



## ***Bay Area Workforce Development Board***

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### **BAY AREA WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT BOARD**

#### **MEETING MINUTES**

**November 16, 2006**

**Present:** Paul Linzmeyer (Chair), Larry Bergner, Amy Du Bois, Shelly Ghare, Sue Hammersmith, Larry Harkness, John Haugh, Penny Helmle, Jill Hennessey, Joe Hilke, Holly Hoppe, Sue Kromm, Jean Marsch, Jesus Panalez, Brian Pelon, Ted Penn, Sam Perlman, John Schwantes, Loretta Shellman, Pat Simonar, Ken Stubbe, Peter Thillman, Mike Troyer, Alex Zacarias

**Absent:** Sandra Beschta, Karen Besiada-Hansen, Louise Blankenheim, John Bloor, Ben Grigg, Bob Guenther, Christine Jensema, David Lisle, Terri Luebke, Tony Marcelle, Don McAdams, Dan Miller, Pamela Phillips, Chuck Rohlmeier, Noel Ryder, Michael Van Dyke, Corky West

Mr. Linzmeyer called the meeting to order at 1:00 PM at the NWTC Center for Business and Industry. A quorum of the WDB members was present. The Minutes of the October 19 meeting were approved as submitted on a motion by Mr. Haugh with a second by Mr. Penn. Brian Pelon was introduced as a new member of the Bay Area WDB representing several of the Department of Workforce Development programs replacing Robert Miller, Jr. Another member, Michael Van Dyke, is retiring from his position as Director of Door County Human Services at the end of the year and the elected officials have appointed Marcia Christiansen, the Executive Director of Forward Service Corporation, to replace Mr. Van Dyke, to represent the W-2 program.

**Committee Reports.** Mr. Hilke reported for the Strategic Leadership Committee. He reviewed the draft plan for consolidating services and creating regional job centers in 2007. This draft plan included consolidating services for Florence at the NWTC Regional Learning Center in Niagara, and cutting back services in Kewaunee and Oconto with a regional center in Green Bay. To be effective, better quality employment and training services will have to be offered online, so a single website for the Bay Area is being developed and implemented. The Bay Area WDB will need to discuss two important underlying issues: the lack of high speed Internet access in rural areas, and the need for universal computer literacy for every job seeker in the Bay Area.

The Program Performance Committee did not meet.

The Executive Committee met and decided to make a sponsorship contribution to NEWREP, a regional alliance of economic development agencies, to support their efforts in promoting entrepreneurship. Staff is working out the details of how best to do that within WIA regulations and hopes to take the funds out of the current budget. The Executive Committee also adopted work plans for the Strategic Leadership and the Program Performance Committees, and reviewed the 2007 agenda for the Bay Area WDB.

Mr. Linzmeyer reported that, with the reelection of Governor Doyle, the state Council on Workforce Investment, which he chairs, is preparing to take on an aggressive agenda for the new term. Supporting regional development efforts will be a key focus of their work.

The Third Annual NEW North Summit will be held on December 14 at the Civic Center in Manitowoc. Members are encouraged to attend. The event is expected to focus on business leadership in creating a national brand for NE Wisconsin and continuing to develop a vibrant 21<sup>st</sup> century economy. In particular, the NEW North Board wants to put forward a strong business case for education and diversity.

**Board Updates.** Members received a handout detailing the Youth Offender and Expelled Youth programs that are supported with WIA funding. Both programs provide intensive and costly services to young people with significant barriers to employment. The Youth Offender program works with young people returning to Brown, Manitowoc, and Sheboygan Counties from state juvenile correctional facilities, and funding for those services is secure through June 30. As an example of success, three program enrollees are currently in the Industrial Mechanic certificate program at NWTC, a 2-semester program with very good job prospects upon completion.

The Expelled Youth program serves students in Brown County who have been expelled or who are “held in abeyance” for having committed expellable offenses. In May 2006, the Bay Area WDB approved half of the requested funding for the program (total approved was \$112,466) based on concerns about enrollment numbers. Those numbers have improved, and this program provides an array of intensive services to young people who have gotten into serious trouble and who have complicated lives. These services supplement services offered by the school districts, and services vary from one district to another. Mr. Schwantes asked about other school districts being served as well. Ms. Gregory-Paasch explained that, at the time this program was developed, we issued an RFP, and Brown County schools were the only ones who responded with interest. Mr. Thillman asked about the real outcomes of the program, and staff indicated that the primary outcome was a quicker return to a regular school setting for many of the participants. Questions remained about duplicating efforts that the school districts are making, and the Program Manager, Kathryn Zavala from Family Services, indicated that services are tailored to each individual case. Motion to approve an additional \$60,000 for the Expelled Youth program through June 30, 2007, was made by Mr. Haugh, with a second by Dr. Troyer. Motion passed on a unanimous roll call vote with Ms. Marsch abstaining.

Mr. Golembeski went over a revised budget report for the year with the members. There is some unobligated funding in the WIA Adult and Dislocated Worker programs, but not nearly at the levels we have had over the last several years. The WIA Youth is actually over-obligated by \$25,867, but staff is confident that there will be dollars to cover that

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from under-spent funds. Significant changes will be required in 2007 due to reduced funding. In addition, Congress is considering a “rescission” of \$325 million that would take away WIA funding that has already been allocated to local areas. Members asked that he send additional information to them about that rescission. Mr. Golembeski indicated that, should a rescission occur, the local area would be very adversely affected.

