



## GOVERNOR'S WORKFORCE BOARD RHODE ISLAND

**BOARD MEETING MINUTES**  
**February 19, 2015**  
**RIDLT, Conference Room 73-1**  
**8:00 – 9:30 am**

### ATTENDANCE

#### **BOARD MEMBERS (\*DENOTES NOT PRESENT)**

Mario Bueno	Juana Horton*	Robert Nangle
Timothy Byrne	Constance A. Howes, Chair	George Nee
Channavy Chhay	Scott Jensen	Stefan Pryor, Vice Chair
Robin Coia	Steve Kitchin*	Jim Purcell
Monica Dzialo	Paul MacDonald	Janet Raymond
Deborah Gist	Cheryl Merchant	Bahjat Shariff
John Gregory	Sharon Moylan*	Martin Trueb
Mike Grey		

**GWB Staff:** Rick Brooks, Amelia Roberts, Sherri Carello, Robert Kalaskowski, Dan Brown

**DLT Staff:** Sean Fontes, David Tremblay, Paul Genovesi, Connie Parks, Donna Murray

**Guests:** Cheryl Dacosta, Tech Collective; Shana Bloom, Stepping Up; Robert Ricci, Anne Walsh, Mark Perrotti, WSPC; Dave Chenevert, Swissline Precision Mfg Inc; Bill McCourt, Chris Matteson, RIMA; Zane Allen, RIMA Participant; Alexis Devine, Galimah Baysah, Lifespan Workforce Development; Kelliann Kent, Workforce STAT Program Participant; Kathleen Kane, Saint Antoine Residence; Robin Smith, CCRI; Malcolm Baxter, BIS; Alexis Stern, United Way RI; Philip Less, RIDE; Andrew Cortes, Building Futures; Bob Palumbo, NEIT; Robert Bromley, Senate Fiscal Office; Katuska Perez, Senate Policy Office; Dan Vock, David Kidd; Governing

### Call to Order

Chair Howes called the meeting to order at 8:01 a.m. and welcomed everyone to the meeting.

### Meeting Minutes

Chair Howes asked if there was a motion to approve the minutes of the Governor's Workforce Board's meeting held on January 15, 2015.

**VOTE:** George Nee moved to approved seconded by Mike Grey. All were in favor, the motion passed unanimously

### Executive Director's Report

Chair Howes asked Rick Brooks to provide an update on GWB programs, policy, planning, and partnerships. Referring to the Q2 Program Updates handout, R. Brooks noted the staff has been working on a number of system improvements for tracking, reporting, and monitoring programs and grants through new online reporting tools which will allow grant recipients to easily report program and fiscal activity. He indicated an employer survey has been distributed to over 100 businesses who participated in the Work Immersion Program in FY14 to gain feedback on the usability of the program and to determine how many of the interns were still working with the businesses. R. Brooks stated the staff has begun developing plans for the next fiscal year following the budget allocations the Board approved in January, including exploring the feasibility and procurement challenges of rolling Incumbent Worker Training grants aimed to be more responsive to business training needs. He noted the Innovative Partnership RFP, which

will be released in late spring, is currently being reviewed to be increasingly more demand, jobs, and sector-driven while serving Rhode Islanders with barriers and exploring new partnerships to serve in-school and out-of-school youth. R. Brooks reported the staff is also looking at ways to incorporate a performance-based funding component to the program.

R. Brooks reported CTE directors and school-based coordinators will be meeting to discuss how to support paid work experiences for high school students in their field of study through the use of Work Immersion funds. The Governor's Workforce Board will be expanding additional outreach efforts including a new GWB Facebook page and will soon be releasing a RFP to procure an outside marketing firm to expand outreach and engagement for greater visibility of GWB programs.

In terms of policy and planning updates, R. Brooks noted a RFP will be released soon to procure an outside firm to develop the Comprehensive System Improvement Plan, which will include an overview of state workforce development system and ways to improve the system. The staff has begun the process of tracking and reporting progress of the FY16-17 Biennial Plan and will convene the Advisory Committee to identify key metrics that will allow us to track and report progress on each of the action steps to increase accountability, transparency and overall awareness of workforce development system activities in Rhode Island. R. Brooks noted, in coordination with the State Workforce Investment Office, the staff will be meeting with other state agencies to look at challenges and opportunities through the new Workforce Investment and Opportunities Act (WIOA) that will allow for greater integration of workforce development efforts in the state. G. Nee inquired about the distribution of the Biennial Plan. R. Brooks stated the Plan has been distributed primarily to GWB partners and the General Assembly but noted the possibility of working with the new administration to make modifications that reflect the Governor's priorities is currently being explored.

Chair Howes formally welcomed Stefan Pryor, Secretary of Commerce as a new member of the Governor's Workforce Board.

### **Committee Chair Reports**

#### *Strategic Investments and Evaluation Committee*

Chair Howes asked Mike Grey to provide an update on the items discussed at the February Strategic Investments and Evaluation Committee meeting. M. Grey noted the committee discussed the Incumbent Worker Training grants and responding to business needs by changing them from annual to rolling grants. He noted the review and scoring process was discussed in detail in addition to ensuring the overall process would remain transparent. He noted a motion was passed to have the GWB staff look further into the process and come back to the next meeting with some recommendations. M. Grey stated a total of \$1.3 million was allocated for Annual Incumbent Worker Training Grants and \$400,000 was allocated for Express Grants for FY16. He highlighted the program focus for the meeting was the Innovative Partnership Program, noting the committee discussed performance metrics and measurements in relation to how to measure the success of a program. He added many of the grantees are in the middle of their program year so the outcome goals such as job placements, will not likely be reported until later in their program year. Lastly, M. Grey indicated the committee reviewed the Q2 Program Overview Report and further discussed the progress of each program in comparison to their targets. R. Nangle commented that changing the Annual Incumbent Worker Training Grants to rolling grants is a great idea.

