

**WASHINGTON COUNTY
WORKFORCE INVESTMENT BOARD MEETING
Washington County Workforce Center
Woodbury, MN
April 15, 2009**

WIB Members and Partners Present

Lori Brink	Brenda Carlson	Duane Gatzke
Peg Killen	Jane Klein	Kim Luchsinger
Ernie Pines	Dave Schaps	Janelle Schmitz
Cherylee Sherry	Pat Singel	Jeanine Swanson
Corrine Watson		

Workforce Center Staff Present

Nina Arneson	Robert Crawford	Carrie Gatzke
Beth Jameston	Rachel O'Connell	

WIB Members and Partners Not Present

Kim Arrigoni	Nigel Bath	Jim Finley
Marie Gadway	Jeralyn Jargo	Lou Johnson
Stacy Kennedy	Lowell Reiks, Jr.	David Videen
Russell Williams		

1. Call to Order and Introductions – Brenda Carlson, Chair

Brenda Carlson called the meeting to order and members and guests introduced themselves.

2. Adopt Agenda – Brenda Carlson

A Motion was made to adopt the Agenda, it was seconded, and the Motion carried.

3. Approve March 2009 minutes – Brenda Carlson

A Motion was made to adopt the March minutes, it was seconded, and the Motion carried.

4. Committee Reports

Business and Marketing: No report

Youth Committee – Ernie Pines: Ernie said Carrie Gatzke reported Youth Program funding will increase this year and 150 kids will be served compared to 50 last year. Youth will work with Tree Trust and at other worksites throughout the county from 20 to 40 hours a week. The Committee also talked about identifying a need for the Tri-WIB initiative and discussed resources they could provide. The Tri-WIB taskforce will meet April 21. (*Note: Meeting rescheduled for the end of May*). Nina added that youth covered under Stimulus funds have an age limit of 24, which will allow more MFIP and DWP participants to be on the program.

Policy and Law – Jane Klein: Jane reported the Governor signed a bill approving \$130 million from Federal Stimulus funds to be used for unemployment benefits. The bill includes

new eligibility guidelines allowing workers to collect UI who are forced to quit their jobs because of domestic violence, to care for an ill family member, or to relocate with a spouse who moved for employment. Legislation was also passed to help felons find employment. Robert said he hasn't heard much about the bill to eliminate DEED and another to put DEED under MnSCU. Peg said her department got a call from Senator Metzen's office to get their opinion on having Rehab Services and other parts of DEED moved under MnSCU. Jane said MnSCU is trying to get involved with business and workforce because of concern that education isn't preparing students for the workforce. Robert added there is more interest from MnSCU in partnering now that there is Stimulus money available.

Pat Singel said the County is taking a cautionary approach waiting to see what the legislature does. The Community Services Department cut \$1 million out of the budget because of a decrease in property tax income. Workforce Center operations haven't been affected because of how it's funded and the recognition of the work that needs to be done. Some positions have remained open which is difficult for staff because workload has increased. The Governor has proposed a 5% reduction in the MFIP Consolidated Fund which may affect Workforce Center operation.

5. Update on Minnesota Family Investment Program (MFIP) – Nina Arneson

Nina reviewed MFIP, DWP, and FSET Employment Services numbers for 2008. Last year the MFIP program served 914 customers and exited 509. Those employed averaged 33.9 hours at an average wage of \$10.42. In November 2008, Washington County reached a milestone reaching the 50% work participation rate. Pat said this goal was set in 2003, and there has been a concerted effort to change performance. Nina said one advantage is that Washington County has little turnover and employees understand policy while other counties have large numbers of contracted employees with higher turnover.

The Diversionary Work Program (DWP) is a four month work program which served 435 customers and exited 345. Close to 80% of customers are diverted from going onto the MFIP program; those employed average \$10.23 an hour. Skill levels vary from low to high and they anticipate more Dislocated Workers will enter the program in the future. Nina said both MFIP and DWP are work programs, but there are some training opportunities. For example, a single mom applied at a Senior Center and was told they needed C N A's. Her counselor paid for the training and she was hired. Cash benefits on DWP go directly to major expenses and once the grant is determined, getting a job will not make it go down, allowing people to catch up financially. The state measures retention rates through the self support index measuring outcome after 3 years. Pat added that the index looks at positive and negative predictors based on county demographics. The most powerful negative predictor is not graduating from high school. Also, the younger a person is at the birth of the first child, the harder it is to succeed.

FSET is the smallest program, which served 44 people last year, with 27 exiting at an average wage of \$9.00 an hour, averaging 22.4 hours a week. Historically, all of these programs had more participants in 2005 than today, although caseloads are expected to increase.

Lori said Community Education is seeing a greater need for computer and Adult ESL classes and have been partnering with the Workforce Center. She hopes in the future computer technology skills will be recognized as a basic skill and be provided free of charge. Brenda is working with the St. Cloud Workforce Center and sees a need for computer and job search training, especially for middle aged and older people laid off from manufacturing jobs.

6. Tri-WIB Taskforce – Brenda Carlson

The Tri-WIB Taskforce will meet April 19 and a report will be given after that meeting. *(Note: the meeting has been rescheduled for the end of May, date TBD).*

7. Job Fair – Robert Crawford, Dave Schaps, Beth Jameston

Beth reported the Job Fair has been set for June 23, 11-4:30 at the Prom Center, Oakdale. She is contacting employers by e-mail and designing an announcement. Their goal is to have at least 30 business and education exhibitors. There will be a \$50 discount for non-profit or education participants and an early-bird discount for all exhibitors. Jane and Brenda suggested that business and education booths be mixed to encourage networking and attract people to the education booths. Dave will use the City of Oakdale website to advertise the event. Peg said it should be publicized that unethical businesses may target unemployed people.

8. Business Services Update – Beth Jameston

Beth visited an auto repair business that had an open position, so she helped them look through resumes on MN Works. She is following up on leads and calling businesses that are starting to hire.

9. Announcements

Pat Singel is working with the Yellow Ribbon Network which is trying to involve businesses, cities, counties and others to generate more awareness and provide support to military families. Robert said the State has hired 60 temporary employees with Stimulus money to work for 18 months in Workforce Service areas. The Washington County Workforce Center will have an additional Dislocated Worker counselor, a support staff for the Youth Program, and two more people will work in the Resource Room and with training. Brenda announced the DEED Military Career Fair will be held May 27 at the Earl Brown Center from 10-3:00. <http://www.deed.state.mn.us/veterans/careerfair.htm>. Corrine said the United Way is funding the Youth Advantage Program for Stillwater District 834 which pays fees for disadvantaged kids to participate in art, educational enrichment and sports. Lori added the program looks at all barriers such as equipment, musical instruments, and transportation. Another program helps kids in 5th and 6th grade plan summer activities during the hours they are home alone.

10. Adjourn – Brenda Carlson

A Motion was made to adjourn the meeting, it was seconded and the Motion carried.