

COUNCIL ON WORKFORCE INVESTMENT

(Draft Pending Approval)

(Workforce Strategies Committee)

Concourse Hotel
1 W. Dayton Street
Madison, WI
June 3, 2005
10:00 a.m. to 11:45 am

MEETING MINUTES

Members Present: Jayson Chung, Terry Craney, Jewel Currie, Margaret Ellibee, (for State Superintendent Elizabeth “Libby” Burmaster), Susan Hatch, John Heyer, James Hill, Ellen Holt, Lee Rasch, Mark Reihl, Norma Tirado-Kellenberger, Dean Welch, Joan Wilk.

Members Absent: Lyle Balistreri, Rodney Copes, Barbara Fleisner, Jerry Johnson, Patrick Schillinger, Julia Taylor, State Senator Dave Hansen, State Senator Joe Liebham, A. Kent Olson, Richard Oulahan, James Schramm, and Xiong Lo.

CWI Staff Present: Fred Bartol (DWD/OEI), Bea Jay Panke (DWD/BJs), Sue Gleason (DWD/OEI—CWI/DWD Liaison).

Others Present: John Wagnitz (office of Sen. Hansen); Rita Black-Radloff (DWD/OEI); Paul Linzmeyer (CWI Chair); Roger Gantzarow (DWD/BWP); Karin Wells (DWD/OEA); Heather Thompson (DWD/BWI).

Key Issues/Discussion

Agenda Item #1—Opening remarks; approval of March 4 minutes —Lee Rasch called the meeting to order at approximately 10:10 a.m. In the absence of a quorum, there was no motion to approve the minutes, but an invitation for comments or suggestions; none were offered.

Agenda Item #2—Review of work to date—Co-chair Dean Welch noted that although the “task group” approach had not developed as planned, it had further refined a substantial list of strategies related to the identified objectives (and tasks related to each strategy). The main challenge now was less to “prioritize” those strategies than to “sequence” them: which did it make sense to try to tackle first, which ones required a longer timeline for completion?

Co-chair Lee Rasch concurred that the task group had produced mixed results but made some progress; he seconded the “sequencing” approach. He then invited brief reports from each of the task groups.

- Bea Jay Panke noted that Task Group A had not met since the initial meeting on March 4, but noted that several presentations related to informational needs identified by the task group were scheduled for later in today’s meeting.
- Lee Rasch reported that Task Group B had met several times, and, among other tasks, drafted letters of support for continued Carl Perkins program funding and COBE. He invited individual task group members to report on specific task-related efforts still in progress.
 - Jayson Chung said he had just sent out a survey request with respect to efforts to create flexible learning options for students whose circumstances did not fit the traditional academic calendar; he expected to have more to report at the next meeting.
 - Terry Craney distributed and discussed two sets of results of a survey on the Youth Apprenticeship Program (one for employers, the other for) participants, and highlighted key results showing substantial employer buy-in and participant satisfaction with the program. He offered to make a more detailed presentation on these results and the apprenticeship program in general at a subsequent meeting.
 - Lee Rasch indicated that implementation of the COBE recommendations (starting with the creation of an implementation team) was proceeding, although some priority elements were contingent on funding. One particular area of emphasis was degree-completion programs for students who had completed most of their credits but left without a degree.
 - Margaret Ellibee distributed and summarized a briefing paper on issues surrounding the reauthorization of the federal Carl Perkins program, noting that the reauthorization bill was now in conference committee to reconcile Senate and House versions. An area of particular concern is increased accountability at the very moment funding is being cut; one issue at the state level is establishing a consistent statewide structure relating voc/tech education to employer needs.
- Fred Bartol reported that in addition to its March 4 meeting, Task Group C had held one conference call in early April. In addition to further refining the strategies, the group had identified two tasks in particular for follow-up.
 - One was to learn more about “workplace learning centers” that had been prevalent in manufacturing during the 1990s; staff from the Wisconsin Regional Training Partnership have expressed a willingness to present to the committee on this.
 - Bartol was also attempting to follow up with staff at Wisconsin Manufacturers and Commerce with reference to the other task, identifying best-practices in private-sector-driven incumbent worker training.

Bartol provided a brief overview of the Objectives, Strategies, and Tasks document distributed in advance of the meeting. The first page represents the final statement of the three main objectives and related strategies; the other three pages break the various strategies out into individual tasks.

