



A Private-Public Partnership Serving Kalamazoo and St. Joseph Counties
222 S. Westnedge Avenue, Kalamazoo, Michigan 49007-4628

**Workforce Development Board Meeting Minutes
May 14, 2009**

WDB Chair, Mary Oudsema called the meeting to order at 8:01 a.m. at the Michigan Works! Service Center, 16587 Enterprise Drive, Three Rivers, Michigan.

Members Present: Omar Alston (DOC), Rick Anderson (Labor), Robin Baker (At-Large), Diane Donovan (PS), Don Edgerly (PS), Jim Harrington (Educ), Brian Johnson (PS), Cathi Knapp (Econ Dev), Kim Luther (DOC), Anne Moreland (PS), Mary Oudsema (PS), Marilyn Potgiesser (PS), Casey Putnam (Educ), Robert Smith (MRS), Barry Visel (PS)

Members Absent: David Allen (PS), Dennis Berkebile (PS), Thom Brennan (PS), Susan Einspahr (PS), Bill Farmer (Labor), Margaret Gagen (CBO), Lisa Godfrey (PS), Erv Heidbrink (Labor), Joe Herdus (PS), , Chris Kadulski (DHS), Ellen Kisinger-Rothi (CBO), Jerry Love (PS), Linda Marcon (PS), Steward Sandstrom (PS)

MW Staff Present: Ben Damerow, Jeanne Konrad, Kathy Olsen, Craig Schreuder, Suprotik Stotz-Ghosh

Guests Present: Ernie Howard (HRDI), Janet Jones (GKUW), Jennifer Kechkaylo (Goodwill), Barbara Marshall (SJISD), Curt Mastos (HRDI), Tim McGann (LMC), Rhonda Ostrander-Cook (Goodwill), Dolly Roselip (Y.O.U./KRESA), Eric Stewart (Y.O.U./KRESA)

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Motion made by Brian Johnson and supported by Don Edgerly to approve the WDB meeting minutes of February 5, 2009. Motion carried.

Motion made by Jim Harrington and supported by Barry Visel to approve the WDB Executive Committee meeting minutes of April 2, 2009. Motion carried.

STAFF REPORTS

Workforce Development Plans – Craig Schreuder requested Board consideration and approval of American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (ARRA) plans for the Adult, Dislocated Worker and Youth Programs. He reported the majority of the Recovery Act Adult and Dislocated Worker funds will be used for direct training through a mix of Individual Training Accounts (ITA) and class-size occupational training. A Request for Proposal for class-size trainings will be released on May 15, 2009 and a report on the outcome of the RFP will be provided at the next Executive Committee meeting. Available funding for the Adult Program is \$576,184 and the amount for the Dislocated Worker Program is \$1,027,004. The plan is to serve 605 individuals between the two programs. The allocation for the Youth Program is \$2,116,109; the majority of those funds, approximately 90% will be dedicated to a 2009 summer program.

Motion made by Brian Johnson and supported by Diane Donovan to approve the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (ARRA) Adult, Dislocated Worker and Youth Program Plans. Motion Carried.

Workforce Development Program Policies – Craig Schreuder requested Board consideration and approval of new and amended Workforce Development Board (WDB) local policies. He reported under the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (ARRA) there is limited flexibility for local areas to determine the best options for their region. These decisions are isolated in a single, new Board “Recovery Act Activities” policy that will expire when the Act expires. The Summer Youth Program has the most flexibility and the policy identifies local decisions that pertain to a number of items such as program elements, follow-up, stipends, performance, assessments to measure work readiness skills, wages, work-site selection, etc. The focus for work experience placements will be on non profit and public work sites. The Adult and Dislocated Worker activities in the “Recovery Act” policy include criteria for class-size training, supportive services and needs related payments. A local Board policy for “Services to Veterans” is also new and states that priority stipulations for veterans are applicable to all tiers of workforce development services administered by the WDB. The “Procurement

Standards” Policy was revised to clarify the contracting and solicitation process. The Policy reflects the three year Request for Proposal cycle and that contracts are issued for one year with the renewal based on performance and fund availability. The “Work Experience” Policy was revised to reflect the State minimum wage, a provision was added that requires supervisor training prior to placing individuals at a work site, assessment tools were clarified, and text was updated to reflect current terminology.

