

Maine Jobs Council Meeting minutes 5/20/05

May 20, 2005:

MAINE JOBS COUNCIL MEETING

May 20, 2005 Augusta Civic Center

MINUTES

Present: Laura Fortman, Steve Duval, Kathy Coogan, Craig Larrabee, Susan Swanson, Sharon Barker, Peaches Bass, Larinda Meade, Patricia Boucher, Gene Ellis, Bob Kelly, Laura Boyett, Denise Demeth-Greenleaf, Sarah Standiford, Debra Reitchel, Steven Boulet, Phil Dionne, Robert Gardner, Kate Grambow, Joanne Harris, Bryant Hoffman, Matthew Hoffner, Goerge Hunter, Kathleen Kearney, Gary McGrane, Al Menard, Janie Miller, Daniel Muth, Susan Percy, Jeanne Shorey Paquette, Linda Smith, Jeff Sousnaud, Charlie Hartman, Garret Oswald Scribe: Debra Reitchel, Bureau of Employment Services, Maine Department of Labor

Phil Dionne welcomed everyone to the meeting and introductions were made.

Commissioner's Report – Laura Fortman

Commissioner Fortman gave an update on the BRAC situation. The Portsmouth Naval Shipyard, Defense Finance and Accounting Service in Limestone and the Naval Reserve Center in Bangor are on the closure list while the Brunswick Naval Air Station is on the realignment list. The closure in Limestone took everyone by surprise as it had recently received awards for excellence. Since then the Governor and our entire congressional delegation have been committed to keeping those facilities open. Maine is working with the other New England states in its efforts to keep the bases open. Closures are determined by the military significance of the base and the economic impact on the area. Economic impact data is being prepared for the BRAC Commission's review. It is important to remember that these jobs will not be lost immediately.

Plans will be developed to address the workforce issues. Governor Baldacci appointed Jack Cashman, the Commissioner of Economic Development, Lance Boucher from the Governor's Office and Laura Fortman as point people in the State of Maine's efforts around this issue. All departments and partners must work together.

There is a New England BRAC hearing scheduled for 7/6/05 in Boston. The recommendations of the Commission go to the President on 9/8/05. After the President approves them, they then go to Congress for a vote on 11/7/05. In the past about 15% of the original recommendations were not on the list at the end of the closing process. Lance Boucher is down in Washington, D.C. and will

be the Governor's point person there. The Workforce Cabinet met on 5/18/05 and discussed the closures.

By Laws – Phil Dionne

Phil Dionne advised that the newly created by-laws had been posted on the MJC website and a copy of the bylaws was passed out to each MJC member. The Policy Committee had approved of the new bylaws at the meeting held in the morning.

A motion was made and seconded to accept the MJC bylaws as published and was unanimously passed.

WIA State Plan Modification – Steve Duval

Steve Duval conducted a PowerPoint presentation of the WIA Strategic Plan Modification highlighting the priorities and goals, strategies and policies, and processes and next steps. On 2/24/05, the USDOL issued official planning guidelines to the states to update their plans for a two year period beginning 7/1/05 carrying us through 6/30/07. The plan must be forwarded to USDOL for approval on 5/31/05, and must be approved by 6/30/05 in order for the allocations we receive to flow to the CareerCenter workforce system.

The USDOL is asking states to develop plans that have a greater emphasis on demand driven workforce services and working with the business community to assist them to move forward. Another national priority is to reform the system and to reduce duplication of administrative costs to save 300 million dollars which will lead to an increase in our training investment. Compared with many of the states Maine is already operating in a lean fashion.

The plan allows for the flow of about 9 million dollars into workforce investment act training and promotes enhanced integration of service delivery through the CareerCenter system. Over the last ten years Maine has been in the process of creating true integration with Wagner-Peyser, WIA, TAA, education and other partners.

The states have been asked to focus on WIA youth initiatives. There is a youth vision paper that has been published that is available through USDOL's website. States must make stronger investments on serving out of school youth, develop partnerships with the juvenile justice system and links with the foster care system. We have partnerships with the Children's Cabinet, the Real Live Maine Council and other service providers.

Currently there are 17 WIA measures that the system must attempt to meet every year. The new plan attempts to streamline the 17 measures into eight. Beginning 7/1/05, we will move toward a common measure system, establishing baseline data and outcomes. Maine's plan will align the national priorities with Governor Baldacci's vision for workforce development. The Governor has highlighted seven high growth, high wage industries.

Commissioner Fortman and Steve Duval are in the process of finalizing negotiations with the regional administrator out of Boston around the 17 performance measures. Our negotiations with

the region have us in a continuous improvement path, and we have added a two to five percent increase over our goals over the last five years. One of the more difficult measures is the adult earnings change increase. Essentially it is a measure of how we were able to assist job seekers with increasing their earning potential after we have provided a service to them, comparing preregistration wages to wages a year after they have left the program. The measurement for adults is a \$2400 increase with the desired increase being about \$2700 to \$3000. The dislocated worker measurement in this plan is different. Up until now, for dislocated workers, our goal was to obtain a replacement wage rate of 80 to 85 percent of former earnings. It is almost impossible to replace those low skill high wages. This plan calls for an earnings gain.

Maine has the number one younger youth skill attainment rate in the country at close to 99 percent, meaning that of all the younger kids that we serve established a set of educational goals, and those goals are met 99 percent of the time.

The question was asked whether or not people loosing their jobs due to the BRAC decision would be included under this plan. Laura advised that this was taken into consideration as part of the negotiations. None of those jobs are slated to be lost until 2007 so we are reluctant to factor them in; however, we have a built in renegotiation around our 2006 numbers if we stay on the closure list.

