

**GOVERNOR'S WORKFORCE BOARD RI
PLANNING AND EVALUATION COMMITTEE MEETING
MARCH 5, 2008**

MEETING MINUTES

Members Present: Mario Bueno, Sandra Powell, William McGowan, Saul Kaplan
Members Absent: Mia Caetano Johnson, Paul MacDonald
GWB Staff Present: J. Michael Koback, Nancy Olson, Maureen Mooney, David Francis
Guests: Jack Warner, Johan Uvin, Robert Ricci, John O'Hare, Lori Norris, Lisa D'Agostino, Dottie Miller, Nick Ucci
Location: RI Department of Labor & Training, Conference room 72-1

CALL TO ORDER

Chair McGowan called the meeting to order at 10:10 AM. He welcomed everyone to the meeting and noted the review of the strategic planning process as a key agenda item. He also welcomed Saul Kaplan and Sandra Powell to the committee. Chair McGowan mentioned that S. Kaplan will be providing an overview of the proposed sub-committee for 21st century workforce development later in the meeting. Chair McGowan also welcomed Dottie Miller who will be providing an update of the Industry Skills Initiative. He thanked Commissioner Warner for attending this committee meeting noting his value to the content of the discussion items.

MEETING MINUTES

A motion was entered to approve the 1-08-08 meeting minutes of the Planning and Evaluation Committee.

VOTE: S. Powell moved to approve, seconded by Mario Bueno. All approved.

CHAIR'S REMARKS

Chairman McGowan noted the full agenda for the meeting. He mentioned discussions with J. MarcAurele about moving the strategic planning process ahead quickly and that this meeting is important to this goal. He acknowledged the significant progress made with the initiatives overseen by the Governor's Workforce Board (GWB) as well as the tremendous collaboration involved with these efforts. Chair McGowan stressed the importance of incorporating the resources needed to build a skilled workforce into the strategic plan.

S. Powell acknowledged the important work done in the strategic planning process by the GWB and the Planning and Evaluation Committee. She also recognized the tremendous efforts of the Workforce Development unit of the Department of Labor and Training (DLT) which is the largest implementer of workforce development programs. She stated she is extremely excited about the direction of the strategic plan and other initiatives and the important connections being made.

Chair McGowan agreed and acknowledged the strong leadership of J. MarcAurele and the GWB as well the collaboration efforts of various entities. He noted that in spite of the recent economic downturn, we are in a good position to move forward. Chair McGowan turned the meeting over to M. Koback for an update on the strategic planning process.

STRATEGIC PLANNING

M. Koback referred to the meeting notes from the February 28th Workforce Plan Steering committee and reported that 2 consultants from the Corporation for a Skilled Workforce (CSW) met with approximately 20 members of the steering committee. This included participants from industry as well as other key stakeholders. A major goal of the meeting was to refine the plan into key points and to establish next steps. M. Koback discussed some of the highlights as outlined in the meeting notes.

M. Koback noted that consensus was reached on the premise that the strategic plan be identified as a benchmark by which all other plans are measured. He reviewed items relating to the vision and goals of the strategic plan and emphasized the importance of supporting these goals with data. He also reviewed the organizational and key elements of the plan outline, which he described as a blueprint, noting that this will drive the development of a business plan. He reported that various agencies will contribute to this business plan by addressing individual agency strategies and goals. He emphasized the importance of determining how economic development relates to the workforce system and identifying where these systems interconnect.

J. O'Hare concurred and commented that the intent of the strategic plan, initiated by the Planning and Evaluation committee in January of 2007, was to be a guide plan for creating a "unified plan" incorporating the various plans affiliated with workforce development in the state. This plan would be the beginning point of the alignment of operational programs at the state level. He noted the goal is to have the completed plan reviewed by the Workforce Cabinet by April or May with the completion of the master plan by April 2009. J. O'Hare emphasized the importance of incorporating the plans of the various state agencies into a unified approach to better align efforts with workforce development.

