

Ramsey County Workforce Investment Board  
**General Membership Meeting**  
Thursday, February 3, 2005, 2:30 – 4:30 p.m.

**Minutes**

<b>Members Present</b>		<b>Members Absent</b>	<b>Staff/Guests Present</b>
Craig Anderson	Jim McDonough	Patricia Brady EA	Kitty Gogins, WIB CEO
Mike Chanaka	Jerry McElroy	Gary Christensen EA	Kate Bates, WIB Staff
Kathy Engesser	John Mohr	Bill Fritts EA	Eric Aamoth, DEED
John Evans	Debbie Montgomery	Phil Hanson EA	Dave Niermann, DEED
Traci Gauer	Paul Nelson	Louis Henry EA	Rhonda Sivarajah, Anoka Co. Commissioner, GWDC Member
Kirk Hayes	Barb Reindl Pjevach	Dean Howard	Tom Triplett, City of Saint Paul
Nancy Hendrickson	Joe Richburg	David MacKenzie EA	Luke Weisberg, GWDC
Allen Hester	Dean Shawbold	Mary McKee EA	Terry Zurn, Workforce Solutions
Doug Hubbard	Vern Vick	Jackie Mlynarczyk EA	
Sheldon Jensen	Ellen Watters	Willie Nesbit EA	
Hyon Kim		Phil Saari EA	
Vinod Kumar		Tom Simonson EA	
Greg Lambert		Ginny Sullivan EA	
Scott Lemire		Robert Veilleux	
Lorrie Louder		Jan Webster	
William Lowe		Tené Wells EA	
Tom Macy		William Yang	

Meeting called to order at 2:35 by Ellen Watters, Chair

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**Approve Agenda and Minutes**

**Motion** made by Lorrie Louder with second by Doug Hubbard to approve the December 2<sup>nd</sup> minutes as written and today's agenda as presented.

**Motion carried**

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**Recognition and Announcements**

Members were recognized for recent achievements and announcements were made (see Attachment 1).

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**Feature Members**

Featured members were Commissioner Jim McDonough, Ramsey County Board of Commissioners; Councilmember Debbie Montgomery, Saint Paul City Council; Dean Shawbold, White Bear Lake Area Schools Transition Plus; and Joe Richburg, Keystone Computer Solutions.

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**Approve Consent Agenda**

**Ratify WIA Incentive Grant Plan**

An ad hoc committee composed of English Language Learner Providers and Employers developed a plan for spending the \$140,000 of WIA Incentive grant dollars allocated to Ramsey County. The Workforce Committee recommended approval and the Executive Committee approved the plan in order to expedite submission to the state.

**Motion:** To ratify the WIA Incentive Grant Plan

**Ratify WIB Grant Application for Our Operation- Enhancing Job Seeker Opportunities through Demand Driven Initiatives**

In order to fill our upcoming funding gap, it is necessary to apply to foundations for funds. Members recommended framing the grant request as a program with defined deliverables. This application will be sent to 8-10 foundations.

**Motion:** To ratify WIB grant application for Enhancing Job Seeker Opportunities through Demand Driven Initiatives.

### **Accept CEO Report**

The CEO report is organized to report on progress v. the tentative 2005 objectives and goals. All are “green light” at this early date. **Motion:** To accept the CEO report

### **Ratify Prosource Education Services Certification**

In December the Executive Committee approved recertification of Prosource Education Services programs. All programs were recommended for certification by the Department of Employment and Economic Development, and were certified by our WIB last year. **Motion:** To ratify the Prosource Education Services certification

### **Accept Report on 2004 Top Accomplishments**

**Motion:** To accept report on 2004 top accomplishments.

**Motion** made by Kirk Hayes with second by John Mohr to approve the consent agenda as presented.

**Motion carried.**

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### **Approve Stub Year Fiscal Report**

For the stub year, the WIB came within \$55 of budget. The largest area of favorability was outside personnel and services, coming in \$1300 under budget. Areas coming in unfavorably were:

- Timing of expenses for travel- budgeted for F05 but had to be paid in stub year 04
- Increased copying because of updated WIB member manuals
- Retirement due to a math error when creating the budget
- Payroll tax- increased with WIB independence

The In-Kind report for the year came in about \$1K under what was budgeted due to reduced need for financial and consulting services. Rent is also under budget because the Chamber’s contribution for the last two months of 2004 was renegotiated in late fall.

