

Washtenaw County  
**Workforce Development Board**  
General Session  
Minutes

- Meeting Date:** Thursday, June 30, 2005 **Time:** 8:00 am
- Members Present:** Steve Girardin, Cindy Harrison, Cynthia Maritato, David Potter, Diane Davidson, Donn Wolf, Edward Resha, Eric Mahler, Frank Zyber, Gene Graber, Gregg Weaver, Jim Frenza, Mark Ouimet, Nicholas Fortson, Sabrina Keeley, Steven Gulick, Suzanne Bade and Timothy Robinson.
- Members Absent:** Anne Williams (excused), Clifford Smith, Deloris Hunt, Diana McKnight-Morton (excused), James Magyar, Janie Jones, Keith Peters (excused), Mary Kerr (excused) and Bill Miller (excused).
- Staff Present:** Trenda Rusher and Rana Al-Igoe from ETCS (Employment Training and Community Services) and Kevin Bulifant and Joanne Morris from the MWSC (Michigan Works! Service Center).
- Guests Present:** Dennis Opoka – United States Department of Labor (USDOL) and Judith Robinson – Local Initiatives Support Corporation (LISC).

1. **Call to Order**  
Wolf called the meeting to order at 8:02 am.
2. **Welcome and Introductions**  
Wolf welcomed everyone to the meeting and asked that everyone introduce themselves.
3. **Approval of the Agenda**  
**Resha moved to approve the meeting agenda. Graber supported. Meeting agenda approved.**
4. **Public Comment**  
There was no public comment.
5. **Approval of the Minutes**  
There was one correction; “Small Business Tax” should be “Single Business Tax.” **Frenza moved to approve the 05/13/05 meeting minutes with the noted change. Robinson supported. Meeting minutes approved with the noted change.**
6. **Report of the Chair**
  - A. Announcements and Updates
    - Wolf recognized local businesses that were recognized nationally, the Sidetrack Bar and Grill and Crazy Jim’s Blimpy Burger. Wolf would like to send them a letter of congratulations as Chair on behalf of the board. He read the prepared letters aloud and asked that staff send them out.

**Resha moved to approve sending letters of congratulations. Ouimet supported. Motion passes.**

- The September 1 meeting date has been rescheduled to September 8 due to a National Community Action Conference.

**B. Business Update**

- Keeley discussed the resolution that was approved at the last meeting for the Youth Leadership Ann Arbor Pilot Program. A number of students submitted applications for the program; six of them will be chosen.
- Ann Arbor recently received a Cool City grant from the State.
- Keeley thanked Ouimet for “taking the high road” by paying his own way to an upcoming conference in Hawaii.

**C. Labor Update**

- Gulick stated that road construction throughout the County is well underway.
- The construction sector is doing well. Gulick mentioned some of the ongoing projects in the area including the new Toyota plant. The University of Michigan is also undergoing construction. Hopefully some spin off businesses will occur as a result.
- Some issues are arising with the manufacturing sector due to the number of area companies that are closing. Bulifant and staff at the Michigan Works! Service Center (MWSC) are working with employees that are laid off.
- Gulick discussed the National AFL-CIO Institute and the lack of funding from labor. They decided to start their own association of Workforce Investment Board labor representatives. The association will concentrate on a lot of the same issues but will do more lobbying. There will be a national training conference for members. They also plan to develop a national website and will provide technical assistance to local boards. They are still in the organizational stage of this. They wanted to get the association up this fiscal year, but are running behind. Rusher asked about Trade Act Assistance, she noted that she received a call from the State yesterday. Apparently, people are not receiving services in a timely manner. Livingston County and Detroit are the areas that are experiencing the most problems due to long waiting lists. Rusher asked Gulick for a briefing prior to a meeting she is scheduled to attend on July 12.

