

6. Report of the Chair

A. Oath of Office

- Alzoubi swore in board member Sabrina Keeley.

B. Report on NACo, NAWDP and NCAF Conference Meetings

- Wolf attended these meetings in Washington DC recently. They were all great conferences. Wolf gathered information and passed out his notes from meetings that he attended.
- CDBG funds were discussed. Wolf expressed interest that other board members would attend such conferences in the upcoming years.
- NACo is an association that the County is very active in. Trena is on the Board of Directors of NACo (National Association of Counties).
- NAWB (National Association of Workforce Boards) is the national board of the WDB.
- NCAF (National Community Action Foundation) is the national board that the ETCS department is a part of through their community action services. Rusher noted that Wolf is a member of both the WDB and the CAB (Community Action Board). Rusher thanked Wolf for his participation as she was unable to attend due to her sick leave. She noted that there are funds set aside in our budget for conference attendance.

C. Business Update

i. Ann Arbor Area Chamber of Commerce

- Keeley talked about the Ann Arbor Area and Ypsilanti Area Chambers of Commerce Joint Member Reception that took place last week.
- She also discussed the new Tech Central initiative that the University of Michigan is leading to give this area a national presence. The University, along with the State, Washtenaw County and companies such as Pfizer Inc. have pledged dollars to create Ann Arbor Tech Central, an independent nonprofit that will aggressively market the region as a technology hub and help startups do business. Keeley will keep us updated on this project.

ii. Ypsilanti Area Chamber of Commerce

- Peters announced that Willow Run Airport is working on an extension of their runway to allow for larger planes to access the airport.
- General Dynamics has fully moved in to the area. A welcome packet was distributed to the new staff there which included in a round of free golf. General Dynamics moved in with their current staff and is going to hire up to fifty new people.
- A Request for Proposals (RFP) is out now for the Water Street Project that was begun by the Biltmore Group on Michigan Avenue.
- The Chamber is working on acquiring 17 acres along the north end of the Huron River.
- A couple of the school districts in the Ypsilanti area are talking about privatizing the bus system. Peters expressed hope that this would happen because it would help the Chamber tremendously. Bade noted that she knows someone who might be interested in the project and would give Peters the contact information.

D. Labor Update

- Road construction is ongoing and residential construction continues. There are actually more workers than there are jobs even with all of the construction going on.
- There is discussion about what will happen with employees as a result of the Visteon facility closing.
- At the State level, two RSAs (Regional Skills Alliances) were awarded that target the building trade. Recruitment will be going on for that.
- There was some discussion regarding the Governor's new faith based initiative. The labor sector is partnering with Youth Build in Washtenaw County. Wolf asked what unions are

doing specifically with faith based organizations. Gulick replied that the Governor's program is based on the President's initiative to target faith based organizations. Democrats oppose this because they want religion kept separate from government activities. Youth Build is a program that goes into areas where housing construction is going on and brings in people interested in the construction industry. It gives them an opportunity to see what the job is like. They actually are able to do some physical work. This also helps interested individuals develop the knowledge they need. Smith asked how one could tap into that resource, referring to his students in the Willow Run school district. He'd like them to take advantage of such opportunities. Gulick replied that there is the expo that all area students are invited to. Gulick also suggested that labor representatives are invited to local schools to talk with students about the construction industry. Gulick noted that some apprenticeships count as two years of college and students can take advantage of that as well. Davidson noted that Youth Build recently received a grant in partnership with the WDB.

7. Report of the Chief Elected Official (CEO) of the Board of Commissioners (BOC)

- Ouimet noted that Prater had another meeting to attend this morning.
- Ouimet also noted that he was on City Council when they privatized parking. He noted that is critical to get the private industry involved and offered his assistance with the privatization of the public schools bus system that Peters discussed earlier.
- The Public Safety and Justice millage was rejected. Members of the BOC are regrouping to determine next steps. The sense is that everything is on the table. They do not plan on asking the public for another millage. Prater, the County Administrator and other commissioners will be going out to the community to ask what citizens want. Instead of townships coming to the County to tell what they want, County reps are going to them and asking what they want. Ouimet is serving as the liaison to the supervisors to the entire county. Weaver said that Ouimet is always welcome to the Washtenaw County Council of Veterans. Ouimet said he'd love to go out and talk with them.

8. Report of the Executive Director

A. Announcements

- Rusher apologized for not having a formal written report. She has been on medical leave and is expected to return to work on March 28. Rusher thanked the staff and the board members for their support. She commended those who work in the health care industry for the work that they do. Wolf noted that Trenda, although on medical leave, was still very actively involved; he also thanked staff.

B. Local / State / Federal Updates

Local

- Rusher noted that we are always looking at how to lower costs in our department. We have been able to stay within budget through careful spending. She also pointed out that ETCS is 90% federally funded.

State

- The Governor laid out her new initiative in the *Jobs Today Jobs Tomorrow* handout in today's meeting packet. Rusher noted that Michigan is tied with Alaska for the highest unemployment rate in the country. Governor Granholm met with the Directors of all of the Michigan Works! Agencies recently, including Rusher.
- Rusher attended the first state meeting of the Council for Labor and Economic Growth (CLEG). The Workforce Investment Act (WIA) is the legislation for the WDB. The state board is comprised of about 75 people.

- There is some concern that the private sector is suffering because finding people with basic skills to hire is difficult.

Federal

- The fight for WIA Reauthorization is still on. We have legislation and would like dollars to be appropriated.
- The Family Independence Agency has officially changed their name to the Department of Human Services (DHS).