Susan Hatch asked what the main purpose of this task outline was; Jewel Currie asked in particular whether the idea was to target certain projects for funding. Welch and Rasch suggested itemizing these various tasks served multiple purposes; in some cases to recommend expenditures by CWI, in other cases to commit CWI to support for certain legislative initiatives, and in still others to guide collaboration among various entities and interests addressing these issues. The main issue now was to identify those that seemed logical to pursue first. It was noted that next steps should include information about what other entities were doing in relation to various tasks.

Two tasks emerged as initial targets from the ensuing discussion:

- One was to pursue expansion/enhancement of the Youth Apprenticeship Program, with the first step a more detailed presentation at the next meeting (following up on Terry Craney's offer).
- The other was to focus on the issue of new models for regional partnerships, in the context of the GROW grant program just announced this week (see next agenda item).

Joan Wilk urged that the committee not lose sight of Objective A, Strategy 4—communicating opportunities to keep highly skilled workers in the state.

Bea Jay Panke noted that the next committee meeting was set for July 20, from 9-11 in the GEF-1 building (Room A415) in Madison, with a conference call connection. She and Fred Bartol offered to work the Objectives/Strategies/Tasks document into one organized around sequential tasks in advance of that meeting.

Agenda Item #3—Presentation on Regional Partnerships Grant Program—Fred Bartol provided a brief overview of the Growing Regional Opportunities in Wisconsin (GROW) grant program, guidelines for which went out June 1, noting that the essential purpose of the grants was to encourage innovative efforts to link economic and workforce development.

Norma Tirado asked whether single-industry projects would be considered; Bartol indicated that while industry targeting was a desirable strategy, narrow focus on a single industry was not; Sue Gleason noted that the option of a more targeted industry approach had been considered early in the program design but that the Executive Committee had rejected that in favor of encouraging more comprehensive projects.

Jim Hill expressed concerns about the definition of "region" as including at least 500,000 people, suggesting that the focus should be on how regional labor markets really work rather than a particular numerical threshold. He felt that although the guidelines permitted a smaller region to apply if it could make a strong case, this still put an unreasonable burden on regions whose labor markets straddled state boundaries (though the guidelines counted only "Wisconsin residents").

Sue Gleason acknowledged that one intention had been to encourage larger regions but that the main interest was in high-quality proposals. Jim Hill noted that that it seemed unfair for smaller applicants to have the burden of justifying a regional configuration just because it fell below the 500,000. Jayson Chung noted that the guidelines called for all applicants to justify their regional configuration, whether or not they met the numerical threshold.

Paul Linzmeyer reiterated that the primary intent was to encourage well-structured projects while acknowledging that different regions faced different issues; the 500,000 figure should not be over-emphasized. He also noted, however, that the amount of money available was small, and the program wanted to make the best use of it, partly by challenging applicants to think beyond the usual regional boundaries.

Norma Tirado urged that illogical regions not be created just to get to the 500,000 population. Joan Wilk suggested that the that the credibility of CWI as a body depended on an equitable process.

Paul Linzmeyer acknowledged the need to address the committee's concerns even though the guidelines themselves had already been published. Sue Gleason suggested that some sort of "Q & A" document might be produced in the next few weeks in response to these and other initial questions raised by the grant guidelines. Another possibility might be a meeting or conference call for potential applicants.

Agenda Item #4—Demonstration of new electronic tools.

- Roger Gantzarow of the DWD Bureau of Workforce Programs provided an online demonstration of the WisCareers tool, which allows users to relate job descriptions with skill sets and employment outlook information.
- Heather Thompson of the DWD Bureau of Workforce Information provided an online demonstration of WORKNet, which was recently rolled out in conjunction with the Governor's Grow Wisconsin, and which enables both jobseekers and businesses to access career, skill, and economic development information.
- Karin Wells of the DWD Office of Economic Advisors provided a demonstration of the soon-to-be released Skill Based Projections System that combines both Wisconsin and U.S. Dept. of Labor information to relate information about knowledge, skills, and work activities with both long- and short-term occupational employment projections.

Agenda Item #6—Adjournment—The scheduled ending time having passed, and with the scheduled beginning of the full CWI meeting approaching, the committee meeting adjourned at 12:00 noon.