

**WASHINGTON COUNTY
WORKFORCE INVESTMENT BOARD MEETING
Century College
White Bear Lake, MN
May 20, 2009**

WIB Members and Partners Present

Lori Brink	Brenda Carlson	Marie Gadway
Duane Gatzke	Jeralyn Jargo	Stacy Kennedy
Jane Klein	Kim Luchsinger	Ernie Pines
Janelle Schmitz	Cherylee Sherry	Pat Singel
Jeanine Swanson	Corrine Watson	

Workforce Center Staff Present

Nina Arneson	Robert Crawford	Beth Jameston
Rachel O'Connell		

Guest

Natasha Fleischman,
Coordinator, ABE, South Washington County Schools

WIB Members and Partners Not Present

Kim Arrigoni	Nigel Bath	Jim Finley
Peg Killen	Lowell Reiks, Jr.	Dave Schaps
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 April 2009 minutes – Brenda Carlson

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

4. Committee Reports

Business and Marketing – Beth Jameston: The committee discussed the Metro Job and Education Fair scheduled June 23 from 11 to 4:30 at the Prom Center, Oakdale. Beth has e-mailed employers metro wide and is following up with phone calls. They have 10 employers and educators committed with a goal of 30. She has found many employers are laying off, have a hiring freeze, or have one or two positions and don't need a lot of applicants. The exhibit fee is \$300 with a \$50 discount if paid before May 31st. Education and non-profits also get a \$50 discount. Some of the participants include Globe University, MDM Rubicon; with strong tentative commitment from Rasmussen College,

ACR Homes, Inver Hills Community College and the Department of Corrections. Let Beth know of any employers who may be interested.

Youth Committee – Cherylee Sherry: The Tri-WIB taskforce meeting was cancelled and hasn't been rescheduled. Century College will have a Career's Day on Veteran's Day, November 11, 2009. Fifteen schools will bus students to the event and the Youth Committee will provide information on resources. Carrie Gatzke updated the committee on the Youth Summer Program. There are 45 slots still available. Carrie is having difficulty finding worksites for youth age 14-15. To be eligible for the program, a family of four must make \$24,000 or less and many applicants don't qualify. If the child has a disability only the child's income is considered, or the parent is a dislocated worker (Minnesota Youth Program only). The committee helped Carrie with a pre- and post-evaluation for students. There is Stimulus money available to provide work readiness activities and field trips and the Workforce Center, District 622, Community Action Program, and Century College will partner on that project. The committee chose as a task to e-mail the Governor to maintain funding for youth internships and higher education at budgetideas@state.mn.us.

Policy and Law – Pat Singel: Pat said counties will be taking a very big hit, and will have more work to do with less money. Workforce Center operations are fairly insulated since the Governor targeted state funded plans. Our department has already lost \$1 million in funding and more will be un-allotted. Cherylee said she is working with HCMC which had \$10 million un-allotted and is bracing for an additional \$40-50 million. The Governor wants to eliminate the \$300 million General Assistance program for single adults which will cause further losses to the hospital. The yearly income eligibility for GA Medical is \$8,000 or less.

5. American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (ARRA) – Robert Crawford:

Robert said the intent of the ARRA is to preserve and create jobs, speed up the nation's economic recovery and assist those most impacted by the recession. Priority for services includes veterans and their spouses, Workforce Investment Act Adults, public assistance recipients, WIA youth, dislocated workers, and seniors who are economically disadvantaged. The Department of Labor wants us to substantially increase the number of customers in training (70% of funds); increase the number of low skilled/low income workers in acquiring 21st Century skills; and help low income families find good paying jobs while achieving the same performance measures as the regular Dislocated Worker and Adult programs. The program allocation is as follows: Dislocated Worker – \$534,145; WIA Adult – \$127,462; WIA Youth – \$289,936; WIA Seniors – \$27,187 for a total of \$978,730. This is in addition to the regular allocation. The unemployment rate in March was 8.2% in Washington County, the second highest in the metro area. Workforce Center staff has changed their strategy to serve larger numbers of people, revamping the intake process and workshops. Through Stimulus money, two more people have been hired to help with workshops. Highly skilled people are getting jobs first and it will take longer for MFIP customers to get jobs. The MFIP, FSET, and DWP programs are expected to see the impact next year as people are pushed down economically.

