



Bay Area Workforce Development Board

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BAY AREA WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT BOARD

MEETING MINUTES September 20, 2007

Present: Paul Linzmeyer (Chair), Larry Bergner, Louise Blankenheim, Amy Du Bois, Shelly Ghare, Bob Guenther, Larry Harkness, John Haugh, Penny Helmle, Jill Hennessey, Joe Hilke, Anne Hughson, Christine Jensema, Ed Kelley, Sue Kromm, Terri Luebke, Don McAdams, Jesus Panalez, Brian Pelon, Sam Perlman, Pamela Phillips, Chuck Rohlmeier, Loretta Shellman, Pat Simonar, Casey Stephan, Ken Stubbe, Peter Thillman, Mike Troyer, Corky West, Alex Zacarias

Absent: John Bloor, Marcia Christiansen, Ben Grigg, Sue Hammersmith, Holly Hoppe, David Lisle, Tony Marcelle, Ted Penn, Noel Ryder, John Schwantes

Call to Order. Mr. Linzmeyer called the meeting to order at 1:00 PM at NWTC Center for Business and Industry. For roll call, he asked all the members present to introduce themselves. Several new members were present: Anne Hughson (Bellin Health), Ed Kelley (Kelley Discount Liquor), and Casey Stephan (Therma-Tron-X) as well as returning members. A quorum was present. Guests also introduced themselves. The Minutes of the May 24 meeting were approved as submitted on a motion by Mr. McAdams, second by Ms. DuBois.

Members filled out Disclosure Statements regarding any affiliation with WIA contractors to disclose any potential or actual conflicts of interest. Mr. Golembeski pointed out that there was actually very little voting on the board except in the spring of the year when new contracts were approved. Much of the board's regular deliberation is done by consensus and open discussion.

Bay Area WDB Strategic Plan Review. Mr. Golembeski reviewed the strategic areas that the board had identified last spring before the summer break. These were: Job Seeker and Employer Services, WIA Training, and Work Readiness. He brought members up to date on what had been happening during the summer months.

Job Seeker and Employer Services are delivered through the local One-Stop system which consists of five Comprehensive Job Centers and several Access Points of Service (APS). Staff provided updates on the Comprehensive Centers in Green Bay, Sheboygan, Manitowoc, Marinette, and Shawano. All five provide quality services to job seekers and employers. The Northeast Wisconsin Job Center in Green Bay moved into a

new facility in mid-May and that has upgraded the professional atmosphere there and improved the quality of services to customers. Shawano remains a job center in transition to a new facility with several issues still being negotiated. In Marinette, the Job Service Supervisor position held by Heidi Schaible (who serves on the Strategic Leadership Committee) is being eliminated in a cost saving move by DWD, and Heidi's leaving will be a significant loss to our area. DWD is eliminating 33 positions statewide by mid-October due to budget cuts. There have been WIA-related staff reductions in all our job centers this year. The process of creating regional Access Points of Service in partnership with NWTC is on-going. There was a dedication of the APS at Niagara on Tuesday. That site will serve Florence and northern Marinette Counties. Our colleagues in Florence have expressed serious concern about not having a full time case manager in their county. Soon leases will be signed to make office space available on an itinerant basis for case managers in the NWTC Regional Learning Centers in Luxemburg and Oconto Falls. The Door County Job Center is an APS connected with Green Bay.

Staff continues to work with the Georgia-Pacific grant to establish a real time video link between the centers and the APS sites. The technology that will be used has been identified, but details have not been finalized. When implemented, this system will allow customers at an APS site to meet with a counselor or case manager at a Comprehensive site. Luxemburg will be the pilot for this Internet-based system.

Work continues to develop the www.jobcenter.org website. Karen Flood provided an update. Right now the system is a one-stop link to a variety of services for both employers and job seekers. There are plans for topical video materials and other information with the goal of making the website as much like actually going to a job center facility as possible. A statewide group meets regularly to push this project forward. Visitors to the site can identify a county of interest and get information specific to that county.

