

**Chief Elected Officials  
And The  
Boone and Winnebago Counties Workforce Investment Board, Inc.  
MINUTES OF March 4, 2008**

Site: The Workforce Connection, 3134 11<sup>th</sup> Street, Rockford, IL 61109

- I. **WIB Call to Order.** WIB Vice-Chairman Paul Callighan called the Boone and Winnebago Counties Workforce Investment Board meeting to order at 7:36 a.m.

**CEO Call to Order:** Catherine Ward Chairman of Boone County called the CEO meeting to order at 7:37 a.m.

**WIB Present (22):** Allan Barsema, Jon Bates, Dr. Jack Becherer, Karen Brown, Paul Callighan, Linda Campos, Angela Hite-Carter, Janet Ellis, Pedro Enriquez, Dr. Richard Fairgrievies, James Fehlhaber, Steve Gibson, Dave Morgan, Dan Parod, Dr. Owen Phelps, Jim Pirages, Mark Podemski, Mark Stefanic, Nord Swanstrom, Elton Turner, Shirley Walker, C. Mark Williams **Absent (15):** Steve Anderson, Shirley Burks, Kevin Dulkan, Lynn Godina, Luanna Grimes, Todd Kindred, Harvey Lightbody, Stephanie Lueder, Larry McKay, Richard Mowris, John Phelps, Maureen Rosenberg, Jim Ryan, Gus Saros, Mary Beth Scholten

**CEOs Present (3):** Adam Smith (Designee for Mayor Lawrence Morrissey), Chairman Catherine Ward, Sue Mroz (Designee for Chairman Scott Christiansen)

**WIB Staff Present:** Darcy Bucholz, Trudy Wellman, John Strandin, Robert Jones

**Partner Staff Present:** Tom Austin – IDES; Dan White – Rock River Training Corporation; Mike Williams – Rock River Training Corporation; Gary Lawson – Rock Valley College Dislocated Worker Program; Ted Duckett – IDES; Sue Molyneaux – Rock River Training Corporation; Amy Massoth – Rock Valley College Refugee and Immigrant Services; Richard Hrynkow - IDES

**Guests Present:** Steve Simmons – Chicago Jobs Council

- II. **WIB Minutes of February 5, 2008:** Jim Pirages made a motion to approve the minutes of February 5, 2008. Mark Podemski provided the second to the motion. The minutes were approved.

**CEO Minutes of December 4, 2007:** Catherine Ward made a motion to approve the December 4, 2007 CEO meeting minutes. Sue Mroz provided the second to the motion. The minutes were approved.

- III. **Consent Agenda:** WIB Consent Agenda Approval: Mark Podemski made a motion to approve the consent agenda as presented. Dr. Owen Phelps provided a second to the motion. The consent agenda was approved.

CEO Consent Agenda Approval: Catherine Ward made a motion to approve the consent agenda as presented. Sue Mroz provided a second to the motion. The consent agenda was approved.

- IV. **One-Stop Operators, The Workforce Connection Mid-Year Performance Report – presentation/discussion:**

The One-Stop Operators presented a mid-year performance report on services and programs offered at The Workforce Connection. Nord Swanstrom, Program Administrator for IL Department of Employment Security, began the presentation with an overview of the Unemployment Insurance (UI) program. The program year for UI begins in October each year and ends September 30<sup>th</sup>. To date 24,260 unemployment claims have been made this year. The previous program year had an average of 29,000 claims for 12 months.

Along with unemployment insurance benefits, other services provided by IDES include veteran outreach and employment services; labor exchange and job search assistance; adjudication on unemployment decisions;

various workshops for job seekers and employers; labor market information; ex-offender programs; and youth employment opportunities through Hire the Future. This past year the Hire the Future Program had a youth job fair that attracted over 500 students and parents. Labor exchange functions include taking job orders from employers and working with job seekers through a re-employment assistance program that includes intensive interviews focusing on job seekers candidates talents, qualifications, and skills matching for employment opportunities. Since July 1, 2007 there has been 6, 032 job orders received.

Gary Lawson of Rock Valley College spoke about the Workforce Investment Act (WIA) Dislocated Worker program and Trade Adjustment Assistance program offered at The Workforce Connection to dislocated workers. Trade Adjustment Assistance is offered to individuals who lost their job to foreign competition, while the Dislocated Worker Program offers help to individuals who lost their job through no fault of their own and qualify as being in a low demand job or industry. Both programs offer education, training, and re-employment services to those who qualify.