C. Ratification / Board Approval

i. Village of Dexter

- Whenever a local township/area applies for a grant, they are required to obtain an employment agreement from their local Michigan Works! Agency. The staff at the Michigan Works! Service Center (MWSC) will be working with the Village of Dexter to implement an agreement.
- This requires board approval so that the state can give the Village of Dexter the grant money requested. Davidson asked if the jobs have to be from the Village of Dexter. Rusher replied that it is a county grant and thus, the jobs should be for residents in the county. Rusher noted that we received approval from administration for this already.

McKnight-Morton moved to approve the Village of Dexter Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) Employment Agreement with the Washtenaw County WDB / MWSC. T. Robinson supported. Motion carries.

ii. Washtenaw County Business Call Program Partnership Agreement

- This is a proposed partnership between ETCS, Washtenaw Development Council (WDC) and the Ann Arbor Area and Ypsilanti Area Chambers of Commerce.
- T. Robinson explained that this partnership agreement is part of talks that began when a marketing consultant was hired last year for the *Business and Community Awareness Initiative*.
- The idea is to coordinate visits to employers between the WDC and other groups. Robinson noted that the WDC and the Chambers are in close contact with companies and know what kind of information needs to be gathered. With the Governor's new initiative to visit so many companies each year, we should coordinate the efforts and share information. Robinson would like to bring someone in on staff to do this as outlined in the "Washtenaw County Business Call Program" that was distributed.
- Keeley said she thought the WDC already worked with the Michigan Economic Development Council (MEDC). Robinson replied that they do and this agreement would involve them and others. Keeley also noted that the Chamber does not make the same calls as the WDC does.
- Rusher felt that this is a super opportunity to coordinate and share resources. Graber noted that the success will be based on the person that makes the call. Robinson said that he had someone already in mind that was a senior employee and was experienced.
- Frenza asked where the funding would come from and who the staff person would report to. Rusher replied that the staff position would be funded through the County and the services would be contracted jointly by the WDC and ETCS.
- Frenza asked if the job would need to be posted; he wants to ensure that the proper procedure be taken.
- Ouimet noted that the chambers' involvement is important and the staff person should ensure that the integrity and interests of all are protected.

- Frenza asked about the time-table. Rusher replied we would like the staff person to start on July 1.
 - Davidson asked who would have access to the information. Keeley asked that sensitivity be given with the information received from companies that is shared to ensure privacy.
 - Graber asked that a plan be developed and felt that it should be reviewed by the partners prior to the agreement being implemented.
 - Smith also felt that a job description be developed. Rusher wanted to take action today so that this would get moving. Frenza asked that a Committee be appointed to oversee this. Rusher suggested that the Employers Committee take charge of this. Wolf asked that a plan be put together and presented at the May Retreat for voting. Frenza would like to see the job description, the job qualifications and the overseeing entity in the plan for example. McKnight-Morton asked if the plan could be reviewed prior to the Retreat so that review and comments can be made. Robinson said that ideally, the staff person will coordinate the calls, gather the data and funnel the information to the organization. Information can also be given to the employers on the programs that are offered by the MWSC for example. An implementation plan will be put together by the Employers Committee.
- iii. Incumbent Worker Training (IWT) Program Grant Update
- Applications for IWT Program Grants are received every year. We are allowed to give money to companies to help them with their employee training. The companies are listed in the agenda.
 - The company proposals are taken to the Community College where they are reviewed and then passed on to ETCS staff. ETCS will work for these companies to help recruit participants to train at the companies listed.

Peters moved to accept the IWT Program Grant Applications. Graber supported. Motion passes.

DISCUSSION

- Graber commented that this grant helps make our presence known in the community. Rusher agreed and noted that it was unfortunate that there wasn't more money available for this program.
- iv. Corporate Services – Bivens
- For years we have developed jobs for companies. A different approach that we are trying deals with addressing specific employment issues of companies. ETCS has developed a new unit at the Michigan Works! Service Center (MWSC) to deal with businesses and corporations and to find out their employment needs.
 - The MWSC's Corporate Services Unit hosted a Health Care Job Fair last week here in Room 107.

9. Report of the Committees

A. Strategic Planning Committee

- Committee members decided that the Report Card would include the new Governor's initiative and a section on the returning veterans and people that are retired.
- The upcoming retreat will be facilitated by Dr. Lew Bender.

B. Education Advisory Group (EAG) – None

C. Community Action Board (CAB)

- The CAB is scheduled to meet next on March 28.
- An orientation was held recently for new board members.

D. Blueprint to End Homelessness

- A *Super Session* will be hosted on Friday, April 22 to roll out the workforce development plan section of the Blueprint.

10. Other Business

- McKnight-Morton announced that Washtenaw Community College (WCC) is in the process of evaluating areas in the County where they can build a wellness fitness center. They have a solid commitment from St. Joe's to be a partner on this venture. The center is expected to be located on the eastern side of the county. One component of the center will be to have physicians and physical therapists on site. It will be a 60,000 square feet. Rusher noted that is just the type of venture that the Washenaw County Business Call Program can help with. Staff will need to be hired, for example, to run the new center.
- Wolf asked anyone interested in attending the Annual Michigan Works! Conference to let staff know. Space is limited. Nicholas Fortson, Eric Mahler and Diana McKnight-Morton all expressed interest in attending.

11. Adjourn

Wolf adjourned the meeting at 9:52 a.m.