

**WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT BOARD and
WDB EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE
Meeting Minutes of February 5, 2004**

WDB Chair, Thom Brennan called the meeting to order at 8:05 a.m. at the W. E. Upjohn Institute for Employment Research, 300 South Westnedge Avenue, Kalamazoo, Michigan.

WDB Members Present: David Allen (Econ Dev), Rick Anderson (Alternate-Labor), Thom Brennan (PS), Tom Drabik (PS), Lisa Godfrey (PS), Joe Herdus (PS), Margie Hojara-Hadsell (MRS), Myra Johnson (PS), Ellen Kisinger-Rothi (CBO), Jerry Love (PS), Linda Marcon (PS), Mary Oudsema (PS), Pat Pangburn (PS), Marilyn Potgiesser (PS), Armando Romero (PS), Bernie Stankewicz (Educ), Suprotik Stotz-Ghosh (CBO). Membership – 27, Attendance 17 (63%), PS (65%)

MWA Staff Present: Kathy Olsen, Craig Schreuder, Jan Smith, Kara Stewart, Bob Straits, John Sullivan, Bridget Timmeney, Jim Walters, Linda Whitlock

Guests Present: Robin Baker (St. Joseph County Board), John Davis (FIA), Ron Carpenter, Candace Beeke (Bus Direct Wkly), Barry Broome (SW MI First), Dana Cole (MEDC), Maureen Darling (Foundation for Behavioral Resources), John Dillworth (Goodwill), George Erickcek (Upjohn Institute), Barbara Gordon (Consultant), Ed Hekman (USDOL Veterans E & T), Donald Jakeway (MEDC), Curt Mastos (HRDI), Jane Parikh (Kalamazoo Gazette), Dennis Sykes (MDLEG), Helen Welsh (ETC), Irma Zuckerberg (MDLEG).

I. Meeting Minutes

Motion made by Joe Herdus and supported by Marilyn Potgiesser to approve the WDB Executive Committee meeting minutes of January 8, 2004. Motion carried.

Motion made by Ellen Kisinger-Rothi and supported by David Allen to approve the WDB Full Board and Executive Committee meeting minutes of November 6, 2003. Motion carried.

II. Presentation to Outgoing WDB Chair – Thom Brennan presented a plaque to Marilyn Potgiesser in recognition of her distinguished and devoted service as the 2003 chair of the Kalamazoo-St. Joseph Workforce Development Board.

III. Program - Dennis Sykes, Deputy Director of the Michigan Department of Labor and Economic Growth and Donald Jakeway, President and CEO of the Michigan Economic Development Corporation, met with the Kalamazoo-St. Joseph Michigan Works! Workforce Development Board to discuss state workforce and economic development efforts and the local impact of those efforts. Dennis Sykes responded to questions regarding the position of the MDLEG on continued efforts to support continuing career preparation in the secondary schools. He stated the Governor has a strong commitment to youth and supports preparing youth for the workforce from early childhood through secondary levels. In summarizing the proposed Regional Skills Alliances, mentioned in Governor Granholm's State-of-the-State address, Mr. Sykes reported the concept is to enable a regional examination of skill needs. Regional Skill Alliance regions do not replace current Michigan Works! regions nor do they change the way local Workforce Development Boards operate. Many Workforce Development Boards are in position to provide the leadership required for the Regional Skill Alliances. Donald Jakeway stated the Kalamazoo area is positioned well and is ahead of many other areas looking for talent and dollars to fund biotechnology and life science enterprises. This alone is a very positive and marketable attribute for the area and he encouraged local leaders to continue moving in this direction. Mr. Jakeway also reported the Governor's focus on manufacturing is a priority. The Governor and MEDC have spent the last twelve months evaluating changes in manufacturing and developing a strategy that includes cultivating a relationship with neighboring states to improve the manufacturing arena.

IV. Committee Reports

A. Monitoring and Evaluation Committee – Myra Johnson reported the Monitoring and Evaluation Committee met at Employment and Training Connections (ETC) in Kalamazoo during January to review the WIA Youth Program and Services for Kalamazoo and St. Joseph Counties. Overall, ETC staff are operating a satisfactory youth program and participants are benefiting from enrollment. The need to improve transportation in both counties, especially St. Joseph, continues to be a concern. Committee members indicated the participants also need increased exposure to computers in order to improve their computer skills to be prepared for jobs today and in the future.