**Motion** made by Doug Hubbard with second by Al Hester to approve the stub year fiscal report

**Motion carried.**

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### **Approve 2005 Objectives**

The 2005 WIB priorities are consistent with discussion last fall. As new opportunities arise, these objectives will be used as a filter on how to best spend staff time. These priorities also help with keeping on track with the strategic plan and grant writing. The priorities are:

- Support Business Driven Hiring and Retention Services in Healthcare Sector and Bring Down Barriers to Healthcare Industry Workforce Supply
- Obtain Funding to Support a Public-Private Collaboration in Healthcare
- Support English Language Learners Successfully Transitioning into the Workforce
- Support Full Roll-Out of New Way of Serving Businesses throughout Ramsey County public workforce system
- Explore Development of Return on Investment Methodology for Workforce Programs
- Migrate to Long-Term WorkForce Center Location Strategy
- Convene and Define a Pilot Program to Create Workforce System Partnership with Public High School Students
- Continue to enhance WIB, Building Organization and Fund Development

A few points were clarified- the term “public high school students” was intended to include students in charter schools. Also, it was clarified that the Public-Private Collaboration in Healthcare will focus on People of Color in addition to English Language Learners. These are stretch goals for 2005- WIB staff will work towards each goal, but it is not likely that all will be accomplished in the time frame.

**Motion** made by Bill Lowe with second by Sheldon Jensen to approve the 2005 objectives.

**Motion carried**

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### **Update on Governor’s Workforce Development Council’s (GWDC) Proposed WorkForce Center (WFC) Strategy**

Luke Weisberg, Executive Director of the GWDC, presented the GWDC’s vision on WFC strategy, for implementation July 2006. There are two main shifts being proposed- (1) business becomes the customer of the

WFCs, and job seekers are a beneficiary of this relationship, and (2) local workforce service areas will be given control and held accountable for their own WFCs. The system will operate more like a franchise, where the community owns and operates their local centers with statewide performance standards. Luke acknowledged that there will most likely be less money going to each of the WFCs over time due to reduced federal funding, however under the new proposal local areas will be able to define how the limited money is best spent. Over the next 16 months there will be a lot of negotiation regarding execution specifics. Luke does not believe the role of the WIB will be dramatically different. From a Local Elected Official perspective, he viewed this as an opportunity to “buy franchises.”

Eric Aamoth, Department of Employment and Economic Development (DEED) Workforce Partnerships Director, said his department agreed with most recommendations from the GWDC proposal and are supportive of local control for workforce service areas.

Commissioner Rhonda Sivarajah, Anoka County Commissioner and GWDC member, was present and expressed her interest in hearing local WIBs’ reaction to the proposal. She also expressed her support for business as the customer and the job seeker as a beneficiary.

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### **Discuss/Q&A Regarding GWDC WFC Strategy**

First it was acknowledged and appreciated that both DEED and the GWDC do a good job of requesting and taking advice from local areas. Representatives from the nonprofit sector were asked what they thought of business as the customer. One member agreed that change is needed going forward, however believes job seekers are more than just beneficiaries, they are more like dual customers. Another expressed that business as the primary customer is theoretically defensible, since services provided need to be geared toward success in the workplace, however going forward the WIB needs to monitor and report on how this change impacts the system, funding stream and results for special populations being served.

In general most people thought this could be a positive change, however there are important concerns. Attachment 2 is the written response provided previously by our WIB based on input from numerous stakeholders. Today’s discussion expanded on several of these key areas needing attention. That while conceptually positive, the devil is in the details like standards, resources and measures. That it is important we not lose sight of the large number of low-income individuals wanting and needing jobs, that local areas not be given accountability without authority, and that the increased responsibility will take away precious resources from local areas and diffuse WIB focus.

The GWDC indicated that development of the detail was next and that having business input would be helpful at this stage.

Also discussed was the recently released Legislative Auditor’s report, which recommends some of the changes in the GWDC proposed strategy. Overall, the improvements suggested are consistent with opportunities defined by our WIB. In order to address some of the concerns with the report, and particularly the newspaper article earlier this week that had a very negative tone, Kitty will draft a response for the Pioneer Press, which will be reviewed by the Marketing and Advocacy sub-group.

