

Washtenaw County
Workforce Development Board (WDB)
General Session
Meeting Minutes

Meeting Date: Thursday, September 18, 2008 **Meeting Time:** 8:00 AM

Meeting Location: 301 W. Michigan Avenue, Ypsilanti, MI 48197, Alpha Level Conference Room

Members Present: Daphne Adams, Suzanne Bade, Dorothy Quinn, Gene Graber, Cynthia Travis, Steve Gulick, Cindy Harrison, Diane Keller, Mary Kerr, Mike Martin, Diana McKnight-Morton, Mark Ouimet, Wesley Prater, Timothy Robinson, Michael Schippani, Gregg Weaver, Anne Williams, Donn Wolf

Members Absent: Jesse Bernstein, Nicholas Fortson, Jeff Irwin, Eric Mahler, William Miller, Keith Peters (excused), Clifford Smith, Jr.

Staff Present: Trenda Rusher, Jenny Bivens, Rana Al-Igoe, Tiffany Lucas

Guests Present: Tamara Real, Gretchen Waters, Maura Campbell, Marti Welsh, Verna McDaniel, Joanne Morris, Kevin Bulifant

I. Call to Order

- Harrison called the meeting to order at 8:02 AM.

II. Approval of the Agenda

- **Wolf moved to approve the agenda. Gulick supported. The meeting agenda was approved.**

III. Consent Agenda

A. Approval of the Meeting Minutes

- **Wolf moved to approve the meeting minutes. Martin supported. The meeting minutes were approved.**

IV. Report of the Chair (Cindy Harrison for Keith Peters)

A. Announcements and Updates

- Harrison reported that SPARK has signed a lease agreement with the owner of the Mack & Mack building and will be moving forward with the SPARK East incubator project. EMU will utilize some of the space in the building during the evening for classes. There will also be several businesses in the building as well.

Rusher added that ETCS is working with the Gateway Board, whose mission is to improve the Ypsilanti Gateway Area, to put forth a proposal with LISC to use the incubator for the support of businesses in the Ypsilanti Area. This would be a nice collaboration between the Gateway Board, SPARK, and ETCS.

- Harrison reported that Rusher and Peters had a chance to visit with a group from the Foundation for a Sustainable Community, and the Chapel Hill-Carrboro Chamber of Commerce this past week to talk about workforce development and our emergency response efforts during the Pfizer closing. Rusher noted that the group was mesmerized by the work we do in Washtenaw County. Kerr added that she had also participated with Mike Finney on another segment of the conference that focused on economic development, which was well received. The group also seemed to be impressed with the spirit of collaboration in Washtenaw County.

B. Business Update

- Keller commented that the SPARK East Incubator is quite an exciting project for Ypsilanti and that it will not only bring more business downtown, but it will restore the Mack & Mack building to its original state.
- The Economic Development group has a draft outline of the economic development plan that will be presented to the Ypsilanti City Council. It is a comprehensive plan that also includes a vision once the SPARK East Incubator is functioning.
- The movie and production companies have been in and out of Ypsilanti. They have been contacting the Chambers to get a list of businesses that can help with their needs.

C. Labor Update

- Gulick noted that there has been quite a bit of construction happening on the campuses of both Eastern Michigan University and the University of Michigan. The City of Ann Arbor also has projects that are underway, but with all this activity there still is not full employment in the building trades.
- Martin noted that at the last meeting Rusher mentioned that the movie and production companies were not utilizing the Michigan Department of Labor and Economic Growth (DLEG) to search for talent. Martin stated that he had questioned those companies, and in the end they are allowed to go through whatever source they choose.
- Recently Pinnacle Race Track opened and has unionized, but if they do not get some type of tax break they are saying that the race track could be in financial trouble.

D. City of Ann Arbor Liaison Report

- There was no City Liaison present.

V. Report of the Chief Elected Official (Mark Ouimet)

- Ouimet reported that the County had gone through a staff reduction of approximately 37 people to help balance the County budget. The unions have been very cooperative in helping.

The Board of Commissioners has approved a 1.5% mileage for veteran services, which will give the County the opportunity to raise approximately \$250,000.00. These funds will then be taken out of the veterans fund and applied to the budget deficit. There was a unanimous vote in favor of this mileage.

