

Ramsey County Workforce Investment Board

April 3, 2008

Minutes

WIB Members Present

Patricia Brady
Brian Carnes
Mike Chanaka
Joe Crowe
Kathy Engesser
Gerry Flannery
Bev Fritz
Trixie Golberg
Kirk Hayes
Lee Helgen
Butch Howard
Doug Hubbard
Bill Lowe
David MacKenzie
Barbara Mednick
Brian Miller
Jackie Mlynarczyk
Bob Morse
Mary Russell
Jane Sanem
Jim Schultz
Dean Shawbold
Rick Vazquez

Members Absent

Craig Anderson EA
Amy Brenengen EA
Robert de la Vega EA
Kristina Hamann
Bernie Hesse
Lorrie Louder EA
Jim McDonough EA
Mary McKee
Rob McKenzie
Paul Nelson EA
Mark Sorenson
Lori Stone
Cynthia Yongvang

Staff/Guests Present

Mary Jo Gardner, WIB CEO
Kelley Heifort, MN Dept. of Corrections
Janet Ludden, Employer Solutions
Kate Raleigh, WIB Staff
John Rayman, Senior US Probation Officer,
District of Minnesota
Shawn Ullrich, Employer Solutions, Inc./MN
Department of Corrections
Terry Zurn, Workforce Solutions

Call to Order

The WIB meeting was called to order at 2:35 p.m.

Approve Consent Agenda

Approve Minutes from February Meeting

Approve Agenda

Approve Annual Report

Approve Annual Youth Plan

Ratify Support for Saint Paul Community Literacy Consortium's Grant Application

Motion was made by Rick Vazquez with second by Kirk Hayes to approve the consent agenda as presented.

Motion carried.

Recognition

New members were introduced and other recognition and announcements were shared.

Update on WIB Membership

The County has approved the reduced WIB size of 33 members, and City approval is pending on April 9th. The reduced number is the result of many discussions between the City and County, who both desired to lower the required membership on the WIB. The number is based on having spots for all of the required representatives on the board, while maintaining the 51% business balance and the 15% community-based organization representation. After the revised makeup is approved by both the City and County it will go to the state for final approval. The County is filling the Rehabilitation Services vacancy and the City will nominate an Economic Development representative for appointment. The category that needs to reduce the current number of representatives is the Education category, going from the current six representatives down to two. The Education representatives had a meeting to discuss how they can stay actively engaged in the WIB with a reduction of appointed representatives. Members are still able to

serve on the Youth Council and it was suggested that the Education representatives form an ad hoc and select the WIB representatives from that committee.

There was further discussion on the reduction- and concern that a smaller WIB means fewer business and education voices. The board agreed that fifty members was a difficult to manage board size, and in past discussions members have been very supportive of reducing the board size. If the number of business or education representatives increases, then other categories, such as community-based organizations, will need to increase representation, resulting in the WIB growing to its former size. Bev Fritz wanted the record to reflect that, as a representative of the Saint Paul Area Chamber of Commerce, she would like the WIB to consider increasing the number of business representatives on the board.

The Business of Offender Workforce Development

Janet Ludden, Employer Solutions Inc., and John Rayman, Senior Probation Office- MN District, came to the WIB meeting to discuss their project on workforce development for offenders. The ultimate goal of this initiative is to reduce recidivism by preparing offenders for meaningful employment after their release. They reviewed what local organizations and corrections facilities were doing for offenders and wanted to connect these programs to reduce redundancy. There was also a desire to connect the demand-driven needs of businesses with the preparation and training done with offenders, in an effort to make ex-offenders a viable labor pool. In this project, John brings his connection with Corrections and Janet acts as a liaison to business.

On December 7, 2007, Janet and John assembled a group of employers to speak to an audience of Corrections leaders about their needs from this labor pool. The Corrections representatives were individuals that help guide policy and strategic planning for Corrections and can affect change within the system. It was the first conversation of its kind in having this audience listen directly to business discuss their needs and concerns. Corrections was able to better understand business needs and their concern in working with this population, and nontraditional workers as a whole, and the employers were able to learn about the services that are already provided to offenders around the state in regards to work preparation and training. A large barrier to employers hiring ex-offenders is the company's hiring practices and restrictions that don't allow individuals with criminal backgrounds to be eligible for a position. Corrections was able to ask employers to consider alternatives to their traditional hiring practices in positions where a criminal background may not affect the individual's ability to perform well in the position. Employers also discussed a desire for increased soft skills training in correctional facilities.

