

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

**Meeting Date:** Thursday, May 1, 2008 **Meeting Time:** 8:00 AM

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

**Members Present:** Jesse Bernstein, Cindy Harrison, Mary Kerr, Mike Martin, Keith Peters, William Miller, Wesley Prater, Timothy Robinson, Gregg Weaver, Anne Williams, Donn Wolf, Daphne Adams, Diane Keller, Jeff Irwin, Steve Gulick

**Members Absent:** Suzanne Bade, James Bunton, Nicholas Fortson, Gene Graber, Fiona Greenland, Eric Mahler, Diana McKnight-Morton, Mark Ouimet, Michael Schippiani, Clifford Smith, Jr.,

**Guests Present:** Marti Welsh, Joanne Morris

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

I. **Call to Order**

- Peters called the meeting to order at 8:08 AM.

II. **Welcome and Introductions**

- All present Board Members and staff introduced themselves. Peters welcomed everyone to the meeting and thanked them for their attendance.

III. **Public Comment**

- Weaver noted that the Aviation Career Expo would be hosted by the Michigan Institute of Aviation today at the Willow Run Airport located at 47884 D. Street in Belleville, MI 48111. This expo will be a great barometer to measure the current condition of our workforce, based on how many employers attend, and how many placements are made from this event. In the past, there have been many placements through the career expo with the lowest starting salary was generally \$80,000.00. ETCS donated \$1,000.00 in support of this event and we'd like to thank Trenda Rusher for that generous donation.

IV. **Approval of Agenda**

- The agenda was amended to include a report from the Community Action Board after the report of the Executive Director. Wolf moved to approve the agenda as amended. McKnight-Morton supported. The meeting agenda was approved.

## V. Report of Chair

### A. Announcements and Updates

- Peters reported that he, Rusher, Marti Welsh of M3 Strategies, and Jenny Bivens had recently attended the Legislative Day in Lansing. The day was very successful as the group spent time talking to the legislators. The day started with a breakfast in the company of State Representatives Jansen and Hammel to speak about Governor Granholms' push for 40 million dollars in funding to support NWLB. We were able to make new connections with Senator Randy Richardville. Each of the Michigan Works Agencies has been asked to host an event with the legislators to showcase the success of the No Worker Left Behind Initiative.

### B. Business Update

- Keller reported that the deadline to make a decision about the new SPARK east incubator is today. There are two choices available, but there were improvements that needed to be made to the property before today, and we are not sure that those things will be done.
- Keller also reported that the City of Ypsilanti has put together a group to revamp the economic development plan for the city. Trena Rusher will be asked to sit on this committee, and they will likely bring Ann Arbor SPARK to the table as well.
- The Ypsilanti Chamber of Commerce will host its' Annual Dinner next Thursday, May 8<sup>th</sup>, 2008 at the Washtenaw County Country Club. Rusher noted that the Workforce Development Board usually holds a table at the Chambers' Annual Dinner, and asked that the board members let the staff at ETCS know if they would like to attend.
- Bernstein reported that there have been meetings with the Ann Arbor and Ypsilanti Chambers to discuss public transportation in the County. This is critical to moving people around the County.
- The Ann Arbor Chamber of Commerce will finally be hosting our open house on June 6, 2008.

### C. Labor Update

- Gulick reported that road construction will be moving into full swing shortly. The Ypsilanti School District will be beginning a major construction project, which actually outsourced much of the work.

- Kerr added that the electricians have made a commitment to move their conferences and training programs to Washtenaw County for the next 18 years. Prater asked that the Board recognize Mary Kerr for her leadership on the project to lure the Plumbers and Electricians here. The Board applauded.
- Martin noted that a company in Washtenaw has landed a deal with the Hollywood Producers Association, which could potentially bring millions in revenue to the area.

**VI. Report of Chief Elected Official**

- Commissioner reported that Washtenaw County will be building a District Court in Saline and putting together blueprints for the new jail. This will be a 35 million dollar project.
- The Community Success plan is going successfully and will be coming together to discuss a few priority tasks. Irwin noted that he hoped this would be an opportunity to address the transit problems mention by Jesse Bernstein.
- There were some budget adjustments that have pulled 64,000.00 from the ETCS budget, which we hope will not affect ETCS greatly.
- The tower which measures wind speed to determine the viability of windmill energy sources was due to be erected nearly one month ago, but it hasn't been because of the weather conditions. If we find that the wind speed is high enough, often enough we will know whether to move forward or not.
- The County is one of the many investors in the SPARK east incubator and we requested an appropriation from the State, which Governor Granholm vetoed.