VI. Knowledge and Innovation Feature (Tamara Real : Arts Alliance)

- Real noted that she had met with Tenda Rusher last week and that Rusher seemed very excited about the efforts of the Arts Alliance. The Arts Alliances' Cultural Plan found that the non-profit Arts and Cultural industry in Washtenaw County is a multi-million dollar industry however, that doesn't speak to the individual artists in our County. There are 1173 artists in Washtenaw County, or 4% of the people here who have creative voices that are not being heard. For this reason, the Arts Alliance has started several programs such as Creative Conversation, which helps artists feel more connected to the community. We also have Hot Flashes, which are quick news flashes of what's hot in the arts industry, and we are developing a web portal where artists can go to find help.

Growing the Talent Pool here in Washtenaw County is also important, which is why the Arts Alliance is working to help artist learn how to be good business people who will be more viable to the economy.

VII. Report of the Executive Director

A. Federal/State/Local Updates

Federal

- Rusher reported that we still do not have reauthorization of the Workforce Investment Act (WIA). This is partly because of the impending elections.

State

- At the last WDB general session the GDI proposal was approved. We had been waiting for the State to approve the waiver so that we could move forward with this project, and the State has finally approved it. We have signed the customized training contract and are happy that we can keep this company in Washtenaw County as they expand to 18 different states.

- Our Michigan Works! Association recently participated in a job fair for employees being offered buyouts from Ford. We were equipped with computers onsite to register the attendees. This was a huge opportunity.

Local

- Rusher noted that the Federal Government gives the workforce boards standards that they must meet to become eligible for incentive dollars. This year our agency met every standard, and exceeded all except one. There are 17 standards to manage, but the formula only allows us to track nine so it can be difficult, but we are still able to keep a handle on it. We should be very proud as a Board and Staff, as we are awarded every year with additional funds for our great work.
- Rusher noted that the Workforce Development Dive is a new feature put together by Jenny Bivens and Rana Al-Igoue to give a quick look at the success of our workforce development programs. Rusher encouraged the Board members to review the Workforce Development Dive for specifics on the programs. Handouts were included in the meeting packets.
- Bivens reminded the Board that Career Jam was coming up on October 30, 2008, at the WCC Morris Lawrence Building. This event will focus on helping youth learn about different careers opportunities so that they can begin making informed career decisions.
- The Michigan Works! Conference was a great success. One of the highlights of the conference was a workshop hosted by Rusher with Bob Knight, David Bradley, and Rick Snyder. This was a talk show style workshop asking provocative questions about the state of our economy and workforce. Gulick noted that David Bradley also hosted another interesting workshop about the outlook in Washington as it relates to our programs.

B. Resolutions

- i. ETCS requests the approval of the Workforce Development Board for the Workforce Investment Act (WIA) Career Advancement Account (CAA) demonstration project in the amount of \$74,626 for the period of February 5, 2008 through June 30, 2008. This represents \$37,313 in WIA CAA demonstration project funds and a WIA match in the amount of \$37,313.
- ii. ETCS requests that the Workforce Development Board approve the ETCS plan for the Workforce Investment Act (WIA) Disability Program Navigator (DPN) Initiative for the period of July 1, 2008 through June 30, 2009 in the amount of \$10,000.
- iii. ETCS requests that the Workforce Development Board approve the ETCS application to the Michigan Department of Labor (MDLEG) and Economic Growth for the Employment Services (ES) Program Plan for the period of July 1, 2008 through June 30, 2009 in the amount of \$489,955.

- iv. ETCS requests that the Workforce Development Board approve the ETCS application for the Michigan Works! Service Center Operations funds application to the Michigan Department of Labor and Economic Growth (MDLEG) for the period of July 1, 2008 through June 30, 2009 in the amount of \$146,123.
- v. ETCS requests that the Workforce Development Board approve the Workforce Investment Act (WIA) Incentive Grant in the amount of \$22,301. For WIA Program Year (PY) 2006 (July 1, 2006 through June 30, 2007) the Washtenaw County MWA/ETCS met or exceeded all 17 of its performance standards, therefore being entitled to receive an incentive grant in the amount of \$22,301.