Chair McGowan asked about the timetable for the incorporation of the current two-year plan into the master plan. J. O'Hare explained that this past year was a starting point in the development of the strategic plan in order to proceed with the work needed for the agency plans. A major task was the development of goals and objectives along with the overall vision and strategy. He noted that the public participation effort is conducted through the GWB. J. O'Hare mentioned the more we can align the resources of workforce development throughout the state agencies over the next five years, the more advantageous it will be.

M. Koback reported that the framework of the blueprint should be completed by May and that CSW will be conducting focus groups. These groups will be made up of constituencies such as business, education, secondary and post-secondary systems as well as the Workforce Cabinet. Their buy-in and agreement is crucial to the process. Once the work with the focus groups is complete, the plan will be finalized. Chair McGowan indicated he would like to see the blueprint by the next Planning and Evaluation committee meeting scheduled for April 8th.

S. Powell indicated she would like to see a timeline of the strategic planning process by the next committee meeting. She would like the timeline to include the benchmarks and the progress of each. She also suggested that committee members receive this timeline by email before the next committee meeting. She inquired if the strategic planning process will be ready by the end of May. M. Koback replied that the work done with the focus groups, the vetting of the plan to the Workforce cabinet and the draft blueprint would all be completed by the end of May.

J. Warner inquired if the strategic plan contains guidelines for the consideration of credentialing for training? He suggested a general indicator exists in the gaps between the credentials RI

residents hold and what the workforce requires. For example, one indicator might be the number of high school graduates and what that represents in terms of the ability to get jobs in the existing workforce. Another indicator might be post secondary credentialing in regards to certificates or apprenticeship and the relationship to job clusters and sectors. He mentioned that the Community College of RI (CCRI) could assist in a credentialing process along with other educational institutions if the credentialing is needed at a higher level. He suggested that using this type of analysis would identify where to focus our strategy.

J. Warner noted a major concern in education today is where to put scarce resources. He cited as an example the No Child Left Behind legislation which has focused on raising a very basic level up to a minimally accepted level of performance. He pointed out that the number of students leaving high school who need developmental coursework to enter institutions of higher education has remained the same. The result of this legislation has left that gap untouched. With this in mind, J. Warner suggested that we look at the various skill levels of the population and the needs of the workforce to determine where the misalignments are occurring. He provided the example of the shortage of health care workers and cited the 13% vacancy rate for nurses alone which projects to be worse over time. This case is an example of an identified gap in the workforce. He suggested this type of analysis is worth doing comparing current skill levels and needs of the workforce with the expansion of current businesses and the recruitment of new businesses.

M. Koback noted that J. Warner has aptly described the key elements of the skills gap analysis that the Industry Partnerships are undertaking. He reported that we are actually moving away from the concept of a focused Industry Partnership to be much more cluster oriented. He indicated that future plans include having the skills gaps analyses presented to the committee and to the full board once completed. He emphasized the importance of the partnerships working more closely as a system to understand how each sector affects the other. He also emphasized that CCRI needs to play a key role as a provider of training in order to meet the demand.

S Kaplan inquired about the details of the strategic plan as far as identifying the timetable, number of employees, and specific skill requirements. He asked how granular the data will be and if it will include questions such as; "10 years from now we would expect that the health and life sciences sector will have X number of employees versus Y number today. And here is the skill requirement for that. Also here is how the workforce development system is going to supply these employees." M. Koback indicated he expects the data will get that detailed.

M. Koback noted that the timeline for the strategic plans extends through 2013 and that the expectation is there will be benchmarks for every year, specifically addressing the skill gaps the Industry Partners have identified. Key questions include how do we create a system that addresses strategies that incorporate occupational skills training and education; how do we incorporate the apprenticeship model; and how does the secondary education system fit into the strategic plan? He noted a network of key constituents is available to provide assistance in closing the gaps. In addition to this, he concluded that at times regulatory requirements can present barriers and suggested we consider how the GWB can be most effective in impacting policy and regulation.

