



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

**Workforce Development Board Executive Committee Meeting Minutes
April 2, 2009**

Workforce Development Board Chair, Mary Oudsema, called the meeting to order at 7:29 a.m. at the W. E. Upjohn Institute for Employment Research, 300 S. Westnedge Avenue, Kalamazoo, Michigan.

Executive Committee Members Present: Dennis Berkebile (PS), Thom Brennan (PS), Susan Einspahr (PS), Lisa Godfrey (PS), Joe Herdus (PS), Jerry Love (PS), Mary Oudsema (PS)

Members Absent: Barry Visel (PS)

MW Staff Present: Kathy Olsen, Craig Schreuder, Kara Stewart, Suprotik Stotz-Ghosh, Jim Walters

Guests Present: John Davis (DHS), John Dillworth (Goodwill), Curt Mastos (MI-HRDI), Tim McGann (LMC), Karen Carlisle (Y.O.U.)

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Motion made by Susan Einspahr and supported by Thom Brennan to approve the Workforce Development Board Executive Committee meeting minutes of March 5, 2009. Motion carried.

STAFF REPORTS

American Recovery and Reinvestment Act – Craig Schreuder distributed a summary of strategies for the implementation of workforce development provisions of the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (ARRA). He reported the emphasis is on spending quickly and wisely. The regulations and performance standards of the Workforce Investment Act (WIA) remain in effect; however, there is some flexibility in the Youth summer program. For this program, eligibility was expanded to include individuals up to age 24 and work readiness in the only performance standard that will be measured. If participants are carried beyond the summer period, then all performance measures will apply. Locally, plans are to implement as quickly as possible while assuring that guidelines are followed. Craig also reported that Michigan is one of 16 states selected by the U.S. Department of Labor (DOL) to have a federal auditing team stationed at the State to monitor implementation. The team will be in place over the next three years and there will be extensive monitoring by federal, State and local auditors.

At the national level, the DOL released funds ahead of schedule along with clear and concise regulations and a user friendly website. Regional meetings for additional guidance and gathering input from the field are in the planning stages. In the interim, there have been three webinars conducted; the presenters were very knowledgeable national staff and the direction given was very specific. As additional questions arise and suggestions from the field are made, the responsiveness has been quick with frequent clarifications. At the local level, the State distributed allocations and State staff are writing a State policy. The amounts identified on the ARRA handout for the Kalamazoo-St. Joseph area are for direct customer service and does not include admin dollars. The amount for the Youth Program includes funds to be used for operating both the year-round and summer programs. The direction given is that a substantial amount of these dollars must be spent on summer youth; one interpretation provided for “substantial” is 90%. The allocations for Employment Services and One Stop Centers have not been distributed. Admin staff has been meeting with staff from Youth Opportunities Unlimited (Y.O.U.), the youth service provider, to provide guidance. Y.O.U. has a number of staff with many years of experience and they are hiring additional staff in order to increase capacity for the summer. They have a process in place for developing and approving worksites and for supervisor training; and plan to have the full infrastructure in place by early May.

Although the ARRA allocations for the Dislocated Worker and Adult Programs are smaller, they are an increase over previous regular WIA allocations. It is expected that a substantial amount will be designated for training, most likely 2-3 times that of previous years. One option available with ARRA funding that is being encouraged is direct contracts for training with institutions of higher education, including community colleges. We expect that most of the training activity will take place in the fall to coincide with academic schedules.

Craig reported the ARRA funding requires updating of local policies and implementation of some new policies. Many of them will be presented to the Board for review and approval at the May meeting.

Dennis Berkebile reported the Kalamazoo Road Commission usually hires 2-4 individuals for the summer and inquired if they would qualify for the summer work experience program. It was agreed that Y.O.U. staff would meet with staff from the Road Commission to explore the possibility.

Request for Proposal (RFP) Committee – Kara Stewart reported that the RFP Committee reviewed the Employment Services and One Stop proposals. One proposal for each from the current service provider was received. The proposals were reviewed internally by staff and this was followed by the Board review. Both review groups reached the same conclusion, i.e., the proposals are acceptable but some clarifications are needed prior to moving on to contracting. The Board members who served on the RFP Committee were new to the process and they also took the opportunity to discuss how to improve the process for Board members. One suggestion was to schedule trainings outside of the RFP review period for vendor groups and Board members to help both groups understand what is expected.

Foundation Grant – Suprotik Stotz-Ghosh reported a local foundation partner is interested in knowing how they could be involved with the summer youth program and how they could compliment what is allowed under the federal guidelines. Discussions are in the planning stages.

