

Alaska Workforce Investment Board
Meeting of the Board
September 6th, 2002
Sitka, Alaska

Draft Minutes

The meeting convened at 8:55 a.m. Roll call was taken and a quorum was present. The agenda was approved. The minutes from the February 2002 meeting were accepted. Fred Smith, the newest AWIB member, was introduced. Guests and staff were also welcomed and introduced.

Nominations for Chair and Vice-Chair were presented. The nominations were accepted and Dr. Alice Galvin and Mrs. Linda Hulbert were re-elected chair and Vice-Chair.

The Chair gave her report. She expressed her appreciation for the efforts of the Board. The Chair also reminded the board of its stated mission. She reported on issues being discussed at the national level as they relate to state boards. She reported that on December 12th, the AWIB will convene a meeting of people in the administration of regional training centers.

Mr. Sanders delivered his report. It was distributed by e-mail and in printed form prior to the meeting. He discussed the AWIB work matrix, the fall WIA Conference, regional training facilities, cooperative actions between boards, the clearinghouse, regulations, 15% discretionary funds, APEC, AWIB reports, incumbent worker efforts, national skills standards and STEP.

Committee Reports

Employment and Placement: Chair Stallone discussed the committee's work. She reported on WorkStar. She reported that Mike Gutierrez and Chris Ashenbrenner would be working together on the program. The most pressing issue is the WorkStar Awards.

Chair Galvin asked about WorkStar's participation in job fairs. Mike Gutierrez reported that WorkStar participates in a round of job fairs in the spring. Barbara Stallone commented that there are far too many job fairs. There was discussion that, on a regional basis, job fairs work very well, but many employers find limited value. Lt. Governor Ulmer pointed out that there is never simply one solution to Alaska's problem. Some Alaskans are place-bound while there may be another way to communicate with other Alaskans.

Policy and Planning: Chair Linda Hulbert discussed the activities of the policy and planning committee. She stated the committee wants to work on a "virtual tour of the workforce." This would be a visual mapping of training available. The committee has several on-going responsibilities including: STEP regulations, regional learning centers, including a written definition of what a regional learning center is, maintenance of

communication with the local WIB's. The policy issues of K-12 and vocational education are also on the committee's agenda. Two important issues also include the Denali Training fund of \$5 million a year. There is rumored to be an additional 7-8 million a year and the committee would like to have some say in how the money is used. The Lt. Governor, who sits on the Denali Commission, pointed out that 10% of the funds the commission receives is set aside for training. That training also must be closely related to the projects (energy and Health Care) which the commission is working on. The Department of Labor has little discretion on how the Denali money is spent. She suggested that an AWIB Committee meet with the training committee of the Denali Commission.

Time was made for public comment at 10:45. Ms. Sally Spieker, Tech. Prep. Coordinator for the University of Alaska spoke. She updated the board on efforts to coordinate University efforts with other training providers.

Lt. Governor Fran Ulmer stated that this would likely be her last AWIB meeting and thanked all of the board members for their efforts over the years. She thanked those who have put in so much time to bring the board forward from where it started. She pointed out that, as she travels around the state, she hears individuals talk about how much they want better jobs – while employers say they cannot find qualified workers and must look Outside. The Lt. Governor challenged the board to continually address that issue.

Assessment & Evaluation Committee: Chair Tim Sunday reported on the new legislative reporting process. He reported that a draft report will be available in November for members to review.

He also discussed Resolution 02-15 regarding skills standards and certification. The draft resolution was moved and seconded. Ms. Sally Saddler asked how this resolution would affect work readiness training providers. Chair Galvin stated that the resolution does not apply to those programs. Mr. Ron Hull stated that there were no grants being put out for work readiness training. Chair Galvin quoted from the A&E Committee report and said she assumed that meant work readiness providers were exempt from the mandates of this resolution. Mr. Jim Wakefield expressed a concern over the impact on rural Alaska. Chair Galvin pointed out that it is a stepped in process that should allow rural providers to get up to speed. Mr. Sunday made two friendly amendments to the resolution that alleviated some of Mr. Wakefield's concerns.

