

**Governor's Workforce Board RI
Strategic Investments Committee Meeting
July 16, 2009**

Meeting Minutes

Committee Members present: Joseph MarcAurele, Chair, William McGowan,
Brandon Melton, Martin Trueb, George Nee
Committee Members absent: Lorna Ricci, Armeather Gibbs
GWB Staff present: John J. O'Hare, Nancy Olson, Dan Brown, David Francis,
Maureen Mooney
DLT Staff present: Lori Norris, Diane Vendetti
Others Present: Johan Uvin, Paul Harden, Andrew Bramson, Nzinga Misgana,
Jim Glover

Call to Order

Chair MarcAurele called the meeting to order at 8: 05 a.m. He welcomed everyone to the meeting and provided an overview of the agenda items.

Minutes of 6/4/09

Chair MarcAurele asked for a review of the meeting minutes of 6/4/09 of the Governor's Workforce Board (GWB) Strategic Investments Committee. He asked for a motion to approve the meeting minutes as presented.

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

Funding Request: Rhode Island Virtual Skills Academy

Chair MarcAurele asked Johan Uvin to provide further information on the funding request for the Rhode Island Virtual Skills Academy.

J. Uvin noted it was the decision of the Workforce Cabinet to explore the possibility of providing technology-based skill development opportunities for low-skilled Rhode Islanders and asked the RI Department of Education (RIDE) to develop a RFP. He indicated the goal is to develop a statewide online learning network for these skill development applications enabling the RIDE to make available approximately 120,000 licenses for adult education participants on waiting lists, One Stop Career Center customers, and students in developmental learning courses at postsecondary education and training institutions. He noted that the intention is to see additional investments from the Office of Higher Education, RIDE, DHS and other public and private entities.

Chair MarcAurele asked for a motion to approve the funding for the RI Virtual Skills Academy in the amount of \$75,000, taking into consideration that an update on additional funding will be provided to committee members in a few months.

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

Funding Request: Shared Youth Vision (SYV) Replication

Chair MarcAurele reported that this funding request was endorsed by the GWB Youth Development Committee (YDC) and asked Lori Norris to provide further information on the replication of the pilot project. L. Norris indicated that she and J. Uvin have been working on this partnership for some time and that the goal is to replicate the SYV initiative statewide.

She provided an overview of the initial project, and highlighted the outcomes for the system, for youth and for the case managers. She mentioned that one of the replication objectives is to expand the pilot model into five regions across Rhode Island and to expand participation. She indicated that additional funding has been requested from other agencies and that allocations will be received from RIDE, the State Workforce Investment Office (SWIO) and Juvenile Justice. She reported that the RI Foundation has committed \$300,000 in funding over a two-year period and noted the need to secure \$200,000 from partner agencies in order to move ahead. J. Uvin provided more detail on the specific outcomes based on evaluation results.

Chair MarcAurele requested a motion to approve funding for the Shared Youth Vision Replication project in the amount of \$500,000.

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

Funding Request: Strengthening Communities Fund (SCF)

Chair MarcAurele asked Andrew Bramson of the Providence Plan to present the funding request for the SCF Program, noting it is part of a cash match for a \$250,000 federal grant. A. Bramson explained that SCF is a new initiative from the Obama administration and a part of the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (ARRA) and is designed to build the capacity of non profit organizations by assisting them in taking advantage of ARRA opportunities for workforce development resources that are coming to the states through the stimulus bill. A. Bramson noted that the \$250,000 federal grant requires a 20% match which is the reason for the funding request to the GWB. Nzinga Misgana provided information on New Roots, a statewide initiative that aims to build the capacity of community and faith-based organizations working to improve life for Rhode Islanders. New Roots assists these organizations by providing training, technical assistance and capacity-building grants to help them strengthen their management structure, develop new sources of funds, and create high-quality service programs.

Chair MarcAurele requested a motion to approve the funding request in the amount of \$62,500.

VOTE: W. McGowan moved to approve. M. Trueb seconded the motion.
The vote was unanimous, the motion passed.

Funding Request: Comprehensive Training Grants

Chair MarcAurele asked Nancy Olson to discuss the request for additional funding for the Comprehensive Workforce Training grant program. She reported that GWB staff continues to work on making monies available to employers for training by reviewing de-obligations from FY 09 grant funds (\$350,000) and FY 10 grant funds (\$50,000). She noted that the scores from the 2009 training grants were reviewed and that additional companies could be funded. This \$400,000 in additional grant funds would train 1,000 new workers from 17 companies.

Chair MarcAurele requested a motion to approve the funding request in the amount of \$398,336.

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

Funding Request: Workforce Expansion Grants

Chair MarcAurele asked P. Harden of the RI Economic Development Corporation (RIEDC) to provide further information on the funding requests for the Workforce Expansion grants.

P. Harden provided background on the following company's grant requests:

Crimzon Rose International Inc.

(Request is \$58,920; the EDC recommendation is \$34,760)

House of Stainless, Inc.

(Request is for \$100,000; the EDC recommendation is \$80,000)

Pioneer Financial Group, Inc.

(Request is for \$30,000 and the EDC recommendation is the same)

G. Nee suggested that at a future meeting, a discussion occur about meeting the Job Development Act revised wage rate of \$17 per hour when awarding funding to the companies for Workforce Expansion Grants. He indicated the importance of meeting the state wage average when approving funds from the GWB.

Chair MarcAurele requested a motion to approve funding in the amount of \$144,760 for the Workforce Expansion grants.

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

Funding Request: Green Technology Industry Partnership

Chair MarcAurele mentioned that at the last Strategic Investments Committee meeting, there was a discussion regarding the Green Technology Industry Partnership funding request. Chair MarcAurele indicated that given the level of funding coming from the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (ARRA) for green technology, he did not want to be seen as being in opposition of this initiative. He suggested re-engaging the conversation about green technology opportunities. J. O'Hare provided further information and insight on the funding available from the federal government for green technology. J. O'Hare commented that the board approved the green RFP and noted that the standard of the RFP has not changed, noting that the scope of work for green technology is identical to the other industry partnerships. He noted the importance of having an industry connection to green technology in order to take advantage of federal funding. He asked for guidance from the committee to respond to the companies who responded to the RFP.

A discussion followed. A question was asked about the obligation of GWB funding going forward from the initial request. J. O'Hare noted there was no obligation beyond the original funding request. Each grant award is reviewed at the end of their contract before another award is made.

Chair MarcAurele requested a motion to approve funding in the amount of \$149,050 to the New England Institute of Technology for the Green Technology Industry Partnership.

VOTE: M. Trueb moved to approve. W. McGowan seconded the motion.
The vote was unanimous, the motion passed.

Other Business

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

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

The meeting adjourned at 9:15 a.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Maureen Mooney