

Workforce Partnership of Greater Rhode Island

Board of Directors Meeting

September 9, 2009

Present: Steven Kitchin, Paul Ouellette, Pat Talin, Evaristo Amaral, Michael Cassidy, Vanessa Cooley, Bob Cooper, Joseph DeSantis, Cynthia Farrell, Raymond Filippone, Paul Harden, Susan O'Donnell, Raymond Pingitore, Betty Pleacher, Fred Ricci, Johan Uvin, Steven Wilson, Joe Oakes, Jr., Robin Ann Smith, Lori Norris, Phil Stone, Kat Grygiel.

Absent: Diane Cook, Alexis Devine, Joseph DiPina, Allen Durand, Peter Koch, Dorothy Mattiello, Nancy Roderick, Scott Seaback, Andrew Tyska, Wendy Kagan, Courtney Murphy, Victoria Gailliard-Garrick, Darrell Waldron.

Guests and Staff: Christine Grieco, Diane Vendetti, Carlos Ribeiro, Janice Lepizzera, Jen Buck, Thomas Fay, Helder Videira, Lisa Rose.

With a quorum present, Chair Steven Kitchin called the meeting to order at 8:10 AM. He asked all present to review the minutes from the meeting held on June 9, 2009.

VOTE: Susan O'Donnell moved to accept the minutes from the June 9, 2009 meeting. Bob Cooper seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

Chairman's Report

Steven Kitchin reported that he and Robin Smith had attended a Workforce Board meeting at Northeastern University at which workforce development leaders and community college leaders in Massachusetts attended. There was discussion about challenges facing workforce boards in Massachusetts, especially the fact that some workforce boards are out of money and have already committed all of their funds for this year. There were conversations with economist Paul Harrington who is talking about a jobless recovery for the next eighteen to twenty-four months, or more. Robin said that they were told that for every one job at this time, there are six qualified workers.

There was also conversation at that meeting with an aide from Senator Kennedy's office. The work of the senator continued although he passed away that day. The aide believed that 2010 would be the year that Congress will deal with WIA re-authorization, that there will actually be a reworking of the Workforce Investment Act legislation sometime during the next calendar year. There are numerous opportunities for this Board to participate in that process and let their congressional delegates know what things they think work in the current WIA legislation and what things could be improved upon.

Steve reported that he had met with the WPGRI staff during the summer. The good work of Cynthia Farrell, Chair of the Youth Council, the Youth Council members and the hard work of Carlos

Ribeiro showed in how they were able to get the ARRA dollars onto the street as soon as required despite the enormous challenge of ramping up for that program. This relatively young staff as far as tenure with this organization has performed in an exemplary way. Steve wanted to let the staff know how pleased he and the Board have been with the work done over the past six months and he asked that the board acknowledge the staff. The Board recognized the staff with applause.

There have been two resignations from this Board. Kimberly Weiss, a representative on the Board for the DLT has moved on to a position with the Department of Labor in Washington, DC. Jane Nugent has resigned as a result of no longer being employed by United Way of Rhode Island due to budgetary restraints. She has sent a resignation which was read to the Board.

VOTE: Steve Wilson motioned to accept Jane Nugent's resignation. Fred Ricci seconded to accept her resignation with regrets. The motion passed unanimously.

Executive Director's Report

Christine Grieco reported that the staff has been conducting both financial and programmatic monitoring over the summer months. Jen Buck continues to do ITA monitoring. Brian Gambardella, Janice Lepizzera and Diane Vendetti have been conducting the fiscal monitoring. Brian uncovered one problem with a vendor who had

purchased computers with the funds. The situation was handled and the money was returned to WPGRI within two weeks.

The two assistant coordinator positions that were posted August 21st through 27th have been closed. The hiring process will continue as soon as the resumes are released. These positions will be paid for with ARRA stimulus funds.

An email was sent out by Christine to the Northern RI, East Bay and Central Rhode Island Chambers of Commerce offering OJT and Customized Training seminars. One of the seminars was presented by Jen Buck at the Northern RI Chamber of Commerce. There has been an excellent response to this employer training. Seventeen people attended and the response has been positive. There has been an invitation to the Human Resource Management Association of Rhode Island and the East Bay Chamber of Commerce to inform their members of the OJT and CT programs. Another seminar may be presented again next spring here at the Cranston DLT. Christine requested that Board members do what they can to help employers be informed about these programs available to all employers who qualify.

Diane Vendetti has been working on budgets and policies for programs regarding Veterans, the prerequisites for WIA programs, also Adult and Dislocated Workers. There is no need to cover Needs Related Payments so those funds will be funneled into supportive

services after going before the Strategic Committee for approval. WSPC will also be providing these types of programs. Bob Cooper is the member who will be able to give insight regarding the prerequisite policy prior to it being presented to the Quality Assurance Committee.