Mr. Fred Esposito stated his concerns as well. He stated that the board would have to find ways to fund the resolution because getting programs up to speed with standards would be costly. He also stated that there would be a lot of work to do in identifying which standards to use and how to apply them. He also pointed out that there were various levels of certifications that would have to be explored. Chair Galvin asked Mr. Esposito to express those questions and concern in writing so that the board could use them to guide discussion. She also pointed out that some of the 15% discretionary funds the board has to use could be used to aid this effort.

Chair Galvin suggested that the resolution set the broad policy direction of where the board wants to go, and a committee could help flesh out the specifics. Ms. Wendy Redman asked that the language “university degree” be changed to post-secondary degree.

Ms. Anne Sponholtz spoke on behalf of APIC in favor of national skills standards.

The resolution was passed as amended without dissent.

Mr. Sunday then reported that a council assessment tool is still being worked on by Ms. Rebecca Gamez who was unable to attend the meeting.

Partner Reports

Mr. Larry Hartig, the new Chair of the Anchorage Mat-Su WIB, expressed his appreciation for being invited and said he is very excited about working with the AWIB. He reported on the Anchorage Career Transition Center – a facility designed to solely serve dislocated workers. This project is being done in conjunction with BP, following a round of layoffs.

The project has been a learning experience. Having the support of BP and close contact with the employer has been very helpful. The program will be evaluated in January, but the stand-alone concept seems to be working very well. Mr. Tom Nelson of the State of Alaska Department of Labor and Workforce Development stated that the project has grown to encompass all kinds of dislocated workers, not just people laid off from BP. He characterized it as another aspect added to their “award winning services.” Mr. Ron Hull, Director of the Employment Security Division of the State of Alaska Department of Labor, clarified Mr. Nelson’s comments. The division won a National Association of State Workforce Agencies (NASWA) Prism award for the top business connection with services. That comes with a \$25,000 award which will be poured right back into business connections.

Mr. Hartig continued on the relationship between the board and the Mat-Su Borough. He stated that the level of interest in the Borough is high. Mayor Tim Anderson is familiar with WIA as is the Borough Manager. The consortia agreement was re-negotiated and there is a lot of excitement about it. The Municipality of Anchorage will continue to be the grant recipient, however, the Borough will have a lot more control over their portion of the funds.

Last year the WIB had received an H1B grant for an IT program. That program is largely completed. There has been great participation by employers. The Mat-Su College has also developed a degree program as a result. The WIB will also be submitting an application for another H1B grant to do health care training.

The WIB went through a program and financial monitoring program and the process was very positive. There were some helpful suggestions made.

The WIB is now working on re-certification under WIA. They are conducting a plan revision as a part of the project.

The Board broke for lunch and a luncheon speaker, Randy Hughey from the Sitka Education Consortium. Mr. Hughey gave background on the Consortia's history and current projects. (a complete recording of Mr. Hughey's presentation is available from the AWIB office.)

Mr. Jim Wakefield, Chair of the BOSWIB then gave his presentation. There have been some changes on the board due to resignations and new appointments. The Board has worked hard to increase private sector representation. Mr. Wakefield updated the board on the upcoming BOSWIB meetings.

At the March meeting of the BOSWIB, there was a very productive discussion with ANCET, discussions about the fall WIA conference and legislative strategy. The BOSWIB shifted a portion of funds from dislocated workers to adult programs because there is a greater need in that area.

The BOSWIB is also preparing to submit a seasonal employment waiver due to the high number of workers employed seasonally.

The BOSWIB Youth Council met in Sitka. There was a joint exco meeting with the other two boards and Jim stated it was very helpful and productive to communicate between the boards.