There was brief discussion. Wolf moved to approve the resolutions. Prater supported. The resolutions were approved.

C. Workforce Investment Act (WIA) Contract Modification Request

- Bivens noted that due to the increased volume of individuals utilizing services at the One Stop Center, ETCS is requesting a proposed increase for Ross Innovative Employment Solutions in the amount of \$31,965.78 to cover the cost of fringes and benefits of staff. ETCS also requests approval of a proposed increase for Michigan AFL-CIO Human Resources Development, Inc. (HRDI) in the amount of \$91,863 to cover the cost of two additional case managers, and one orientation specialist, as well as fringes and benefits of existing staff.

There was discussion. Prater moved to approve the resolution. Wolf supported. The resolution was approved.

D. Connect Business/Workforce Development

- Rusher noted that every year the Board provides assistance to the Ypsilanti Chamber to assist with their Early Childhood Development Program, E3 Awards, and the Leadership Ypsilanti Program. They are asking for a renewal of these funds in the amount of \$17,000.00.

There was brief discussion. Prater moved to approve the renewal of funds. Weaver supported. Motion carried.

E. Just Build It Contract Extension

- Gretchen Waters noted that the Just Build it program has been supported by the Workforce Development Board for ten years, and it has been a hugely successful event. The biggest challenge to the program is that there are schools who cannot afford to pay for transportation to the event. For this reason, we are asking that the Board increase support of this program by \$2,000.00, to assist with the cost of busing youth to the event. If we cannot provide transportation it becomes a burden on the parents, and many times the youth simply do not make it to the event. Wolf noted that he feels this is one of the best programs in the County, and

he attends every year. Gulick noted that although there is not full employment in the building trades at this point, it is still important that we recruit.

There was brief discussion. McKnight-Morton moved to approve funding for the Just Build It Program in the amount of \$19,775. Kerr Supported. Motion carried.

Waters thanked the Board.

VIII. Report of the Committees

A. Strategic Planning Committee

- Williams reported that the Strategic Planning Committee had not met, and there were no updates to report.

B. Employers Committee

- Harrison noted that the Employers Committee met earlier in the spring and is still working with the MEGA-P group on outcomes from that meeting.

C. Education Advisory Group (EAG)

- There was no report at this time.

D. Communications and Marketing Committee

i. WAAM Partnership/Proposal

- Wolf reported that the Marketing Committee began looking at a complete marketing plan for Workforce Development, and WAAM is part of that plan. When the Committee met with WAAM we asked that M3 Strategies also sit in on the meeting to help discern what services are needed from the radio station. In the meeting, we took it a step further and decided that it may be a great opportunity to form a partnership with WAAM.

The proposal offered to us would include 4 prime time radio spots per day for the duration of 6 months at a total cost of \$13,000.00. We felt this was a great compared to the \$97,000.00 spent last year for the billboard campaign. Also as a partner of the radio station we would also be able to piggy back at no additional charge on any events WAAM would be participating in. We would offer them the same courtesy, as they are also looking to expand and diversify their listening audience.

Maura Campbell, of M3 Strategies noted that Washtenaw County doesn't really have much of its own media market, but pulls from Detroit and other areas. For years, WAAM has been the most prominent local radio station in this area. ETCS and the Workforce Development Board have three tiers of media. Those are paid media, partnership media, and earned media. With paid media like the billboards, it can be very expensive, but the immediate impact on the community is unlike any other. Where Washtenaw County really succeeds is in the partnership media, because of the many partners we have and the collaborations we continue to form.

Prater noted that we should really look at WAAM's market share and rethink the partnership. Martin pointed out that he feels it is a great idea, but notes, that the nationally syndicated hosts on WAAM are very volatile. McKnight-Morton expressed that she would be concerned that the people who need to hear the radio spots would not hear them. Quinn noted that she felt it was great opportunity to tap into the business community, and that parent do listen to WAAM regarding school closings.

It was agreed that the Board would table the issue at the time in lieu of additional research on other radio stations and marketing options before making a final decision.

IX. Other Business

- There was no other business at this time.

X. Adjournment

- Harrison adjourned the meeting at 10:12 AM.