

Maine Jobs Council meeting

February 1, 2008: 8:00 AM

Forest Products Council Building, Route 27 in Augusta

MAINE JOBS COUNCIL Forestry Building, Augusta, Maine February 1, 2008

Minutes

Present: Ned McCann, Steve Duval, Ann Beebe-Center, Kate Grambow, Bryant Hoffman, Mel Clarrage, Craig Larrabee, Mike Roland, John Dorrer, Lisa Martin, Merle Davis, Libby Stone Sterling, Peaches Bass, Sarah Standiford, Richelle Wallace, Barry Martin, Phil Dionne, Garret Oswald, Meg Harvey, Joanna Russell, Linda Smith, Sue Swanton, Mel Arsenault, Laura Fortman, Al Menard, Antoinette Mancusi, Peter Thompson, Phyllis Cohen, Debra Reitchel

Phil Dionne called the meeting to order and welcomed members and guests. Introductions were made. Garret Oswald introduced Bureau of Employment Services employee Merle Davis who has been assigned to assist with the duties of the Maine Jobs Council, Policy Committee and the Industry Association Committee.

John Dorrer, Director for the MDOL Center for Workforce Research and Information gave a PowerPoint presentation on Maine Workforce Trends and Developments: An Update which was produced by their Economic and Demographic Research Team. John advised that Maine employers are consistently complaining that they need a skilled workforce. John had recently attended a STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering, Math) summit at the Augusta Civic Center. One in seven jobs in Maine requires STEM skills.

Linda Smith recommended that the MJC approach REALIZE!Maine to speak at one of our meetings. They are a program of the Maine Development Foundation.

Lisa Martin advised that high insurance and energy costs are hindering companies from moving to or expanding in Maine.

Service Delivery Committee Update - Mike Roland

Mike passed out copies of the recommendations concerning CareerCenter system reconfiguration necessitated by state and federal budget cuts and solicited feedback. The Service Delivery Committee had been meeting with workforce partners for the past few weeks. In summary, the committee recommends the following:

1. The number of Maine CareerCenters in Maine should be reduced to 12 and they are Portland, Lewiston, Bangor, Presque Isle, Augusta, Machias, Bath, Skowhegan, Rockland, Springvale, Houlton and Wilton.

2. Discussion should continue about how to bring services to the outlying areas.
3. A uniform, practical and precise method of collecting and reporting data on CareerCenter visits should be developed.
4. The Maine Jobs Council Service Delivery Committee should continue to explore funding sources for services provided by the CareerCenters.

A motion was made, seconded and passed to approve the Service Delivery Committee's report of recommendations concerning CareerCenter system reconfiguration. Coastal Counties Workforce provided a dissenting opinion against the recommendations due to the lack of information, a copy of which was given to board members. The report will be forwarded to Commissioner Fortman.

Women's Employment Issues Committee - Sarah Standiford, Peaches Bass

Sarah Standiford highlighted portions of the report *Succeeding in the New Economy: Pathways to Prosperity for Maine Workers*, January 2008 published by the Maine Women's Policy Center and the Maine Equal Justice Partners. The goal is to develop recommendations to open doors to higher education and training for people who are in the workforce who are either unemployed or underemployed. The Maine Center for Economic Policy conducted a survey of students. Workers face financial, transportation, childcare, and access to health insurance barriers. Many students struggle with student loans that they have defaulted on which hinders them from finishing their education. There are programs already in existence to provide pathways to higher education such as Parents to Scholars and the new Competitive Skills Scholarship Program.

Peaches Bass passed out a copy of the 2007 *Working Women in Maine Report* which contains new information on minority women in Maine. In summary, the report has the following policy recommendations:

1. To promote and encourage women in training and job placement in nontraditional occupations
2. To institutionalize child and family care services as an integral component of workforce and economic development
3. To educate all job seekers who are served by public programs on equal pay, safety, discrimination, harassment and negotiation rights
4. To adopt the livable wage as the minimum standard for job training and placement programs
5. To collect and analyze program outcome and performance for benefits and efficacy in serving women and include ethnic and racial data even if the numbers are small and to extend this to data collected by all state agencies, but in the short term especially labor, education and economic and community development.

A motion was made, seconded and unanimously passed to accept the 2007 *Working Women in Maine Report*.

Tuesday is Maine Equal Pay day and the Women's Employment Issues Committee meets next week and is going to be discussing activities to observe EPD.

Carl Perkins Plan Update - Meg Harvey

Changes at the federal level:

- Program of study requirement
- Increase in articulation agreements
- Increased emphasis on teacher development
- Emphasis on academic and technical integration
- Tech prep is now rolled into the basic grant
- Requirement that special populations be accommodated

Changes at the state level:

- Program of study process defined
- Required ten percent increase in articulation agreements over five years
- Professional development is being emphasized
- Technical skill attainment is now required.
- Must prove technical skill attainment of students
- Mandatory program advisory
- School evaluations are required
- Emphasis on apprenticeship opportunities

A motion was made, seconded and passed unanimously to accept the update on Carl Perkins as the requirement for the Department of Education to present this to the State Workforce Investment Board.

