

COUNCIL ON WORKFORCE INVESTMENT

Workforce Strategies Committee

K. F. Bemis Conference Center
St. Norbert College
100 Grant Street
De Pere, WI
September 16, 2005
10:00 to 11:45 a.m.

MEETING MINUTES

- Members Present:** State Superintendent Elizabeth “Libby” Burmaster, Jayson Chung, Rodney Copes, State Senator Dave Hansen, Susan Hatch, John Heyer, James Hill, Barbara Prindiville (for Lee Rasch), Mark Reihl, Dean Welch, Joan Wilk.
- Members Absent:** Lyle Balistreri, Jewel Currie, State Senator Joe Liebham, Xiong Lo, A. Kent Olson, Patrick Schillinger, Julia Taylor, Norma Tirado
- CWI Staff Present:** Fred Bartol (DWD/OEI), Bea Jay Panke (DWD/BJJS), Sue Gleason (DWD/OEI)
- Others Present:** Daniel Abrahamson, Teresa Barch, Jerry Hanoski, Beth Norris, Joel Rogers, Steve Terry

1. Welcome, opening remarks; approval of minutes from 4 March, 3 June, and 20 July.

Dean Welch called the meeting to order at 10:10 a.m.

In the absence of a quorum a formal vote to approve the minutes was not taken, but the consensus of those present was that all three sets of draft minutes should be considered approved.

Dean Welch asked that the agenda be re-ordered so that the GROW Grant discussion (Item III) could precede the discussion of the sequencing document (last bullet under Item II); there were no objections.

Welch reminded the group of the CWI vision and this committee’s mission as a developer of strategies to pass along to the Workforce Systems committee, all with the end goal of “Quality Workers for Quality Jobs.” He urged the committee to stay focused on the central question of how best to apply the money being spent on workforce development, and how to ensure accountability.

Senator Hansen agreed on the need for accountability, so that, for example, subsidies justified in the name of creating jobs actually do so and recipients of such funds are held to their promises.

2. Update on Youth Apprenticeship program

Sue Gleason noted that since the last meeting's presentation by the Executive Director of the Governor's Work-Based Learning Board the latter body had been dissolved. The youth apprenticeship component is moving to DWD's Office of Economic Initiatives and the tech prep component is moving to the Wisconsin Technical College System (WCTS).

Jayson Chung suggested that on the tech prep side this represented an opportunity to reassess and reevaluate programs and that the WCTS looked forward to a smooth transition.

Superintendent Burmaster observed that these relocations should actually elevate these programs in the context of the Governor's second phase of the Grow Wisconsin initiative.

3. Presentation on innovative career development systems

Margaret Ellibee described Canada's system for integrating workforce and career development information from the local to the national level from a variety of sources in a way that was "invisible" to the user. She noted that Wisconsin had the elements of such a system in the form of its various LMI resources, WorkNet, WisCareers and similar tools, but was still working on how to provide one simple point of access tying it all together for ease of use by individual public customers.

This depends in part on having a good "big picture" sense of how these different elements relate to each other, which is where the concept of "career clusters" comes in. These are increasingly a focus of regional partnerships of communities, businesses, and the education system. Career clusters map pathways connecting education, skills, and jobs enabling students to relate their learning more clearly to the skill demands of particular careers (or to see how the skills might be transferable to other careers). Career clustering also supports more flexible and contextual learning more suited to today's students.

For example, in the Wausau area a very strong health care clustering program is aligning secondary education with both the post secondary education system and the local hospital system. These are the kinds of linkages between education, business, and the workforce development system that need to be in place for a region to attract business as well as to prepare the regional workforce to take full advantage of the opportunities such businesses create.

Susan Hatch asked how teachers were gotten to buy into the program. Ellibee noted that these programs offer benefits to teachers in the form of improved student behavior and performance, since students tend to be more engaged and

achievement-oriented when their school work relates to career opportunities in this way.