The Manufacturers Alliance that started last January continued to meet all summer and is working on K-12 school linkages, membership, and marketing projects. The general membership meeting on September 6 was well attended and focused on postsecondary training opportunities in advanced manufacturing skills and engineering.

The Northwoods 3 Summit is being held on October 2 at the Four Seasons Resort in Pembine and will focus on linking northern businesses with educators. The purpose of this conference, now in its third year, is to connect the northern counties to the NEW North initiatives. The adjoining counties in Michigan, (Dickinson and Menominee) also participate.

WIA Training Initiatives continue to focus on high-demand, high-wage occupations as required by Department of Workforce Development (DWD) policy. We are still working with several individuals in training programs from before the 35% policy went into effect, but all new training programs have to be high-demand, high-wage. High-wage is now defined as at least \$14.60 per hour. The nursing training for a Florence County group from the Pride dislocation has just been completed and nursing programs continue in Marinette for individuals from Emerson and Bay Area Medical. Staff will consider additional targeted training in welding, CNC, and/or Basic Industrial Skills Training after the first of the year depending on available funding. Employment

The vision of the Bay Area Workforce Development Board is that job skills and educational levels are increased, quality of life for all individuals is enhanced, while employers' needs are met.

information from the Basic Industrial Skills Training is just coming in and that pilot will be evaluated soon.

WIA performance from the program year that ended June 30, 2007 was reviewed. Staff went over the meaning of the various WIA standards under each title. While these numbers were not final, all performance standards were met or exceeded. Members asked, however, about the comparatively low WIA Adult Entered Employment Rate at 66.4%. Bay Area still serves more WIA participants than any area except Milwaukee, but in recent years we have stood out in WIA Adult performance. Staff now has the data to review performance by contract, so when final numbers are received we can look at this in more detail. Mr. Haugh suggested bringing the Program Performance Committee back together to do just that and there was agreement to do so.

Work Readiness. The Strategic Leadership Committee has met over the summer months to discuss ways to prepare individuals who do not have 21st century work skills. This effort goes back to our experience in Marinette with a 10-week training called Basic Industrial Skills Training. In that pilot program, a panel of employer interviewers rejected more than half the applicants because of their apparent lack of foundational work skills.

Several efforts around the state are focused on this same challenge including the RISE (Regional Industry Skills Education) Initiative that is being driven by a \$1 million grant from the Joyce Foundation. Mr. Golembeski used a short PowerPoint presentation to demonstrate how “career ladders” can be used, based on gaining credentials and certifications, to take smaller steps toward jobs requiring higher levels of skills. Member packets contained an article titled “Getting Punished for Earning More” about how social services systems actually work to discourage people from working their way out of poverty. RISE will be a long term effort at DWD and the technical college system (WTCS) to create career ladder systems.

In the Bay Area, the Strategic Leadership Committee has been studying the Florida *Work Certified* program which is a 90 hour training program using nine modules that provides a nationally recognized certificate upon completion. Members received a summary of this training in their packets in a handout called “Career Pathways Plan.” *Work Certified* is a curriculum that we could purchase and use to improve foundational work skills. Mr. Hilke and other members of the Committee reviewed the draft plan in which existing job center services would be used along with *Work Certified* or a similar program to prepare people for training in four occupational areas: 1) manufacturing, 2) transportation, 3) customer service, and 4) health care. The draft plan requires innovation in several areas. First, basic skills and/or vocational English instruction would be combined with vocational training in one of the occupational areas. Those two elements are currently provided separately in the technical college system. Secondly, services would not end at the beginning of employment. Rather a longer career development plan would be developed and then use an employer-based mentoring system and subsequent training opportunities to implement that plan over time.

The Committee will meet again in October to further refine this plan and how to implement it.

