

Maine Jobs Council meeting minutes

October 14, 2005:

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Minutes

Present: Peter Thompson, Greg Dugal, Gene Ellis, Tuesdi Woodworth, Al Menard, Denise Nemeth-Greenleaf, Ginny Carroll, Lisa Martin, John Dorrer, Laura Fortman, Lance Boucher, Elizabeth Johns, Tanya Pereira, Dan Muth, Susan Swanton, Craig Larrabee, Barry Martin, Anne Beebe-Center, Kathy Coogan, Sharon Barker, Chris Hastedt, Patricia Boucher, Antoinette Mancusi, Michael Bourret, Phil Dionne, Ned McCann, Larinda Meade, Garret Oswald - Scribe: Debra Reitchel

Phil Dionne welcomed the group and introductions were made.

"Assessing the State of the Labor Market and Workforce Policies" - John Dorrer

John advised that this data in this PowerPoint presentation gives us a pulse on what American workers are thinking and feeling about their move into retirement and the tenuous economy. We need to open a dialogue about our delivery of service to the people of Maine. This block and sentiment of public opinion will drive the next generation of policy and strategy vis a vis employment and training in workforce development. Phil advised that due to limited resources we must be demand driven to prioritize our resources and avoid duplication. Parents and the secondary schools should make students more aware of the opportunities that are out there. This presentation will be posted on the Maine DOL, Maine Jobs Council website.

Commissioner's Report - Laura Fortman

Commissioner Fortman of the Maine Department of Labor and new Regional Rep for NASWA, gave a PowerPoint presentation on NASWA, the National Association of State Workforce Agencies, explaining the roles and responsibilities of the SWA's, a description of our funding sources and where those funds are targeted. The Governor has created the Workforce Cabinet whose members consist of the Commissioners of Labor, Education, the DECD, DHHS; Directors of FAME and MSHA; Presidents of the community colleges; Chancellor of the universities, and the Director of the Maine Jobs Council. The goal of NASWA is to transform the system and make it demand driven. One of the things that we are trying to do with the Maine Jobs Council in partnership with the Governor is to create a seamless strategic plan involving and working together on education, economic development, and workforce issues. The Maine Department of Labor has started Value Stream Mapping on delivery of services.

Greater focus will be put on youth programs. We are identifying better ways to link with the community and faith based organizations, implementing common measures and then examining infrastructure costs and eliminating duplicative administrative costs. If we are going to better serve workers in our state we must have a good foundation in data and to move from there.

Committee Reports

Women's Employment Issues - Sharon Barker

The Women's Committee has developed the following Statement of Purpose:

“The Women's Employment Issues Committee fosters action on current factors affecting women's participation in the workforce. The committee highlights employment issues, develops recommendations to the Maine Jobs Council and supports initiatives that remove barriers preventing women in Maine from obtaining complete economic success and security. The Committee proposes and promotes policies, programs and legislation that provide full economic opportunity for all Maine women. Through 2010 the Committee will establish quantifiable benchmarks to measure, monitor, and annually evaluate Maine's progress in achieving that economic opportunity and security for all Maine women.”

A subcommittee of the Women's Committee was established to work on the benchmarks that would provide quantifiable ways to measure the progress made in Maine. This subcommittee includes people from the Labor Market Information Services, the Maine Centers for Economic Policy, the Maine Women's Policy Center, the Bureau of Labor Standards and the Bureau of Employment Services. Some of the benchmarks that will be identified and tracked will be: women's and men's wages, health insurance benefits for men and women, the number of men and women living in poverty, the ages of men and women workers, breakdowns of workers by industry, age and sex, completion of post secondary education for women and men, and business ownership by assets for women and men.

The Women's Committee advocates for the establishment of a Prior Learning Assessment Program in Maine's university and community college system and is directly involved with staff at the Department of Labor. We are also advocating for the establishment of a Workforce Development Fund. The fund is to insure that unemployed workers have some access to training and skills development to allow them to attain self sufficiency. The Workforce Development Fund will supplement expanding the options that are currently available through other kinds of financial support

Industry Committee - Lisa Martin

The Industry Committee has developed the following goals:

- ♣ State collaboration between Maine businesses, industry sectors, public, and private agencies.
- ♣ "Just in time" sharing of information and resources critical among not just those sectors represented on the committee but all those invested sectors here in the state.
- ♣ Promoting direct industry involvement in the development of Maine's overall economic development strategy.

Industry involvement in workforce education and training initiatives is critical in terms of particular sectors that we do serve as well as training models for other sectors and also industry involvement in economic development initiatives. We feel that our voice and the initiatives that we work on and represent are critically important to the state in developing strategy. We will be encouraging strategic partnerships between industry associations and public agencies, particularly engaged around surveying and analyzing businesses, the trends, the issues. We strive to survey our industries so that we have "just in time" information on workforce, wages, sector trends, and economic development issues that affect those industries that we can distribute to the Department of Labor, the CareerCenters, and the Economic Development community. We would like to work in collaboration with the training institutions looking for work flexibility, training flexibility, expanded options for delivery of workforce training that are critical to the needs of all of our various industries.

