

**GOVERNOR'S WORKFORCE BOARD RI
PLANNING AND EVALUATION COMMITTEE MEETING
September 14, 2007**

MEETING MINUTES

Members Present: Mario Bueno, Paul MacDonald, William McGowan,
Members Absent: Mia Caetano Johnson, Armeather Gibbs, Adelita Orefice
GWB Staff Present: M. Koback, S. Schaefer, Nancy Olson, M. Mooney
Guests: Kathy Partington, Kim Weiss, Sandra Powell
Location: RI Department of Labor & Training, Conference room 73-2

Call to Order

Chairman McGowan called the meeting to order at 10:15 AM.

Meeting Minutes

A motion was entered to approve the April 10, 2007 meeting minutes of the Planning and Evaluation Committee.

VOTE: P. MacDonald moved to approve, seconded by Mario Bueno. All approved.

Chair's Remarks

Chairman McGowan indicated that the key purpose of the meeting is to provide an update and assessment of the status of current initiatives, primarily strategic planning. He reported that on October 4th the Corporation for a Skilled Workforce (CSW) will be facilitating the next strategic planning meeting. Chairman McGowan indicated that he will be attending and that he has reviewed the documents relating to the plan outline. He is interested in seeing how all of the information will come together and how the process will move forward.

Strategic Planning

M. Koback informed the committee of the progress of the strategic planning process since the June meeting. He noted that the information presented to the committee at this meeting will be sent to the Strategic Planning Ad-Hoc Advisory Committee soon.

He referred to the handout: *Rhode Island Strategic Plan Outline* and indicated there were dramatic shifts in some of the planning strategies based on a review of the information obtained from the June meeting. M. Koback reported on a two hour conference call conducted with CSW on September 13th, which highlighted the work done over the summer by CSW and the LMI section of the DLT. The data from June was reviewed and either verified or refuted and new strategies were proposed based on this research. As an example, M. Koback indicated there were some discrepancies about what the workforce looks like in RI regarding high skill and high wage jobs. Earlier assumptions leaned towards a 40/60 split, with 60% of the workforce in lower skilled jobs. However, further research supports a 50/50 split which is the national average. As a result of the conference call, and the discussion of the data research results, CSW will revise and update the Strategic Plan Outline for RI.

Although the strategies have changed to some degree, M Koback indicated that the process steps have not. In referring to the handout: *Rhode Island Strategic Plan Development*, he noted that the practical vision, the contradictions, barriers and obstacles remain valid. He also noted that the "revised" plan will focus on goals, measures and strategies and indicated the

importance of the input from all of the agencies attending the next meeting. This will hopefully result in a unified effort across agencies to address the measurable goals.

M. Koback referred the committee to the final strategic planning hand-out: *Results of Final Vision Session Agreements on Themes*. This hand-out lists the key strategies for Rhode Island suggested by the group and were determined after much discussion and debate. These key points will be a starting point at the planning meeting in October.

M. Koback noted that CSW has indicated there is a good cross section of agencies involved in the strategic planning process. It is expected that the session on October 4th will be valuable to the process and the plan is to create four focus groups to consider ideas already identified as well as potential new ones. The October session will provide an opportunity to discuss the need to conduct a resource mapping. It was noted that United Way may contribute funds for this effort.

Chairman McGowan inquired if CSW will be addressing the full board with the updated strategic plan. M. Koback responded this should occur after the draft plan is presented to the Workforce Cabinet, who will review the plan for feasibility.

M. Bueno inquired about the population of the focus groups and if measures will be taken to include members who can address language barrier issues. M. Koback responded that there will be input from those at the strategic planning session about who should be included in the focus groups. He encouraged M. Bueno to attend the October session.

M. Koback also reported that there was a slight setback in staffing of the CSW team. He mentioned that one of the facilitators, Ed Strong, was dealing with health problems but indicated that another staff person would be taking on his role.

A discussion followed regarding items listed on the handout: *Results of Final Vision Session Agreements on Themes*. M. Bueno indicated that the list seemed more like a wish list than a list of concrete action items. He questioned how we would determine if it is a good plan? He also noted somewhat of a disengagement between the ad hoc group and the board.

A summary of this discussion follows. M. Koback responded that CSW was chosen because of their successful track record around this work in other states. K. Partington commented that CSW accomplished great work in the state of Michigan by revamping the state system there. S. Powell noted that the understanding of the existing system is important to move ahead with the strategic plan.

M. Bueno mentioned that in order to achieve a clearer understanding of the different models used in this strategic planning approach, more information is necessary.

M. Koback discussed the collaboration that currently exists among state agencies for change and specifically mentioned the Department of Human Services (DHS), and the Department of Children, Youth and Families (DCYF). He also noted that CSW is tasked with informing the strategic planning committee of the items they should be reviewing to promote collaboration and change.

M. Koback clarified that the comment in the final vision session regarding a disconnect between board members and the ad hoc committee, simply referred to the fact that there were few board members present at the June meeting. K. Partington commented that the Workforce cabinet is engaged, desires system change and that they play a critical role in the strategic planning

process. M. Koback acknowledged the Governor's support for this strategic plan. P. MacDonald noted the importance of the strategic plan to be summarized and made understandable to all participants as well as board members.

On the separate topic of apprenticeships, P. MacDonald noted the lack of enforcement issues as well as the importance of the Department of Labor and Training in taking an active role in the redesign of this program. He connected this program to the strategic planning initiative. He commented that in order for this redesign of the Apprenticeship Program to occur, work must be done to advance to a higher skilled workforce.

P. MacDonald reiterated the importance of the enforcement issue stating that all companies receiving state or federal money should be audited regarding workforce issues. S. Powell noted she was aware of progress made with the Apprenticeship Council but noted this was not her area of specialty. For one, the engagement of Bill Holmes, Chairman of the Apprenticeship Council in the redesign of the apprenticeship program was valuable. In addition to this, also important is the support and direction of the Department of Labor and Training. She noted that a fulltime staff person, Chris Grieco, has been assigned to oversee the redesign process.

netWORKri Restructuring

S. Powell referred to the handout provided to the members regarding netWORKri restructuring. To update the committee, she reported that in June 2007, the Governor authorized the implementation of the recommended changes of the netWORKri Restructuring Task Team. This included the closing of the Warren and Wakefield netWORKri Career Centers in late 2007 and the enhancement of the availability of programs on Aquidneck Island. She reported that a transition period of reduced weekly hours of operation would occur in advance of closing these centers and that an increase in the hours of operation in Newport would occur. She noted that programs and services will still be available in Pawtucket and Providence, as well as the Reemployment Centers located in Woonsocket and West Warwick.

S. Powell noted that many factors contributed to the need for reorganization of netWORKri including the rise in internet use, the addition of new adult education and youth services and changes in program funding. She reported that the Department will continue to look at ways to re-engineer netWORKri by utilizing technology, an improved Apprenticeship program and the reassignment of the staff to meet future needs.

Chairman McGowan, noting time constraints indicated that the two remaining agenda items; Industry Partnerships and Apprenticeships will be discussed at the next committee meeting. He indicated he would like to have this meeting before the end of the year.

Chairman McGowan entertained a motion to adjourn the meeting.

VOTE: P. McDonald moved to approve, seconded by M. Bueno. All approved.

The meeting adjourned at 11:25 a.m.

Respectfully submitted,
Maureen Mooney