

**Governor's Workforce Board RI
Strategic Investment Committee Meeting
March 5, 2009**

Meeting Minutes

Committee Members present: William McGowan, Vice Chair, Brandon Melton,
George Nee, Lorna Ricci, Martin Trueb
Committee Members absent: Joseph MarcAurele, Chair, Armeather Gibbs
GWB Staff present: John O'Hare, Nancy Olson, Dan Brown, Maureen Mooney
DLT Staff present: Lori Norris
Others Present: Paul Harden, Dan Egan, Janet Raymond

Call to Order

Vice Chair McGowan called the meeting to order at 10:15 a.m. He welcomed everyone to the meeting and provided an overview of the agenda items.

Minutes of 12/17/08

Vice Chair McGowan asked for a review of the meeting minutes of 12/17/08 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: L. Ricci moved to approve. G. Nee seconded the motion. The vote was unanimous, the motion passed.

Funding Requests: Workforce Expansion Grants

Vice Chair McGowan asked Paul Harden of the RI Economic Development Corporation (RIEDC) to review the funding requests for the Workforce Expansion grants. P. Harden provided further detail for the following companies:

Workplace Dynamics	\$ 24,210
Epoch Sleep Centers, Inc.	\$ 60,000
Precision Web Marketing, Inc.	\$ 80,000
Pentair Electronic Packaging	\$160,240 (original grant request reduced)

L. Ricci asked if the companies requesting funding were physically accessible to people in wheelchairs who are prospective employees as well as clients. P. Harden was not aware if these companies met that standard but agreed to inquire further. J. O'Hare noted that these companies must meet ADA requirements and that it is part of their contract.

A discussion followed on the funding approval process for the Workforce Expansion grants. J. O'Hare asked if the funding process included testing the companies using the approved Business Retention model. N. Olson reported that these grants are presented to the already established Workforce Expansion Grant sub-committee and that the representatives on this committee are familiar with On the Job Training (OJT) and State Workforce Investment Office (SWIO) procedures. She mentioned that the Employer Service Representatives (ESRs) are part of this sub-committee which reviews the funding requests before they are presented to the Strategic Investments Committee. N. Olson recommended that the process of reconvening the WF Expansion subcommittee, which was originally established by the Strategic Investments Committee, be set back into motion. P. Harden reported that RIEDC reviews the grant requests and makes the recommendation for funding.

Vice Chair W. McGowan asked for a motion to approve the funding requests based upon the compliance of the companies with taxation and other financial criteria. This motion was made on the condition that the companies meet the physical access availability concerns raised by L. Ricci.

VOTE: L. Ricci moved to approve. B. Melton seconded the motion. The vote was unanimous, the motion passed.

Incumbent Worker Training Grants - \$2,000,000

Vice Chair McGowan asked N. Olson to summarize the results of the incumbent worker training grant proposals. She reported there was a good response to the RFP, which indicates that in spite of the difficult economic times, companies are interested in training their workforce. She reported that the staff recommendation is to fund 78 companies, and that 27 companies were not recommended for funding. She indicated that the total number of employees to be trained is 6673.

A discussion followed regarding the criteria used to rate the proposals. N. Olson provided information on the process of reading and rating the proposals. J. O'Hare indicated that you cannot change the criteria for this current round of grants, but going forward you can apply any standard that the board wants to apply to the process. He noted that the revised standard must be advertised and published.

Vice Chair McGowan asked for a motion to approve funding in the amount of \$2,055,845 for the Incumbent Worker Training grants adding the stipulation that within in the next six months the criteria would be reviewed with committee members.

VOTE: B. Melton moved to approve. M. Trueb seconded the motion. Vice Chair McGowan recused himself from the vote. The vote was in the majority, the motion passed.

Expansion of the Pilot Projective Initiative – Cranston School Department

Vice Chair McGowan asked B. Melton to provide an overview of the Cranston School Department Pilot Project Initiative. Noting that the original focus of the youth initiative of the GWB was on summer employment needs for youth, he emphasized the importance of developing programs that serve youth year round. He indicated that this pilot project not only met this goal but also served to align business with education and worked to link the curriculum to work readiness skills in addition to the core skills received in school. He noted that the pilot program exceeded objectives and that it is proposed to expand this program beyond Cranston to three additional districts in the state.

L. Norris reported that 166 youth obtained jobs noting this was remarkable given the state of the economy. She reported that Dr. Roy Seitsinger, the Director of Middle and High School Reform for the RI Department of Education, was pleased with the initial results of the pilot project. She indicated that the goal is to make this project a sustainable endeavor across the state and to expand this project into urban, suburban and rural areas which would assist in the evaluation of outside factors influencing the outcomes. L. Norris asked J. O'Hare to provide further insight on the funding aspect of this request.

J. O'Hare indicated that for capacity issues with youth programs, it is important to utilize the school systems as well as the current youth centers. He reported that the GWB has funded \$3 million annually for youth initiatives and suggested that the GWB fund \$2 million in the next funding cycle. He suggested that the other \$1 million be used to connect to the high schools by incorporating this pilot project. This is the funding which is being requested today.

J. O'Hare mentioned that he has spoken to the local Workforce Investment Boards (WIBS) and reported they will be receiving an additional \$5 million through the federal stimulus package. To manage this additional funding, he indicated an RFP team will utilize vendors for the summer employment program incorporating workforce readiness components.

Vice Chair McGowan asked for a motion to approve funding in the amount of \$974,750 for the expansion of the Pilot Project Initiative World of Work (WOW) program.

VOTE: G. Nee moved to approve. L. Ricci seconded the motion.
The vote was unanimous, the motion passed.

Knowledge Retention Symposium – Student Capture for the Knowledge Economy

W. McGowan introduced Dan Egan, President of the Association of Independent Colleges & Universities of Rhode Island (AICU Rhode Island). Mr. Egan explained this request is to assist in funding the development of a Knowledge Retention Symposium. D. Egan indicated that the funding request of \$10,000 will be used for planning, management, speaker fees, site selection, collateral, research and marketing of, and for, a statewide event to identify, evaluate and develop long-term, student-retention activities. He mentioned that other partners include the Greater Providence Chamber of Commerce, the Rhode Island Board of Governor's for Higher Education, the Rhode Island Department of Labor & Training and Tech Collective.

Vice Chair McGowan asked for a motion to approve funding in the amount of \$10,000 for the Knowledge Retention Symposium.

VOTE: B. Melton moved to approve. G. Nee seconded the motion.
The vote was unanimous, the motion passed.

Other Business

With no further business, Vice Chair McGowan asked for a motion to adjourn the meeting.

VOTE B. Melton moved to approve. L. Ricci seconded the motion.
The vote was unanimous, the motion passed.

The meeting adjourned at 11:25 a.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Maureen Mooney