

**GOVERNOR'S WORKFORCE BOARD RI  
STRATEGIC INVESTMENT COMMITTEE MEETING  
DECEMBER 3, 2007**

**MEETING MINUTES**

Members Present: Joseph MarcAurele, Chair, George Nee, Brandon Melton, and Martin Trueb  
Members Absent: William McGowan, Armeather Gibbs and Lorna Ricci  
Staff Present: Michael Koback, Stephen Schaefer, Nancy Olson, David Francis, Maureen Mooney  
Others Present: Paul MacDonald, John O'Hare, Kathy Tufts, Paul Harden

**Minutes of 10/01/07**

Chairman MarcAurele asked for a review of the meeting minutes of October 1, 2007 of the Governor's Workforce Board RI (GWBRI) Strategic Investment Committee. He then asked for a motion to approve the meeting minutes as presented.

**VOTE:** George Nee moved to approve. Martin Trueb seconded the motion. The vote was unanimous, the motion passed.

**Budget Update**

M. Koback asked N. Olson to present the budget update who referred to the handout entitled: HRIC Job Development Fund FY '08 Budget Status which is based on 11/30/07 data.

***Workforce Training:***

N. Olson reviewed the FY '08 allocation priorities of the budget beginning with the Workforce Training category and reported that the RFP's for this funding are due on Friday, December 7<sup>th</sup>. She anticipates a good response because many companies that were previously awarded Workforce Improvement Grants for round 1 and 2 are now eligible for grant funds.

N. Olson indicated that the allocations for this round of funding will be better known after all of the RFP's are submitted, read and rated. She also mentioned there is a great need for readers and encouraged committee members to refer anyone who may have an interest. G. Nee inquired about the timetable for the allocations of these funds. N. Olson responded that the grant start date is January 21, 2008 noting that the board will meet in January to formally approve the funding.

***New Worker Training:***

N. Olson explained that this funding is designated for those companies with less than 10 employees and that the grant process is currently being developed with the Business office as well as the Department of Administration. M. Koback indicated they are waiting for the process of delegated authority to be approved for this funding. G. Nee inquired if this funding source could be a subset of Workforce training. N. Olson clarified that the funding category of Workforce Expansion is for 10 or more employees for new hires and that the idea behind the New Worker training was to assist those smaller employers that are adding 1 or 2 employees at a time. M. Koback explained the rationale behind the delegated authority process and the intention of moving away from the RFP process by providing rotating grants on a monthly basis.

***Workforce Expansion:***

N. Olson reiterated that this funding is managed by the Economic Development Corporation (EDC) and that currently there is \$100,000 obligated for this purpose. She noted that there are 2 or 3 companies in the midst of the application process for this funding.

***Partnership Grants:***

N. Olson reviewed the funding of the Partnership Grants indicating that \$250,000 of the \$1,500,000 has been obligated for the DLT portion recently approved and that \$500,000 was also recently approved for the Industry Partnership grants. She noted that the obligated amount does not include the partnership grants and that funding amount will be modified in the budget report to show \$750,000 as obligated.

***Youth Strategies:***

N. Olson noted there is no change from the last committee meeting on this funding.

***Adult Education/Literacy:***

N. Olson reported that the Department of Education (DOE) is in the process of sending to us a list of agencies that are funded by this initiative. She indicated we will be working with DOE with this program and providing assistance in monitoring these grant funds.

***Business Retention:***

N. Olson noted that the \$50,000 in this funding category is obligated to Hope Global. She hopes to have a progress report from Hope Global for the next Strategic Investment Committee meeting.

G. Nee inquired if there are any other funding requests pending in the Business Retention category and it was noted there are not. Chair MarcAurele mentioned that more thought needs to be given to the reallocation of the funds remaining in this funding category.

M. Koback provided an update on a recent meeting held on November 30<sup>th</sup> at the Department of Labor and Training, which focused on the topic of business retention and

expansion. A representative from the U.S. Department of Commerce, Mark Troppe, and a representative from the National Institute for Standards and Technology participated in this meeting which focused on goals and policies relating to business retention. M. Koback reported that meeting topics identified an apparent shift of focus on company growth rather than on the demise of a company.