- B. **Marketing Committee** - Mary Oudsema distributed copies of an article about Michigan Works that appeared in the "Best Local Jobs" section of the Kalamazoo Gazette on January 4, 2004. Mary announced the Michigan Works! annual Alumni event took place in Lansing on January 27, 2004 and Traci Carpenter, a medical assistant at Bronson OB/GYN, was recognized as the award recipient representing Kalamazoo and St. Joseph Counties.

V. **Staff Reports**

- A. **Education Advisory Group (EAG)** – Craig Schreuder reported Kevin Hollenbeck provided EAG members with an overview of the Career Preparation System that he, in his capacity as a Senior Economist at the Upjohn Institute, developed for the Michigan Department of Career Development, Office of Career and Technical Preparation. Marilyn Potgiesser provided the EAG members with a brief review of the workforce development plans that Bronson Healthcare Group developed. Bronson's workforce development strategies were in response to the need for skilled workers in the healthcare industry. Craig announced that both the Kalamazoo County Education for Employment (Career and Technical Education) program and the St. Joseph County Direct Credit Partnership Program will be presented the *2004 Excellence in Practice Award* on February 9 at the 2004 Michigan Career Education Conference. The *Excellence in Practice Award* recognizes successful, sustained career preparation, state-approved career and technical education practices that prepare Michigan's students for careers.
- B. **Disability Awareness Resource Team** – Jan Smith reported the current main focus of the Disability Awareness Resource Team is to apply to the Michigan Department of Labor and Economic Growth for a community rehabilitation grant.
- C. **"Nickel and Dimed: On (Not) Getting By In America"** – Linda Whitlock reported the Kalamazoo Public Library (KPL) and the Kalamazoo Community Foundation are working together to sponsor a county-wide reading program, "Reading Together Kalamazoo." Michigan Works! and Upjohn Institute staff are participating in some of the community events and are meeting internally to discuss what can be done to make a difference in the community. The Workforce Development Board contributed \$250 toward this project. Books for the initiative are available in English and Spanish. Board member, Mary Oudsema highly recommended the book for others to read.
- D. **Earned Income Tax Credit Initiative** – Jim Walters reported the Earned Income Tax Credit (EITC) initiative is one way in which low-income individuals can supplement their income. Governor Granholm organized a committee to develop the initiative into a state-wide effort and Linda Whitlock serves on the committee. Locally, this is the second year of the free tax preparation assistance focused on the EITC and the effort is being coordinated with AARP. Volunteers for the EITC initiative will assist low-income individuals while AARP volunteers will concentrate on assisting senior citizens.
- E. **Incumbent Worker Program** – John Sullivan reported the Incumbent Worker Program provides funds to local employers for training their current workforce. Twenty-five employers applied for approximately \$500,000 that was available. This year the selection of recipients was focused on the manufacturing sector and eleven companies from Kalamazoo and St. Joseph Counties were selected. Most of the training is in LEAN Manufacturing and improving computer skills. Approximately 250 employees will benefit from the training during this program year.
- F. **Poverty Initiative** – Bob Straits reported the Poverty Initiative is a collaborative effort between the Kalamazoo Chamber of Commerce, the City and County of Kalamazoo, Housing Resources, the Upjohn Institute and the Workforce Development Board. A director was recently hired with financial support from the Kalamazoo Community Foundation for this initiative.

VI. **Members Time** – None.

- VII. **Citizens Time** – John Davis announced ISAAC is sponsoring a banquet on February 28 at the WMU Bernhard Center. The cost is \$25 per person. Individuals interested in attending should contact John Davis or any ISAAC member.

- VIII. **Next Meeting** - The next *Executive Committee* meeting is scheduled for Thursday, March 4, 2004 at 7:30 a.m. at the Michigan Works!/Upjohn Institute office in Kalamazoo. The next *Monitoring and Evaluation Committee* meeting is scheduled for Thursday, February 19, 2004 at the Michigan Works Service Center in Kalamazoo. The next *Full Board* meeting is Thursday, May 6, 2004 at approximately 8:00 a.m., immediately following the Executive Committee meeting on the same date. The location for the full board meeting will be announced at a later date.

- IX. **Adjournment** - With no further business, Chair Thom Brennan adjourned the meeting at 9:35 a.m.

Robert A. Straits

Date

Thom Brennan

Date