

Ramsey County Workforce Investment Board  
**Communication, Advocacy and Oversight/Workforce Committee**

March 12, 2010  
**Minutes**

**WIB Members Present**

Patricia Brady  
Amy Filice  
Trixie Golberg  
Janet Ludden  
Barb Mednick  
Paul Nelson  
Joe Stratig

**Members Absent**

Elizabeth Campbell  
Jacquelyn Carpenter EA  
Joe Crowe EA  
Lee Helgen  
Rob McKenzie  
Scott North  
Jim Schultz  
Dan Strittmater EA

**Staff/Guests Present**

Mary Jo Gardner, WIB CEO  
Kate Raleigh, WIB Staff  
Wayne Young, Workforce Solutions  
Jim Zentner, Workforce Solutions  
Terry Zurn, Workforce Solutions

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**Call to Order**

Barb Mednick called the meeting to order at 10:05 a.m.

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**Welcome and Introductions**

Members and guests introduced themselves.

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**Approve February CAO/Workforce Minutes**

**Motion** made by Janet Ludden with second by Joe Stratig to approve the February minutes as presented.

**Motion carried.**

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**Annual Report Update**

Kate Raleigh updated the committee on the progress of the Annual Report, which features the WIB's accomplishments as well as the program outcomes of WIB partners. The report draft has started and will go to the Marketing subcommittee prior to approval by this committee in May, followed by the Executive Committee in May and the full board in June. The report is due out on June 15<sup>th</sup>.

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**Healthcare Initiative Update**

Mary Jo Gardner updated the committee on the Healthcare Initiative. Students enrolled in the Medical Billing and Coding program have completed close to half of the program. The planning committee is currently setting up internships for the students. Additionally, there is discussion at the planning committee meetings on how to best work with students on their strategies for success- in school and in their career fields. The committee is also discussing and refocusing the role of the Single Point of Contact in this program. Some initiative partners are meeting with Michael Murphy, Vice Chancellor of MnSCU, on Monday to discuss how the project is going and to address how different systems, such as the workforce system and MnSCU, can work together as partners.

There was a question on running future classes through this project because of the way the WIB is structured; any future classes would be run by the partners, as the WIB aims to convene partners to build community solutions then transfer responsibility of the projects to the partners. The partners are discussing options for this program in the future.

Barb Mednick recently attended a presentation by Enterprise Minnesota, which identified what local manufacturing employers need. Barb will send this report to the WIB staff for distribution to the committee.

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**Local Plan Update**

The state requires an annual “Local Plan”, which states how workforce funding is being spent in the local area. This year’s plan is very similar to last year’s. Partners are in the process of writing the plan, which is due to the state on May 14<sup>th</sup>, however, the state is aware that the document will not have WIB or County Board approval at that point. Changes can be made to the plan after the May 14<sup>th</sup> date.

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### **Issues Awareness Concept**

Barb Mednick discussed the issues awareness/issues management concept for the WIB. The WIB’s legislative ad hoc initiated the conversation and saw this structure as a way to establish the WIB as a strategic leader in workforce development and as a way to raise visibility of the organization. The goal is two-fold:

- Inform Ramsey County Workforce Investment Board members, businesses, funders and other key influencers about key workforce issues in Ramsey County.
- Position the organization as a strategic thought leader in important workforce development issues in Ramsey County.

In practice, the WIB will scan the environment to see patterns of reoccurring concerns/needs/opportunities and identify the most relevant issues to focus on. For each issue identified, the WIB will create a one- to two-page “brief”, which will provide background, statistics on the issue, impact on Ramsey County, any action the WIB has taken and the WIB’s philosophy on the issue. The document would inform target audiences and influencers on key workforce issues.

Members were interested in this idea and felt it would help establish the WIB as a leader and give actionable information on which to respond. The committee agreed the issues need to be identified ahead of when they become critical so the WIB has time to react and prepare a response. Members discussed a desire to identify those with a strong local connection so the WIB can have a greater influence. Each committee may want to identify their own issue, keeping the full board aware of their discussions and action. Other suggestions included:

- Utilizing local university programs assisting organizations with research (e.g. CURA at the U of MN)
- Keeping the scan focused on the future
- Asking partners what issues they are seeing/anticipating in the local area
- Focusing on the strategic conversation related to the issue, which the WIB can have an impact on
- Determining a format for the brief so there is a standard level of expectation (similar to an RFP format)
- Keeping an ongoing list of possible key issues

**Motion** made by Amy Filice with second by Joe Stratig to recommend this concept to the full WIB.

**Motion carried.**

This will be discussed at the April WIB meeting, though the merged committee would like to maintain some control over the topics that are selected by the other committees. Possible issues identified by committee members included the following:

- Unemployment rate
- Shortage of healthcare workers
- WIA reauthorization
- Sen. Franken’s SEED Act
- Skill gap between what people have and what is required to gain an entry level position

Members agreed to initially focus on the “skill gap” issue.

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### **Committee Name**

Tabled until next meeting.

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### **American Recovery and Reinvestment Act Funding Outcomes**

Patricia Brady, Wayne Young, Jim Zentner and Terry Zurn presented outcomes associated with the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (ARRA) funding. The funding was distributed nationally through the existing WIA funding channels, though it was not required to be spent in the same way WIA funds are. A

stated goal of the Act was to spend the funds quickly, with transparency and accountability maintained in the distribution and use of funds. Additionally, the funds were to preserve and create jobs, promote the nation's economic recovery and provide extra assistance to those most impacted by the recession.

Patricia and her team went through the following opportunities and outcomes:

- Strategic vision for ARRA funds
- Ramsey County unemployment numbers (roughly double what it normally is)
- How Ramsey County residents are being served
- Tools used in addressing unemployment
- Partnerships utilized
- Needs not met by these funds

Ramsey County received \$4.5 million for various workforce and assistance programs, with these funds to be obligated by June 30, 2010 and spent out by June 30, 2011. Programs impacted by these funds include year-round and summer youth, WIA adults, dislocated workers and Job Service, amongst others.

Members discussed how to support further recovery efforts and Sen. Franken's Strengthening Our Economy Through Employment and Development (SEED) Act.

**Motion** made by Trixie Golberg with second by Paul Nelson to officially support the SEED bill through a letter of support from the Ramsey County WIB.

**Motion carried.**

Committee members felt this information should be presented to the WIB at the April 1 full board meeting. Pre-reading will be sent out urging members to review the information prior to the presentation so Patricia and her staff can focus on the most important information in the presentation.

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#### **Adjourn**

**Motion** made by Paul Nelson with second by Janet Ludden to adjourn the meeting at 11:58am.

**Motion carried.**

**Next Meeting-** April 9<sup>th</sup>