## Washtenaw County

# **Workforce Development Board**

General Session Meeting Minutes

Meeting Date: Thursday, November 1, 2007 Meeting Time: 8:00 AM

**Meeting Location:** Key Bank Building, 301 W. Michigan Ave., Ypsilanti, MI 48197, Alpha

Level Conference Room

**Members Present:** Cindy Harrison, Clifford Smith Jr., Gregg Weaver, James Bunton,

Jesse Bernstein, Keith Peters, Mark Ouimet, Mary Kerr,

Michael Schippani, Mike Martin, Nicholas Fortson, Reid McCarthy, Suzanne Bade, Wesley Prater, William Miller, Jeff Irwin, Donn Wolf

**Members Absent:** Diana Mc-Knight-Morton, Eric Mahler, Fiona Greenland,

Gene Graber, Steven Gulick, Timothy Robinson

**Staff Present:** Trenda Rusher, Jenny Bivens, Tiffany Lucas

## I. Call to Order

• Peters called the meeting to order at 8:05 AM.

### **II.** Welcome and Introductions

• Peters welcomed all in attendance and asked the Board Members to introduce themselves.

## III. Approval of the Agenda

• Schippani moved to approve the meeting agenda. Prater supported. The meeting agenda was approved.

## IV. Consent Agenda Items

- i. Approval of the 9/06/07 meeting minutes.
  - Prater moved to approve the meeting minutes. Martin supported. The meeting minutes were approved.
- ii. Resolutions
  - It is requested that the Washtenaw County Workforce Development Board (WDB) approve the service contract with Ann Arbor SPARK in the amount of \$150,000.00 for the period of August 7, 2007 through August 6, 2008.

### V. Report of the Chair

- i. Announcements & Updates
  - Peters noted that we are doing continually well, as we continue to build our workforce and more companies and jobs move into our County.

## ii. Business Update

- Peters reported that there was a meeting of the Chambers in Michigan to discuss reviving the Counsel of Chambers. All of the Chambers in our County were represented at the meeting.
- Peters noted that Travel Writers visited over the weekend. They were very impressed with the Chelsea area, and all of the cool things to do here.
- Peters reported that he was excited about Aernnova + choosing to locate Washtenaw County,

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- Ouimet noted that the Counsel of Chambers gives a rare opportunity to be able to look at issues from a regional perspective, and he is personally pleased with the effort to revive the Counsel.
- Kerr expanded on the weekend spent with Travel Writers. The group included writers from various publications. The writers toured golf courses, ate at restaurants, visited galleries and museums, and shopped. They felt that there was a strong sense of community in Washtenaw County, and loved all the interesting things there are to do here.

# iii. Labor Update

- Prater noted that the UAW contract negotiations are important to Michigan overall.
- Prater noted that Toyota will be hiring next Spring.
- Housing foreclosure reports are worst than most anticipated and the damage will have long term effects.
- Prater noted that manufacturing will eventually slowdown, and in the short term there will be layoffs.
- Schippani noted that the UAW and "The Big Three" are setting up a multimillion dollar healthcare enterprise that will put Michigan at the front of the fight for healthcare reform.
- Prater commented on the living wage. He noted that the living wage was originally created and pursued by the UAW, and now there are eleven cities that have approved living wages, but we haven't been able to get traction with the private sector adopting the living wage. This is an issue that needs to be addressed and the Chambers should be helping to address.
- Irwin noted that once the UAW contracts are approved there will be many plant closings to follow. Irwin asked if there was anything we could do as a Board to head off those closings.
  - Rusher commented that the Workforce Development Board is currently trying to find other industries that can support training for the workers in the areas where these closings will leave behind layed off individuals. We are looking at the arts and cultural industry, etcs and retooling our workers to help expand other such industries including green jobs.
- Schippani commented that we should focus on the future of the automotive industry. We need to use the available skills and the available resources to support the electric car, and fuel cell energy. General Motors went to China to produce their electric car and that is where their growing market is.

- Schippani noted that there have been a number of buyouts and over 5 million people who have left Michigan. This could be another element contributing to our stagnant economy.
- McCarthy added that only half as many young lawyers are staying in Michigan and it is very apparent if you are 25 to 35 that people are leaving.

# VI. Report of the Executive Director

#### A. Announcements

 Rusher reported that last week she and Michael Finney of Ann Arbor SPARK attended the NACCED (National Association of Counties Community and Economic Development) conference to give two presentations about how we make Workforce Development and Economic Development work together in Washtenaw County. The response from many attendees was surprise and excitement to learn that the two sectors can work together.

