

**GOVERNOR'S WORKFORCE BOARD RI
EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE MEETING
MARCH 10, 2008**

MINUTES

Members Present: Joseph MarcAurele, Brandon Melton, William McGowan
Members Absent: Jack Warner, Sharon Moylan
Staff Present: J. Michael Koback, Maureen Mooney, Sandra Powell
Location: RI Department of Labor and Training, Conference room 73-2

With a quorum present, Chair MarcAurele called the meeting to order at 3:45 p.m.

A motion was entered to approve the minutes of the 1-31-08 Executive Committee meeting.

VOTE: B. Melton moved to approve, seconded by B. McGowan. All approved.

Strategic Planning Update

M. Koback reported that the steering committee meeting held on February 28th was a productive meeting. Consultants from the Corporation for a Skilled Workforce (CSW) facilitated the meeting and a consensus was reached on a number of items. M. Koback indicated he is expecting there will be a blueprint of the strategic plan by the April 8th Planning and Evaluation committee meeting. S. Powell indicated she will be working with the Workforce Cabinet on the implementation of the plan from their perspective in order to identify the items they need to address.

J. MarcAurele noted the inclusiveness of the process and asked M. Koback if there was a sense that participants still feel good about their involvement? He stated his concern that sometimes opinions are ignored or marginalized due to the streamlining of the process.

M. Koback responded that the goals are also inclusive and that they were based on four key points which includes employers, adults, the emerging workforce and the system. M. Koback stated it was emphasized during the meeting that these goals include all of the sub-groups that might be advocated for and that strategies will be developed that address these different populations.

M. Koback acknowledged S. Powell's efforts to assist with the timely progress of the strategic plan. He mentioned that she has offered staff support from the department as well as the Labor Market Information (LMI) unit. She has indicated the high priority of this project to staff.

S. Powell mentioned a meeting earlier in the day with Saul Kaplan on other matters but noted that the strategic plan was discussed. She indicated that S. Kaplan has some concerns about the data elements relative to the plan. In this meeting he stated his goals as set forth in his plan on the 21st Century sub-committee. S. Powell suggested to S. Kaplan that the optimal forum to address his concerns about the strategic plan is with the steering committee. She noted her assurance to him that his concerns will be well respected within the process that currently exists and within this committee and that his concern on the data elements will be duly noted.

S. Powell asked P. Harden if this would satisfy Saul's needs.

P. Harden mentioned his reluctance to speak for S. Kaplan and that S. Kaplan feels very passionately about this issue. He did mention that, in his opinion, S. Kaplan thinks it is critical for the state to look at its workforce needs and how the economy is changing. His concern, he believes, is identifying how the workforce development plan addresses changes in the economy going forward.

J. MarcAurele asked P. Harden if the concern is that some of the data available to us could be lost or marginalized by the strategic plan. He asked if the concern is that there is old data or not enough data?

Paul responded that may be part of his concern.

J. MarcAurele mentioned that this data may or may not be available based on the idea that data collection methods and analysis differ industry-wide. For example, he noted that some of the data in the health care industry is predictable and backed by demographics. He noted that in the financial services sector, the data is less predictable and sometimes based on factors such as the exponential increase in technology and a company's ability or inability to invest. He also noted that the banking industry is an inexact science. J. MarcAurele indicated that with all of the negative economic data both locally and nationally, that we are at a reflection point and that we must react to the current situation. We cannot be seen as doing nothing.

B. Melton provided an overview of a long term labor forecast developed by Lifespan last spring. This forecast was extended out to the year 2025 and there were 3 different demand scenarios developed. He mentioned that as predictable as the data might be, there are always wild cards. For example, the human genome could have an enormous impact on the health care needs of U.S. citizens. He also noted the international impact of trends in the health care industry. He cited the example of people traveling to the Middle East for operations. In spite of these uncertainties however, he indicated the necessity of attempting these forecasts for workforce planning purposes.

S. Powell indicated she felt it is important to be respectful of S. Kaplan's position. She reported her comments to him on the importance of acknowledging the GWB as the agency administering the strategic plan. She noted there is a process in place to develop this plan and that the steering committee is the appropriate forum for this effort. She indicated that S. Kaplan feels that the 21st Century sub-committee is important also. S. Powell noted she does not know where we go from here.

W. McGowan mentioned that a motion was made at the committee meeting and that Saul voted with it. He indicated that an additional sub-committee will not be established.

Both P. Harden and S. Powell indicated S. Kaplan's recollection was different than this.

W. McGowan stated the vote was unanimous. He noted it is important to avoid diverting resources and adding any delays to the process. He also noted he is encouraged by the efforts of the strategic plan and the Industry Skills Initiative (ISI) and the impact these efforts will have on workforce development. He emphasized the immediate need for action based on recent economic forecasts and statistics released on the educational system in RI (and nationally). He also stressed the importance of everyone working together, noting that collaboration is crucial to the process and that on April 8th we need to move forward with the strategic plan.

