

**GOVERNOR'S WORKFORCE BOARD RI
EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE MEETING
OCTOBER 3, 2007**

MINUTES

Members Present: Joseph MarcAurele, Brandon Melton, Sharon Moylan,
William McGowan, Jack Warner
Members Absent: none
Staff Present: J. Michael Koback, Maureen Mooney
Location: RI Department of Labor and Training, Conference room 73-2

With a quorum present, Chair MarcAurele called the meeting to order at 11:10 a.m.

A motion was entered to approve the minutes of the 8-28-06 Executive Committee meeting.

VOTE: J. Warner moved to approve, seconded by S. Moylan. All approved.

Legislative Affairs Committee (Proposed)

M. Koback introduced David Tremblay, the legislative affairs liaison for the Department of Labor & Training (DLT), who presented a proposal to create a Legislative Affairs Committee of the GWB. M. Koback commented that the results of the last session of the General Assembly showed that the GWB should be more informed about legislative issues that are occurring at both the state and federal level in order to more fully participate in the legislative process. He mentioned Governor Carcieri's recent appointment to lead the National Governor's Association's Committee on Education, Early Childhood and Workforce as an example. This committee is tasked with working with other governors to develop best practices to enhance education for students and for those adults in the workforce who require additional skills training. M. Koback reported that GWB staff member, David Francis is staff to this committee. His involvement includes attending a weekly meeting at the State House with Governor's staff, Janet Durfee-Hidalgo, and participating in conference calls with Washington. The GWB role is to assist with the process of linking educational components with the workforce on a local level and participating in the national conversation.

M. Koback indicated a legislative affairs committee would be important in considering the effects of the political process on the workforce system. He noted that the GWB is prohibited from lobbying but can assume an informational role and support legislation that furthers the board's agenda. He turned the meeting over to D. Tremblay to provide some background on what might be key elements of this committee.

D. Tremblay informed the committee of his prior staff experience in the Policy and Legislative Affairs unit of the Governor's office. In his similar position at DLT, he follows congressional actions, general assembly activities and policies, and legislation and evaluates how it affects the department. He provided some background information on the work of legislative affairs committees nationally and referred to the handout: Legislative Affairs Committee (proposed). This proposal describes the various ways that a committee could be structured; e.g., as a standing committee, an ad hoc committee or as an additional responsibility of the existing board.

W. McGowan spoke of a recent experience with a legislator at the end of the last legislative session. In his conversation with this legislator it became apparent that the representative had

no idea of the mission or purpose of the GWB. He indicated it was important that the Legislature be informed of what the GWB does, noting that the board has made great progress in the area of Industry Partnerships, youth initiatives, adult education and others. He also noted the general lack of understanding of the utilization of funding relating to the GWB.

D. Tremblay noted the two separate roles being identified for the proposed legislative committee. The first is an informational role providing board members with an understanding of the varied legislative agenda both locally and nationally and its impact on the work of the board. He indicated that this is a good practice for a board to adopt. The secondary role would be to isolate and address the issue of the governance of the GWB itself. He also discussed the impact of the recent separation of powers legislation and the effects this has on this board and others.

J. Warner commented there are multiple concerns being presented with differing solutions. He observed that if the purpose is to educate the board about legislative issues, it is easily doable. If it is to try to overcome potential threats to board from the assembly that feels out of the loop, then that would lead to a different solution. He raised the question "Given the separation of powers, how do you engage the assembly in matters of importance when it comes to the sustainability of those structures that have been created by executive order?" He offered the Pre K-16 Council as an example. He also raised the question, "How do you engage key members of the assembly to help them buy into this structure?" and finally "How do we get to legislation that could sustain a structure using an appropriate method which is separate from the politics?"

Chair MarcAurele noted that the separation of powers has affected all boards. He asked D. Tremblay if there are examples of boards in the state that are doing an effective job communicating with the legislature.

D. Tremblay responded they he was not aware of any currently noting that the Economic Development Corporation (EDC) board formerly had legislators on it and perhaps was more effective because of this.

W. McGowan re-iterated the issue of the lack of understanding by the legislature of the work of the GWB. He suggested meeting with House Finance Chairman Steven Constantino to thank him for his support. It would also provide an opportunity to explain the work of the GWB and the progress being made. He suggested having this meeting before the legislative session opens. Other important contacts suggested by committee members would be Marie Gannon and Russell Dannecker, fiscal and policy advisors of the Senate.

Chair MarcAurele commented that the onus is on the GWB to educate the legislature and to accomplish our agenda items. This in itself is an important reason to form a legislative affairs committee. Regarding the information reporting aspect of this committee, he suggested we would need to be selective on the information provided since there are such wide ranges of legislative issues.

