



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

**Workforce Development Board  
Executive Committee  
April 1, 2004**

WDB Chair, Thom Brennan, called the meeting to order at 7:35 a.m. at the W.E. Upjohn Institute/Michigan Works! Office, 222 S. Westnedge Avenue, Kalamazoo, Michigan.

**WDB Members Present:** Thom Brennan (PS), Susan Einspahr (PS), Lisa Godfrey (PS), Joe Herdus (PS), Jerry Love (PS), Mary Oudsema (PS), Pat Pangburn (PS), Marilyn Potgiesser (PS), Suprotik Stotz-Ghosh (CBO)  
Membership - 10, Attended – 8 (80%), PS - 7 (88%)

**Staff Present:** Kathy Olsen, Craig Schreuder, Kara Stewart, Bob Straits, Jim Walters

**Guests Present:** John Long (Kalamazoo Chamber), Jack Mekemson (Goodwill)

**I. Meeting Minutes**

**Motion made by Marilyn Potgiesser and supported by Jerry Love to approve the WDB Executive Committee meeting minutes of March 4, 2004. Motion carried.**

**II. Committee Reports**

**A. Executive Committee**

1. **Plans** - Craig Schreuder reported the Education Advisory Group met and reviewed the Career Initiatives Plan that incorporated secondary career development programs into one initiative. The plan includes the Career Technical Education and Tech Education programs. He reported these programs are federally funded and each of the programs has long-range and annual plan requirements. Some of the programs extend into post secondary education. There were no substantial changes from the prior year and no action was required from the WDB.
2. **Planning for WDB May meeting** – Kathy offered suggestions for possible speakers for the May full board meeting. Members agreed they would like to hear from partners who are meeting on a regular basis regarding workforce development. Each partner would be asked to discuss their operations as they relate to workforce development. The meeting will be held at the Community Center in Three Rivers.

**B. Monitoring and Evaluation Committee** – Suprotik Stotz-Ghosh reported the Monitoring and Evaluation Committee met in March at Goodwill Enterprises to review the Work First programs and services in Kalamazoo County. He reported Goodwill Industries staff have done well in providing a smooth transition of all WF programs and services to Goodwill during this contract year. The participants interviewed were satisfied with the support they were receiving and the services being provided. The participants indicated their supervisors are available to discuss employment and production issues; however, many times there are situations where a “floating” counselor or mentor would be helpful. The participants suggested an improvement would be to add counselors or mentors to the program.

**C. Marketing Committee** - Mary Oudsema reported Michigan Works is participating in a job fair at Glen Oaks Community College on April 14 and at the Kalamazoo Radisson on April 15. The Marketing Committee is scheduled to meet immediately after today’s Executive Committee meeting.

**III. Information Reports**

**A. Earned Income Tax Credit (EITC)** – Jim Walters reported the Tax Credit Initiative was coordinated with AARP and Community Mental Health. AARP focused on assisting seniors, mental health focused on other credits and MW focused on the EITC. For the EITC portion of this initiative, ten sites were used. Community volunteers provided tax assistance at no charge and approximately \$76,000 in EITC would be coming back into Kalamazoo through the returns that were filed. Some of the customers who received tax preparation assistance were not aware of their eligibility for this credit; however many of the individuals were return customers from last year. Suprotik Stotz-Ghosh reported Jim Walters has been the key support person for this initiative and thanked him for his efforts. In order to further address self-sufficiency, the Tax Committee is exploring adding an educational component, such as financial literacy, to the initiative.

**B. Workforce Development Proposal** - Bob Straits distributed a draft of the Workforce Development Proposal for Low Income Residents of Kalamazoo County. The original model was developed a few years ago by Institute staff, George Erickcek and Tim Bartik; however it was not funded at the time. Bridget Timmeney and Jan Smith have added to the original program design and are meeting with individuals and organizations as well as cluster groups in the community. Bridget will also meet with individual board members, as the model program is refined.

**IV. Staff Reports** – Bob Straits reported he was one of 16 individuals recently invited to meet with State department heads. The four state departments were very interested in partnering and looking at the multi-purpose collaborative bodies. These collaborative organizations bring together all the organizations receiving state and federal funding. In Kalamazoo County the group has been in existence since 1989 and is currently called the Multi-Purpose Collaborative Body (MPCB). The value in Kalamazoo County has been communication and networking among the members and is required in order for the Strong Families/Safe Children initiative to receive funding. In St. Joseph County the group is called the St. Joseph County Human Services Commission (SJCHSC). The SJCHSC is the funding recipient and all the human services agencies coordinate activities and request funding through the SJCHSC.

**V. Members Time** – Suprotik Stotz-Ghosh reported the Greater Kalamazoo United Way (GKUW) sponsored a PeaceJam last week. Nobel Peace Prize recipient, Jodi Williams spoke to over 200 youth from Michigan, Ohio, and Indiana on peacemaking skills. Suprotik asked members to contact the GKUW if they knew of any youth that should be involved with this effort.

**VI. Citizens Time** – Nothing to report.

**VII. Upcoming Meetings** - The next Executive Committee will be held at 7:30 a.m. at the Three Rivers Community Center on Thursday, May 6, 2004. The full Board meeting will immediately follow on the same date. The Marketing Committee will meet immediately after today’s meeting. The next Monitoring and Evaluation Committee meeting is scheduled for 7:30 a.m. on April 15, 2004 at the Work First office in St. Joseph County.

**VIII. Adjournment** - With no further business to discuss the meeting was adjourned at 8:20 a.m.

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Robert A. Straits

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

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Thom Brennan

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date