S. Powell acknowledged S. Kaplan's role as the head of economic development efforts for the state. She indicated that when discussing this topic with S. Kaplan, she speaks on her own behalf from a DLT perspective and does not speak on behalf of the board. She re-emphasized that S. Kaplan would be represented very favorably within the existing process and within the steering committee and that his concerns would be listened to.

M. Koback noted that economic development activity addressing workforce and educational goals requires mutual support in terms of educating the workforce, creating new jobs, and expanding and retaining companies. A major goal for the workforce development system is to implement strategies and provide the training to support these industries. He reported that in the steering committee meeting, it was discussed that supporting this goal would involve utilizing information taken from the O Net job zones. These job zones provide a clear pathway of information containing identified zones and defined skill requirements, as well as strategies to move people from one level to another. This provides an opportunity to bring in new companies as well as support current industries. He also noted the goal for the strategic plan has always been to be data driven. The data elements will be identified in the business plan.

Carl D. Perkins Career and Technical Education Act (Perkins IV) Five-Year Plan

M. Koback reported this act was previously named the Carl D. Perkins Vocational and Technical Education Act of 1998 and that it was reauthorized in 2006. This reauthorization focuses on bringing the vocational training system into the 21st century as well as placing more credibility on career and technical education programs. He reported that RI submitted a one-year transition plan in 2007 which must be followed by a five year plan and due in April 2008. M. Koback referred to a hand-out provided to committee members which provides a summary of the plan. He reported that this plan was endorsed by the Planning and Evaluation committee and will now go before the full board for approval.

B. Melton inquired if the intent of the Perkins funds is to support vocational training programs at Lincoln, Davies, Rogers and other programs. M. Koback indicated it was.

S. Powell indicated this is an example of the type of statutory plans that should be presented before the Governor's Workforce Board.

M. Koback indicated J. Uvin will present the summary of the Perkins Plan at the board meeting since he is the most knowledgeable.

March Meeting Agenda

M. Koback noted the GWB board meeting agenda would include the WIA Consent agenda items and that there was no presentation scheduled. He also indicated there would be committee reports including a report on the recent Planning and Evaluation committee meeting. B. Melton indicated he could provide an update on the Youth Development committee.

Committee Chairs Update

M. Koback indicated that Sharon Moylan and Bob Nangle have been working on the plans for the Annual meeting to be held on June 26th. He noted B. Nangle offered to have his company prepare the invitations.

Other Business

S. Powell reported that she has attended several meetings with the Governor's office recently and wanted to inform the committee of a possible request for assistance from the GWB for Colibri. She indicated that the company may decide to leave the state and was recently visited

by S. Kaplan and staff from the Economic Development Corporation (EDC). She indicated there is a potential request for business retention funding. She mentioned at a meeting with the Governor, and Saul Kaplan agreed, that there was some concern on the part of the board regarding business retention as a viable funding option. She also clarified that currently there is not an actual request for funding but that EDC would like to report back to the company that there is a possibility a request can be considered.

S. Powell also reported that the Governor held a press conference to address the math results from the New England Common Assessment Program (NECAP) scores, and statewide proficiency rates of 22% for 11th grade testing. She indicated she shared with the governor's key policy lead the work of the GWB in endorsing and supporting statewide youth service initiatives.

S. Powell asked for the committee's indulgence with a comment she made about the possibility of the GWB aligning some of the current initiatives with math proficiency needs. She suggested that perhaps a connection could be made with some of the components of the youth programs by establishing demonstrated links to math proficiency in whatever work efforts the youth are undertaking.

S. Powell also noted a goal for the Governor regarding Medicaid reform. One discussion involved the de-institutionalization of people with developmental disabilities. This discussion included the possibility of creating a group of workers to assist the disabled in the workforce in the community. She asked the committee to consider how this might align with the work the board is doing relative to workforce training. One thought suggests an alignment with the health care industry. S. Powell noted this is proposed and may never occur, and if it did go forward it would have to be legislated. She explained that as a new board member, she tries to speak to the work of the board when attending meetings with the Governor on prominent issues relating to the workforce. She noted her continuing efforts to bring the GWB into policy conversations.

M Koback reported there is work being undertaken to establish business retention policies and procedures which will enable us to provide assistance if a request is considered.

P. Harden suggested setting limitations with this policy. For example, if there are 350 employees currently, the number should not drop below 250.

M. Koback mentioned that Colibri is in an unfortunate situation noting they have been taken over by a venture capitalist with 3 different partners. He reported on a visit he made to Colibri last November with Adelita Orefice, S. Kaplan and Bill Parsons. He mentioned that Colibri has transitioned from a manufacturing company to a distribution company and that originally they manufactured high end lighters. He noted that the demand for this product has lessened as people quit smoking. S. Powell indicated that the company is being courted by the states of NY and MA to join their state. M. Koback noted the recent signing of a 10 year lease for the building where they are currently located.

With no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 4:20 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Maureen Mooney