# B. Federal/State/Local Updates

Local

- Rusher reported that our unemployment rate is still the lowest in the State. The rest of the nation doesn't seem to care much about the economic challenges in Michigan because their economies are doing fine, so we must take this as a leadership challenge and move forward.
  - Economic Development and Talent Development are the center of our plan to help the County. SPARK is branding the region as Ann Arbor USA, and hoping to make it one of the top 16 cities in the world.
- Rusher noted that we will be assisting the casinos in Detroit that will need Workforce Development by working strongly in the region with SEMWAC, the Southeast Michigan Works Agencies Coalition. Detroit has to fill the casino and hotels with 51% of its residents and the other seven (7) MWAs (including Washtenaw can send 49% of its Talent Pool.

### i. Access Points

• Rusher explained that a year ago County Administrator Bob Guenzel approached ETCS about getting involved in the faith-based community. We worked with David Behen to reuse County computers to set up at various churches and community based organizations. These were called Access Points. There are currently 13 workforce boards that have approximately two Access Points each. Washtenaw County has 16 operating in churches, etc, and 10 more in community based organizations such as Libraries, SOS, etc, and about 5 more that are waiting to begin. These organizations act as an extension of our services directly into the community. The Access Points celebration was held in coordination with a USDOL training session on Access Points, and honored all of the volunteers for their commitment to the community. USDOL gave etcs and the County awards, as well as our Ambassador awards, indicating we were the BEST workforce area in the nation to establish partnerships with faith-based and community based organizations, making Michigan #1 as well.

- Welsh reported that last week the individual interviews
  were conducted for the Labor Assessment. The week of
  November 12<sup>th</sup> employer interviews will be conducted.
  We are still on track to have a full report for the roll-out at
  the Joint Annual Meeting of the Workforce Development
  and Community Action Boards.
- Kerr reported that the Southeast Michigan Hospitality RSA
  has recently soft launched their new website at
  WhereHospitalityWorks.org. It is a compilation to meet
  both the employers and job seekers needs in the hospitality
  industry.
- Rusher announced that on November 12<sup>th</sup>, she will be giving a workshop for AARP, where she'll discuss what it means to be a "Boomer" and successfully meet challenges in the today's workplace.

# ii. Billboard Campaign

• The billboard campaign is in progress and will be up soon. The focus will be on Washtenaw County's Talent Pool.

## VII. Knowledge and Innovation Feature

Rusher introduced Tamara Real, Director of the Arts Alliance. Real thanked the Workforce Development Board for their time.
 Real stated that the Arts Alliance was created as a result of an arts summit in 1991 to be an umbrella organization that represents the arts and culture industry in Michigan. The Arts Alliance doesn't simply put on Artistic events, but focuses on creating a culture that will help them those things flourish.

Last year the industry produced approximately 100,000 jobs. We are working one a new initiative called Community and Culture. There are seven cities within the County involved and we are also working with Eastern Michigan University. Real explained the timeline and a schedule of 25-30 community discussions about this project that will take place over the next few days.

Real requests \$20,000.00 in support of the Community and Culture initiative.

There was brief discussion.

Gulick moved to approve \$20,000.00 to support the Community and Culture initiative. Prater supported. The motion passed. Bernstein and Kerr abstained from the vote.

## VIII. Report of the BOC

• Irwin reported that the County is preparing to approve a new two year budget. In addition to the budget, the County is working on a strategy to invest in a strategy called "Successful Communities". This will include increases for an incubator, railways, an aerotropolis, and SPARK and focus on planning for how the region will look in the next 5, 10, 15, 20 years.

## IX. Report of the Committees

- A. Education Advisory Group
  - There is no report at this time. We will be looking into how to connect the EAG to the efforts of the Early College Alliance (ECA).
- B. Strategic Planning Committee
  - The Strategic Planning Committee is continuing work on the Labor Assessment and Strategic Plan.
- C. Employers Committee
  - There is no report at this time. Rusher noted that she would encourage all employers on the Board to attend the MEGA-P meeting on Tuesday.

## X. Report of the Community Action Board

• Wolf reported that the Community Action Board (CAB) is continuing to work with homelessness issues, and poverty issues. The CAB is working particularly closely with the Washtenaw County Housing Alliance. Rusher noted that ETCS will be pursuing extra HUD funds to help start a program to help homeless people break into the Arts industry. Chuck Kieffer has been working on this as well.

### XI. Other Business

 Martin asked to have the Board advocate the support of the living wage in Washtenaw County.
 Rusher noted that there will be discussion about the living wage at the Joint Annual meeting, where the board can focus more on this issue.

# XII. Adjournment

• Peters adjourned the meeting at 10:20 AM.