J. Warner inquired if the board is barred from engaging a lobbyist on staff or by contract? He provided examples of boards which retain registered lobbyists whose purpose it is to inform and to advocate.

D. Tremblay indicated he has spoken with DLT legal counsel exploring what the limitations are, and what is appropriate. He reported that you cannot advocate but can inform and indicated there is a fine line between each.

W. McGowan reiterated the importance of educating the legislature about the GWB and its work. Important topics should include the awarding of grants, GWB funding sources, and current reform efforts such as youth and adult education initiatives. Also important is to emphasize to the legislature on how the GWB is helping their constituents.

Chair MarcAurele concluded that it makes sense to consider forming a legislative committee and noted he would like to be involved with it. He stated that if the committee does nothing else but educates key people in the legislature then it is an important accomplishment.

M. Koback emphasized that the legislative committee could assist in exercising the GWB's role as a policy board by impacting legislation such as tax credits, WIA reauthorization and other issues surrounding the workforce. He reported that the GWB's annual report, which is planned to be completed by the end of the calendar year, would be a good start at educating and informing the legislature and the public on GWB's mission, policies, activities and accomplishments.

Further discussion followed concerning the role of the legislative affairs committee to address the more immediate concern regarding the House finance situation and of keeping the legislative leadership informed about the GWB. A suggestion was made by W. McGowan to designate a day, perhaps at the Marriott in Providence, to talk to legislators providing information and the opportunity to ask questions. This could be similar to the higher education day that is held at the State House in April.

Chair MarcAurele entertained a motion to form a legislative affairs committee.

VOTE: W. McGowan moved to approve, seconded by S. Moylan. All approved. The motion passed.

Chair MarcAurele asked W. McGowan to chair this committee and to consider which board members should be invited to join. Chair MarcAurele indicated he would be interested in being on this committee. D. Tremblay offered his assistance with this committee also.

J. Warner suggested that in addition to forming this committee, an added task might be developing a strategy to keep the general assembly informed of the work of the GWB. M. Koback also noted the possibility of this committee supporting initiatives of other agencies such as the Office of Higher Education as well as EDC.

Vice Chair Vacancy

M. Koback mentioned that the position of Vice Chair has been vacant for some time. Chair MarcAurele asked committee members their thoughts on the background required for this position. J. Warner noted that it should be someone who offers a complementary perspective and a supplemental skill set from the business environment represented by the board president. Chair MarcAurele agreed to consider the options for putting forth a candidate.

Members/Staff Committee Assignments

Chair MarcAurele asked committee members to review the current committee assignments asking if they were adequately supported. He noted that new board members, Saul Kaplan and Cathy Streker, did not have committee assignments. He also noted that the Executive Committee, the Strategic Investment Committee and the Adult Education and Literacy Committee were adequately staffed. It was discussed that W. McGowan would contact Saul Kaplan about joining the Planning and Evaluation Committee. Chair MarcAurele mentioned that he would contact Cathy Streker about a committee assignment.

Meetings Format

M. Koback requested feedback from committee members on the meeting format for the board meetings. He stated that at the last board meeting, the format was changed to focus more on policy matters and presentations, which was accomplished by putting the process and operational items into a consent agenda. All members agreed this was an effective format to follow.

M. Koback mentioned at the next board meeting, Director Orefice will present information on RI employment trends & workforce issues. At this point in time, it appears the Governor will be attending. M. Koback referred to the publication: RI Employment Trends and Workforce Issues 2007 which will be distributed at the board meeting. He also requested ideas from committee chairs for board meeting topics that will generate more thought about policy and systems and how they interact and impact each other.

Committee Chairs Update

S. Moylan provided an update on the Board Development Committee explaining they have not met primarily due to the current strategic planning process. She asked for suggestions on topics of interest for the committee to pursue. Chair MarcAurele suggested that information on best practices occurring in other states is always valuable to the board. He cited the topic of business retention funding, currently being discussed in the Strategic Investment committee, as a good example.

M. Koback reported on a presentation given by Dr. Andrew Sum at the recent U.S. Conference of Mayor's Workforce Development Council meeting held in Washington D.C. His presentation on youth employment from the 2007 Summer Jobs Report indicated that this past summer was the worst in 50 years for youth working in summer jobs. W. McGowan pointed out that in comparison RI seems to be doing relatively well specifically mentioning the funding the GWB approved for the upcoming year for youth initiatives.

2008 Board Meeting Schedule

The 2008 Board meeting schedule was reviewed and approved. M. Koback requested that committee chairs prepare an annual meeting schedule in advance.

With no other business to discuss, the meeting adjourned at 12:10 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Maureen Mooney