Strategic Development and Quality Assurance Committee Schedules will be sent out to all members so that as many members as possible can understand and participate in the work of these committees. The corporate side of WPGRI has funds set up to cover Contract Agreements and MOUs for PY09. There is a MOU with WSPC for Adrianna Goode, who has made a huge impact on the uniformity of services at the netWORKri centers. WPGRI pays 60% and WSPC pays 40% of her salary. The amount of \$141,870 has been allocated to the ARRA Stimulus.

This season, each Board member will be invited to give a short talk about their organization/company and what they do.

There have been talks about replacing Kim Weiss on the Board of Directors, possibly with Sue Chomka. It has been sad to lose Jane Nugent and no replacement has yet been found for her.

Board Development

Paul Ouellette introduced the new members who were present: Joe Oakes, Phil Stone, Kat Grygiel and Robin Smith. He also introduced

Attorney Tom Fay. He mentioned that the board Orientation attended by new members on August 11th went very well. The Board orientation meetings are always open to everyone. Paul also asked that all new members hand in their profile forms and let him know which committees they would like to join. The Board Development Committee will be discussing a replacement for the vacant CBO position at their next meeting. Any committee chair could also be asked about the work done by their group.

There will be an Ethics Commission presentation by Jason Gramitt immediately following the Board meeting on November 10th for all new Board members. All Board members are invited to attend as a refresher.

Strategic Development

Paul Harden reported that he has been working with CVS regarding a call center. The intention is to have 200 people working by the beginning of 2010, and 500 by the end of 2010. There is a question about the pay issue. We had been told at inception that the pay would be \$14 per hour but we are now being told that it will be \$12.75 per hour. There will still be good opportunities for those who complete the training. Robin Smith said that 750 people had attended the CVS job fair held at CCRI. It is a complicated screening process for potential employees who will eventually work in a call center in Woonsocket on the Cumberland line. It is estimated that 90% of the workers will come from Rhode Island.

Youth Council

Cynthia Farrell reported that there had been a goal of serving 1000 youth this summer. The end result was 909 youth for 20 hours per week, with average earnings of \$130 per week. There are still four programs running through September 30, 2009.

Phil Stone asked how youth were recruited. Carlos responded that they were recruited through the 12 Youth Centers, schools and also through partnering with DCYF. A total of 1,600 applications were received for WIA eligibility. Then the screening weeded out those who were ineligible. Many Massachusetts WIBs had a very difficult time determining eligibility and their process took too long, pushing vendors to do the screening. The Rhode Island process, which included 4 individuals hired by WPGRI, helped screen for eligibility and proper documentation so that funds could be put to use as soon as possible. The All Youth Agenda in RI also helped attract eligible youth because there was not such a negative stigma involved in participation.

Paul Ouellette commented on the positive aspect of a Mural created by youth in Woonsocket. There had also been an excellent green project in process. Christine Grieco told about the Summer Youth Showcase and what a positive experience it had been for the youth and those in attendance. Carlos said that the visit from Congressman Langevin and Senator Reed had also been very positive. He will be

putting together a packet about these experiences for the Youth Council.

Quality Assurance

Michael Cassidy reported that the Quality Assurance Committee is always open to new members. He will be informing Board members when netWORKri monitoring occurs.

Old Business

There was no old business to report.

New Business

There will be very important voting issues regarding policy and funding streams at the October 14th Board meeting. Jen Buck will be presenting a new Bioscience ISDI partner and we need to vote to let that program begin. Paul Ouellette will oversee that meeting in Steve Kitchin's absence. Members will be contacted soon to assure a quorum at that meeting.

Steve Kitchin would like potential Board members to come to future meetings and present themselves and their backgrounds to the Board. He would also like to bring Paul Harrington in to speak about the condition of the labor market and its impact on youth. In light of the knowledge that WIBs in other states are running out of money, Steve would like to have PY09 budget reports for the next meeting. WPGRI is not out of funds and Diane Vendetti will report at the October 14th meeting.

Joe DeSantis spoke about a group which is part of an energy training grant through WSPC.

WPGRI will also be part of a Health Initiative. There are still logistical obstacles to be worked through but WPGRI and WSPC are working together with all the players. There is not yet a shovel-ready project but progress is being made.

VOTE: Robin Smith motioned to adjourn. Betty Pleacher seconded and the motion passed unanimously. The meeting was adjourned at 9:08 AM.

The next meeting of the Board of Directors will be held on October 14, 2009.

Respectfully submitted by Lisa Rose, Administrative Assistant