Industry Skill Development Initiative (Update) and Second Year Funding

Chair McGowan noted the phenomenal work done by both Local Workforce Investment Boards (LWIB) under the leadership of Dottie Miller and Bob Ricci. He reported that D. Miller would be providing the update on the Industry Skill Development Initiative (ISDI).

D. Miller referred to the hand-out in the meeting packet and reported that the Industry Skill Development Initiative was created to meet the goals of the two-year strategic plan for 2007-2008. She mentioned that she and B. Ricci are very involved in the strategic planning process that will assist in establishing a foundation for this initiative. She noted that on January 17, 2008, the GWB endorsed year one funding for the Industry Skill Development Initiative. As a result, the LWIBs developed an RFP to achieve stated goals and to invest in the One-Stop Career Center infrastructure. She also noted a significant change in the service model to focus on skills rather than on resumes.

D. Miller reported that the RFP was completed on March 4th and that it targets the Industry Partnerships that have completed the skills gap study. Many of these partners are ready to move forward in responding to the gaps identified. She noted the importance of the administrative capabilities and employer support needed to successfully implement programs and strategies to close the skill gaps. She reported that if the GWB endorses the Initiative that a joint RFP will be issued by the 2 LWIBs on March 14th. She emphasized it was important to have the contracts ready for implementation by July 1st. D. Miller summarized the key items mentioned in the outline provided which include: industry participation and investment in the system along with the LWIBs; the collaboration among the adult and youth system and industry, and the commitment of industry to participate with the One-Stop system.

D. Miller reported that the funding commitment for year one of the contract has been approved by the GWB. She noted that the contract language states that the renewal of the contract is based on the planned activities endorsed for year two which is the reason for requesting second year funding for the initiative at this point in time.

Chair McGowan clarified the request for 2nd year funding. He reported that initially the GWB authorized the funding for the infrastructure technology updates for the One-Stop Centers to be primarily done in-house. He asked if this was in progress and D. Miller reported it was. He asked D. Miller if the intention is to bring a request for second year funding before the Strategic Investments Committee. D. Miller stated they are asking the Planning and Evaluation Committee to endorse the 2nd year funding request in order to ensure support by the GWB of this second phase so they will feel comfortable issuing the RFP.

M. Koback asked if the intent is to put this item on the Strategic Investment Committee agenda for the meeting scheduled for Monday, March 10th. D. Miller referred to the RFP schedule in the meeting packet indicating the RFP release date of March 14th. She stated that if the Strategic Investment Committee approved this funding on March 10th, with full board endorsement on March 13th, then she could adhere to the schedule which will ensure the issuance of contracts by July 1st.

Chair McGowan emphasized we should stay aggressive with this process.

M. Bueno inquired about evaluation and how it would be tied into the deliverables. D. Miller indicated they will structure an evaluation element and noted the role of the LWIBS in providing oversight.

M. Bueno asked about providing information to the industry partners about the skills gaps analyses as well as the possibility of credentialing being a part of the training process. He stated that it was obvious that collaboration needs to take place and that this takes time. He also noted it is important that educational institutions provide the training to fill the gaps. He cautioned that the certification process adds another time element to the process and that notification of any training and/or certification requirements should be provided to the Industry Partners.

D. Miller reported that a meeting was held with the Industry Partners in late January and that the partners received both the concept paper and a draft RFP schedule. She also noted that the RFP is specific about the requirements and that July 1st is the contract start date, not a date that all of the requirements need to be accomplished by.

S. Powell commented that the work done in year 1 and 2 was established by the goals set up for the Industry Partnership program when created. The analyses were done the first two years, and now there is work in progress to provide the resources required to meet the gaps identified by utilizing systems already in place such as CCRI, the career and technical education system and the One-Stop system. S. Powell referenced the ISDI concept paper and pointed out how the Industry Greenhouse model provides workers with an opportunity to make a connection between the youth and adult systems as well as industry. She concurred that conversations have already taken place with the Industry Partnerships as indicated by D. Miller.

In consideration of the suggestion by M. Bueno, M. Koback observed that it might be advantageous to approach key members of the educational system to advise and include them in future plans. This would ensure there is some preparation on their part to be responsive.

