

WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT COUNCIL
Board Meeting Minutes
November 15, 2003
SkillSource, Wenatchee

Gary Park called the meeting to order at 9:00 a.m.

Members and guests were introduced.

Ken showed a PowerPoint presentation he made for board member use giving workforce presentations.

Terry Brewer moved and Kathy Mertes seconded to approve the August 19, 2003 meeting minutes. Motion passed.

Okanogan Committee Report

Our Area's share of the 503 Incentive Grant is \$221,000. The state board has prioritized health care occupations for the funds and has identified three potential outcomes: (1) Improve information available about health careers; (2) target populations; and (3) blend basic and occupational skill training.

Dave will meet with community college presidents and school superintendents next week before submitting our Area's proposed plan for State approval. He asked the Board members for their input on the three potential outcomes.

John said there is a lack of knowledge about the diversity of jobs available in health care and not a clear path to get the skills. Often employees working in food service or laundry have a good attitude and the hospital assists with tuition until they are a nurse or tech. There are also good administrative jobs such as medical transcription, medical assistant and medical records, but the greatest impact might come from CNA upgrading.

Kathy asked about the demand for enrollment in medical programs at the colleges. Bill said capacity is a challenge, but increased information would keep a full "pipeline." It is also important to raise literacy in rural areas.

The E3 health care grant can be used to augment the 503 funds. Classes are underway for entry-level health care employees in Mattawa and Lake Chelan.

John suggested improving information available at schools that will continue to introduce health care careers long after the grant ends. Gary agreed the message is not nearly strong enough in schools. Students need direction in career planning.

Mike Wade suggested learning how familiar career counselors are with workforce demand occupations because they may have a role.

Bill explained that Gear Up tries to reach kids in grades 6 through 8. The experience is most positive when parents attend with students. Information provided to counselors is only helpful when kids come to the counselor. Parents still have great influence on the choices their children make. We should engage parents and students at the same time.

Roger believed providing basic skills to parents should be a priority. Once the parents see the difference education makes so will their children.

Roger asked that the PowerPoint presentation be made to all school boards. Dave reminded members they agreed in the strategic plan to make presentations to local associations and boards.

Grant/Adams Committee Report:

Terry presented the local workforce study which includes information for the three counties within 50 miles of Moses Lake (Grant, Adams, and Douglas). People were called at home, asked if they were employed, and asked a series of questions. The information in the reports is helpful for companies considering expanding in the area. Two reports were issued one included all three counties and the second Grant County only. There are about 11,500 people in the workforce who are willing to change jobs. Some will change for less than a dollar an hour. Information is broken down by skill level and occupation. Terry said this information will help any employer. Genie requested the information to help local managers to submit a request for expansion to their corporate office.

Rich reported the Grant/Adams committee reviewed the definition of self-sufficiency and determined that if an applicant is not self-sufficient, but belongs to a priority 3 household, they are eligible to receive intensive and training services.

Lisa explained this will not increase the number of priority 3 enrollments. Priority 3 enrollment is capped at ten percent.

Bill Bonaudi moved and John Hamilton seconded to approve the Self-Sufficiency Definition. Motion passed.

Rich also reported the One-Stop facility is taking longer than anticipated. The committee recommended renewing the current lease until April, 2005.

Terry Brewer moved and Duane Johnson seconded to extend the Moses Lake lease through April, 2005. Motion passed.

Gary explained the purchase option for the proposed Moses Lake One Stop site is about to expire. Dave expected the approval process to be fairly simple because it was a school site, but it has taken more time than anticipated. The lease option can be extended through next summer for \$14,000. If purchased, the \$14,000 would be applied to the purchase price.

Dave introduced architect Brad Brisbane and attorney Phil Johnson. Brad presented the site map. Phase one of the project uses two acres and a proposed second phase would use one more acre. The City of Moses Lake has approved the site plan. Grant County PUD wants \$25,000 for the power. The parking meets minimum city requirements, but it may not be enough for phase 2. There is a lot across the street for additional parking if needed. There are detailed notes that indicate all asbestos was removed from the site with the exception of some floor tiles, but no documentation the fuel tanks were removed. Floor tiles are the least dangerous, but it could be a stumbling block in the future. It would be good to know one way or the other. The basement boiler rooms were most likely filled with rubble. It would be good to break down the floor and compact debris. Those are the two areas of concern from environmental and settlement issues. We have received three proposals for environmental analysis.

