

**GOVERNOR'S WORKFORCE BOARD – RI
STRATEGIC INVESTMENTS COMMITTEE MEETING
JUNE 21, 2006**

MINUTES

Members Present: Joseph MarcAurele, Brandon Melton, Deborah Wilson
George Nee, Martin Trueb, William McGowan
Members Absent: Armeather Gibbs, Lorna Ricci
Staff Present: Michael Koback, Mavis McGetrick, Lori DelRossi, Nancy Olson,
Marsha McDowell
Others Present: Paul Harden, EDC

With a quorum present, Chair J. MarcAurele called the meeting to order at 9:05 AM.
A motion was entered to approve the Strategic Investments Committee minutes of April 25, 2006.

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

Paul Harden was asked to report on the two Economic Development Corporation's (EDC) funding requests. He explained that Chivers North America Inc. (dba BBC Audiobooks America) is a publisher and distributor of American and British best selling unabridged audio books and radio dramatizations for adults and children. 18 employees will be hired at a rate of pay of \$24,000/\$40,000 a year. The company is requesting \$80,000. EDC staff recommendation is for \$51,000.

A motion was entered to approve the staff recommendation of \$51,000 to be awarded to Chivers North America Inc. (dba BBC Audiobooks America).

VOTE: G. Nee moved to approve, seconded by M. Trueb. All approved.

The second request is from Aspen Aerogels, Inc., a company engaged in the development and mass production of aerogel products. Aerogels are open cell, ultra-low conductivity, low density materials that offer thermal insulation, acoustic insulation, infrared suppression, shock absorption for a wide range of commercial and government applications. 50 employees will be hired at a pay range of \$16/\$22 per hour. The company is requesting \$250,000. EDC staff recommendation is for \$218,000.

A motion was entered to approve the staff recommendation of \$218,000 to be awarded to Aspen Aerogels, Inc.

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

After having several conversations with EDC, Chair MarcAurele's opinion was that an expedited and cooperative approval process be set up to react quickly to EDC funding requests. Staff will work to establish new procedures.

The next agenda item discussed was the Round 2 of the 2006 Workforce Improvement Grant Program. M. Koback stated that 112 proposals were received requesting \$1,984,073. 49 proposals that scored 89 points and above are being recommended for funding. 60 reviewers were recruited to evaluate the proposals with 42 representing the private sector. There are 36 organizations representing high wage

industries and 25 new applicants. A total of 2,146 employees will be trained. In addition to the first round, this funding would obligate the \$2 million allocated for this category. Inside the meeting packet was a list of the companies being recommended for funding along with a list of those that scored below 89 that are not being recommended. Staff will provide, upon request, an overview of comments by the reviewers to organizations not funded.

M. McGetrick explained that in the Request for Proposals (RFP) it was stated that up to 10% of the funds awarded would be allocated to non-profit organizations. This threshold was exceeded by approximately \$2,000 in order to fund all non-profits scoring at least 89 points. The RFP also stated that the board could waive the requirements of the RFP if it was in the best interest of the board to do so.

A motion was entered to waive the 10% limit for non-profits in the Request for Proposals.

VOTE: W. McGowan moved to approve, seconded by G. Nee. All approved.

A motion was entered to approve the funding of the staff recommended 49 organizations in the amount of \$938,361.

VOTE: M. Trueb moved to approve, seconded by D. Wilson. All approved.

M. Koback discussed the funding request for Adult Education and Literacy. At the last meeting of the Adult Education sub-committee, the members approved a budget of approximately \$2.4 million for FY07 activities to be funded by the Job Development Fund. Mr. Koback explained that the RI Department of Education (RIDE) had a two year commitment for \$1.6 million of Job Development Funds. This is the second year of that obligation. Last year RIDE received the \$1.6 million plus \$156,000 in carry-over funds which increased the funds available to \$1.8 million. RIDE is requesting \$1.8 million to fulfill the commitment for the second year. These are funds that are awarded to adult literacy providers for program activities. The remainder of the \$2.4 million includes activities such as the establishment of professional development centers; funding requests for these activities will be presented at a later date.

Members were asked to review the spread sheet in their packet that listed the 11 agencies currently funded by RIDE. The committee would like Johan Uvin to provide them with an explanation of what "local match" refers to in the document.

A motion was entered to approve funding in the amount of \$1,806,674 to the Rhode Island Department of Education.

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

The meeting adjourned at 9:45 AM.

Respectfully submitted,

Marsha McDowell