

Washtenaw County  
**Workforce Development Board (WDB)**  
General Session

**Meeting Date:** November 6, 2008 **Meeting Time:** 8:00 AM

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

**Members Present:** Daphne Adams, Jesse Bernstein, Nicholas Fortson, Gene Graber, Steven Gulick, Cindy Harrison, Diane Keller, Mary Kerr, Eric Mahler, Mike Martin, Mark Ouimet, Keith Peters, Wesley Prater, Timothy Robinson, Gregg Weaver, Anne Williams, Donn Wolf

**Members Absent:** Suzanne Bade, Cynthia Travis, Dorothy Quinn, Jeff Irwin, Diana McKnight-Morton, William Miller, Michael Schippani, Clifford L. Smith Jr.

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

**Guests Present:** Maura Campbell, Marti Welsh, Joanne Morris, Peg Windsor, Darilyn Draper, Kevin Bulifant, Amy Cell, Deborah Swasey for (Cynthia Travis)

- I. **Call to Order**
  - Peters called the meeting to order at 8:08 AM.
- II. **Welcome and Introductions**
  - The board members, guests, and staff introduced themselves. Peters welcomed everyone to the meeting and thanked them for their attendance.
- III. **Public Comment**
  - There was no public comment.
- IV. **Approval of Agenda**
  - Gulick moved to approve the meeting agenda. Prater supported. The meeting agenda was approved.
- V. **Consent Agenda Items**
  - A. Approval of the meeting minutes
    - Wolf moved to approve the meeting minutes as presented. Prater supported. The meeting minutes were approved as presented.
- VI. **Report of the Chair**
  - A. Announcements and Updates
    - Peters congratulated Jeff Irwin, Mark Ouimet, Wes Prater, Mike Martin, and Anne Williams on victories in their respective elections.

- Peters reported that Tim Robinson will be leaving the Workforce Development Board (WDB) and Ann Arbor SPARK to take a new position in Lenawee County.
- Peters reported that Board Members Donn Wolf, Steve Gulick, Mary Kerr, Daphne Adams, and Jesse Bernstein were appointed to serve on the nominating committee. All have accepted. Gulick will serve as Chair.

#### B. Business Report

- Keller reported that the Ypsilanti Economic Development group had met yesterday to present an Economic Development Strategy to the Ypsilanti City Council. The plan was comprehensive and innovative. It is now available for viewing online.
- Keller noted that there are two companies from Ypsilanti who may receive the Pfizer grant. This will be a great opportunity for both these businesses, and the City.
- Keller also announced that the “Big Ideas” grant is available, and if there are organizations or areas that would like to apply they should do so now.
- Bernstein reported that Ann Arbor Transit Authority (AATA) now has a system to gage the traffic on campus at Eastern Michigan University, the University of Michigan, and Washtenaw Community College during the day. This technology should allow the company to plan more functional routes and move residents through the Ann Arbor/ Ypsilanti area more efficiently.
- The annual meeting of the Ann Arbor Area Chamber of Commerce is coming up tomorrow, the Communities of Success plan will be presented at that meeting.

#### C. Labor Report

- Martin reported that there have been approximately 40 additional film projects signed on to do business in Michigan in 2009, however, if the tax incentives being offered go away the companies backing these projects may leave Michigan. This is currently of great concern.
- Prater reported that most road construction work has been completed for 2008.
- Prater then pointed out that he was really encouraged by President-Elect Obama’s discussion of alternative energy and felt some focus should be put on developing a manufacturing industry in Michigan for alternative energy, and other environmental products.
- The wind study in Sylvan Township is improving. There is now 4 months of data gathered noted Prater. This project began in the spring but has attracted much interest from others wanting to start additional projects of this sort.
- Gulick noted that alternative energy will be one of the Governor Granholms’ main initiatives in 2009. Gulick also noted that the iron workers do erect many of the wind towers like that being used for the Sylvan Township study and that there was recently an announcement that 200 additional towers will be erected. This is evidence that we definitely have a growing industry.
- Gulick reported that there is also concern that the workforce of individuals trained and ready to build nuclear facilities, and to operate them is diminishing since there has not been a facility of this sort built in many years. For this reason, several of the educational institutions have cut back on their curriculum training students for this type of work. Most individuals with these skills have acquired them in the Navy.

