

Ramsey County Workforce Investment Board
Market-Driven Workforce System Committee

May 1, 2008
Minutes

Members Present

Craig Anderson
Joe Crowe
Butch Howard
Mary Russell

Members Absent

Gerry Flannery
Bev Fritz EA
Kirk Hayes
Lorrie Louder EA
Mary McKee
Rob McKenzie
Jane Sanem
Mark Sorenson
Lori Stone
Cynthia Yongvang

Staff/Guests Present

Mary Jo Gardner, WIB CEO
Rachel Hillman, DEED
Janet Ludden, Employer Solutions, Inc.
Kate Raleigh, WIB Staff
Chris Stoehr, DEED Business Services
Terry Zurn, Workforce Solutions

Call to Order

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

Approve Minutes

Motion made by Joe Crowe with second by Mary Russell to accept the minutes from the March 6th meeting as presented.

Motion carried

Update on Metro Manufacturing Sector Initiative

Craig gave an update on the Metropolitan Manufacturing Sector Initiative (MMSI). Phase 1 graduation was held on April 10th at Saint Paul College with 21 individuals graduating. The majority of the students engaged in this project are individuals who would not normally consider post-secondary education; this program provided them with the entry point into education. The on-the-job training (OJT) phase is starting up with many of the new hires already placed with participating manufacturers. Upon completion of the OJT, students will be able to return to school for advanced training in Phase 3 focused on a specific career path like welding, CNC machining or Metalforming.

Partners are seeking additional funding to support Phase 3 training, as well as Phases 1-3 for new groups of students. Saint Paul College will be submitting a Minnesota Job Skills Partnership (MJSP) grant on Monday, May 5th for about \$400k to fund 110 new students for Phases 1-3 over the next three years. Eleven employers, two colleges and various other partners are involved in this request. A positive outcome of this program is the strengthened relationships developed with employers.

Corrections Workforce Development Next Steps

At the March Workforce Committee and April WIB meetings, Janet Ludden discussed the Corrections Program she developed which allowed for an active discussion amongst Corrections policy makers and employers. Janet returned to discuss any questions the group may have and possible next steps.

Members asked about the legal issues that employers face when hiring from the pool of ex-offenders. There is a training called GAUGE (Gaining Access to Useful and Gainful Employment) that helps employers understand what a "criminal background" is- if the WIB is interested, Janet could bring more information on this to a future WIB meeting. There was discussion on the need for employers to be thoughtful about their hiring policies and consider each position in terms of the safety and ability for an ex-offender to be successful in that position, rather than having a blanket policy that excludes ex-offenders from all positions. There was also discussion on the training offered in correctional facilities and how the skills taught through these programs relate to real life skills needed by employers; it is Janet's impression that the correlation amongst these programs is strong.

Update Labor Market Information

Rachel Hillman, Metro Area Labor Market Analyst from the MN Dept of Employment and Economic Development was present to discuss the current labor market situation in Ramsey county and surrounding metro.

Rachel outlined occupations and industries based on growth, wages and future job prospects. Despite a downturn in the economy, the industries of Finance and Insurance and Healthcare have continued to grow. Rachel also discussed the percentage of job vacancies requiring post-secondary education; the latest data shows that 52% of job openings require additional education, up from 45% last year.

Based on similar criteria from previous years, the WIB reviewed the current three selected industries (healthcare, manufacturing and construction) in terms of strong future prospects, wages, benefits offered, fits local economic development priorities. The group felt that two focus industries may be more appropriate for the WIB given their limited resources.

Motion made by Joe Crowe with second by Butch Howard to recommend the WIB focus on healthcare and manufacturing as their priority industries.

Motion carried.

Tri-WIB Meeting

In January the Washington County WIB asked the Chair and staff of the Dakota/Scott and Ramsey County WIBs to meet and discuss the possibility of partnering on a project. There is a meeting scheduled for June 13th from 8:30-11:30 in West Saint Paul for the three WIBs to meet and discuss the possibility of partnering on an initiative. Members will be invited to join in this discussion. There was a question as to whether or not western Wisconsin could be included in these discussions- there is a possibility in the future, but the initial meeting will start with a more focused geographic area.

Strategic Plan

The WIB has set a priority of working on a new strategic plan for the board this year. The last plan was completed in April of 2003. Mary Jo asked questions to have the group start thinking about the process they would like to use. Questions included what members want the planning session(s) to look like, who should be involved, how much time should be devoted to the process and what pieces of information would be helpful to have prior to planning. The group will discuss these questions further at the July meeting, but members began to detail information they would like to have prior to the strategic planning process. Information suggested includes the Metro WIB RACE, and area demographics such as age, immigration and poverty concentrations. Let Mary Jo know if there is any other information that would be helpful in the planning process.

Other

Members suggested that State Demographer Tom Gillaspay be invited to share data at an upcoming WIB meeting.

The group briefly discussed the Ford plant situation and the value in seeing where employees at the closing plant live. Joe Crowe is able to get this information on the clients his organization is serving, and Terry indicated he could probably find this information for Workforce Solutions clients as well.

Adjourn

Craig Anderson adjourned the meeting at 2:18p.m.

Next Meeting: Thursday, July 10, 2008