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### **Update on County Vision on WorkForce Centers and Next Steps**

Commissioner McDonough reported that the County is defining their vision of where to provide workforce services in Ramsey County. He indicated that it is clear there is a need for two full service WFCs as defined by the WIB CAO Committee, but that the County is also interested in the possibility of a mobile workforce center unit. The CAO Committee will have an opportunity to review the costs and benefits of the mobile unit at its upcoming meeting.

With the Midway lease up next fall, the County appreciates that the timeline on this issue is short. Because of the importance of not having the timeline drive the decision, the County is working with the state to obtain a lease extension. There will be a WIB-County Board workshop on this topic in the near future.

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### **Update on Blueprint on Poverty Project**

Kirk Hayes requested that board members participate in this new community project. The essential purpose is to end poverty. The organizers are pulling together people from across the community to come up with high impact strategies to end poverty. He mentioned that it is particularly important to get business volunteers since their voice is missing from these discussions. All members were invited to join this effort in some manner.

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### **Share Events, Network and Other Discussion**

Saint Paul College will be holding a career expo for high school students again this year. Students will be able to attend 3 out of the 40 career sessions offered. Curriculum is presented before and after the expo to support learnings from the event.

On April 16 at the Rondo Center there will be a program called "Thinking about College Early" for 7-10 graders. There is also going to be a job fair at the Merrick Community Center on February 9 from 9:00-3:00.

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### **Adjourn Meeting**

Upon completion of the agenda, Ellen Watters adjourned the meeting at 4:30pm.

**Next Meeting:** April 7, 2:30-4:30, St. Paul College, room 137A/B

## **Attachment 1. Recognition and Announcements**

### **Recognition:**

- Thank you to Kirk Hayes for his strategic guidance in greatly increasing our odds of being awarded foundation funds to close the WIB funding gap, by proposing transforming the request from an operating fund request to a program fund request
- Our WIB CEO was quoted in recent Federal Reserve magazine article on the labor market situation and future workforce shortages in our area
- Congratulation to Business Service Steering Committee and Pilot Team on receiving \$42,000 grant from the St. Paul Foundation to provide business coaching to pilot staff.
- Thank you to all community and WIB members that helped design the Incentive grant plan. Our plan is the first to be submitted and several other workforce service areas are using it as a model. Approval is expected by February 7.
- Thank you to everyone who provided input on the proposed long-term WorkForce Center strategy. It allowed us to provide a broad and comprehensive response to the state.
- Congratulations to Kate Bates on her promotion to WIB Operations Specialist. In her new role, Kate has taken on additional committee, special project, and accounting responsibility.

### **Announcements:**

- Please send out letters to your legislators of behalf of the Minnesota Youth Program. The Minnesota Workforce Council Association (MWCA) is optimistic that we can prevent elimination IF each WIB mobilizes input to their legislators.
- We are looking for volunteers to serve on the Evaluation Panel for the WIA Incentive Grant. Time commitment involves reading submitted applications and attending a 2-hour evaluation session. If you are personally interested or have a recommendation, please contact Kate or Kitty. To prevent influencing evaluators, names will not be made public. We are looking for:
  - 1 individual with Expertise in ELL that is a not an eligible provider
  - 2-3 employers with some experience having ELL employees, who will not be applying for a grant in Round 1

- 1-2 others
- Ed Barlow, a well-respected futurist, is coming to Minnesota for an event on the afternoon of Wednesday, March 16, jointly sponsored by the Governor's Workforce Development Council (GWDC), DEED and MWCA. Those who attended his previous presentation highly recommend it.
- The first application date for grant funds for employer focused ELL training is April 15. Information is already available from Kate on service providers in our community.
- The State Legislative Auditors report was released February 1. Discussion within our WIB is consistent with most of the findings. Much of the work recommended is already underway either locally or at a state level. The report is available on line at: <http://www.auditor.leg.state.mn.us/ped/2005/pe0506.htm>
- Shar Knutson, one of our labor representatives, resigned from the WIB.
- 10-year employment projections by DEED show strongest growth is projected to be in Professional and Business Services and Health Services, with significant growth in Computer and Math related jobs, Community and Social Services, and Health Care Support. This data is available online at: [www.deed.state.mn.us/lmi/tools/projections/](http://www.deed.state.mn.us/lmi/tools/projections/).
- A 2004 Salary Survey showing median wage rates for a wide variety of occupations was made available. This information is also available online at [www.deed.state.mn.us/lmi/tools/oes](http://www.deed.state.mn.us/lmi/tools/oes)

## **Attachment 2. WIB Written Feedback to GWDC on Proposed WFC Strategy, 1/18/05**

To: Cynthia Leshner, GWDC Chair  
 John Molinaro, Committee Chair  
 Luke Weisberg, Executive Director

Thank you for the opportunity to review the long-term WorkForce Center strategy. I have solicited input from our WIB members and am providing a consolidated response on behalf of the Ramsey County WIB.