L. Norris mentioned that the youth system is a good link to bring training full circle. She noted that the youth system already works in conjunction with the Industry Partnership program in identifying occupational skills training within the youth centers. This training assists those youth with low barriers to employment by providing a continuum of support. Youth with higher levels of skill, support and knowledge would also be assisted in moving through the system. She also noted the connections being developed between the youth system, and the career, technical and education communities.

S. Powell asked L. Norris to briefly discuss the K-12 initiative. L. Norris mentioned ongoing discussions that have occurred on the topic of content standards which includes working with Diane Schaefer from the RI Department of Education. She noted the formation of a group that will formulate plans to bring workforce development learning into the school system. She explained that one way of accomplishing this is to provide students with an opportunity to participate in projects related to applied learning concepts.

M. Koback asked about the plan to incorporate the educational system in this initiative. D. Miller stated that both Johan Uvin and Vanessa Cooley would be reviewing sections of the RFP that relate to the educational system. She noted that the concept is industry driven, however resources will need to be developed. M Koback mentioned that if Industry Partners are identifying training needs, there has to be a responsive outlet to address them.

J. Warner inquired as to the extent you can get specific training credentialed. He noted the previous point of identifying the gaps that exist in the skills that residents hold and what the workforce is requiring. He offered that this is an area where CCRI can be of assistance. He also suggested that other higher education institutions could be involved if the credentialing goes to a higher level. He mentioned that certificates could be packaged quickly at any level; post secondary, post baccalaureate and post master. He also noted that credentialing would create incentives for the participants as well.

J. Uvin emphasized the importance of noting the connection between the Strategic Planning effort and the Industry Skill Development Initiative. He agreed on the collaboration effort required to have this happen by design in order for it to become part of the strategy.

A motion was entered to move the proposal for the RFP for the Industry Skills Initiative to the Strategic Investment committee for the 2nd year of funding.

VOTE: S. Powell moved to approve, seconded by M. Bueno. All approved.

WIA Policy Issuance 07-13

M. Koback asked J. O'Hare to review the Policy Issuance. J. O'Hare noted that all policy issuances have to come before this committee and then before the full board in the consent agenda. He briefly discussed the Workforce Investment Notice: 07-13, a copy of which is in the meeting packet. This will be brought forward to the full board next week at the March 13th meeting.

21st Century Workforce Sub-Committee

Chair McGowan introduced S. Kaplan, Director of the RI Economic Development Corporation, as a new member of the committee. He noted the critical role of economic development in the future of the state, particularly in this time of declining resources. Chair McGowan emphasized the necessity to better educate and train the workforce as well as attract new business to the state. He reported that S. Kaplan has exciting ideas to present to the committee and noted his interest in incorporating everything possible into the current planning process.

S. Kaplan began the discussion by assuring the Economic Development Corporation's (EDC) collaboration. He agreed that the cross-agency collaboration may not always have been present in the past. He mentioned that he is impressed and very encouraged by the progress made with the workforce development system as well as by the connections created. He noted that this will bode very well for the state. He acknowledged the hard work associated with this progress and that an incredible platform is now in place to move forward. He also indicated he is humbled as there is a lot of catching up to do in order to be in a position to create important integration points. S. Kaplan reiterated that for whatever reasons connections have not been made previously, they need to be made now. He stated the importance of the alignment of the workforce development system with the vision and strategy for the economy and concurred that this system is delivering the output necessary to implement this vision and strategy.

William McGowan stated he takes some responsibility for the lack of communication in the process and noted that the main purpose of this meeting is to bring everyone up to speed on where the process is. He commented that it's imperative to keep everyone informed in order to effectively work together.