Steve advised that the plan has been reviewed by the Policy Committee. There will be a request to act on this plan. On 3/18/05, the local Workforce Investment Boards were given a set of planning instructions that mirrored the state planning instructions and have been developing their own plans. Those plans were due at the Bureau of Employment Services on 5/16/05. We are in the process of reviewing local plans which are all posted on their individual websites. After the plans were received on 5/16/05, the public hearing process continues for 30 days. The plans are due in their entirety to the department on 6/16/05.

Phil Dionne advised that part of our role as the Maine Jobs Council is to approve the state plan and pass it onto the Governor for his final approval before he passes it onto the USDOL. Secondly the MJC must accept the local plans and pass those unto the Governor.

A motion was made and seconded to give the Policy Committee the authority to vote to accept or deny Maine's Workforce Investment Act Strategic Plan Modification. The motion passed unanimously.

A motion was made and seconded to give the authority to the Policy Committee to approve the local Workforce Investment Board plans.

Older Worker Committee Report - Janie Miller

A Public Service Announcement was created by the Older Worker Committee. Maine is the nation's oldest state. Maine is projected to have 68,000 new jobs in the near future and this PSA is an attempt to recruit the older workers. Currently we have 90,000 people in the 55 to 64 age group which will grow to 126,000 people in the next five years. That age group has a participation rate of about 60 percent. The participation rate for people over 65 years of age is

only 13 percent. Right now there are in that age group of 55 to 64, 53,000 people that aren't working and that number will grow to 71,000. LMIS and the Census Bureau are merging data systems. Once this is done we will be able to develop more demographic profiles. Cynthia Dow has worked to compile a lot of needed resources for older job seekers and that information is going to be used in the new brochure. They are collaborating with the Jobs in Maine to compile a survey on their website. There is a link on that website for older job seekers to go to and respond to a survey. A grant is available through the Western Workforce Board for an older worker on line tool kit. The Older Worker Committee will continue to research legislative or regulatory disincentives and report to the Policy Committee on those findings. The draft of the PSA was viewed by the members of the MJC

Disability Committee Report - Susan Percy The Disability Committee will feature a success story at every meeting about people with disabilities and what they have accomplished within the workforce. Within the Maine Department of Labor, Division of Vocational Rehabilitation there is a year long waiting list for disabled people trying to enter the workforce. The state is trying to reduce that waiting time. The Committee has been working with local businesses and trade associations to sponsor an employer recognition award. The Maine State Chamber will host an award this year. The Maine Businesses for Social Responsibility will also include an award within their Eagle Awards.

The Disability Committee meets the third Thursday of every month in Augusta and encourages anyone seeking more information to attend.

School to Work Committee – Craig Larrabee

The School to Work Committee is considering changing their name to Youth Transitions Committee. Steve Duval has been to a recent meeting to discuss the WIA plan. John Dorrer had attended to speak about the emerging workforce. The Casey Foundation's research revealed that 18 percent of people from 18 to 24 years old were not engaged in the workforce. The Committee is trying to understand how to put a positive focus on the Youth Transitions Committee, looking at existing resources, the alignment of those resources and where we can potentially invest. How can we get youth from 14 years of age to 24 years of age connected to the workforce. The Committee will be meeting in a couple of weeks to redefine our focus, after which more members will be recruited.

Women's Issues Committee – Sharon Barker

Sharon Barker advised that the Committee participated in a press conference with the Governor on 4/5/05 commemorating Equal Pay Day at which the Bureau of Labor Standards introduced a new equal pay poster. One of the members of the committee is on the Maine Women's Lobby which developed the Women's Guide to Pay Equity.

Sarah Standiford advised that the Committee's conversations have been about women's participation in the workforce and how we can continue to increase wages for women and helping all workers meet working family needs. The bill to remove the sunset provision from the part-time unemployment insurance benefits law has passed the House. As part of that legislation there was an amendment to include a pilot program to assist unemployed part-time workers in

getting back into the workforce through a training program. The Family Care Act to allow people who have already accrued sick time to use that time to care for family members is moving forward.

Sharon Barker advised that for every dollar a man makes a woman makes .77. The gap between men's and women's wages is decreasing, but that is only because men's wages are decreasing. Sharon passed out a publication "Outlook for Maine Women Workers" produced by the Bureau of Labor Education at the University of Maine. Women tend to be segregated into fewer job categories which tend to make less money. The challenge is trying to figure out how to raise whole categories of workers' wages significantly enough to have an impact on the overall picture of women workers. A small subset of the Women's Issues Committee is looking into benchmarks to monitor our progress and see how we're doing. Larinda advised that Labor is hoping to get a planning grant through the Sloan Institute at Rutgers for a laptop computer program in which the computers will be used for long distance learning.

Apprenticeship Committee: Gene Ellis

The Apprenticeship Committee met on 5/10/05 and will meet again on 10/4/05. The Committee is working with the Marine Trades apprenticeships and is in the process of registering apprentices with boat builders along the coast. Other apprenticeship initiatives are occurring in the logging and filming industry.

Phil Dionne advised that at the Policy Committee members chose "access to services" as an overriding first element to be passed down to all the committees.

Denise Nemeth Greenleaf from the engineering union at the shipyard in Kittery thanked everyone for the wonderful support they have received from elected officials, the Commissioner, Governor, religious leaders, businesses and citizens. When asked how the MJC could help Denise responded that a large turnout at the BRAC hearings would be beneficial.