We believe looking at redesigning the system is a positive development. Our WIB supports the underlying themes of the long-term strategy. We agree both with the need to make the system more demand driven, by increasing the priority placed on the business customer, and to increase local control making the system more responsive to community needs.

In the principles section, it would be helpful to clarify that while the business customer is the number one priority, serving the job seeker customer remains a key function of the center. While the new focus will likely bring new metrics, the WIA program metrics remain critical and are job seeker focused. As you point out later in the document, serving businesses will be achieved largely through offering support, training and/or preparation that job seeker beneficiaries need in order to fulfill business customer's need.

We have some concerns that we would like to see addressed as the execution details are defined:

1. The quality standards need to be set such that delivering them does not become an unfunded mandate. Since funds available to support WFCs are expected to continue to erode, there is concern that the standards be set such that WIA funds transferred to the local areas are sufficient to enable delivery of the standards. With the prevalence of transferring mandates from the state to the local level in the past few years without sufficient funds, this issue is shared by many of our stakeholders.
2. As the local areas take on accountability for the WFC, what control and funds will the state transfer to the local level?
  - From a funding standpoint what specific funds are under discussion. Are there any funds aside from WIA Title 1 10% funds available for infrastructure?
  - With Rehabilitation programs, are we allowed to define staff priority or does a statewide plan remain in place?
  - Does the WIB have authority to dictate the contribution partners need to make to infrastructure costs?
  - If business customer service or resource room service is not at the desired level, what recourse does the WIB have? If this occurs with a contractor we can terminate using the vendor. What action can we take with state staff---mandate employee improvement plans with termination if performance goals are not achieved?

- Do we define where state staff will be housed within the WSA e.g. which WFC or community site?
  - Etc.
3. Moving from centralized control to local control inherently means more individuals involved in administration and less mass in ordering. What can be built into the plan to minimize cost increases and maintain some of the efficiencies?
    - Can we have access to state purchasing contracts?
    - Will the state define costs for the state providing the service so we can determine if contracting it back to the state is the most cost effective option?
    - Maintenance of software and hardware are a particular area of concern---increased cost with lack of consistency and reduced mass. How can these concerns be avoided?
    - Other?
  4. What is the operating structure vision?
    - Is the Local Title 1 administrator expected to take on broader administration? If so, how does this fit with the stipulation in WIA that the provider of a program cannot be the operator of the one stop?
    - Is the WIB itself expected to administer? If so, this would require more staff. Is there sufficient funding for more staff? How can this be structured so it will not distract from the desire for WIBs to become more strategic?
    - Is the WIB expected to contract out for a center manager? Does funding support this?

Specific to Ramsey County, how this should be implemented poses some challenging dilemmas. The current scope of the WIB is defined as strategic, specifically precluding any program administration. There are questions about how to implement this while keeping the WIB strategic and preventing incremental demand on volunteers, which are already tapped. We will also need to work through what is the WIB's role v. the County' role. For example having the WIB hold a lease does not seem like a viable operating procedure.

5. Clarify what is the role for the Local Elected Official. This is important to local area and LEO buy-in.
6. Putting in place regional coordination to support consistency within a labor shed. We know that 20% of our WFC visitors are not Ramsey County residents.
7. What will be the process for allocating merit state staff to the local areas? If the state equally supports a WFC in each WSA, the majority of the population will be underserved. There are concerns that an equitable formula based on population or economic engine be used. There is concern that only 9 of 32 business reps are being allocated to the Twin Cities when significantly more than half of the businesses and populations are located here. Allocation of Rehab and other resources are also felt to be under allocated based on businesses and population.

Thank you for the opportunity to share the areas we would like to receive attention as this is translated into operation.

Kitty

Kitty Gogins  
 CEO Ramsey County Workforce Investment Board