S. Kaplan indicated he is here today to be an active participant in the committee and to assist in determining how the workforce development system fits with an overall economic development strategy and plan. He noted the importance of accomplishing this by working together and without duplicity. He also noted the importance of the work already accomplished and of finding a constructive way to take the economic development vision and strategy that has emerged and to map it to these accomplishments. He suggested the need to evaluate this work and to determine if there are gaps or implications that would create opportunity. He further suggested that this will not be known until the work is done on the front end based on facts to support this work. He suggested a question to ask regarding the economic development plan is where are we headed in the next 10 years? Also what are the implications of this plan on a workforce development system? Once this is understood, it is important to compare the components of the strategic plan being developed and to evaluate if there is alignment and collaboration. This could bring out opportunities to do things better which is the purpose of this committee. He restated the importance of the work and of the idea that we should have one economic development vision and a workforce development vision and system that is in support of that vision.

Chair McGowan agreed and stated his view that the cooperation was missing with the previous leadership and noted that it is crucial to reinstitute this collaboration.

S. Kaplan indicated he has had conversations with S. Powell regarding this topic. He mentioned that trust is an important part of the collaboration process. He stressed that there is serious and important work to do to reposition the economy and the workforce. To successfully accomplish this work, he noted the importance of trusting each other, of identifying connections and of establishing this collaboration. He stated his commitment to make this happen.

Chair McGowan reiterated this must happen now especially with the development of the strategic plan. He stated that the GWB has worked closely with EDC for years in the approval of grant proposals, and other matters.

S. Kaplan observed that the GWB has become more strategic in the planning process and in the policy objectives of the workforce development system. He noted the need for alignment at the policy level around economic and workforce development with a view towards the future economy. We must look at the gaps and determine if the workforce development system is enabling us to fill those gaps. He stated his willingness to go through this analysis to determine if the appropriate outcomes are present.

S. Kaplan referred to the hand-out entitled: *Governor's Workforce Board RI 21st Century Workforce Development Sub-Committee* which is in the meeting packet. This outline presents a clear vision of where the economy should be going and identifies key strategies. He noted that when looking at the outlined goals, the requirements underneath each goal should be examined. An example of this is the goal to increase the percentage of jobs at a certain wage and to connect with the industry. As an end result, we can determine if the strategic plan currently envisions the right strategies and tactics or if there are other things we should be considering, both short and long term. S. Kaplan noted that the focus may result in understanding if the right connection points exist at the policy level between the EDC and DLT and also at the operational level. He indicated the need for a better line of communication and alignment around approaching a company regarding workforce development needs. He also noted the importance of communicating back the information on an individual company's programmatic needs that develop from working with the Industry Partners. He noted the importance of designing a system with this in mind and that the time is right for this work. He

also shares the same sense of urgency commenting on his experience last week at the state house to discuss strategies after statistics on employment levels were released. He reiterated his commitment for better alignment in order to provide a unified response in the need to strengthen the economy.

S. Powell commented that the GWB has been a policy making entity since its inception more than 2 years ago and that it is effective in its ability to effectuate policy. From a DLT perspective, she noted a good deal of exchange of information on workforce development. She agreed there is a need for further communication and mentioned a meeting scheduled next week to discuss further collaboration between both agencies.

S. Kaplan indicated that he does not suggest this has not occurred. He remarked that he is not here to criticize but to figure how to work together noting that if we combine economic and workforce development in stronger ways than in the past that it will be good for the state. He mentioned he has watched this from the sidelines for many years, and notes the urgency that the correct way to go about this must be determined. He restated his willingness to participate in the process and that this is the right platform to do so, that any new or additional platforms do not need to be created. He noted J. MarcAurele's announcement at the recent board meeting on the formation of a sub-committee and indicated the need for this sub-committee to inform the Planning & Evaluation Committee. He stated he does not care about the format or if a separate committee is formed, that it could just as well be an assignment of this committee. He stressed he simply wants to do the work, to get below the rhetoric to start putting data on paper with such items as what is the translation of the number of jobs we are trying to shift as well as the requirements of those jobs. He noted he is anxious to understand how much of the requirements are specific to the high wage industries identified as well as understanding how the current workforce development system maps to that requirement. We need to know if there is enough urgency around making the shift and we would need to see the data. He noted that the results are not granular about where the workforce development system needs to go. He asked how does the current system enable this and to Commissioner Warner's previous point, where are the gaps that we can work on?