Youth Transitions Committee - Craig Larrabee

The committee, along with the Kennebec Valley Community College and Maine After School Network sponsored and helped host a mentoring symposium to shed light on mentoring and raising aspirations. The Maine Mentoring Partnership is now working with Jobs for Maine Grads to promote mentoring as one of the pathways to help achieve better results with disconnected youth here in the state of Maine. Craig passed out an article that will be going out in HR Times. The committee is finalizing a resource list of organizations, public and private schools, and other organizations that help youth. The list will be shared with the MJC, mailed to the business community and available on the JMG website. Due to dwindling resources, we need to think differently about the messages that we send youth. Although we want youth to aspire to attend college, we need to look at additional pathways for these students to be successful to get them into the workforce.

A motion was made, seconded and passed unanimously to accept the Youth Transitions Committee Report.

Industry Association Committee - Lisa Martin

The committee has not met formally lately; however, a number of committee members have been working on industry related projects involving employing people with disabilities. We are meeting with Working Together next week to discuss strategies for looking at employment opportunities within the industries and then linking those opportunities to people with disabilities. Garret was formally elected to the Manufacturer's Association Board of Advisors. The Committee has just completed Phase 1 of the aerospace initiative which involves the Maine

manufacturing industry, the composites industry and the IT industry. The committee will work with BNAS about redevelopment strategies and will collaborate with the other committees.

Sue Swanton, Co-Chair of NSAI advised that one of the best things to come out of NSAI is the development of "T3 - Train the Trainer" program. The program has a component to bring the trainer's technical skills are up to recognized standards and to develop their training skills.

Sue advised that the NSAI has funded the Marine Systems Training Center. It will be used primarily to train incumbent workers in mechanical, electrical, plumbing systems that go into boat construction and repair. The Maine Marine Trade Association has hired a director for the new center. The Commissioner will be holding a meeting with Phil, Garret and Gene to figure out how we can help the community colleges better serve people enrolled in the apprenticeship program.

Commission on Disability and Employment - Mel Clarrage

The committee is serving as the advisory committee to the Disability Navigator program in BES and continues to collaborate with the other MJC committees and advocate for the rights of people with disabilities.

Older Worker Committee - Phyllis Cohen

The committee has developed a vision statement:

"The Older Worker Committee of the Maine Jobs Council promotes and supports Maine's older workers through advocacy, education and policy development". The committee is developing a strategic plan on how they are going to involve the CareerCenters in a more comprehensive way in training and evaluating.

Garret advised that Maine was one of nine states that was part of the National Governor's Association's Policy Academy around engagement of older workers, both in the workforce and volunteer activities. The NGA recommended that the Older Worker Committee develop a report with benchmarks similar to the one that the Women's Employment Issues Committee had published around the economic security issues for older workers.

Apprenticeship Committee - Phil Dionne

There are two openings in the public sector for the committee. Pre-apprenticeship and apprenticeship numbers continue to grow each year. Minorities and women are starting to show gains. New rules will be coming from the federal government. In some cases there is more flexibility allowed and discussion around WIA funding. There is going to be a better definition of the role of the agency and the council. Distance learning is going to be allowed for marine construction under the new rules.

Local Workforce Investment Board Reports

Coastal Counties Workforce Investment Board - Antoinette Mancusi

Laura Fortman advised that Maine has received a 2 million dollar BRAC implementation grant to fund training. This is a result of the Governor's interest in making sure that there was outreach and capacity in the state around IT occupations. This fits nicely with the STEM initiative.

Antoinette advised that the project is going to involve curriculum development and instructional programs for basic IT and the creation of an information technology skills scholarship program to support the targeted workforce in obtaining certificate or degrees.

The Career Advancement Account Project provides CareerCenter services at the Base Transition Center.

Coastal Counties is working with the Jacksonville Florida LWIB to ensure that people who are being transferred to another state are receiving services before they arrive at that other state so that the impact is not heavily felt by the receiving state.

Tri County Workforce Investment Board - Joanna Russell

Joanna Russell was introduced by Garret as the new Executive Director of the Tri County Workforce Investment Board. Joanna Russell has been and meeting board members and will continue to work her way in the system.

Central/Western Maine Workforce Investment Board - Bryant Hoffman

You can go to MaineFocus.org to access the new Central/Western Maine WIB blog. Bryant has been invited and funded to attend the Transportation Distribution Logistics meeting in Memphis which is similar to the WIRED/NSAI.

National Emergency Grants are being processed for New Page in Rumford and SAS Shoes in Pittsfield.

Bryant is actively seeking private donations from businesses and foundations such as United Way. Bryant will be going to Washington next week with Rob Brown from the University of Maine to talk to the feds about a plan to look at different ways of partnering for workforce development in Maine.

Meg Harvey requested that everyone send all their reports electronically to Garret so that he can send them all to members to distribute to other interested parties.