Youth Transitions Committee - Craig Larrabee

Craig passed out a draft summary of the "Vision, Mission and Goals" for the Youth Transitions Committee. Maine is reporting an 86% graduation rate which is based on the number of students starting their senior year and actually graduating. The new formula for determining the graduation rate will be calculated using the drop out figures of the ninth, tenth, and eleventh grades as well. The Educational Trust, a nonprofit working with the National Governor's Association reports that Maine's graduation rate could be somewhere around 72 to 74 percent.

About 30 percent of Maine's first year post secondary education students do not return for their second year. Approximately 18 percent of 18 to 24 year olds are not engaged in the workforce or going onto secondary education. Nationally 36.4 percent of 16 to 19 year olds are employed which is the lowest teen employment rate in the past 56 years. The Committee is working with Andy Sum at Northeastern University on a special data project.

The Youth Transitions Committee targets 14 to 24 year olds and how we can help them gain the knowledge skills, attitude and abilities needed to transition successfully and how we can get educational policies and workforce policies to collaborate more. We are examining policies coming out of the Department of Education.

We have to keep in mind that not every student is going to want to go to a four year college. We need to discuss the different kinds of continuing education. We do not want our kids to feel like second class citizens if they are not attending a four year college.

MJC Member survey During a break, Council members were asked to fill out a survey concerning their preferences for meeting times and agenda items. The schedule of meeting dates for 2006 was also distributed. The 2006 dates are as follows; 1/20/06 in Augusta, 4/28/06 in Bangor, 9/22/06 in Augusta.

BRAC Update - Lance Boucher, Ginny Carroll

Lance met with Project Manager Brian Monroe from the US Department of Defense, Office of Economic Adjustment who advised that the Navy would like to receive fair market value for the

BNAS property, but the Maine delegation will seek a no cost transfer. Lance provided a legislative update on the BRAC process.

All the housing at BNAS is owned by GMH (Government Military Housing) and the Navy owns the land. This is the first time that BRAC has had to deal with the privatized housing issue. The BRAC Advisory Council and Maine State Housing Authority have been engaged in conversations to convert base housing into affordable housing.

Ginny Carroll advised that she has been working with LMIS and identified demographic information on appropriated and nonappropriated fund employees. Most of the contractors are for short time civil service kinds of contracts. There are about 200 private contract services on the base, most of which are for short time civil services. Results of a worker needs survey will be entered into a database created by Mike Roland. The MDOL has been and will be providing many onsite workshops based on the needs identified in the survey. The Bath CareerCenter has provided workshops as well. A BRAC website has been developed that's right on the desktop of every worker at BNAS thanks to HRO in Brunswick. HR is also sponsoring a full day for the workers to access information and actually register for some of their programs, like the Priority Placement Program. FAME is giving thousand dollar scholarships to the first 250 people.

Program Updates - REA, LiLA, Mapping Project - Larinda Meade, Garret Oswald

Maine Workforce Development Fund

Larinda advised that the Maine Workforce Development Fund would be used to help fund training and education in high growth, high wage occupations. It will focus on people who are likely to exhaust their unemployment benefits. If we were to use a portion of unemployment insurance funds, we would have to go to the Legislature. A show of hands by the MJC indicated that the council supports the concept.

Reemployment Eligibility Assessment Project (REAP)

Last year the Bureau of Employment Services and Bureau of Unemployment Compensation wrote a grant together. People collecting UI are put on a fast track for re employment. Ten positions within MDOL were shifted to CareerCenters. People who have collected five UI checks are invited in for a four hour workshop. They come in again after the 8th week. In the 10th week if they are still not employed we give them another booster workshop. Approximately 50 percent of the people we are sending a letter to are coming in. For those people who are receiving their 5th UI check and those who have gone through the REAP program, we have cut down the amount of UI by eight weeks. We are looking to see if the program can be extended past its end date of March 2006.

LifeLong Learning Accounts -

Larinda passed out a flyer about the LifeLong Learning Accounts. Employers and employees would make equal contributions to a training fund through a FAME Next Gen account. Larinda would be happy to come and visit any chamber or business to speak about LiLA.

Mapping Project

The Rockefeller Foundation provided grants to eight states to do a map of their workforce development system on one page with all the information about the organizations that receive federal and state funding to do workforce development. The map includes information on the funding and it includes information on the agencies that provide that service, specifically what types of services they provide, their target population for those service and how those services are accessed. The map will help us to determine how the system can be. Kevin Thurston from the Maine Development Foundation will be doing interviews to collect the data. We hope that by January's meeting it will be done.