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

- Prater had another meeting to attend this morning. He asked Ouimet to let the board know that he remains close to workforce development issues.
- Ouimet updated board members on activities of the BOC. Commissioners expect to have a direction set in early September regarding the situation with public safety and justice. Between the Commissioners, there are a lot of opinions involved; each commissioner represents a different geographical area. They are going to work on the expansion of the jail and then move on to road patrol.
- Ouimet asked if there were any questions or comments. Wolf wanted to thank Prater for helping with some County red tape. Ouimet noted that Prater was a huge benefit to the BOC and to the County as a whole. He has a keen sense of what is needed to get a job done.
- Keeley noted that there is a millage that is going to be coming up regarding the 911 system. The idea is to get dispatchers to work with other responders in the County. She wanted to make members aware of the millage. Ouimet added that this is going to be a millage request and there is a strong feeling from the Commissioners that maybe they should not go out for another millage after the last one was defeated. Ouimet agreed that it is important that the chambers are

looking at this issue jointly. Keeley noted that this issue came up last year, and the chambers opposed it because they felt that the tax was disproportionate. They felt that the tax should also apply to cell phones for example. Davidson asked if the money was to be used to beef up the current system. Keeley replied that the system does not cover the entire County; there are some spots that do not receive receptions. Grabber felt that the whole system needed to be evaluated instead of looking at situations piece by piece. Ouimet agreed and noted that timing is critical to the success of such a millage.

## **8. Report of the Employment Training and Community Services (ETCS) Executive Director**

### A. Federal / State / Local Updates

Federal – No change

#### *WIA Reauthorization*

- They are in recess and will not have a final vote until August. Letters to our congressional representatives helped with our agenda. We did receive a negative letter from Secretary Chao, though. What we did was advocate to keep the control at the local level. Secretary Chao wants to have control moved to the state level.

State

#### *Enhancing Workforce Development Leadership in Michigan*

- On May 19, Rusher met with the Governor's staff to discuss workforce leadership.
- Rusher has been asked to participate on a committee to develop a nine-month strategy to execute a new initiative of the Governor. The tentative plan is to have the Governor meet with the Workforce Board Chairs, Executive Directors and the Chief Elected Officials to boost local leadership efforts of the Michigan Works! System with businesses and elected officials. The Governor believes this is critical to our success in Michigan.
- There will be at least two leadership sessions that the Executive Leadership Committee members will be asked to attend.

#### *WAN – Workforce Action Network*

- Rusher sits on a Steering Committee to reform Work First (Welfare Reform) in Michigan with State staff of the Department of Human Services (DHS) and the Department of Labor and Economic Growth (DLEG).
- Directors Hollister and Udow have approved the overall plan and strategies for reform, which include focus on in-depth assessment of people on welfare and developing individual plans to address their needs, especially in the area of education and employment with a focus on post-employment support.

#### *Council for Labor and Economic Growth (CLEG)*

- Rusher attended and gave a presentation on the Michigan Works! System to the Governor's Council on May 23.
- Rusher sits on two subcommittees of CLEG, one for expanding businesses in Michigan and one for planning (environmental scans and using the Universities to assist with this).

#### *MRS – Michigan Rehabilitation Services (MRS)*

- Rusher attended the MRS Statewide meeting with all MRS and Michigan Works! Agency (MWA) Directors on June 21. Steve Girardin, acting Washtenaw County MRS Director also attended.

- The purpose of the meeting was to determine statewide and community agendas for MRS resources, services and gaps for people with disabilities.
- There will be a second part to the meeting on August 2 titled “Strategies for Priority Targets” and a third meeting “What’s Working? And Where Do We Go From Here?” on October 20.

#### Local

##### *Annual Foster Grandparent Program (FGP) Recognition*

- Several WDB and Community Action Board (CAB) members attended the ETCS Annual FGP Recognition.
- Senator Brater, Representative Alma Wheeler Smith and the County Administrator also attended the event.