Motion made by Don Ederly and supported by Brian Johnson to approve the following Workforce Development Policies: #27 Recovery Act Activities, #28 Services to Veterans, #06 Revision 01 Procurement Standards, and #15 Revision 01 Work Experience. Motion carried.

Program Status Report –Suprotik Stotz-Ghosh reported service providers are on track to meet contract enrollment goals for the year-round programs. The Summer Youth Work Experience Program recently commenced and the goal is to enroll 1,000 youth this summer. Due to the high unemployment, the number of customers being served at the Service Center, as well as the units of direct service to customers for resume assistance, workshops, job search and job development far exceeds the goals. Eric Stewart reported service center staff have been extremely busy and occasionally encounter a very frustrated customer; however, customer service survey results continue to show high ratings. The complaints that have been received are generally directed at the Unemployment office. Diane Donovan reported she volunteers at the Kalamazoo Service Center to teach a computer workshop and individuals who have attended her class have verbalized their appreciation for the service center staff and the workshops offered. Another Board member expressed a desire to recognize the efforts of service center staff. One Board member noted that the JET Program employment and retention rates were below contract goals; however, he recognized that the population served in this program has the greatest number of barriers and are the hardest to place. Tim McGann reported JET staff in St. Joseph County are beginning to see an increase in placements due to the availability of seasonal jobs. He also stated that some of the younger participants may be eligible for placement in the Summer Youth Work Experience Program. Rhonda Ostrander-Cook noted that in Kalamazoo the unemployment rate has not been as high as in other areas of the State; however, JET staff are beginning to see reductions in available entry-level jobs in the Kalamazoo area. Suprotik reported the Michigan Prisoner Re-entry Initiative (MPRI) continues to average approximately 20% of active participants and 78% of the active participants have been employed for 90 days. Tim McGann reported MPRI participants are aware of the many barriers they had to overcome to obtain a job; they appreciate the opportunity to be employed and work hard to keep the job. Brian Johnson reported the MPRI Initiative has been very helpful in serving this population and without the program, employment numbers would most likely be lower. Bob Smith reported Michigan Rehabilitation Services may be able to assist MPRI participants with disabilities.

Summer Youth Program – Dolly Roselip reported the goal of the Summer Youth Work Experience Program is to serve 1,000 youth between the ages of 14-24 years, 750 in Kalamazoo County and 250 in St. Joseph County. Due to the high volume and limited capacity at current sites, additional space was procured in both counties. Additional staff were hired and two coordinators are recruiting job sites; so far, over 800 job slots have been identified. For the summer program, the age eligibility was increased from 21 to 24 years; other eligibility requirements and documentation is the same as for the year-round program. During the first week of May, staff started enrolling out-of-school youth in the program. Dolly reported Kathy Olsen sent out a media release which resulted in a sudden increase in inquiries in both counties. Job sites that have been identified in Kalamazoo County include numerous departments at Western Michigan University, various departments within the City of Kalamazoo, the Kellogg Biological Station, the Cheff Center, area schools and many non-profit agencies. Eric Stewart reported sites in St. Joseph County include many of the cities, townships, villages, schools and non-profits. Dolly reported it is often difficult to place younger youth between the ages of 14-15; however, a number of job sites suitable for this age group have been identified. Suprotik Stotz-Ghosh reported some nonprofits do not have the existing capacity to host placements or may need an additional supervisor to increase capacity. Other funding can support increasing capacity at these sites and the Kalamazoo Community Foundation is excited about the program and providing support. A second foundation has also expressed interest in being involved. Last week, a number of local organizations who work with the youth population held a follow-up meeting to February’s program on the Manchester-Bidwell employment and training center. The discussion was focused on the opportunities that currently exist in the summer and year-round programs operated by Youth Opportunities Unlimited (Y.O.U.) and how those opportunities could be increased.