**VII. Knowledge and Innovation Feature - CONCENTRATE**

- Rusher noted that bringing Mike Finney, the CEO of Ann Arbor SPARK to Washtenaw County has been beneficial because he understands that a team effort is important to building a successful community. Accordingly, ETCS and Ann Arbor SPARK have hired a Talent Director which we share, and this has been able to bring many new companies to the area. Together we have chosen to market our unique area through an e-magazine called Concentrate. The e-magazine focuses on the positive things about our County. It includes a featured city every week, and the Talent Crunch, which lists new jobs in the area weekly. The Talent Crunch is sponsored by ETCS. Kerr noted that the Ann Arbor Convention and Visitors Bureau sponsors a video feature on the Concentrate website as well. The video is fed through RSS so anyone who would like to use the video on their website can do so. Rusher added that ETCS can also feature the Workforce Development Board members as guest bloggers to talk about the positive impact Mega-

P and our collaborations in the County have had in creating our success. Keller noted that there will also be other investor coming in to support the Concentrate e-magazine. Kerr inquired about how the jobs in the Talent Crunch are gathered. Rusher responded that Talent Director, Amy Cell posts the jobs which appear directly on the home page, but then redirects job seekers to search engines like Monster.com.

## **VIII. Report of Executive Director**

### **A. Federal/ State/Local Updates**

#### Federal

- Rusher reported that WIA funding has still not been reauthorized in Washington. David Bradley is continuing to champion our program however, and hopefully we'll have reauthorization soon.

#### State

- Rusher noted that legislative day had gone successfully and should prove beneficial in rallying support for Michigan Works!
- A grant for 5,000.00 to assist with our Access Points was completed and turned in to USDOL yesterday. The current success with our Access Points network should give us an edge at securing this funding.

#### Local

- Rusher noted that the Ypsilanti Gateway Community and Economic Development Corporation (YGCEDC) had recently sent members of their board to the CACDE conference in Chicago. The group attended the conference to explore funding opportunities for the organization. We are hoping that the leads from this conference will catapult the Gateway Board beyond the developmental stage and help them secure the funding necessary to hire an Executive Director.
- Wireless Washtenaw is working on a new initiative called I-Zoom. This program will reuse County computers for residents who cannot afford to buy them. The computers will be restored and then loaded with a discounted internet service. Residents receiving these computers will be required to continue the monthly fees for internet service themselves.

### **B. Resolutions**

- i. ETCS is requesting the approval of the Workforce Development Board on the application for the Michigan Department of Labor and Economic Growth (MDLEG) Fiscal Year (FY) 2008 Jobs, Education, and Training (JET) General

Fund/General Purpose (GF/GP) Expansion Funding in the amount of \$121,489 for the period of October 1, 2007 through September 30, 2008.

There was brief discussion.

**Wolf moved to approve the resolution. Weaver supported. Motion carried.**

- ii. ETCS is requesting the approval of The Workforce Development Board for the Fiscal Year (FY) 2008 Trade Adjustment Assistance (TAA) Program to the Michigan Department of Labor and Economic Growth for the period of October 1, 2007 through September 30, 2008.

There was brief discussion.

**Harrison moved to approve the resolution. Wolf supported. Motion carried.**

#### **IX. Report of the Community Action Board**

- Rusher reported on behalf of McKnight-Morton that the Community Action Board had recently decided to host their first Annual Community Action Barbecue in honor of Board Member, Joseph Dulin. The event will be held in conjunction with the Gateway Board, and will give the Community Action staff at ETCS a chance to celebrate the grand opening of their new office. The event will be held in the parking lot of the Michigan Works! service center on August 9, 2008.

#### **X. Report of the Committees**

##### A. Education Advisory Group

- Miller noted that the Education Advisory group would meet on May 12<sup>th</sup> at the Administrative Offices of ETCS.
- A renewal of the youth aging out of Foster Care proposal was approved at the last EAG meeting and now needs approval from the full board.

**Prater moved to approve the renewal proposal. Harrison supported. Motion carried**

- The Early College Alliance now has a waiting list, and Keith Peters will be involved in helping tackle the childhood obesity problem in our schools.

##### B. Strategic Planning Committee

- The Strategic Planning committee is still awaiting the completion of the Labor Assessment to move forward. There are no other items to report at this time.

##### C. Employers' Committee

- Harrison noted that she had recently met with Tenda to discuss some new initiatives to involving the Employers' Committee. The group will meet soon to discuss those initiatives in detail.

**XI. Other Business**

- Wolf noted that Washtenaw county had been listed as one of the ten worst places to find employment in a Forbes article, which reflects negatively on the efforts of our Workforce Development Board. Wolf requested that the Board read the article available through Google, and respond.

**XII. Adjournment**

- Peters adjourned the meeting at 10:03 AM.