Mr. Hilke also reported on the “Spaceport Sheboygan” project that is raising funds for a space education center in Sheboygan. There are obvious opportunities for science and engineering education connected to this. Sheboygan is one of the few areas in the country which has restricted air space around it. As a result, there is the potential that it could become a commercial space launch center. There will be a presentation on this project at the next board meeting.

Issues. Mr. Linzmeyer addressed the members to speak about several regional initiatives underway. **Aligning Business and Education** in the NEW North is a vital effort for creating future prosperity. Two separate committees, one focusing on K-12 education and one on postsecondary education, are now merging to develop a comprehensive approach to this issue with the goal of creating and maintaining a high quality of life in NE Wisconsin based on educational excellence. Over the summer months, many involved in this effort have read the book The 2010 Meltdown by Edward Gordon. Dr. Gordon will be the featured speaker at the NEW North Annual Summit in Sheboygan on December 14. The reality is that the “product” our schools are producing is not what is needed in the regional economy. At the same time, business has not stepped up to provide the long term leadership that is needed to have a successful workforce development system in our schools. Policy changes in Madison and in Washington will be required to meet this important challenge. The **Single Parents Initiative** grew out of the same concern that a significant and important part of our workforce has not been prepared to participate fully in the regional economy because the education and economic system has been willing to accept a certain level of poverty in our society. A group of interested parties met in Appleton on August 28 to discuss single parent families in poverty and is working on a pilot project that will be, in effect, a career ladder leading to economic success targeted at single mothers and their children.

There was general discussion about the complexity of the systems that need to be aligned better. Strong leadership will be required, as will the involvement of parents in improving educational outcomes for their kids. Businesses must step forward with a strategic vision and contribute significantly to this effort. With NEW North, our area is positioned well to move forward on these important issues.

Corrections Projects. Mr. Golembeski reported that there was a great deal of activity over the summer break involving developing stronger partnerships with the Wisconsin Department of Corrections. During September, all the Community Corrections (i.e., Probation and Parole) agents in Green Bay are getting tours of the new job center facility to acquaint them with the services there. The first group orientation for individuals on probation and parole was conducted on August 24 and there was some immediate success with entered employments for a number of the participants. Another group orientation is scheduled for October 19. In 2008 there will be an effort to make sure all of our job centers have solid partnerships with Corrections. Mr. Golembeski has also been working on housing issues with our partners at Corrections and there are some exciting options being developed. The recent hysteria about sex offenders has created some serious barriers to reintegration of offenders in some communities. Lastly, with the state budget still being developed, the *Windows to Work* and *Transitions* programs are still in jeopardy without funding from DOC.

Federal and State Updates. Staff reported briefly on the complexities of the federal budget process. Members receive the updates from the National Association of Workforce Boards. In brief, Congress has been attempting to restore WIA funding in a new budget to its current level over the wishes of President Bush whose budget had deep cuts in many domestic programs. In order to maintain a middle ground coalition, the House included a \$335 million rescission of current year WIA funds in their budget bill. If this would pass, the Bay Area WDB would have to give back an estimated \$300,000 of the WIA funds we received this year. That would hurt badly. Meanwhile the President has threatened to veto any budget that goes over his budget limits. This is all far from resolved. There was also some information on the reauthorization of the Workforce Investment Act in the meeting packets.

Members received a copy of the state monitoring report from their visit to our office last spring. Mr. Golembeski questioned the real value of a monitoring report that indicated a "Finding," (defined as a serious failure to comply with a state or federal regulation) because the job center sign for the new Green Bay facility was installed on May 27 so that it was not in place when the state monitor was there on May 22. He expressed his opinion that there are many other areas regarding leadership and customer service that state employees could be focused on that would add real value to the public employment system. For the most part, the state monitoring is focused on finding paperwork deficiencies in case records--time and energy spent again in an area of questionable value.

The meeting adjourned at 3:15 PM.

The next meeting will be October 18, 2007.