

**GOVERNOR'S WORKFORCE BOARD RI
EMPLOYER COMMITTEE MEETING
APRIL 26, 2012**

MINUTES

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

Committee Members Not Present: Connie Howes, Mike Grey, 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: Linda Katz, Economic Progress Institute; Malcolm Baxter, BIS

Location: RI DLT, Conference room 72-1

Call to Order

Chair Trueb called the meeting to order at 8:05 a.m. and welcomed everyone to the meeting. He provided an overview of the agenda and summarized the key components of the mission statement of the committee. The draft of the mission statement is as follows:

The Employer Committee of the Governor's Workforce Board of Rhode Island (GWB) will support the goals of the GWB by providing a forum for employers to provide feedback on the effectiveness of GWB sponsored programs and initiatives. This will be accomplished through three core strategies:

- 1. Serve as a bridge to and among the existing vehicles that the GWB utilizes for those organizations that do not have a natural place to come.*
- 2. Provide employer focused feedback to the GWB and related resources such as the Industry Partnerships and the Career Pathways System Task Force to facilitate communications to and amongst the workforce system.*
- 3. Establish an Employer Advisory Committee to acquire actionable information and enable referrals to the resources of the workforce development system.*

Meeting Minutes 3-30-12

Chair Trueb asked for a review of the minutes of the 3-30-12 meeting. He asked if there was a motion to approve the meeting minutes.

Vote: R. Nangle motioned to approve the minutes of the 3-30-12 meeting. C. Streker seconded the motion. The vote was unanimous; the motion passed.

Employer Survey

Chair Trueb reviewed the employer survey that was provided to employers at the recent Governor's Workforce Board pre-proposal conference for the Incumbent Worker Training Grant Program. He reviewed key points of the survey including what employers indicated were important to their workforce such as employee training and work readiness skills. There was a discussion about internships and apprenticeship programs. Robert Nangle noted that small

employers tend to be conservative about these programs. J. Horton mentioned legal barriers and liability for unpaid internships. Chair Trueb suggested that a minimal stipend or academic credit could be helpful in deflecting any legal issues with internships.

Other survey questions discussed included the high percentage (75.3%) of employers who indicated they had vacant positions that are difficult to fill and the reasons the employer is unable to fill these positions.

GWB Employer Advisory Group

Chair Trueb asked for comments on the establishment of the Employer Advisory Group.

Many suggestions were given on the number of employers to include in this group which ranged from 12 to "casting a net" to all businesses. It was suggested the employers should be invited to attend an initial meeting which would provide an overview of the goal of the Employer Advisory Group.

N. Olson suggested the committee approach the local Chambers of Commerce to inform them of the goals and missions of the GWB Employer Committee and Employer Advisory Group and to ask for assistance with outreach to employers within the state. J. Horton suggested reaching out to the Providence Chamber which has more than 3,000 members. She indicated the Providence Chamber does not have regular meetings in the summer but has board meetings (40 board members) and business after hour events. She suggested inviting Chamber leaders to a morning breakfast meeting as a next step.

Connie Parks of DLT noted that the chambers are regional and that the needs of South County and Aquidneck Island are different from the other chambers.

Topics to be presented to the Employer Advisory Committee were mentioned and included work readiness credentials, educating employers to better utilize workforce development services, and bridging the skills gaps. R. Nangle offered that it would be helpful to know how to get information to the smaller employers. He noted that 70% of businesses in Rhode Island have less than 25 employees.

Next Steps

It was decided to convene the Chamber leadership initially to receive feedback from them on what is valuable information to bring to the employers. They could also suggest key businesses to include in the Employer Advisory Group. It was suggested that the strategy session with the Chamber be scheduled for June and that invitees should include the Chair of each chamber. The invitation could be done by email with a follow-up phone call. B. Melton offered Lifespan and C. Streker offered Textron as possible meeting sites. Each had a meeting space that could accommodate 25-30 attendees.

Adjournment

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

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

The meeting was adjourned at 9:08 a.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Maureen Mooney