Mr. Wakefield pointed out that some interesting information came out of the Barrow meeting of the BOSWIB. There are professional positions available in the North Slope Borough that local workers are not trained for, and Outside workers are unwilling to take. These high paying jobs are being left empty. Local workers must be trained to fill these positions. Mr. Wakefield also presented the BOSWIB's re-certification packet for review.

Sharon Olsen submitted a written report from ANCET.

Ann Sponhotz reported from the Industry Skills Coalition. She reported that the APIC is proceeding with a project funded through the U.S. DOL to develop apprenticeship positions and partnering with the Employment Security Division and Alaska's People to increase Native Placement Services.

The Industry Skills Coalition is very concerned that children are not coming out of school prepared to work. The coalition is beginning a media campaign in October aimed at 5th, 6th, 7th, and 8th grade students as well as their parents. They are conducting focus groups

on the messages. The coalition is also working with rural school districts. The coalition also expressed its happiness with the passage of the skills standards resolution.

Youth White Paper

Chair Galvin suggested that the use of a white paper on youth could act as a catalyst for the board on the issue. She pointed out that the board does not know where money is coming from, going to or where the gaps are. The board has some money to use for the project. Ms. Linda Hulbert suggested narrowing the focus to youth and career and vocational change. Ms. Galvin agreed that the scope would be focussed on youth and preparation for work.

Fred Esposito asked if the purpose was to provide direction to youth programs. Dr. Galvin clarified that the purpose was to provide information first so that policy could be developed. Jim Wakefield suggested that the board should get input from the two youth councils in the state.

Pete Galle suggested that a white paper should have some action component. That it should provide some direction. Dr. Galvin then suggested not calling it a white paper, rather a “status on youth.” Barbara Stallone asked if that was something that could be prepared by the December Meeting. Jo Ann McDowell suggested that it was fine to call it a white paper and that determining the status of youth was important.

Marjorie Menzi pointed out that there are many efforts to report youth information going on and that it is important not to duplicate efforts made by others, but rather use the wealth of information that already exists. Larry Haritig suggested that a youth white paper would be very helpful to the Anchorage/Mat-Su WIB. They have a youth council that is working very well but could use some more direction. He suggested asking the existing youth councils what kind of information would be helpful to them.

Jo Ann McDowell also suggested regionalizing the report.

Fred Smith suggested that there should be some statement of mission for youth programs in the state and then establish goals for them to meet. Barbara Stallone pointed out that the results should be marketed after the fact to draw business to Alaska. Fred Smith also suggested an organizational chart showing which agencies are responsible for which outcomes.

State of the Alaska Workforce

Jim Sanders presented the draft “State of the Workforce” report. He stated that the idea was to put together a very simple brochure with very basic measurements as an attention getter. It should be easy to read and engage the audience. It is being modeled on a Washington State document.

Barbara Stallone asked for more pictures. In particular, she suggested education related photos. Colleen Ward asked if there would be any white space left. Jim Sanders also suggested photos could be regionalized for different versions. Jim Wakefield spoke in favor of regionalizations and Colleen Ward spoke against regionalization. The board also suggested using unemployment as a key indicator. Chris Ashenbrenner spoke against using poverty as an indicator and Jim Wakefield expressed concern with using unemployment as an indicator. It was suggested that the report show how Alaska ranks in the nation on the indicators chosen.

Jim Wakefield pointed out that indicators should be chosen on the basis of what employers need to see. Colleen Ward stated that the audience for the paper was intended to be policy makers. Fred Esposito suggested that indicators should be related to education, training and employment – in alignment with the indicators we report to the legislature.

Incumbent Workers and 15% Discretionary Funds

Jim Sanders presented the 15% statewide assistance funds. This year the total was about \$1.5 million. Right now 500 thousand is out in an RFP. A certain portion is also being taken for the hiring of consultants on special projects.

Barbara Stallone suggested that there was a great opportunity to spend incumbent worker money to help immigrant workers master English language skills.

