



Bay Area Workforce Development Board

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EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE of the Bay Area Workforce Development Board

Meeting Minutes July 12, 2006

Present: Paul Linzmeyer (Chair), Joe Hilke, Mike Troyer, Tony Marcelle, Sam Perlman
On Vacation: Christine Jensema, John Haugh

Mr. Linzmeyer called the meeting to order at 9:05 AM. A quorum was present with Mr. Hilke participating by conference call. The Minutes of the November 10, 2005 meeting were approved as submitted on a motion by Dr. Troyer, second by Mr. Perlman.

Mr. Golembeski explained that we have the opportunity to write a grant request for \$110,000 from the state dislocated worker reserve fund that would support a nursing training program in the Marinette area. Board approval is required for submission of that grant. A motion to approve the submission of a Special Response Dislocated Worker Training Grant was made by Dr. Troyer, second by Mr. Marcelle. The motion was approved on a unanimous vote.

The committee discussed the Bay Area WDB agenda for the fall meetings. Mr. Golembeski shared his thinking that the board's study of the school-to-work process during the previous program year had resulted in the ability to articulate some of the key issues, but that we had not yet reached a point at which effective action was clearly determined. In particular, it is clear that school resources are increasingly focused on academically advanced students and on special needs students, leaving a large part of the student body (70%?) less prepared for education and life after high school graduation. Along the same lines, employers have continually raised the issue of the disconnect between the skills that area high school graduates have and the skills that the employers require for good-paying jobs in the regional economy.

Members agreed that school-to-work should continue to be a topic of discussion for the Bay area WDB throughout the fall. Mr. Linzmeyer suggested that the NEW North Educational Attainment Committee provide a presentation on their work in this area. Mr. Perlman spoke about the recent efforts in Door County to have business leaders help develop technical education programs in the county high schools as a model for action. The new Manufacturers Alliance organization is working in this area as well and might provide useful information. It might also be informative to gain a better understanding of the implementation of the "No Child Left Behind" programs in our schools, and to look at models for "life enrichment" curriculum that help students develop a more balanced and wholistic approach to life and work.

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.

A second area for the Bay Area WDB's attention is the area of assisting immigrant and minority families to have better access to postsecondary education, especially for their children. There had been a program in the Green Bay area, under the leadership of Alex Zacarias, using a "train the trainer" model, that taught parents about developing good study habits in their children and provided information about the importance of postsecondary training and how to enroll in it. The program worked through businesses that employed immigrant and minority workers as the point of delivery for this training. This initial effort met with some success but was not able to sustain itself. Still, the goal remains important for the future of our larger communities in the Bay Area and the committee would like to have it addressed in the fall.

Mr. Linzmeyer also brought up the topic of working with the Wisconsin Department of Corrections on programs that raise the success rate of reintegration into Bay Area communities upon release. He and Mr. Golembeski had recently toured the Kettle Moraine Correctional Institution in Sheboygan County and both had been impressed with the enthusiasm of the staff as well as with the training opportunities available there. This included welding, masonry, and computer software, along with GED classes. Mr. Golembeski has been spending a significant portion of his time working with Corrections staff, faith-based groups, and others on setting up a neighborhood support system, called "Citizens' Circles" based on a model that the state of Ohio developed. The first circle should be up and running in Green Bay by mid-October. These kinds of support systems will give employers a greater comfort level in working with offenders. Systemic changes in the way the state prisons operate are also being discussed that will make more educational opportunities available to prisoners so that they are better prepared for reentry. 95% of the people in state prisons are eventually released, many after very short sentences. Members agreed that this was also an area of interest for the WDB meetings in the fall. Mr. Golembeski indicated that this gave him and the staff plenty to work with as they plan those meetings.

The committee discussed changing the WDB retirement plan for staff. The current plan was set up as a Simplified Employee Plan (SEP) in 1993 that contributes 5% of each employee's salary to a retirement fund annually. Employees determine the kind of investment they wish to have from a variety of options. We have worked with Principal Insurance Company from Des Moines for many years and staff is satisfied with the service they receive. The SEP, however, does not allow employees to contribute additional dollars voluntarily to the retirement plan and they would like to convert to a Safe Harbor 401(k) that would allow them to make voluntary contributions in addition to the employer contribution. After investigation it was determined that the current employer contribution would cover the employer obligation under the Safe Harbor plan, so no additional matching contributions would be required from the employer. Neither would any employee lose any current benefit. The only difference would be an increase in the administrative cost of the new plan which would rise from \$250 annually to about \$1500. The members agreed that the company should have a retirement plan that allowed employees to contribute additional dollars voluntarily, but they asked that further information about the administrative services be obtained and comparison made with similar plans about the cost.

The meeting adjourned at 9:50 AM.