Planning for the May Full WDB Meeting - Suprotik Stotz-Ghosh reported the Business Services Team would like to utilize the experience of Board members as well as deepen the Board's knowledge of the current Business Services model. We would like to devote a major part of the agenda to better understand the current and emerging issues of the private sector and lean what opportunities there may be for the Michigan Works system and Business Services Team in particular, to improve the region's competitiveness. The Business Service discussion will also include a report on their work with economic development. A questionnaire will be sent to private sector Board members prior to the meeting. The meeting would also include a short presentation on the Youth Dropout Recovery, an update on the ARRA and approval of new plans and local policies. Mary Oudsema reminded members the meeting is scheduled one week later than normal and will be for two hours.

Program Status Report - Suprotik Stotz-Ghosh reported the number of individuals served in the JET Program in both counties is above the planned number for the year. However, due to the current economic conditions, the year-to-date employment rate is below the planned goal. The numbers served in all WIA programs are also higher than planned. Throughout the State, an increase in the number of parolees to be served in the Michigan Prisoner Re-Entry Initiative is expected. In Kalamazoo-St. Joseph Counties the expected increase is 102 individuals. Michigan has a Truth in Sentencing Law and all have served their minimum sentence; however the State's goal is to reduce their time from 140% of their minimum sentence to 120%. The individuals being released were identified as lowest risk by using three different assessments. The long-term effort is to rehabilitate as opposed to locking up. Michigan is one of the only states reducing prison population. John Davis reported there was an article in the previous Sunday's Kalamazoo Gazette in the Parade magazine insert. Suprotik also reported the Kalamazoo Comprehensive Approaches to Sex Offender Management (CASOM) recently sponsored a public forum at the Kalamazoo Radisson to share how the community is assessing, managing and monitoring sex offenders who are returning to the community in order to keep the community safe. He pointed out that Michigan is one State that sends the smallest number of felons to prison because of the many alternative programs such as Mental Health Court and Drug Court that are available. Research shows that these programs do work. Securing Childrens' Opportunities, Possibilities and Empowerment (SCOPE) which is designed to support families of felons and to help break the intergenerational cycle, just completed the first year of operation.

Legislative Update – Craig Schreuder reported our State constitution requires the legislature to approve all funds including the federal WIA and Welfare Reform dollars that pass through the State to the local areas. There is discussion that the legislature wants to pass all Recovery Act funding in one appropriations bill; however, given the emphasis for rapid implementation, this may be counterproductive to getting a summer program implemented quickly. The federal government instituted a 30 day deadline to release the funding and MW Areas throughout the State will be communicating to the legislature, the importance of approving the appropriations and releasing the funds quickly. Suprotik Stotz-Ghosh added that the ability of the workforce development system to implement programs funded by ARRA will be evaluated. This is a great opportunity to increase our partnerships and visibility

with economic development and education partners and the goal is to evolve as a stronger system.

COMMITTEE REPORTS

Executive Committee – No report.

Monitoring and Evaluation Committee – Kathy Olsen reported the Monitoring and Evaluation Committee met at the Upjohn Institute during the month of March and admin staff provided an orientation to the Request for Proposal process. The Committee was also provided an update on the status of the JET contract in Kalamazoo which is being monitored by the JET RFP Committee. Benchmarks have been set for this contract and the JET RFP subcommittee will review the contract and progress again during the month of May. The Monitoring and Evaluation Committee will meet at the Upjohn Institute in May to review the Michigan Prisoner Re-entry Initiative.

Marketing Committee – Kathy Olsen reported there has been a lot of media interest in Michigan Works and the resources available to help job seekers with resumes, job search and education. She was recently interviewed by Channel 3 for a segment that will air late April or early May.

MEMBERS TIME – Lisa Godfrey announced yard signs supporting the Kalamazoo Public Library (KPL) millage are available and she is available to deliver them to individuals who would like one. The website for further information is VoteforKPL.org. Items on this year's ballot include the election of trustees for half of the Library Board, the renewal of the KPL operating millage and a transit millage. Lisa reported library staff is seeing a large increase in the number of individuals attending job interview and resume writing workshops and the use of Internet for job search has doubled. Suprotik Stotz-Ghosh added that there is a new resource center at the Library called "ONE place" to support non-profits in this area. Mary Oudsema commented that the Kalamazoo library has been very innovative.

CITIZENS TIME – None

NEXT MEETING – The next full WDB meeting is scheduled for May 14, 2009 at 8:00 a.m. at the Three Rivers Service Center. The Executive Committee meeting will be combined with the full Board. The Monitoring and Evaluation Committee will meet on Thursday, April 20, 2009 from 7:30 – 9:00 a.m. at the W.E. Upjohn Institute, Kalamazoo, Michigan.

ADJOURNMENT – The meeting was adjourned at 8:22 a.m.

Craig Schreuder _____ Date

Mary Oudsema _____ Date