The presenters answered questions of members and clarified points of their initiative. Employers expressed the importance of having healthy, drug-free candidates for open positions within an organization. Janet and John stated that a case management approach can address issues faced by offenders entering the workforce, as well as help the employers of the ex-offenders. Case managers could work with Corrections to ensure that offenders are in a position to be positive, trustworthy employees for community businesses. It was clarified that soft skills are taught in the corrections system through some of the job skills training programs. To increase this focus, MINNCOR is going to fund two positions to work with inmates on soft skills before they leave the system. Members expressed that the government, as an employer, has hiring practices that don't allow for ex-offenders to hold positions, even down to the level of program vendors receiving government funding not being able to hire from this population. The presenters were asked for positive results in the training, placement and retention of ex-offenders in the workforce; this is a new piece of the corrections system and there is not data available at this time. There was a question on what the WorkForce Centers are doing for ex-offenders; the Building Lives program, with its case management intensive model, was a very successful program serving youth offenders and had a recidivism rate among participants of approximately 6%. The programs, as a whole, have participants that fall into this category, and those individuals are served as other program participants. Luis Brown Pena at the Ramsey County WorkForce Center in Saint Paul has developed a specific ex-offender curriculum for the creative job search class. The National Work Readiness Credential and Assessment that is being piloted at that location can measure readiness for entry level positions including situational judgment, communication, reading and math skills. This assessment and credential is available to everyone. Some local organizations work with individuals post-incarceration. Members expressed that small businesses (which a high percentage of employers fit in) need a high degree of certainty before taking on a new employee. There could be a lot of value in collecting statistics and case studies on positive outcomes of training, placement and retention in employment to show employers that

hiring from this population can be very positive. Closing comments from the presenters and WIB members expressed the need for Corrections efforts to connect with the labor market and business needs, the importance of communication in this type of project and the importance of building relationships and partnerships with which to serve these individuals.

First Place

Lee Helgen discussed the basic idea behind the City's planned "First Place" program. This program is modeled after Minneapolis' "Step Up" program and would provide unsubsidized work experience for older youth in Ramsey County. Matt Reinartz is leading this project for the City, and Terry Zurn and Workforce Solutions are involved as well. Some of the private sector employers in Saint Paul are providing positions to youth from Minneapolis, and it would be great to have these same opportunities for youth in Ramsey County. Important aspects of this program are to have a business leader champion the project and get other businesses into the process, train youth in soft skills, and find jobs in areas that are accessible to public transportation. Businesses who may be interested in hiring youth should contact Matt Reinartz- WIB staff will send contact information out with the minutes.

There was also a short discussion on the City's early childhood education program that provides scholarships for low income families in targeted neighborhoods to send their young children to high quality childcare that will prepare them for success in school.

Committee Reports

Communication, Advocacy and Oversight

The funding ad hoc has chosen a consultant with whom to work on a development plan for the WIB. Currently there are funding requests in to the Saint Paul Foundation and one in process to be sent to the Jay and Rose Phillips Family Foundation.

The Minnesota Department of Employment and Economic Development (DEED) requires an annual plan (called the Local Plan) from the local Workforce Investment Boards (WIBs) outlining how the WIBs will allocate WIA Title I funds as well as other funding to meet the needs of the employers and jobseekers in their service area. The committee will review the Local Plan at the May meeting. The plan is comprised of three sections; Section A outlining regional strategies, Section B detailing program operations and Section C which focuses on compliance. The plan is currently in development with help from the core partners.

Workforce Committee

The Workforce Committee has primarily been working on the Metropolitan Manufacturing Sector Initiative (MMSI) with graduation dates from Phase 1 planned for April 8 at Anoka Technical College and April 10 at Saint Paul College. Each school will have 21 students graduating and starting the OJT program shortly. In terms of funding for further incarnations of the MMSI program, the WIB is still waiting to hear from the MPMA and the PMA. Saint Paul College will submit an MJSP grant in May with eleven employers to get about \$400k to continue the program.

At the next Workforce Committee meeting the group will get an update on the labor market situation in Ramsey County. If anyone is interested in attending that meeting and hearing the new information, please let Kate know.