Stacy said there was an opening for an administrative assistant position in the corporate office requiring five years of experience and they received 160 applications in 24 hours. Many resumes were terrible and only 10 people met the minimum requirements. Pay attention to the minimum requirements, as employers remember names and are irritated when people apply who aren't qualified. Board members discussed what job seekers should do from an employer's standpoint and made the following points: Be specific about work experience rather than just stating "finance background"; keep track of who you apply to; be professional when answering the phone at home; don't have kids talking on your voice mail; have a professional e-mail address; cover letters tend to look the same and a dynamic one makes a person stand out.

Other suggestions were: HR people do not have time to follow up on each application or do informational interviews. Employers hire through an automated system that feeds information into the system. During an interview, project confidence, use eye contact, and have a strong handshake. Don't tell the interviewer how terrible your life is going. Use the same key words in your resume that are in the job description so the computer will pick it up. It's important that an applicant research the company before the interview and be able to answer the question: "Why do you want to work for our company?" Many companies use tests or give assignments to applicants to see if they have the skills stated on their resume, such as doing a PowerPoint. Employers gather information and screen applicants during the first phone call. The interview process can be intense, including personality testing, group interviews and role playing.

Brenda said she has talked to job seekers in their 50's who once had good careers but have lost everything. Some jobs didn't require a degree in the past, but now people are finding they can't continue working in their field without one, which creates anger and frustration. Robert said there is a Veteran's Representative that focuses on veteran's needs and employers can sign up to give preference to veterans.

6. FastTrac – Robert Crawford:

Funds have been allocated through the Stimulus plan for Workforce Centers to collaborate with Adult Basic Education, MnSCU, and community based organizations to serve Minnesota low wage or low skilled adults. The goal is to increase education and skills leading to attaining jobs in in-demand occupations. Eligible customers include: individuals who are unemployed or underemployed and/or low wage, low skills; those with disabilities who aren't enrolled in secondary schools; and those who lack basic academic skills and/or English, reading, writing, and math below 12th grade and lack basic computer skills.

Washington County has been allocated \$33,000. There is a tight timeline because the plan must be submitted to the state by June 12, so Robert has contacted all ABE programs in Washington County and the WIB needs to approve this proposal. Lori commented that a great use of the funds would be to provide a computer instructor for ABE, because the state doesn't recognize computer knowledge as a basic skill. Natasha Fleishman said the definition has been recently expanded and they are now able to offer computer training once a week in the South Washington County School's ABE program.

Brenda recommended approving FastTrac and encouraging WIB partners to participate, with an update at the next meeting. A Motion was made to accept this proposal, it was seconded, and the Motion carried.

7. Announcements:

Brenda said elections for chair and vice-chair will be held next month and if anyone is interested, contact Robert. The Board will be in summer recess for July and August.

There are several openings on the Board and small and large business representatives are especially encouraged to apply. Robert said Jeanine Swanson and David Videen have reached their 6 year term limit and will be honored at the June meeting with a certificate of appreciation from the Commissioner. Duane Gatzke announced the St. Croix Valley Labor Assembly annual picnic will be held June 24, from 5:00 – 8:00 p.m. at Valley View Park in Oak Park Heights.

8. Adjourn – Brenda Carlson:

The meeting was adjourned. Some members stayed to tour the Science Library.

9. Tour of Century College Science Library Building – Jeralyn Jargo:

In 1995, Technical College 916 was incorporated into Century College. Some 916 programs still exist and the buildings are rented from them. There is a full 12 chair dental clinic for the dental assistant and hygiene programs, which also provides a community dental clinic. Traditional technical shops teach welding, automotive and auto body. In the past, there were two libraries which have been combined into one in the new Science Library building. The Kopp family is the largest donor to Century and other MnSCU colleges. The library holds an 85 person computer center. In one lab students pull apart computers, networking and CISCO systems. The bridge across 120 to the other side of campus has been incorporated into the library. A series of three pieces of 3-dimensional artwork was created by an artist and a visual communications technology person. Science labs are located on the second and third floors. The organic chemistry lab is “state of the art”. “Smart” classrooms contain a computer and projector which can display microscopic images. The building received an award for using recycled and reused materials. Outside the building, there are sculptures from a local artist who once wanted to be a doctor, and that influence is seen in his work.