J. Warner indicated he would like to put into perspective where we have been and where we need to go from here. He noted that going back two years there was no systematic method of communication. However since that time, discussions have intensified. He remarked that if there has been a theme it is not stated, but it is underneath. He indicated we have been creating integrated systems of disparate activity and have tried to connect these systems with each other. For example, services for youth were disconnected and not serving many people. Currently a youth system is in place and doing well. The question now is how do you connect this system with places it needs to connect to? He noted the same holds true for the adult literacy system. Two years ago, this was disconnected with disparate providers. Now the systems are at a peak process, are all solidified, and are connecting to career technical education as well as higher education and other workforce resources. This is a natural part of the evolution. These systems have evolved tremendously over a fairly short period of time. The work to be done between EDC and DLT is just another piece. In a year from now, we will be looking back at some integrated activities that we can say have created a much more integrated system between workforce and economic development. We should recognize this as a natural part of the evolution that has occurred over the past couple of years and should embrace it.

S. Kaplan observed also that we did not have the platform earlier to be able to connect. He agrees that now we are able to do so. We need to determine if there are things we can introduce into the system to accelerate positioning for the future and if we need to work at the federal and state level to make it happen. S. Kaplan assured the committee that he will not slow

down anything that is currently in progress. He will review the connection and interaction between the workforce and economic development systems and that it is incumbent on him to evaluate this in a way that is not disruptive.

Chair McGowan felt it was incumbent on the committee also to work on the communication piece. He noted the recognition of the value economic development brings. The goal of J. MarcAurele in leading the GWB is to develop a system where everyone is on the same page, has the same goals, is statistically and goal driven by a mode of collaboration.

J. O'Hare noted from his experience with Industry Partnerships that in aligning resources in building a workforce system, you must also identify the obstacles and problems. He suggested that the pipeline isn't always there due to regulatory barriers.

S. Kaplan commented this is the reason for adopting both a policy and a strategic view. He observed that if you ask companies what they need, they will identify what they need now. This is a balancing act as we need to be thinking about what the economy is going to look like ten years from now so that processes can be put in place recognizing the long lead time.

S. Powell noted that from a support perspective that all must agree with the workforce development goals, that policies must be in place to support these goals and that a consensus on a skill set must occur. This effort will establish clear goals and strategies.

Chair McGowan recognized the constructive exchange of ideas and discussion and requested a motion to address the alignment of the 21st century workforce needs with the strategic planning process.

A motion was entered to include discussion about the needs of the 21st century workforce in the strategic plan under the Planning and Evaluation committee.

VOTE: S. Powell moved to approve, seconded by M. Bueno. All approved.

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

J. Uvin provided an overview of the Carl D. Perkins Career and Technical Education Act (Perkins IV) Five-Year Plan which was available as a hand-out in the meeting packet. He reviewed the 5 key elements of the plan and requested endorsement from the committee. This will be brought to the full board at the next meeting.

A motion was entered to endorse the Carl D. Perkins Career and Technical Education Act Five Year Plan.

VOTE: S. Powell moved to approve, seconded by M. Bueno. All approved.

Industry Partnership RFP

M. Koback reported that due to fiduciary reasons, CCRI withdrew from the Construction Industry Partnership. He noted that an RFP is being drafted for construction and financial services. The plan is to release the RFP and publish it in the next week or two. The intent is to have the RFP remain open for 5-6 weeks in order to allow time for interest to develop with the industries and to allow time for the collaboration that could exist among the different industries. He noted that the construction partnership will not be focused on a specific segment as previously done with the minority construction sector. M. Koback noted that a bidder's conference will be scheduled in a few weeks and this partnership should be off the ground by July 1st.

Chair McGowan noted the next committee meeting is April 8th and asked if committee members could be contacted on their availability for an 8:30 a.m. starting time.

Chair McGowan entertained a motion to adjourn the meeting.

VOTE: S. Powell moved to approve, seconded by M. Bueno. All approved.

The meeting adjourned at 12:20 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Maureen Mooney