

Ramsey County Workforce Investment Board
General Membership Meeting
Thursday, December 7, 2006 2:30-4:30
Minutes

Members Present

Craig Anderson
Patricia Brady
Amy Brenengen
Mike Chanaka
Robert de la Vega
Kathy Engesser
Trixie Golberg
Kristina Hamann
Kirk Hayes
Nancy Hendrickson
Doug Hubbard
William Lowe
Jim McDonough
Brian Miller
Jackie Mlynarczyk
Robert Morse
Debbie Montgomery
Paul Nelson
Willie Nesbit
Barb Reindl
Dean Shawbold
Ellen Watters

Members Absent

Jesse Bethke Gomez EA
Jeanne Blake
John Evans
Gerry Flannery EA
Traci Gauer EA
Courtney Henry EA
Bernie Hesse
Tom Klas
Vinod Kumar EA
Lorrie Louder EA
David MacKenzie EA
Tom Macy EA
Jerry McElroy
Mary McKee
Tom Simonson

Staff/Guests Present

Mary Jo Gardner, WIB CEO
Kate Bates, WIB Staff
Joe Crowe, Quality Career Services
Terry Zurn, Workforce Solutions

Call to Order

The meeting was called to order by Bob de la Vega at 2:45p.m.

Approve Minutes and Agenda

Motion was made by Dean Shawbold and seconded by Willie Nesbit to approve the minutes and agenda as presented.

Motion carried.

Share Recognition and Announcements

Members were recognized for their recent achievements. Ellen Watters was honored for her years of service with the WIB- she will be resigning at the end of the year. Jim McDonough recognized Ellen for her service on the WIB and Kathy Engesser for her term as Chair- both were presented proclamations from the County. See attachment 1 for further recognition and announcements.

Update on the Joint Powers Agreement

There is no update on this issue yet.

Update on New WorkForce center

A group of stakeholders visited the new WorkForce Center on December 6th-it is on track to open to the public on February 5th. There are a few organizations that are interested in the adjacent space on the first floor.

Update on MnSCU/Business Services Collaboration

The Business Services reps from the state and county and the customized training reps from MnSCU institutions met for the second time to discuss ways to work together. Representatives from Adult Basic Education were

included in this meeting as well. The participants were split into three groups and asked to address, as a group, issues that employers in the WIB's priority industries are facing. Representatives discussed what resources and solutions their organizations could bring to issues such as a shortage of welders, CNC machinists and CNAs. Another collaboration will be scheduled in spring of 2007. The participants found it a valuable use of their time.

Update on Diversity Seminar Initiative

The WIB, Workforce Solutions, DEED Business Services and DEED Job Service hosted a diversity seminar on October 25th. The seminar provided information to HR representatives to address cultural barriers in the workplace, and was attended by 79 business people. There were five panelists from various cultural backgrounds along with a moderator from the Saint Paul Foundation. As suggested by a panelist, there will be a follow-up session sometime in spring to get into working groups and better workout the issues employers are facing.

Accept 2006 Accomplishments

Bob de la Vega briefly discussed the WIB's 2006 accomplishments. There was a comment that the brevity of the write-up of the accomplishments did not justify the work done on each accomplishment, particularly the work done to find the new WorkForce Center. Mike Chanaka requested that the record show the appreciation from the members to those who worked so diligently to find a new location for the center.

Accept 2007 Budget

Mary Jo reviewed the budget, which was reviewed in greater detail at the Executive meeting in November. Based on the planned income and expense for 2007, \$3,000 will be left over at the end of the year in cash. There will also be about eight months worth of reserve funds going into a CD. There was a question on the planned \$30,000 to be raised in Community Support/Grants. WIB staff plans to commit more of its time to fundraising, and will be going after a large grant for ELL services, of which the WIB will get a portion.

Approve 2007 Goals

Bob de la Vega briefly reviewed the goals set for 2007, falling into the general categories of continued collaboration with community and business partners, increase funding for operations and increase efficiency and processes of the WIB internally.

Targeted Industries Current Workforce Conditions

The WIB selects industries on which to focus strategic efforts for our community- normally these are discussed in light of the labor market information available from the state. At this meeting, board members representing each sector discussed the problems and opportunities they are seeing within their organization and industry. Barb Reindl Pjevach represented advanced manufacturing and Kristina Hamann represented healthcare.

Advanced Manufacturing

Barb Reindl Pjevach has been with Boston Scientific (formerly Guidant) for 20 years and the biomedical manufacturing field has changed vastly since then. Boston Scientific manufactures pacemakers and defibrillators and much of the work done by the employees is computer-based, while it used to be more manual dexterity based. Employees need to have strong computer skills, technical skills and strong English communication skills. Boston Scientific runs ESL programs at their organization and gives employees time off to take classes. Employees need at least a two-year degree for the vast majority of positions at Boston Scientific.