##### *Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) Grant with Eastern Michigan University (EMU)*

- ETCS participated in planning for EUM to submit a grant to HUD for assistance with programming for youth in the Ypsilanti Gateway area.
- HUD is only issuing grants to those that received funds in previous years (which we have).
- The Executive Leadership Committee approved the application earlier this month.
- Rusher noted that one of the strings attached is that EMU is required to meet our performance standards (the same 17 that we are required to meet).

**Quimet moved to support EMU’s application to HUD. Davidson supported. Motion passes.**

#### DISCUSSION

- Resha asked what the age limit was for youth. Rusher noted that our requirements stipulate that individuals are aged 14 to 21. Rusher added that Pfizer is also a contributor to the grant application.

##### *County, City and YGCEDC Partners Meeting*

- ETCS staff met with County Administration, the City Manager and YGCEDC officers to discuss the YGCEDC becoming a subsidiary of ETCS and future partnership ventures with economic and community development plans.
- The CAB will also need to play a role in this along with the WDB.
- Keeley asked why the County would support or take over this EDC, the Ypsilanti Gateway Community and Economic Development Corporation (YGCED), noting that there are a number of EDCs in the County and Statewide. Rusher replied that the Gateway Area is very small and they need our help to grow. This is not a long-term arrangement. Rusher added that this project is still in the planning stages. Frenza added that there might be some confusion at the County level as to what an EDC is; they might regard it as something a bit different. Rusher stated that the charge of the YGCEDC is to increase the lively-hood of the Gateway Area and its housing. Their funding is mainly from grants. Rusher noted that the nice thing about partnering with YGCEDC is that it allows us to work on our community action position and without the County’s support the YGCEDC would not survive at this point. Rusher also added that the County and the Commissioners are very dedicated to that area.

#### *Washtenaw County Space Plan*

- The County has decided to turn the Human Services Building (555 Towner Street) into a health services center and ETCS will be relocated.
- Rusher attended a meeting on June 20 to begin plan development on expanding the Michigan Works! Service Center (MWSC) on Harriet Street. The hope is that the MWSC will accommodate all ETCS functions along with additional space for Washtenaw Community College (WCC), EMU, other Community Based Organizations/Partners) and corporate services – with recruitment and interview stations for employers.
- The meeting on June 29 was to begin the space assessment needs process with Bill Kinley and the Director of Washtenaw County Facilities.
- Rusher discussed some other possible new locations for ETCS including the empty Exemplar building.

#### *Blueprint to End Homelessness in Washtenaw County*

- Ellen Schulmeister, Executive Director of the Delonis Center, and Rusher co-facilitated a Super Session training for Strategy Workgroups #10 and #11 on May 19. The purpose of the Super Session was to develop a work plan on how the homeless can better access education and employment opportunities in our County as well as set up strategies for evaluating current programming.
- Anne Williams serves as a Workgroup Champion and also participated.

#### *Ypsilanti Area Chamber of Commerce Retreat*

- Keith Peters and Rusher attending the retreat on May 25 at Pfizer.
- A motion was planned to work with the WDB another year for continued funding and support of the Education Committee work.

#### *Prison Reentry Initiative Grant*

- The United States Department of Labor (USDOL) released a grant notice for faith-based organizations to apply for.
- The Salvation Army and POWER, Incorporated approached ETCS to apply for the grant jointly. ETCS staff has met several times this month with them to assist with the writing of the grant.
- This grant would allow us to work with the local jail and set up a system for individuals that are let out of jail. This will also allow the group to work with them in helping them get a GED.
- Rusher noted that only 30 grants will be given in the entire nation.
- We will play a major role and will need a letter of support for this project.
- Davidson asked if the group was working with the statewide prisoner reentry plan. Rusher replied that the group was.

**Davidson moved to approve a letter of support for the Prison Reentry Initiative Grant. Ouimet supported. Motion passes.**

#### B. Resolutions

- i. Ratification of the Chair of the Board's signature on the ETCS 2005 Michigan Works! System Plan to the Michigan DLEG authorizing the County Administrator to sign subsequent delegate contracts.