#### D. MEGA - P Updates

- Peters noted that the MEGA-P group had recently met and that the auto industry crisis was their main focus. Rusher commented that last week she had been asked to sit in on a conference call to discuss the situation with Chrysler and GM. On that call, it was reported that there will be several workers offered buyout deals, if they choose to accept the buyouts they will be permanently laid off. A few months after that, several other line workers will be affected.
- Rusher noted that at the MEGA-P meeting they talked about how to address the needs of the entire Washtenaw County Workforce so that they are ready to seize the opportunities that will be available in the future. The group talked about an action plan that will assist people as they transition, and we decided to create two focus groups, one centered on economic development, and one on transitioning. We will develop a model, and ask for funding from the State to support the activities of these groups under the MEGA Partnership. We will also work with SPARK, and develop a Center for Transitional Talent to focus on mentorship, internships, apprenticeships, and entrepreneurship, so that people can earn income as they transition into new careers. Lastly, we will focus on retired CEO's and executives who may need retooling by offering them assistance re-entering the workforce or perhaps starting their own businesses. The Center for Transitional Talent will be housed in the Key Bank Building. We have already talked to MEDC, and they are very excited about this project.

Bernstein added that basically the MEGA-P group is putting together a plan that will focus on reframing jobs on an individual level, as it is obvious at this point that the idea of having a clearly defined job, in a large building, is no longer the wave of the future. This plan will focus on teaching this beginning at the K-12 level.

- Gene Graber noted that since he has been on the board he has never heard any real discussion of the employers and how they are affected. This is extremely important because employers need to see some incentive to come and stay in Washtenaw County and to create jobs. The new MEGA-P plan does not seem to address this issue.
- Bernstein commented that there are at least two initiatives of the Workforce Development Board that have been employer focused - the Hospitality Regional Skills Alliance, which has focused on retraining our workforce in the hospitality industry, so that businesses in the services industry are better equipped to compete globally. Also, the partnership with GDI, which offered training dollars to this employer in exchange for guaranteed jobs.
- Cell noted that it may be beneficial to have Vince Strom of Ann Arbor SPARK come and speak to the Board, since his major focus is on retaining and recruiting new businesses to Washtenaw County.
  - **Keller moved to support having Vince Strom speak to the Board. Adams supported. Motion passed.**

## **VII. Report of the Communications and Marketing Committee**

- Wolf reported that the Community Action Board (CAB) would like to have a representative from their Board sit on the Communications and Marketing Committee.
- In addition there has been some more factual information gathered on local radio stations and the marketing committee will be meeting with M3 Strategies to further discuss the findings. The Committee will report back to the full board at the next meeting.
- Ouimet commented that he feels it is extremely important that our target market is identified first and that we align any marketing strategies to our customers and not our personal preferences.

## **VIII. Report of the Chief Elected Official**

- In absence of Commissioner Irwin, Commissioner Ouimet reported that the Commissioners are still dealing with the budget deficit, and recently passed a resolution to start slenderizing the workforce to meet budget cuts that must be made.

## **IX. Report of the Executive Director**

### A. Announcements and Updates

- Rusher reported that Because of our efforts and work with David Bradley, Community Action may possibly see a double in funding increases. Workforce Development will also receive a slight increase.
- Governor Granholm announced last week that the Department of Labor and Economic Growth (DLEG) has been changed to the Department of Energy, Labor and Economic Growth (DELEG).

