

Ramsey County Workforce Investment Board  
**Market-Driven Workforce System Committee**

**March 9, 2006**

**Minutes**

**Members Present**

Craig Anderson  
Bob de la Vega  
Kirk Hayes  
Nancy Hendrickson  
Mary McKee  
John Mohr  
Ginny Sullivan

**Members Absent**

John Evans  
Phil Hanson  
Hyon Kim  
Lorrie Louder EA  
Jerry McElroy EA  
William Yang

**Staff/Guests Present**

Mary Jo Gardner, WIB CEO  
Dave Niermann, DEED  
Kathy Korf, Workforce Solutions

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**Call to Order**

Craig Anderson, chair, called the meeting to order at 1:04 p.m.

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**Approve Minutes**

**Motion** made by Nancy Hendrickson and seconded by Kirk Hayes to approve the meeting minutes from November 10, 2005 as presented.

**Motion carried**

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**Vice-Chair**

Mary Jo Gardner reported that the committee is still looking for a vice-chair.

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**Update on Ford Plant**

Craig Anderson reported that the Ford Plant is not being closed at this time, but production is going to be scaled back. It is expected that this will result in about 200 permanent layoffs. Most of the people who will be laid off are in their mid 40's. The plant will remain open at least until the end of the year. There is a potential for 1500 lay offs down the road.

\$4,000 to \$6,000 in tuition is available to the employees. Saint Paul College and union leadership are advising employees to utilize the funds to pursue a degree.

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**Update on Mobile Workforce Center**

Mary Jo reported that there is still interest at the County level for the mobile workforce centers. She added that an invitation was extended at the NAWB Conference from a Farber representative (manufacturer of mobile workforce units) to bring their mobile workforce center here for the WIB and County Commissioners to view. Discussion was held. Consensus among those present was that there is not a strong interest among WIB members for a mobile workforce center, primarily due to operational costs. Concern was also expressed that a mobile workforce center would duplicate services already in place and would get less use than the mobile libraries. Dave Niermann acknowledged that the Department of Employment and Economic Development had one, but it was abandoned due to maintenance costs.

**Motion** made by Kirk Hayes and seconded by Ginny Sullivan that the WIB not move forward with the mobile workforce center.

**Motion carried**

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**ELL Grants**

Mary Jo reported that more money is needed for English Language Learning (ELL) training. There is an ongoing need for the training. Private foundations have expressed interest in this area. \$400,000 per grant is available from the MN Job Skills Partnership for the training. Members suggested targeting the healthcare industry. Ginny Sullivan added that there is an English Language Training project in operation at St. John's Hospital.

Ginny Sullivan, Nancy Hendrickson, and Mary McKee volunteered to form an ad hoc to discuss an additional model for the healthcare industry.

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### **Update on the Regional Economic Profile Project**

Dave Niermann from the Department of Employment and Economic Development (DEED) gave an update on the profile project. There is a need for a metro scan of the economy to help boards with local planning. Information being compiled includes: geographic characteristics, where people live and commute, employment gaps (such as ELL training), aging populations and impact, impact of legal aliens in workforce, etc. DEED's Labor Market Information office is working on this. They are taking guidance from the Metro Workforce Council and are drawing in other sources outside of DEED. It was suggested that they contact the Higher Education Service Office for their input.

DEED's report will include workforce implications, strategies, and suggested action steps. Plans are to tie the information in with the Mind the Gap report and other similar initiatives. Determining how to use the information for planning purposes is up to the WIB. The information is also intended for outside stakeholders, i.e. economic developers. DEED's plan is to get the information to workforce center staff that provides direct services to job seekers. Dave added that he expects the rough draft to be completed in about two weeks.

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### **Open Forum**

John Mohr confirmed that he is retiring by June 30.

Mary Jo Gardner announced that Workforce Solutions is looking for volunteers to review proposals for the Dislocated Worker Program Request for Proposal process. Craig Anderson volunteered.

Mary Jo reported that the WIB is looking for new board members to represent business and community-based organizations, especially from the healthcare industry.

The Youth Council is seeking funding for the Building Lives Program and would like help identifying businesses to hire program participants.

Ginny Sullivan reported that HealthEast has been put on notice by Andy Stearns, President, of Service Employees International Union (SCIU) that it will be the recipient of an international corporate campaign if it does not include neutrality as part of its contracts. They expect picketing to take place. SCIU wants to unionize everyone who isn't. At this time 550 of HealthEast's employees are organized. Ginny indicated that HealthEast is not offering neutrality in its contracts but has made a good contract offer to its employees. Ginny asked for the WIB's support as a good employer.

The WIB does not agree with President Bush's proposal which could cut up to \$680 million in WIA funds. The WIB will be sending a response to his proposal.

It is not expected that the reauthorization of the Workforce Investment Act will be acted on until 2007.

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### **Adjourn**

**Motion** was made by Ginny Sullivan and seconded by Bob de la Vega to adjourn.

**Motion carried.**

Next Meeting: May 11