Legislative Update – Craig Schreuder reported there is discussion regarding employment and training programs at the federal level. President Obama announced his plans to rethink the job training model and to reauthorizing the Workforce Investment Act (WIA). The legislature is closely examining WIA and all the components of the legislation. At the State level, allocations were announced for the WIA Programs for the 2009-10 program year. The Dislocated Worker Program experienced a 40% reduction in funding which brings it to a level similar to what it was three years ago. He explained

that other states have caught up with Michigan's conditions and this resulted in a more level distribution of funds. Nationwide, without a significant increase in total funds, Michigan's allocations are lower while other states are experiencing increases. Funding from the Recovery Act is helping to offset this loss. Craig reported the Trade Act is changing and is broadening the eligibility requirements to include service organizations. Participant eligibility is basically the same. Budget cuts are being made at the State level and notice was received that General Fund dollars previously allocated for some of the programs are being cut and the State intends to recover any unspent dollars.

PROGRAM

Education Reconnection – *Janet Jones, Greater Kalamazoo United Way and Dolly Roselip, Youth Opportunities Unlimited, a division of Kalamazoo Regional Educational Service Agency*

Janet Jones distributed information summarizing the findings of the Education ReConnection Initiative in Kalamazoo County along with data regarding the earning potential as it relates to educational attainment. The lead agencies for the Initiative are Youth Opportunities Unlimited (Y.O.U.), Michigan Works (MW) and the Greater Kalamazoo United Way (GKUW). The C.S. Mott Foundation funded the initial review along with local matches and the Foundation is committed to a continuation of funding. They also fund three other sites in the State. Janet reported there are a number of reasons why youth drop out of high school and the Initiative is focused on identifying and improving the solutions to reconnect these youth to education. The guiding principles of the Initiative focus on youth being central to the planning and implementation of solutions. The legal age for someone to drop out of school is 16 years and at age 19 or 20, schools can no longer receive State funding. Therefore, the Initiative will focus on youth, ages of 16-18, in Kalamazoo County who have dropped out of school; as progress is made the age group will be expanded. Evidence indicates that for an increasing number of youth the traditional way of earning a diploma is not working and there is no specific effort that systematically identifies all out of school youth for the purpose of re-connecting them to an education. Janet reported on the many alternative education programs that currently exist in Kalamazoo County and the variations that among the non-traditional ways of obtaining a high school diploma. A summary of the "Multiple Educational Pathways" in Kalamazoo County was provided and Janet reported a video highlighting some of these alternatives is on-line at YouTube and on the Kalamazoo Regional Educational Service Agency (KRESA) website.

Dolly Roselip reported on programs and services available at Youth Opportunities Unlimited (Y.O.U.) to assist youth who are at-risk. She reported high school youth who are behind in credits required to graduate are referred to Y.O.U. for assistance. Y.O.U. staff work with the youth using a credit recovery program called NovaNet to help them earn the needed credits, keep them engaged in school and move them toward graduation. Y.O.U. staff also provides connections to job training that will lead to employment and self-sufficiency. Janet Jones reported the Education ReConnection Initiative will continue to identify choices and resources available; where the gaps exist; and what system changes, policies and practices would be needed to reengage this population of youth. They also will be examining what supports could be provided to help navigate the system and make connections to health and human services, housing, etc.

Michigan Works! Business Services – *Suprotik Stotz-Ghosh, Michigan Works!*

Suprotik Stotz-Ghosh reported the State of Michigan is on the cutting edge of serving both the supply and the demand side of workforce development. However, to do this well, it is important to understand what the demand is, what the current issues are and to create strong partnerships with education, the private sector and economic developers. It is equally important to be able to identify demand occupations and the skills needed, and then train individuals to fill those jobs. The staff working with businesses that make up the local Business Services Team (BST) attended a training offered by the State of Michigan through Michigan State University. In preparation for today's discussion, some Workforce Development Board (WDB) members provided feedback to general questions regarding current and emerging issues in the private sector. Some of the issues identified include a general anxiety of the existing workforce due to uncertainty if jobs will be maintained; difficulty in recruiting; the lack of soft skills or work readiness at the entry level; and basic skills in reading and math. Members present at the meeting identified additional concerns that included an increasing number of overqualified applicants, training costs, attendance, customer service, teamwork, motivation, job performance, and exhibiting inappropriate behavior in the workplace. One member stated Michigan Works could also help employers with assessments and skill certifications.

