

Maine Jobs Council Meeting Minutes
Augusta Civic Center
1/28/05

Present;

Anne Beebe-Center, Don Berry, Patricia Boucher, Steve Boulet, Mike Bourret, Tom Davis, Yvonne Davis, Phil Dionne, Greg Dugal, Jill Duson, Laura Fortman, Norman Fournier, Robert Gardner, Susan Gendron, Jane Gilbert, Kate Grambow, Bryant Hoffman, Matthew Hoffner, George Hunter, Kathleen Kearney, Joseph Kumiszczka, Craig Larrabee, Barry Martin, Lisa Martin, Ned McCann, Al Menard, Janie Miller, Daniel Muth, Denise Nemeth-Greenleaf, Susan Percy, Jeanne Shorey Paquette, Tanya Pereira, Linda Smith, Jeff Sosnaud, Sarah Standiford, Susan Swanton, Thomas Targett, Cindy Thomas, Tuesdi Woodworth, Peaches Bass, Ginny Carroll, Steve Duval, Gene Ellis, Karen Fraser, Mary Fran Gamage, Charlie Hartman, Larinda Meade, Frank O'Hara, Garret Oswald

The meeting started with a new member orientation conducted by Frank O'Hara and Garret Oswald that included the vision, mission and guiding principals of the Maine Jobs Council (MJC) and then an overview of the new structure of the MJC. Next was a discussion about the MJC committees, including roles of committee Chair, Liaison and Staff.

The full MJC meeting was opened by MJC Chair Phil Dionne with welcomes and introductions.

The first agenda item was a report on the Education, Technology and the Future of Maine's Economy conference by Commissioner Fortman. The Commissioner spoke about the great cooperation between the three departments (Education, Labor, and Economic and Community Development) in putting the conference together and the need to constantly link the work of the departments to the Governor's economic strategy. Yvonne Davis (DOE) then talked about the Denmark model of Adult Vocational Training. Yvonne said that in Denmark they focus on big picture economic goals and have flexible funding so they can be responsive to changes in the economy. Coalitions of industries address the competition among employers for employees, and that there is great cooperation between employers, labor, and government.

Commissioner Fortman stressed the need to focus on sectors and create alignment so we can get out of the reactive mode (RETI) all the time and get ahead of the curve for Maine's employers and workers. Commissioner Gendron then added how exciting it was at the conference to have the Speaker of the house (Beth Edmonds) commit to help this effort thru Legislative channels, and that this was our window of opportunity.

Next, Jeff Sosnaud (DECD) spoke about Maine's Economic Development Strategy having two tracks; New & emerging industries, (like Biotech, Biomed and RFID), and Existing industries, (like Forest products, Marine resources and Precision manufacturing). Jeff gave examples of each and noted we are trying to build upon our strengths. He stressed the importance of an R&D bond and said continuity was the key if we hoped to get to the goal of \$1000 invested in R&D per Maine citizen. Jeff also spoke about paying attention to other sectors like financial services, tourism, and the Creative economy.

Next was updates from Realize Me and Maine Choices. Tanya Pereira spoke about Realize Me which came out of the Youth Summit and is an attempt to find out why young people are leaving Maine and develop strategies to keep them here. Larry Glantz spoke about Maine Choices which has three goals; maximize employment for persons with disabilities, increase the state's labor force through the inclusion of persons with disabilities, and protecting and enhancing workers health care, other benefits and needed supports.

Commissioner Fortman then spoke about the Workforce Cabinet, it's connection to the work of the MJC, and that she (Commissioner Fortman) was the Chair, and Garret Oswald was the staff for the Workforce Cabinet. Commissioner Fortman stressed that the Workforce Cabinet needed to cut across Department lines and align the work of state government with the needs of Maine's Businesses and workers. The recent Conference sponsored by DOE, DECD and DOL is a good example of the Workforce Cabinet working together.

Next on the Agenda was a presentation about the Reauthorization of the Workforce Investment Act (WIA) by Larinda Meade and Steve Duval of the Bureau of Employment Services (BES). The new plan will clarify roles and responsibilities of the MJC, Local Boards and BES, and incorporate the Governor's goals and the State of the Workforce Report. The plan will be data driven and in line with economic development realities, so as to communicate what is important to focus on. The challenge will be to craft policies to respond to the important issues.

Last on the agenda was an opportunity for sub-committees (from now on to be known as committees) to meet with new members. Each committee should have a staff person, a chair and a liaison to the policy committee. Each committee should be comprised of at least four (4) voting members of the MJC, and eight (8) others who are interested in the committee's work. We would also like a schedule of the committees meetings for the rest of 2005 to be posted on the MJC website when revised.

Next meeting of the Maine Jobs Council;

5/20/05, 1:00 – 4:30 PM, (Location to be announced)