

Ramsey County Workforce Investment Board
Market-Driven Workforce System Committee

July 13, 2006

Minutes

Members Present

Kirk Hayes
Nancy Hendrickson
Mary McKee

Members Absent

Craig Anderson
John Evans EA
Phil Hanson
Hyon Kim
Lorrie Louder
Jerry McElroy EA
John Mohr
Ginny Sullivan
William Yang

Staff/Guests Present

Mary Jo Gardner, WIB CEO
Kate Bates, WIB Staff
Terrell Towers, DEED Business Services
Terry Zurn, Workforce Solutions

Call to Order

Nancy Hendrickson, acting chair, called the meeting to order at 1:28 p.m.

Approve Minutes

Motion made by Kirk Hayes and seconded by Mary McKee to approve the meeting minutes from May 11, 2006 as presented.

Motion carried

Nominate Committee Chair and Vice-Chair

Craig Anderson and John Evans have agreed to serve as Chair and Vice-Chair, respectively. Neither were present, so this item was tabled for later action.

Update on Ford Plant

Terry Zurn gave an update on the Ford Plant situation. Ford has decided not to lay anyone off in July or August, and closed the plant for the month of July. At this point, no one knows when the employees will be laid off. Workforce Solutions has applied to DEED to work with the dislocated workers at the Ford Plant, and were granted the contract. Quality Career Services will be working with them as well. Ford has given each employee up to \$4,500 for training through credit courses and an additional \$2,500 for non-credit courses. All expenditures must be approved by Ford. It is estimated that about 60% of the employees will take an early buyout, which means they aren't eligible for training or unemployment insurance. Workforce Solutions is planning on holding orientation sessions and workshops at the plant.

There was a question on MnSCU's role in the lay off- they had heard they should not approach employees for training. Terry was asked how we can ensure that schools are represented at the table. Terry will talk to Anthony Arangia about this, and suggested that MnSCU provider's talk to Denise Stephens.

Update on ELL Funding

Mary Jo gave an update on WIA Incentive grants given to employers with ELL employees. Marsden served less employees than they had proposed, and the group was wondering why this happened. Mary Jo will check with them and report back to the committee. MDI served the minimum clients sited in their proposal. Each client took a considerably longer time with the courses than was anticipated.

In May, an ad hoc met to discuss trying to find additional funding for ELL, ideally \$300,000-\$400,000 to work like the incentive grant funding. Mary Jo recently met with ESI, who is very interested in partnering with the WIB on this project. Mary Jo and Janet Ludden discussed going after about \$1million and targeting small and medium

businesses that didn't qualify for WIA funds. In this scenario, the Port Authority would be the fiscal agent, ESI would serve as project managers and the WIB would serve as the administrative arm.

The committee responded to this proposal. They felt that getting a \$1 million grant would be a great accomplishment and we would want to do the fiscal services for ourselves. The WIB would be able to hire someone just to do the fiscal part of the grant for our organization. ESI's role was intended to recruit businesses to participate, and generally manage the project, not to provide services as it may seem. All agreed that this needed more discussion, and Janet will be invited to the next meeting to discuss this further.

Update Business Services Next Steps

Mary Jo went over a document that outlines a meeting between MnSCU and the Business Services Specialists. This meeting would serve to connect the two groups, ensuring synergy and collaboration in their future efforts. The majority of the time at this meeting would involve introductions of the two groups to each other, communicating on their services and defining referral opportunities for clients.

Mary McKee informed the group that MnSCU and Business Services already met and defined the need for this meeting. They were envisioning it as a one-time meeting between all metro partners, while the WIB was envisioning two meetings just with Ramsey County reps. There was further discussion on whether this should be a Ramsey County-focused meeting, or a larger Metro effort, though there was no conclusion. The committee felt that a meeting facilitator would not be necessary, as was in the original plan, but that Mary Jo could facilitate the meeting. The next step would be for Mary Jo to send out an invite to the appropriate people in the county providing business services and have them meet. At that meeting, those in attendance can decide if they wish to meet again. Mary Jo, Mary McKee and Craig Anderson will meet to discuss the logistics of this meeting before it is planned.

Business Services Staff/WIB Interaction

Terrell Towers was present to discuss the way information from the Business Services Specialists (BSS) is presented to the WIB. Currently there is no formal process for sharing this information, but Business Services is trying to standardize the information that is reported to WIBs. The plan is to report to the WIB quarterly with the number of businesses visited, what industries were visited, what the issues at the company were and the solutions provided. This would be delivered in a four page report, including graphs and the info described, emailed out with pre-reading, and then reported orally at the meeting, using no more than five minutes for reporting. Terrell also informed the group that they may see this info before it goes to the full WIB, or more often if interested. The group indicated that they would like to see the information at the committee level first.

Open Forum

Mary Jo discussed the number of businesses the Ramsey County BSS are required to visit each month. Currently the number in our local plan is thirty visits to businesses per month by each full time BSS. This involves personally going to meet with a business and providing all the pre-work and follow-up for each business. DEED chose this number as a starting point, as this is all new to them, and would be open to modifications if there were justification to change this goal. It is estimated that an easy call to a business from a BSS takes six hours of the BSS's time. A medium-difficulty call takes six to ten hours, and this is the difficulty of the majority of calls. Based on these estimates, 30 visits per month is extremely challenging. As the manager, Terrell can determine if a long and involved phone call counts as a visit to a business, though at this time it does not. It is important, from this, to have a good definition of what constitutes a visit. Terrell has an upcoming meeting with other BSS managers and will inquire at that time. At this time, the Workforce Committee would like to refer this issue to the Exec committee.

Adjourn

The meeting adjourned at 2:41

Next Meeting: September 14, 2006