Youth Council

As voted on in the consent agenda, the Youth Council members completed work on the 2008 Youth Plan that will be submitted to the State. This plan outlines how resources will be used to affect the youth in Ramsey County to prepare them for the workforce. The committee is continuing work with the PACER Center and DEED to increase PACER Center's resource mapping tool so that it covers Ramsey County. Youth Council members were asked to make sure their organizations are represented in the Project C3 web mapping tool. The Building Lives ad hoc will be meeting on April 22 to discuss strategies for obtaining private foundation funding.

The Education Team from the City of Saint Paul, Workforce Solutions and WIB leadership had a meeting focused on youth initiatives provided by the WIB and the City of Saint Paul on Monday, March 10. The intention was to find areas of connection so we can continue working together to serve the youth in the area. Staff will send information on the initiatives out with the minutes.

Other

The Third Annual Youth Event is coming up on June 17th, 5:30pm, Harriet Island. Past years have been great successes. This event allows for the participants in the youth programs to celebrate their successes with their

friends and family. Members who have attended in the past say it is very powerful to see these youth proud of their accomplishments. This year Tubby Smith, Head Coach of the University of MN Basketball Team, will be a speaker at the event. A member asked if donations were needed, as they were last year. Workforce Solutions indicated they would appreciate anything members are able to provide. It was also suggested that Workforce Solutions send out a press release on this event and try and get media to cover it.

The MN Workforce Council Association (MWCA) is holding their summer meeting the last week of July and all WIB members are invited. WIB Chairs and Chair Elects from across the state have the opportunity to come together and discuss issues and what they have in common. This year a consultant from Accelerating Higher Achievements will come to speak about how boards can take a big picture view of their area and focus on strategic work.

The Twin West Chamber received a FIRST Grant from the state and they are interested in the MPowered/MMSI program. The Metro WIB will work with them to expand the program to their area. Additionally, the Metro WIB is updating the RACE report and figuring out what their role is and should be in the metro area.

There was a request for information on the County's youth initiatives. The board has been kept informed on all programs and there are no new initiatives to share with the group. Members can view the City's website for further information on their education initiatives. Members may also view Workforce Solutions' website for information on their programs.

Adjourn

Upon completion of the agenda, the meeting adjourned at 4:30p.m.

Attachment 1: Recognition and Announcements

Announcements:

- Welcome new WIB members Barbara Mednick and Jim Schultz!
- Thank you to Trixie Golberg and Libby Starling for their participation in the WIA Certification ad hoc.
- Thank you to the ongoing efforts of our local Metropolitan Manufacturing Sector Initiative: Craig Anderson, Paul Huot (Friends of the WIB), Saint Paul Adult Learning, Workforce Solutions and DEED.
- Thank you to Youth Council member Peter Jessen-Howard for his representation at the Building Lives meeting with Congressman Ellison.
- Thank you to Kathy Engesser for her assistance in editing the WIB's Annual Report.
- Thank you to the City, County and WIB leadership for their work on developing the new WIB membership makeup, resulting in a board size of 33 members, reduced from 50 members.
- Thank you to Robert de la Vega, Kirk Hayes and William Lowe for their work on defining a fundraising consultant for the WIB to secure operating funds.
- Congratulations to Craig Anderson and Saint Paul College for receiving a healthcare training grant of nearly \$2 million from the federal Department of Labor.
- Thank you to the individuals who came together to discuss County and City youth initiatives. These include: Patricia Brady, Mary Jo Gardner, Kirk Hayes, Nancy Homans, Commissioner Jim McDonough, Bob Morse, Paul Nelson, Wendy Underwood, Terry Zurn and the Mayor's Education Team, including Jessica Ayers-Bean, Lisa Cariveau, Matt Reinartz, and Marnie Wells.

Announcements:

- The Minnesota Workforce Council Association (MWCA) has organized a legislative breakfast on Friday, April 4, 8:00 a.m. at the State Office Building, Room 300 North (across from the Capitol). It will be an "open house" style event where key committee members from the House and Senate are invited to come by. All WIB members are invited to attend.
- Leadership opportunities available: Chair-Elect of the Youth Council, Vice-Chair of the CAO Committee and Vice-Chair of the Workforce Committee. If you are interested in any of these positions, please contact Mary Jo.
- The Workforce Committee is meeting the FIRST Thursday of every odd month; their next meeting will be on May 1, 1:00-2:30 at the Ramsey County WorkForce Center- Saint Paul.