- This is a systems grant with no money attached.

**Grabber moved to approve the resolution. Resha supported. Resolution approved.**

- ii. Ratification of the Chair of the Board's signature on the ETCS Program Year (PY) 2005 Workforce Investment Act (WIA) Adult, Dislocated Worker and Youth Plan in the amount of \$1,939,280 for the period of July 1, 2005 through June 30, 2006; approving the budget and authorizing the County Administrator to sign delegate contracts.
  - This is a continuation of WIA funds.
  - We received close to \$200,000 more for youth programming. This resolution is an acknowledgement of those funds.

**Frenza moved to approve the resolution. Grabber supported. Resolution approved.**

- iii. WIA Displaced Homemaker Program
  - The Women's Center of America is requesting continuation funding for the Displaced Homemaker grant.
  - The WDB is asked to sign off that they received a copy of the grant.
  - Frenza asked what the implications were for ETCS. Rusher replied that ETCS staff is required to monitor them.
  - Frenza asked if ETCS staff was happy with the work they have done in the past. Rusher replied that we are not. She stated that it is not they do not do good work – they actually provide really good services. Where they fall short is with the administrative paperwork to support their work.
  - Ouimet noted that we have a responsibility to make sure that they do the administrative work that is required and hold them accountable.
  - Keeley asked if they did not receive the money, would the money be distributed elsewhere in the County. Rusher replied no.
  - Board members expressed trepidation and felt that it should be on record that they are seriously concerned.

**Frenza moved to approve the signature on the grant application. Gulick supported. Motion passes.**

#### DISCUSSION

- Davidson asked about liability. Rusher replied that we are not liable.
- Maritato felt that the WDB should not support the grant if the Women's Center of America does not meet the requirements set forth. The idea is that there are funds here that can be used for something employment related.

#### **9. Knowledge and Information Feature – Local Initiatives Support Corporation (LISC)**

- Rusher introduced Judith Robinson from LISC. The County has embraced LISC and Robinson has been working with the YGCEDC and some of the other local organizations.
- Robinson distributed a packet of information on LISC and explained what the organization does. One of the things that LISC supports is the development of affordable housing.
- Resha noted that he worked with LISC when he was with Avalon Housing and added that LISC helped them a great deal. Rusher agreed and noted how great it is to find a partner that brings so many resources to the table. Rusher added that she has been working with Robinson and LISC on a number of other projects locally.

- Robinson will be putting together a local advisory committee and will be asking board members to participate. She also noted that she would be doing some fundraising activities to raise money for LISC.

**10. Knowledge and Information Feature – Local Initiatives Support Corporation (LISC)**

A. Strategic Planning Committee

- The Strategic Planning Committee will help coordinate the goals and activities that resulted from the Board Retreat in May.

B. Education Advisory Group (EAG)

- Rusher reported that Project Great Start is still underway.

C. Community Action Board (CAB)

- The CAB Executive Committee is going to try and meet as the full board is in recess during the summer.

D. Blueprint to End Homelessness in Washtenaw County

- Strategy Groups #10 and #11 had a Super Session last month.
- There are some real issues facing the homeless population in the County. Rusher worried that there is a large number of “working poor” as there is not enough affordable housing in the County.
- A major service ETCS provides on the community action side is help residents pay their utility bills.
- Maritato noted that in May, the Department of Human Services (DHS) issued over \$33,000 to help people pay for eviction prevention.

**11. Other News/Business**

A. Hospitality Regional Skills Alliance (RSA)

- ETCS applied for a Hospitality RSA last year but did not receive the grant. ETCS submitted an application jointly with the City of Detroit, Balance of Wayne County, and Livingston County.
- Rusher received a call recently from the Michigan Department of Labor and Growth (MDLEG) asking her whether we were still interested in that RSA. They asked Washtenaw County to take the lead on this RSA and staff will be working on this project.

**12. Other News/Business**

Wolf adjourned the meeting at 9:30 am.