John asked who is responsible. Phil Johnson explained the owner made certain representations in the option. We must do the research necessary to make sure they are true. If we do not, we cannot come back against the owner. If the owner knows something we do not find we would have a claim. John asked if the owner could pay some costs. Phil said everything can be negotiated but it depends how badly they want to sell. The fact that the owner has agreed to extend the option may be an indicator.

Mike asked if the current option agreement provides a refund if something is found. Phil explained it does not. The option allows us the right to inspect and it contains representations made by the owner. Mike asked about reducing the price to cover costs in the event something is found (such as the two concerns indicated). Roger agreed if there are serious problems there is no reason for us to buy the property without having the owner fix it first.

Mike asked if it is possible on the option extension to incorporate the value of these studies and refund half if we do not purchase property. Phil said there is flexibility to negotiate. We could propose that if we find a \$25,000 problem they agree to reduce price by \$25,000.

Roger Theime moved and Mike Wade seconded to extend the purchase option including language in the option to reflect discussion. Motion passed.

Gary explained Adams County is purchasing and refurbishing the vacant Akins building in downtown Othello. The County would like SkillSource to lease space in the new facility. This would be a great location.

Dave said the facility is large enough for the WIA operation and partners as well. This could be a mini one-stop. The current facility would be relocated late in 2004.

Roger Thieme moved and Mike Wade seconded to sign intent to lease with Adams County. Motion passed.

Dave introduced Bryan Wilson, Associate Director of the Washington State Workforce Training and Education Coordinating Board. Bryan explained the State Workforce Board is responsible not only for Workforce Investment, but also for vocational training, private vocational schools, and maintains the strategic plan for employers and workers in the state. This is the only state with a Board that serves all these functions. It is a unique partnership between labor and business. The Council has equal membership between labor, business and government.

Bryan introduced Rich Bender, President of the Labor Council and a member of the State Coordinating Board. Rick has served on the board since shortly after Governor Locke was elected and previously served in the Legislature for 18 years.

Rick thanked the Board, staff, and city for their hospitality last month when the State Board held their conference in Wenatchee. He shared his concern regarding dropouts in the K-12 system and a potential "train wreck" in 2008 when graduation requirements will be higher with WASL. On one hand everyone wants higher standards but must also understand the reality of what may happen if 2/3 cannot graduate. The linkage between workforce investment and education is important for a strong economy in Washington. Outsourcing family wage jobs overseas is another concern. Not just manufacturing jobs but also engineering and IT jobs. Reauthorization of WIA is also an issue. The State Board is concerned about the block grant approach which often means more flexibility, but less money. Because of the budget situation and a critical election year, budget cuts are not anticipated in 2004. Rick said the morning's discussions were interesting and explained the State Board wants enhance the local operations. The banquet and stories were great.

Roger shared Rick's concern about outsourcing jobs and the fact that 25 percent of people are earning below poverty level and asked what can we do to change the dynamic? Rick explained our State has some tax structure problems. The bottom 20 percent pay up to 17.5 percent in taxes and they will approve any tax cut fair or not and this can cut into education. If the standard of living is reduced it will have dire consequences on us all.

John suggested the Governor listen to the business community to learn why business is leaving. Also, there is a need for tort reform which is driving skilled labor to other states.

Rick pointed out Washington is among the one-third least expensive worker's compensation rates and one of only three state that do not allow insurance industry to be involved.

Staff from the Wenatchee Learning Center shared a presentation prepared for the State Youth Conference. Lisa explained the presentation follows a typical youth into the learning center. The presentation illustrated the process a dropout or at-risk student might follow being referred by a school counselor, completing their secondary education, and going on to college. Shawn Trowbridge, a recent learning center graduate, then shared his story.

Gary thanked everyone for attending the banquet and meeting. Meeting adjourned at 11:20.

Members:

Gary Park
Kathy Mertes
Mike Wade
Karl Allison
John Hamilton
Duane Johnson
Bill Bonaudi
Rich Davies
Peggy Gill
Terry Brewer
Roger Thieme
Keith Goehner, ex-officio

Staff:

Dave Petersen
Lisa Romine
Ken Kelnhofer
Laura Hennigh
Yolanda Rios
Shari Milliken
Georgene Ford
Erin Mundinger
Cindy Blaufuss

Guests:

Rick Bender
Bryan Wilson
Brad Brisbane
Phil Johnson