Susan Hatch suggested this idea needed to be marketed more intensively to make the community more aware of its potential. Dean Welch suggested the concept deserved more intensive focus by the committee because it pulls so many committee priorities together.

John Heyer noted the importance of getting the school districts fully involved, but also the need to take account of the full continuum of career options, and especially not lose sight of those students who are not college-bound. Margaret Ellibee agreed that the purpose of the concept was to equip students, at any point in their learning, to head in whatever direction they choose.

Joan Wilk expressed particular concern, in this context, about the looming shortage of health care workers, as well as of teachers of future health care workers. She urged the committee to make this a priority focus and suggested that staff put together a fairly comprehensive presentation specifically on the whole health care workforce issue, trends related to it, the dimensions of the problem. Barbara Prindiville noted that there were already a number of partnerships forming to address this issue.

Joel Rogers asked if the committee was working from a list of high-shortage occupations. Dean Welch indicated that the committee needed to get the word out more generally about the issues it was working on.

4. Update on the GROW Grants

Fred Bartol summarized the grant evaluation process that had unfolded since the committee's last meeting. DWD received eight proposals to spend a total of \$880,000, more than twice the amount allocated to the grant program. In consultation with the CWI Executive Committee it was decided to consider all the proposals on their merits and not summarily reject any on "compliance" grounds, although several did not meet all the criteria (those that did not offered compelling rationales for deviating from them).

An effort was made to provide all proposals with at least some funding while recognizing different levels of project development. In the end three "outright" GROW grants were approved, though at less-than-requested amounts: to a combine representing South Central and Southwest WDBs, another combine representing both Fox Valley and Bay Area WDBs, and the West Central WDB. Three other proposals had exciting ideas but needed more work; these were awarded \$25,000 each in "starter" funding to facilitate further planning: Northwest WDB, Western WDB, and North Central WDB.

Bartol also noted that no grant award has yet been announced for the Milwaukee/SE Wisconsin/WOW region. Two competing (but potentially complementary) proposals were received for that combined region, and there was strong sentiment on the part of reviewers that a way needed to be found to bring these two projects together, and to connect both with other emerging

economic development initiatives in the region. A process is now under way to establish a project combining elements of both proposals, to be funded out of the \$75,000 of remaining GROW grant funding and an additional \$75,000 to be requested from the Executive Committee at a special meeting for this purpose at the end of September.

Bartol observed that a central issue for the Strategies Committee was how to define its role with respect to these grant projects, which were intended in part to inform the committee's ongoing effort to identify new models and strategies of workforce development.

John Heyer expressed concerns about the way the Milwaukee situation was being handled, in particular the message being sent if a grant was made to the Milwaukee Mayor's office or some other entity rather than a Workforce Development Board—the latter are supposed to be the drivers of these types of projects.

Jim Hill expressed concerns about the request for an additional \$75,000; in effect we are finding extra money to reward the submission of two competing proposals when other applicants had seen their grants greatly reduced. He urged the committee to insist that any additional funding be contingent on evidence that the two applicants are working effectively together.

Fred Bartol reiterated that putting together a working project for this critical region was the prime objective of the process and that clear intent was for any additional money to be closely tied to a well-designed project.

It was noted that the Workforce Strategies Committee as such did not have a direct role in approving the additional money, but that the two committee co-chairs could, as members of the Executive Committee, convey the committee's concerns to the Executive Committee when the latter takes up the issue.

Several proposals for specific language expressing such concerns were offered, including a resolution requiring specific evidence of progress under the initial \$75,000 as a condition of the additional \$75,000, but none received a formal vote amid continuing discussion as to whether the committee had the authority to impose such specific conditions. It was noted, however, that the clear general sense of the group was that Dean Welch and Lee Rasch should convey to the Executive Committee a concern that any additional money for the Milwaukee region project be attached to strong accountability provisions.

Efforts to finalize consensus language on this point were under way when the meeting ended at 12:05 p.m.