In this fiscal year, the Dislocated Worker Program has seen 205 new applicants. An increase in applicants has occurred since January, resulting in 113 new applicants. Out of the 113 new applicants since January, 43 have been Chrysler workers. Over the past six months 199 people have exited the program. Out of the 199 exits, 114 people have found employment. Services offered by the Dislocated Worker Program include career counseling and case management; employment transitions workshop; and training. Gary reviewed the top training institutions and training programs utilized by the program.

The Refugee and Immigrant Services program offered by Rock Valley College is also located here at The Workforce Connection. This program helps new arrivals to our country access housing, education, and employment. Another Rock Valley College program at The Workforce Connection is the Displaced Homemaker Program. This grant funded program assisted widowed, divorced, and separated individuals make the transition into the workplace. Historically the program participants are female, but the program is open to males.

Mike Williams of Rock River Training Corporation provided an overview of the Workforce Investment Act (WIA) Adult program services provided by Rock River Training Corporation. Over the past six months 326 participants have been enrolled in the adult program, which provides case management; supportive services; access to training programs; and job search/placement assistance. Eligibility for the WIA Adult program is determined based upon income criteria. Individuals must be determined low-income or be receiving public assistance. Most individuals in the program are not eligible for unemployment, either through the benefits running out, or having not worked enough.

Mike Williams spoke about the impact of the 40% training expenditure has had on the programs and will have on the programs. With the number of individuals coming in to receive services from Rock River Training and Dislocated Worker Program, it appears that the programs will be stretched in providing the services requested with the amount of staff they currently have and the prospect of facing additional staff cuts.

- V. **Labor Market Information – New Hires in Our Area:** Tom Austin, IDES, Labor Markey Analyst presented information regarding new hires in the Rockford area. Hiring is taking place in the manufacturing sector, but not at the rate of 2006. The skill set requirement is more technical, such as CNC programming and specific welding skills. Other areas that are hiring are the Professional, Scientific, and Technical services, includes the tax accounting services, which is higher in the first and second quarter of the year.
- VI. **Financial Reports:** Dan White presented the financial reports through January 31, 2008. The WIA Dislocated Worker program may be facing an issue of not meeting the 40% training expenditure requirement. Program enrollments, specifically into training programs, have been slower than anticipated.

Other issues related to finance include the impending Federal rescission of funds. Estimates for the recession are expected to be at least \$100,000 for the Dislocated Worker Program, \$30,000 for the youth programs, and \$30,000 for administration.

Department of Commerce and Economic Opportunity (DCEO) will be providing a grant for Kishwaukee Community College to conduct CDL training for workers dislocated from Chrysler and their suppliers. Board members and CEO's discussed the demand for individuals in the truck driving / transportation industry.

**VII. Executive Director's Report:** Darcy Bucholz reported that we are within days of finalizing the move to 303 N. Main Street, Rockford, IL. The move date is scheduled for early June 2008.

March 19, 2008 training will be offered in Dixon, Illinois for WIB members for sector strategies for targeting training dollars and career lattice. The training is a regional training offered by DCEO, which was requested by the workforce areas. Additional information will be sent out in the next couple of days and any member who is interested in attending should contact Darcy Bucholz for registration.

**VIII. Other/New Business:**

- WIB Executive Committee/Chief Elected Officials meeting – 7:30 a.m. April 1, 2008; The Workforce Connection Conference Room
- WIB Meeting – 7:30 a.m., May 6, 2008; The Workforce Connection, Classroom 4 & 5

**IX. Public Comment:** C. Mark Williams noted that there will be construction jobs available in the near future for the pipeline that will be going through Boone County. There will approximately 650 job openings for this project.

**VIII. WIB Adjournment:** The WIB meeting adjourned at 8:50 a.m.

**CEO Adjournment:** The CEO meeting adjourned at 8:51 a.m.

**Items included with the WIB and CEO meeting packets:**

- 1) 03/04/08 WIB/CEO Agenda
- 2) WIB Minutes of February 5, 2008
- 3) CEO Minutes of December 4, 2007
- 4) WIB Financial Report – January 31, 2008
- 5) Consent Agenda
- 6) Committee Reports

Trudy Wellman  
Boone and Winnebago Counties Workforce Investment Board

Date

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(Signature affixed upon WIB approval)

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(Date affixed upon WIB approval)