Jim Sanders presented Mike Shiffer's proposal of a committee of industry representatives and the WIBs to come up with a focus. Then Shiffer would take these suggestions and create an RFP.

Linda Hulbert pointed out that incumbent worker programs were not the only way this money should be used. She suggested a prioritization. Jim Wakefield objected to that and said the money should go to the best projects proposed from all of the areas it might be spent.

Colleen Ward asked if we were obligated to do incumbent worker programs and if we were already. Jim Sanders stated that we are not doing any incumbent worker programs.

Wendy Redman suggested that money could be used to subsidize professional development for smaller employers.

Chair Galvin pointed out that the AWIB is in an important position to provide guidance as to how this money should be spent, because it will be spent regardless. The role of the AWIB today should not necessarily be to make decisions today but to assign the task to a committee and come up with a process.

Colleen Ward and Barbara Stallone offered to take this matter up as a Joint Committee matter.

Linda Hulbert asked that the final decision come back to the executive committee at some point, maybe in October.

At this point, Ms. Corine Geldhof of the Department of Labor presented the marketing plan for workforce development.

Clearinghouse

Colleen Ward spoke on the clearinghouse and promised to be short and sweet. She gave background on the project and spoke of the need for a central communication hub. The clearinghouse was decided to be a web-based product and we are searching for a consultant to help design it.

Mike Gutierrez reported that Janet Mitson was hired to produce an inventory of all of the web-based resources that already exist. That report should be available by the November executive meeting that corresponds with the WIA conference.

Colleen Ward re-emphasized the importance of the funding picture component to the clearinghouse. We should also explore funding for the AWIB that would allow us the staff to maintain a clearinghouse.

Mike Gutierrez reported that the system initially thought to be the answer to the clearinghouse, which was developed in Utah, has proven to be inadequate. He gave examples of several designers he had researched and what they could do for the AWIB and at what cost.

Marjorie Menzi suggested that the AWIB should develop a presence on the AJCN site rather than developing its own identity. Jim Sanders pointed out that we are currently buried deep within the department of Labor site.

Wendy Redman pointed out that the AWIB would likely need a full time staff person just to maintain the clearinghouse. She asked where the money will come from. Colleen Ward pointed out that there is only a limited amount of content that AWIB would need to maintain.

Wendy Redman also commented that Corine Geldhof should also be involved in the development of a web site so there is some consistency between her marketing efforts and our own.

WIA Conference

Mike Gutierrez reported on the fall WIA conference. He reported that the presenters' list was filling up as well as the exhibitor list. There will be presentations from in-state as well as out-of-state professionals.

Mike reported to the board that the awards sub-committee of the conference steering committee was asking AWIB, BOSWIB, Anchorage/Mat-Su WIB, and ANCET to sponsor an awards ceremony on the second night of the conference. He reported that the awards ceremony grew from something very simple and grew to 16 awards.

Chair Galvin asked if the board could put a stop to the awards ceremony idea. Jim Wakefield of the BOSWIB stated that his board has had no input on the idea. Chair Galvin asked again if it could be stopped. Ron Hull of ESD moved to not support an awards ceremony at the WIA conference and the board concurred.

Legislative Plan

Chair Galvin spoke about the legislative breakfast on the 22nd of November. It would be followed by a work session in the afternoon but would not count as a formal AWIB meeting. Chris Ashenbrenner asked how much the new commissioners would shape the legislative agenda. Chair Galvin stated that the needs of the workforce were the needs of the workforce regardless of who was in charge.

Chair Galvin pointed out that the Board would like to see some strong recommendations incorporated in the Executive Summary of the Legislative Report.

The Next Board meeting will be February 27th and 28th in Juneau.

There was no public comment.

Mr. Jim Wakefield added an addendum to his BOSWIB report. He mentioned that there was a STEP RFP review coming in the near future. He also reported that there have been complaints from people about the process of applying for STEP grants. The Board was also planning 5 local advisory board summits across the state. The meeting was then adjourned.