Don Edgerly reported on the success of a "Reality Check" process that was implemented with the help of Michigan Works to assist in the hiring process at Borgess. The process helped to educate job seekers about each of the job openings and what was expected by the employer. Prior to the Reality Check, supervisors indicated the number one issue was time and attendance. Now performance and the inability to work at a pace that is expected is a concern.

Barry Visel noted that for Indiana Michigan Power there is a generation gap. There were a couple of decades where the company did not hire; now they experiencing employees who are retiring and a need to hire individuals with a special

skill set. The same scenario is present in nuclear plants. The establishment of training programs at community colleges to address the needs of electric utilities and nuclear plants would be helpful; one such program was recently developed at Lake Michigan College to address this need. Eric Stewart reported developing the right training helps businesses grow and he gave examples of Certified Nurse Assistant (CNA) training and Commercial Drivers License (CDL) training courses that are now offered at Glen Oaks Community College (GOCC); and that GOCC is now also exploring offering training in heavy equipment. All of these training programs are based on local employer needs.

Suprotik Stotz-Ghosh reported Michigan Works may receive a call from an employer or a referral from an economic developer and they no longer just ask, “are you hiring,” instead there is more fact finding. Eric Stewart provided details on a Business Services project with Fresh Solution Farms that evolved from a referral from an economic developer. This new company in high-tech farming was looking to hire staff with specific skills. Staff met with company representatives and set up a process to holistically address their needs for hiring and training. The community college was at the table to provide training options and economic developers for tax abatements. Assistance was provided throughout the process with components such as writing job descriptions, providing interview space, training options, etc. All 27 individuals were hired using the process that was jointly established between Michigan Works and the employer. Another current project is with a new company locating in Schoolcraft; and in Kalamazoo, Michigan Works has been a critical partner in a project with Kaiser Aluminum to fill 160 jobs during the next year. Curt Mastos reported the State contacts a Business Services Professional whenever there are company closures, layoffs and business attractions and the line of communication with our education representatives and local and State economic developers is very open due to the trusted relationships that have been built.

COMMITTEE REPORTS

Monitoring and Evaluation Committee - Jeanne Konrad reported the Monitoring and Evaluation Committee reviewed the Michigan Prisoner ReEntry Initiative (MPRI) at their April meeting. Lake Michigan College is the service provider for both counties. The agenda for the meeting included a review of the program, services provided and dialog with staff. Program statistics were reported earlier in today’s meeting under the Program Status Report provided by Suprotik.

Marketing Committee – Kathy Olsen reported Michigan Works has been receiving a lot of media attention, especially with local television stations. The annual report and newsletter were included in the agenda packet and additional copies were available at the meeting

OLD BUSINESS – None.

MEMBERS & CITIZENS TIME – No comments.

UPCOMING MEETINGS

The next meeting of the full Workforce Development Board is scheduled for Thursday, September 10, 2009 at 8:00 a.m. at the Michigan Works Service Center in Three Rivers. The next Monitoring and Evaluation Committee meeting is scheduled for Thursday, May 21, 2009 at the Michigan Works Service Center in Three Rivers. The Committee will review the Jobs Education and Training (JET) Program in St. Joseph County. The next Executive Committee meeting is scheduled for Thursday, June 4, 2009 at the Upjohn Institute.

ADJOURNMENT

With no further business to discuss, the meeting was adjourned at 9:55 a.m.

Craig Schreuder

Date

Mary Oudsema

Date