

**GOVERNOR'S WORKFORCE BOARD RI  
EMPLOYER COMMITTEE MEETING  
MARCH 30, 2012**

**MINUTES**

Committee Members Present: Martin Trueb, Chair; Mike Grey, Brandon Melton, Sharon Moylan, Robert Nangle, Cathy Streker,

Committee Members Not Present: Connie Howes, Juana Horton, Paul MacDonald, Keith Stokes

GWB Staff Present: Rick Brooks, Nancy Olson, Dan Brown, Angelo Dafonseca, Maureen Mooney

DLT Staff Present: David Tremblay, Sue Chomka, Connie Parks  
Others Present: Judy Jones, Economic Progress Institute; Malcolm Baxter, BIS; Michael Paruta, Women & Infants Hospital

Location: RI DLT, Conference room 73-2

**Call to Order**

Chair Trueb called the meeting to order at 8:01 a.m. and welcomed everyone to the first meeting of the GWB Employer Committee. He provided an overview of the agenda and stated that a primary objective of the meeting is to summarize and develop a mission statement for the committee.

**Establishing the GWB Employer Committee**

Chair Trueb asked Rick Brooks to provide background information on the establishment of the committee. R. Brooks stated that the initial idea of the committee was formed during the GWB Board retreat held in December 2011. He noted a primary objective is for the committee and participants of the larger workforce development system to assess the real time needs of employers to strategically plan programs and funding. He indicated the creation of an Employer Advisory Group would assist in connecting the activities of the Governor's Workforce Board which are not linked to other board committees. This would include Industry Partners, Career Pathways System Task Force (CPSTF), netWORKri centers and others. Chair Trueb noted the importance of connecting to individuals that are not currently part of the Industry Partners and the role of smaller businesses.

**Defining the mission of the GWB Employer Committee**

Chair Trueb asked for input on creating a mission statement for the committee and suggested there were three main areas to focus on:

1. Be a bridge among the existing vehicles that the GWB utilizes for those organizations that do not have a natural place to come to.
2. Connect with the current resources of the GWB including Industry Partnerships and the Career Pathways System Task Force (CPSTF) for feedback and communication to the workforce system.
3. Develop and utilize the Employer Advisory Committee as a resource to gain information and referral to the workforce development system.

Bob Nangle noted the importance of internships and spoke of an idea he recently heard about unemployed Rhode Islanders who are collecting unemployment insurance. It was suggested the unemployed could get back into the workforce or participate in an internship program and not have their benefits affected. R. Nangle indicated this would provide a benefit to the worker to gain experience and to the organization to vet the employee. He explained that his business often utilized employees through a temp agency. B. Melton stated providing internships creates pipelines and assists with better decision making in hiring. R. Brooks noted there is legislation submitted on this topic.

### **Formation of the GWB Employer Advisory Committee (Composition, Activities and Events)**

Chair Trueb explained that a key role of the Employer Committee is to convene a larger group of employers in an Employer Advisory Group. The Employer Committee would plan the agenda and provide outreach to establish the Advisory Group membership. There was discussion on the composition of this group on such as:

- Should this be a fixed or ad hoc membership?
- Should this Advisory group be made of small businesses or large businesses or a combination of both?
- Should there be one or more Advisory groups?

There was discussion on the topics to come before the Advisory Group:

- How do you handle those issues raised that are not related to workforce development and are outside of the scope of the GWB's mission? (Examples were given such as business climate, taxes, and other obstacles to businesses hiring.)

There was further discussion on the Advisory Group being a fixed group vs. a variable group. One suggestion was to start out with a limited scope and expand from this. A suggestion was made to sponsor periodic forums. There were questions and comments on what industries to include. R. Brooks asked committee members to forward the names of 3-5 businesses to be included in the first ad hoc group.

There was discussion on utilizing the services of the Small Business Association (SBA) as they would be instrumental in communicating the value of participating to the smaller businesses. N. Olson noted that many of the Industry Partnerships were connected to small business. She also suggested utilizing the local Chambers of Commerce to solicit interest among all businesses.

There was discussion that a first step might be to reach out to the Chambers, Industry Partners and SBA and provide a 10 minute presentation on the programs and services available from GWB/DLT. It was suggested that this presentation could be folded into a Chamber meeting or event and could be presented by a member of the GWB Employer Committee.

Survey Monkey was suggested as a way to collect data, correlate the data quickly and vet the results through the Industry Partners and/or Chambers.

It was noted that the DLT Labor Market Information Unit conducts surveys and provides valuable information. The Business Workforce Center at DLT was also suggested as a resource for employers.

A suggestion was made to inventory past attempts of state government agencies in collecting information about workforce development services. It would build credibility with employers to offer inquiries and information that has not been presented repeatedly.

Chair Trueb stated it is important to link groups together to increase the effectiveness of the work and to bridge any gaps. He suggested starting with a group of 12 employers, provide them with information of value and be open to their feedback. R. Brooks suggested that an early morning Chamber of Commerce Business and Breakfast meeting might be an appropriate forum.

The April 6<sup>th</sup> GWB Pre-proposal meeting for the 2012 Incumbent Worker Training Grants was suggested as an opportunity to reach employers since many would be in attendance. A survey was suggested. This survey would include questions about the workforce needs of Rhode Island companies and organizations. This information would be collected and presented at the next Employer Committee meeting.

In closing, Chair Trueb summarized the discussion:

- main concepts of the mission statement were discussed and reviewed
- collect information from employers at the April 6<sup>th</sup> Pre-proposal meeting
- organize the information of past and current workforce services offered to establish an inventory which could assist in determining future communication efforts to businesses.
- determine where employers are currently involved.
- determine how to communicate the next steps to businesses and what forum to use
- Identify programs which will present quick wins and establish interest
- develop comprehensive list of Rhode Island Chamber of Commerce contacts

### **Schedule of Future Meetings**

Chair Trueb asked that a meeting schedule of the GWB Employer Committee be established. The next meeting date of Thursday, April 26, 2012 was determined with an 8:00 a.m. start. He asked that one hour meetings for May and June be scheduled and sent to committee members.

### **Adjournment**

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

**VOTE:** R. Nangle moved to approve, seconded by B. Melton. All approved.

The meeting was adjourned at 9:37 a.m.

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Respectfully submitted,

Maureen Mooney