**State Staff.** Bill Clingan and Gary Denis from the DWD Division of Workforce Solutions joined the WDB members to talk about things from the state perspective. Mr. Clingan suggested that Governor Doyle’s reelection will keep the state focused on growing regional economies across the state by focusing on creating high skilled, high wage jobs that require quality education. NEW North has put Northeastern Wisconsin ahead of much of the rest of the state in this effort, and the new state requirement that workforce boards focus 35% of their WIA resources on training for higher skilled jobs reinforces the Doyle GROW Wisconsin policy. He spoke about the “dance between state direction and local creativity,” to ensure consistency of quality services across the state. Resources will continue to diminish, and the One-Stop system will have to change significantly to stay relevant. Job Service is adjusting by having staff specialize in either job seeker services or business services.

Mr. Denis spoke of some of the directives coming from the US Department of Labor which emphasize the need to fund more training using WIA funding as well as supporting regional efforts with special grants. The Bush Administration has consistently supported what are currently called “Career Advancement Accounts,” but has never gotten congressional buy-in on that concept. Such Accounts would amount to converting programs such as WIA into direct training vouchers which would simply be distributed to eligible job seekers by a yet-to-be-determined method. The intent of providing significantly more training for a broader segment of the population with fewer dollars seems counterintuitive.

Meanwhile, the WIA Local Plan submitted by the Bay Area to DWD is very close to being approved, and the state officials congratulated the Bay Area WDB on being that far along in the process. Mr. Linzmeyer discussed the challenges of true system integration to create a coordinated employment and training system in the state. Mr. Golembeski spoke of the importance of investing resources in people who can perform the vital function of coordinating programs and resources. Lastly, Mr. Denis discussed the options that the state office is considering for implementing the 35% high-wage training requirement for the workforce boards. There are a number of approaches being considered that would offer boards leeway based on specific program outcomes. Everyone recognizes that there is a portion of the Wisconsin workforce that needs a significant skill upgrade, both hard and “soft” skills, in order to participate in the jobs of the “New Economy.” DWD policy does not intend to abandon this population. That discussion is on-going.

**More Board Updates.** The job center regionalization plan for 2007 (as outlined by Mr. Hilke in the Strategic Leadership Committee report) was discussed in some detail. Mr. Golembeski stated that the worst decision would be to just leave things as they are and keep whittling away at it year after year as resources diminish. Real change in the way this board and its partners provide services is called for.

The board also discussed plans for WIA Youth programs in 2007. It was decided that the discussion would remain on very general terms and that staff would be charged with making final decisions about the RFP details that would go out by the beginning of February 2007. As a result, the WDB did not go into closed session. Mr. Golembeski explained that there were three levels of WIA Youth services to consider. On the broadest level, the WDB could support more effective transition into the regional workforce for all students. Staff actually spends significant time doing this now, but the regulations governing actual program funds require that specific students be enrolled in WIA training programs and outcomes tracked, so this is not a real option for the use of WIA funds.

Traditionally in the Bay Area, the board has provided services to students who need just a little extra push in order to graduate high school with their age groups. WIA has allowed these “credit-deficient” students to catch up and get back on track, and we have had good success with this focus. At the Youth Council meeting, the supporters of the rural school districts indicated clearly that this population is the one to focus on in the smaller communities of the Bay Area, and they sent that recommendation to the board.

Lastly are the young people who require very intensive and costly services to have a successful transition to the workforce, such as those served in the Youth Offender and Expelled Youth programs discussed earlier. These students tend to be located in the larger urban areas and are a more recent focus of our efforts. Over the last few years, the Bay Area has developed and tested some models for working with this population, and learned quite a bit in the process. This is a very costly population to serve.

Discussion centered on the importance of avoiding duplication of services and better collaboration with other agencies and organizations serving at-risk kids. Creating such collaboration, however, also requires dedicated staff time to learn about the various programs and services, organize meetings, and move collaborative projects forward. Mr. Golembeski brought up the option of contracting for a youth coordinator position to better leverage resources for all the levels of need.

**Board Issues.** With the time remaining, the board focused on School-to-Work. Nancy Schopf, the Vice President for Education of the Green Bay Area Chamber, gave a presentation on “Lifework Skills Assessment” formerly called “Employability Endorsement” that is a part of her Partners In Education (PIE) program. This is an ongoing effort in the Brown County schools to identify the “New Economy” skills (e.g., Teamwork, Initiative, Work Quality) and evaluate students on those criteria in ways that can be communicated to employers. Ms. Schopf indicated that it has been challenging to engage businesses in this effort despite calls for this kind of training. She provided a detailed handout.

Mr. Golembeski called members’ attention to the “Are They Really Ready to Work” report in their packets. This report, based on a national survey of employers by four established groups (including the Society for Human Resource Management/SHRM) provided some important definitions and very useable charts demonstrating the differences between “Basic Knowledge Skills” and “Applied Skills.” Employers across the country were asked to rate the importance of skills in each broad category for job seekers coming out of 1) high school, 2) two-year college programs, and 3) four-year college degrees. Those same employers also rated the job seekers they have been

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encountering on their proficiency in these same skills. The report mirrors the recent work of Taskforce One that Tim Baneck presented at the October Bay Area WDB meeting. Mr. Golembeski noted that more detailed curriculum for these so-called "New Economy Skills" is posted on the Bay Area WDB website under "Library." The next challenge is to determine how to implement such skill training into the curriculum of the 49 school districts in the ten counties of the Bay Area. That is the charge given to Taskforce Two and it will be monitored by the Educational Attainment Committee of NEW North. Additional input from the members of the Bay Area WDB is encouraged.

Other reports were deferred to the January WDB meeting. The meeting adjourned at 4:00 PM.

The next Bay Area Workforce Development Board meeting is scheduled for **Thursday, January 18, 2007** at 1 PM.