Chair MarcAurele reiterated that he did not want to create another category of funding. M. Koback agreed that a reallocation of funds for business retention should be reviewed at the next Strategic Investment Committee meeting.

G. Nee added that it is unlikely that the criteria for business expansion funding would be determined by the end of the fiscal year. He suggested reallocating these funds into one of the more successful initiatives such as Adult Education or Workforce Training noting that the need is there for these funds. He further suggested that the committee could review Business Retention funding needs in the next fiscal year.

Chair MarcAurele requested that M. Koback consider the initiatives that are the most effective and determine a strategy for the balance of Business Retention funding. He also mentioned that he considered adult education and literacy as well as youth strategy initiatives as strong contenders to receive additional funding.

M Koback offered a suggestion to consider specific customized training for the Industry Partnerships as there has been discussion with the local Workforce Investment Boards (WIBS) to provide training on health care, technology and manufacturing related topics. Chair MarcAurele stated that the committee has established core competencies that he would prefer to focus on emphasizing we should narrow our focus to those initiatives that have momentum.

### ***Capacity Building:***

N. Olson explained the funding allocation category for Capacity Building as designated for the Corporation for a Skilled Workforce (CSW) portion of the strategic planning initiative. M. Koback clarified that this allocation funds the resource mapping piece, focus groups and possibly new technology to update the current Labor Market Information (LMI) systems.

### **Industry Partnerships Update**

M. Koback provided a brief update of the Industry Partnerships. He reported that negotiations are complete with the Hospital Association of Rhode Island, Quality Partners and Tech Collective for the year two program. He also reported that the funding amounts are approximately \$150,000 per organization and that year 2 plans have been submitted. He noted that the RI Manufacturing Extension Services (RIMES) is having some difficulty with their partnership with the RI Manufacturing Association (RIMA), therefore an extension has been granted to complete the work outstanding for year one. M. Koback also noted that negotiations for their year two contract are still pending.

A brief discussion followed regarding the financial services and insurance sector as part of the Industry Partnership program. In summary, Chair MarcAurele requested that

P. Harden work in conjunction with EDC to establish meetings with higher level participants to further develop this partnership opportunity. M. Koback offered that the Financial Services Academy in Boston would be a willing participant in these meetings.

### **Presentation: Export Management Training Grant Program**

Katherine Tufts, Associate International Trade Director of the RI Economic Development Corporation (RIEDC), presented information on the Export Management Training Grant Program. She noted that the purpose of this grant program is to create jobs in RI through increased exports and to create a better trained workforce in export skills. She provided statistics on the importance of exports in business markets specifically noting that exports accounted for ¼ of the U.S. economic growth during the past decade. She reported that to remain competitive in today's economy, R.I. companies must compete head to head with their global competitors in their own markets if they wish to maintain domestic market share.

K. Tufts explained that the request for \$100,000 is funded from the RI set aside which has already been approved. She reported that since the program's inception in 1996, almost 600 RI employees have been trained in export skills and that 274 companies received grants. She also provided a brief overview of the following programs: Export Management Training grant, Market Entry Training, and Trade Mission Training.

G. Nee inquired about the funding source for these programs and N. Olson responded that it is funded from the Workforce Expansion grant program. He also inquired about the relationship with Bryant University. K. Tufts responded that RIEDC is partnered with Bryant.

A motion was entered to approve the funding for a Workforce Expansion grant to RIEDC for the Export Management Training Grant Program in the amount of \$100,000.

**VOTE:** George Nee moved to approve. Martin Trueb seconded the motion. The vote was unanimous, the motion passed.

With no further business, Chair MarcAurele asked for a motion to adjourn

**VOTE:** M. Trueb made a motion to adjourn. G. Nee seconded the motion. The vote was unanimous, the motion passed.

The meeting was adjourned at 8:55 a.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Maureen Mooney