



MAINE JOBS COUNCIL

FEBRUARY 19, 2010

PRESENT; Phil Dionne, Lisa Martin, Peaches Bass, Sharon Barker, Gail Dyer, Mel Arsenault, Gerard Salvo, Mark Ouellette, Craig Larrabee, Jeanne Paquette, Ed Clift, Ester Clenott, Antoinette Mancusi, Greg Dugal, Sarah Standiford, Peter Thompson, Bryant Hoffman, Joanna Russell, Mike Bourret, Steve Duval, Jeff Fantine, Fen Fowler, Paul Williamson, Ginny Carroll, Christina Sklarz-Libby, Garret Oswald

Phil Dionne opened the meeting with welcomes and introductions.

First on the agenda was a presentation about the North Star Alliance project. Christina Sklarz-Libby gave a power point presentation about the outcomes and lessons learned from this effort. First and foremost this project was about sector/cluster development for the Marine Trades and Composite industry. Biggest lessons learned were; Consistent Leadership, Project management must be flat and democratic, Equitable distribution of funds, and funded staff support are essential. Many valuable lessons have come out of this project and we should work to keep them in focus as we move on to the next sector initiative.

ARRA – Mel Arsenault gave an update about current ARRA activity. Mel spoke about the Summer Youth Program that served 778 participants. Two of the four LWIBs have funds for a SY program this year. MDOL is looking for funds to support a SY program this year.

Mel also spoke about UI and how benefits are helping people survive. Many recipients will exhaust their benefits soon. Feds are working on another extension.

Mel also spoke about the Competitive Skills Scholarship program – all the State 10% ARRA admin was given to CSSP, as well as a \$300,000 contribution from PUC for Green Job training.

Pathways out of Poverty Grant – Joanna Russell gave a presentation about the Green jobs grant that the Tri-County LWIB received. The grant is for 2.1M over 2 years. Seven homes will be built by Eastern Maine Community College and United Technology Center. One Hundred and five participants will be trained and receive 3 credentials. Targeted participants include Ex Offenders, Drop outs, Public Assistance recipients, and Dislocated Workers. Project partners include Eastern Maine Development Corp, Eastern Maine Community College, United Technology Center, Maine State Housing, Penquis Community Action Program, IBEW Local 1253, United Association of Plumbers & Pipefitters Local 716, Opportunity Maine and the Tri County Local Workforce Investment Board.

Last on the agenda was a discussion about the Policy Priorities for the MJC in 2010. Using the 2007 MJC Policy Agenda as background the members had a discussion about which of the five current Policy Priorities were still relevant as well as which still need work to accomplish. The five priorities are;

1. Connect workforce development to economic needs through outreach and education.
2. Develop the skills needed for low-wage workers, including women and people with disabilities for jobs that lead to reducing income disparity and creating a high quality of life for all.
3. Provide opportunities for lifelong learning and expand / create incentives for continuous learning by improving access to higher education.
4. Build supports for workers to manage their careers.
5. Create effective governance and accountability structures amongst workforce and economic development, education and human service providers

All five were identified as still needing work. Priority number 5 was noted as the top priority for this year. The discussion that followed included concerns about the MJC's ability to have an impact given its current positioning under the Department of Labor. Specific concerns included not having any input into the 10% funds - example of the ARRA 10% shifted into the CSSP.

This information will be relayed to the MJC Policy Committee for further discussion and action at the April 23, 2010 meeting.

Next MJC meeting – June 25, 2010

Respectfully submitted by Garret Oswald