#### **Governor Gina M. Raimondo Presentation "Stop the Decline and Spark the Comeback"**

Chair Howes welcomed Governor Gina Raimondo to the meeting and commended her on setting such a high standard of excellence in hopes that the Governor's Workforce Board will also be held to the same high standards. Governor Raimondo discussed her ongoing outreach to businesses and noted the common feedback from them was the need for predictability and a skilled, trained workforce in order to expand their business in Rhode Island. She stated the speed of businesses needs to increase by reducing long RFP processes for workforce development programs. Governor Raimondo noted skill development programs are only successful if they move quickly and respond to the needs of business. She presented key statistics that define Rhode Island's economy as it currently stands in hopes to

establish a shared understanding of where we are and where we need to be. Governor Raimondo stated Rhode Island needs to create well-paying jobs in advanced industries through innovation and research and development. She noted 20% of Rhode Islanders' income comes from aid, assistance, benefits, and other types of public assistance. She discussed the per capita income of Rhode Islanders in comparison to other surrounding states, highlighting that Rhode Island's average of \$46,969 is significantly lower than both Massachusetts (\$57,248) and Connecticut (\$60,658). Governor Raimondo stated economies that succeed have to be more global, higher-skilled, and higher-tech to remain competitive. She shared the projected general revenue deficit, highlighting the FY2016 deficit of nearly \$200 million but stated cutting spending will not solve the problem. She proposed a solution to the problem is investing in job training, tourism, schools, and higher education while cutting in areas that do not create jobs.

Governor Raimondo discussed the manufacturing industry, the unsettling trend in replacing middle class jobs with lower wage jobs, and increasing the minimum wage to improve the economic position of Rhode Island. She spoke about looking at ways to cut spending such as Medicaid. Rhode Island spends around \$9,000 a year per enrollee, the second highest in the country, yet outcomes are no better than states that spend less per enrollee. Governor Raimondo further discussed her sense of urgency in creating high-skill, high-wage jobs that can support families. P. MacDonald commended the Governor on her presentation and the awareness it brought to the current state of Rhode Island's economy in a digestible form. T. Byrne inquired about using land in Providence to create a thriving economic system like Cambridge. Governor Raimondo noted that the administration is working on it and has appointed new people to the 195 Commission. She also discussed the possibility of an Applied Science campus on that property. G. Nee thanked Governor Raimondo for her eye-opening presentation as a catalyst to make things happen and thanked Chair Howes and Rick Brooks for providing structure and awareness of the Governor's Workforce Board. The Board discussed outreach, connecting jobseekers with employers, and the lack of essential skills among jobseekers.

#### **USDOL American Apprenticeships Initiative**

Chair Howes asked Andrew Cortes from Building Futures to present on the USDOL American Apprenticeships Initiative. A. Cortes showed a short video on the value of apprenticeships and spoke about how the competency-based model for apprenticeships is very flexible and adaptable to any employers needs. According to a federal study across 10 states, A. Cortes explained that \$1 WIA federal dollar invested in apprenticeships returned \$27 dollars. He explained the social benefits of apprenticeships and shared his own success and career development through the construction industry apprenticeship model. A. Cortes explained how apprenticeships can reduce youth unemployment, providing examples of countries such as Germany, Austria, Switzerland that move 70% of their youth directly into apprenticeships and employment. A. Cortes described how collaboration, key employers, and building out the state's capacity to support quality apprenticeships will ultimately jump-start our state's apprenticeship center and meet the needs of businesses through structured employment.

#### **Innovative Partnership Presentations**

##### *Rhode Island Manufacturers Association*

Chair Howes asked Chris Matteson to provide an update on the RIMA Advanced Manufacturing and CNC Machining Innovative Partnership Program. C. Matteson provided an overview of the program, noting that the 21-week program includes classroom hours and eight different certifications to participants. He discussed the focus areas of the training and highlighted many of the training outcomes, noting that by the end of the program, 240 Industry Recognized Certificates will have been earned. Dave Chenevert, President of Swissline Precision Manufacturing discussed his experience with the program and commended the program on effectively addressing the current skill gap issue in Rhode Island. Zane Allen, a program participant described his reasons for joining the program and commented on how the program has had a positive effect on his life and career goals.

##### *Rhode Island Hospital – Workforce S.T.A.T. Program*

Chair Howes asked Alexis Devine to provide an update on the Workforce S.T.A.T. Innovative Partnership Program. A. Devine described the industry need for CNAs due to the high turnover rate, recruitment and selection process, and the program provisions that address barriers. She indicated the 8-week program

provides CNA training for free and graduates receive their licenses after they complete the 8-week training portion. A. Devine noted participants are required to do a 6-week experiential learning internship at a Lifespan affiliate. During that time, participants attend work-readiness training one day a week. She further discussed the enrollment requirements, noting the participants are required to have a 7<sup>th</sup> grade reading level based on the level of the license test.. Kelliann Kent, a recent program graduate described her experience participating in the program and commented on how the program has had a positive impact on her life and self-confidence.

**Adjournment**

With no further business, Chair Howes asked for a motion to adjourn the meeting.

**VOTE:** Paul MacDonald moved to approve, seconded by Cheryl Merchant. All were in favor, the motion passed unanimously.

The meeting adjourned at 9:32 a.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Amelia-Anne Roberts