Boston Scientific is most in need of mechanical engineers- there is an issue that many of them will be retiring in the near future, and not as many people are graduating in mechanical engineering. Barb speculated that this was because other specialties, like computer and electrical engineering, are more attractive to students because they are thought of as higher paying while mechanical engineering is thought of as more basic and manual. If people are not found to fill these positions, the jobs will be outsourced to other countries that do have the skilled individuals. It is very important to keep these positions in Minnesota and Barb outlined a few things that would help to accomplish this goal. The most important thing to do is get younger students (4-6 graders) interested in science and math, and the careers that require these skills. Boston Scientific worked on a program with WomenVenture that got girls interested in science and math. With the retiring workforce, it is important for

employers to think of creative ways to retain employees that are reaching retirement age- like allowing them a flexible, part-time work schedule. Also, youth and underemployed individuals should be encouraged to pursue education at two-year institutions that prepare them for careers in the biomedical technology field.

Healthcare

Kris Hamann discussed the shortages faced by the long term healthcare field, particularly with the need for Certified Nurse Aides, Registered Nurses, Licensed Practical Nurses, Directors of Nursing, and Pharmacists. These needs will increase with the aging population, as nurses will retire and the need for services for the aging population will increase. Computer skills are very important for people in long term healthcare as well as English-language skills. Some of the people who want to fill these slots are foreign-born and do not want to give up their native language, showing a resistance to communicate in English. Additional barriers to working in long term care are much higher risk of being injured on the job, the inflexible schedules and the relatively low salary (when compared with other healthcare facilities). Nurses are not recommending the field to their children for all of these reasons, and those who do go in to the field as CNAs see it only as a stepping stone to more advanced nursing. There needs to be a way to have this position seen as a career and not just a rung on the career ladder. Another barrier is the bottleneck found in school- many people apply to nursing school, but only so many get in because there is a lack of qualified individuals with a Master's in Nursing that want to teach because the pay is lower than if they used their degree in a hospital setting. Also, clinicals are hard to find for all of the students in nursing programs. It was suggested that the WIB could create collaborations in Ramsey County to address some of the issues faced by long term healthcare.

Paul Nelson spoke very briefly on the needs in Construction where the retiring workforce will also create openings that may not be able to be filled. Discussion continued on the general needs in the various high demand fields. It is clear that reaching youth before high school is important to give them enough time to take classes to prepare for the field they want to pursue.

Adjourn

The meeting adjourned upon completion of the agenda at 4:35 p.m.

Next Meeting

Thursday, February 1, 2007

2:30 to 4:30 p.m.

Ramsey County Parks and Recreation.

Attachment 1: Recognition and Announcements

Recognition:

- Welcome new WIB member Kristina Hamann
- Thank you to our WIA partners: John O'Phelan, Workforce Solutions, Jim Schultz, Job Service and Jody Pepinski, DEED Business Services, for their work with the WIB to put together the Addressing Cultural Barriers in the Workplace meeting on October 25.
- Thank you to Jackie Mlynarczyk, Kathy Engesser and Nancy Hendrickson for their help with the WIB Orientation on October 30th
- Thank you to Saint Paul College for hosting the MnSCU/ABE/Ramsey County Business Services Staff Collaboration on December 5th
- Thank you to Craig Anderson, St Paul College, Mary McKee, Century College, Dave Niermann, DEED, Terrell Towers, DEED and Denise Stephens, MnSCU, for their help in developing the December 5th MnSCU/ABE/Ramsey County Business Services Staff Collaboration.
- Thank you to Kathy Engesser, US Bank, Cheryl Beaumier, Chris Stoehr and Jody Pepinski, DEED Business Services, John O'Phelan and Karyn Berg, Workforce Solutions, for their help in developing the Ramsey County business services marketing pieces currently appearing in the St Paul Area and Midway Chambers of Commerce newsletters.

Announcements:

- There is funding available for members to attend the National Association of Workforce Boards conference February 24-27, 2007 at the Renaissance Washington, DC Hotel. Please contact Kate for more information.
- For those members not yet serving on a committee, the CAO, Workforce and Youth Council committee are all seeking new members. Please call Mary Jo with questions 779-5653.
- The next WIB meeting, February 1, 2007, 2:30 – 4:30, will take place at Ramsey County Parks and Recreation in Maplewood.
- If you are in need of qualified individuals for open positions within your organization, Job Connect is a network of 250+ job counselors in the NE metro and surrounding areas that utilize their caseload to fill these positions with quality candidates. John O’Phelan, Workforce Solutions, is the coordinator of this electronic network- if you would like more information please contact him at john.o'phelan@co.ramsey.mn.us
- We congratulate Ellen Watters on her new business adventure but are saddened by her resignation from the WIB. Thank you, Ellen for your participation and efforts on the WIB.