#### i. Poverty Summit

- Rusher noted that our Community Action Agency was responsible for transportation provided to and from the Poverty Summit for Washtenaw, Livingston, and Macomb Counties. All of the Board members have been invited. The Governor will be there. There are over 3,000 people expected to be in attendance at this event.

#### ii. One ETCS

- Rusher reported that in these times of economic hardship and uncertainty ETCS has decided to unify our image and services. It has become apparent that many of our customers now need both Community Action and Workforce Development services, and in an effort to serve our clients as efficiently and holistically as possible, we felt a unified approach was key.

The main element of One ETCS is to align the Community Action and Workforce Boards by merging the executive councils of these two boards. We have already presented this model to both the Executive Committee of the Community Action Board and the Workforce Development Board. Both Committees are in agreement with this new structure.

Graber noted that he feels this is a great idea, and suggested in addition that ETCS develop a concise vision and mission which includes a more definitive name for the department.

#### iii. Access Points Celebration

- Rusher noted that ETCS will be hosting its 2<sup>nd</sup> Annual Access Points Celebration November 18<sup>th</sup> at the Community Church of God. All are invited to attend.

#### iv. The Mega-P Harvard Grant:

- ETCS and the Mega-P group have applied for a \$100,000.00 grant with Harvard that will be used to help initiatives in the eastern region of Washtenaw County, including projects like the Aerotropolis and others. We should know more soon.

#### v. Film Production Industry Strategy

- Kerr directed the Board members to articles in the packets that have appeared in the news. Kerr noted that these articles give a good perspective of what is happening in Michigan with film industry.

65 films have been approved for production in Michigan, and one major film has already begun filming in Ann Arbor on the campus of U of M. This is a huge economic boost. The producers would like to hire locally because the more locals they hire the more tax incentives they become eligible for. The Ann Arbor Convention and Visitors Bureau along with Ann Arbor SPARK, and a few others have been working on a marketing plan to attract film makers, and also to create a web portal for film makers to quickly access all the local information necessary.

Film Detroit is also working to attract more of the film industry to Michigan, in addition to working with legislators to keep the film incentives intact.

- Kerr noted that the Film Action Committee will meet on November 12<sup>th</sup> in Oakland County.

vi. Career Jam

- Rusher reported that the Career Jam event was a huge success. There were nearly 40 exhibitors who participated, and over 300 students. The jobs featured at the Career Jam had starting salaries ranging anywhere from \$9 to \$26 per hour. It was an extremely exciting event.

SOS Leverage Letter

- Rusher noted that every year the Workforce Development Board provides funding to the SOS Community Center to administer workforce development activities for the homeless population in our County through their offices and community network. This year the continued funding amount is \$62,207.00 pending final availability of federal funding, and their past performance. The board must approve this continued funding.

**Grabner moved to approve continued support of the SOS Community Center in the amount of \$62,207. Gulick supported. Motion passed.**

B. Resolutions

- ETCS is requesting approval of the Program Year (PY) 2008 Workforce Investment Act (WIA) Incumbent Worker Training (IWT) funding recommendations.

**Harrison moved to approve the resolution. Mahler supported. Motion passed.**

**X. Report of the Committees**

A. Strategic Planning Committee Meeting

- Williams noted that there were no updates at this time. The committee will be working on rolling some of the new initiatives into our Strategic Plan.

B. Education Advisory Group

- There was no report at this time.

C. Employers Committee

- There was no report at this time.

**XI. Report of the Community Action Board**

- There was no report at this time.

**XII. Other Business**

- Weaver noted that there was much mention of “green” during the meeting and asked if it was possible to get a definition of that term in the context of workforce development.
- Rusher referred Weaver to the website [www.greencommunities.org](http://www.greencommunities.org). This website goes into detail about what “green” means. Prater then added that green is anything environmentally friendly. It is a new blanket term used to describe any industry or job that is environmentally friendly.

**XIII. Adjournment**

- Peters adjourned the meeting at 10:05 AM.