

# V E R M O N T

## Workforce Development Council

### Executive Committee Notes

8/9/10

- Updates from the NGA State Chair's Meeting - John provided a summary of the remarks on the "Jobless Recovery" that were made at the Summer NGA State Workforce Chairs meeting in Boston. A copy is attached.
- Regional WIB Update - eligible applicants and the review process - Chip reviewed the process of preparing for competitive grants for WIB funds, and identification of the eligible applicant organization in each region. The following tech Centers have agreed to take on these responsibilities; Newport, St. Johnsbury, Springfield, Randolph, Hyde Park, and Middlebury. In the remaining areas the pre-existing WIB will be eligible to apply. In Brattleboro, the Tech Center has been the WIB and has declined to continue. A new group of volunteers has formed and will be invited to apply. The Bradford and Upper Valley WIBs have merged. Several members expressed interest in meeting with the WIBs, and Chip will arrange this as well as organizing the grant review committee.
- Council Membership Update - Chip explained that the Governor has reappointed the members whose terms had expired and who had not resigned. That leaves five vacant seats. He distributed a chart broken out by sector and geographic region. We need members from southern Vermont, and should try to find members from the Agriculture and IT sectors. Fran agreed to contact Tom Stearns and Andy Meyer in Hardwick. Chip will contact the Software Developers Association. Chip reported that we need members from Southern Vermont. He explained that the new State legislation requiring that new WDC business members be appointed from names submitted by the Tech Centers conflicts with Federal law that requires that these individuals be appointed from names submitted by business and trade associations. He is exploring a work-around that might meet both requirements.
- Update on Adult Tech Ed Performance Grant Planning Process - Chip and Val reported that a date has been set for a meeting of the group required in legislation to establish performance criteria and measurement system. Four members, two adult coordinators and two directors have been identified by the Director's association. They hope to complete this task in one meeting.

- Next Full Council Meeting - After some discussion, it was agreed hold a full Council meeting after the election and before mid-December. Chip suggested inviting Asst. Secy. of Labor Jane Oates who John and he heard speak in Boston earlier in the month. He will contact her office. Other agenda items discussed include; Tim Donovan on the K-16 Council, Armando on the State Board's Opportunity to Learn strategies and a Labor Market Power Point presentation (As Andy Condon did last year), and finally, an invitation to the Governor Elect.

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NGA State WIB Chairs Association August 2010  
Prepared by John O'Kane

Summary of Messages and Challenges:

- 1) The economic recession is effecting all discussions and thoughts about workforce, skills, and policy initiatives.
- 2) There is a growing consensus that we will be facing a "jobless recovery".
- 3) Among the major problems affecting the economy:
  - a) Small businesses are the job creators, but they are being starved for credit because:
    - b) Banks can make money by borrowing from the fed and investing it in risk free Treasury notes.
    - c) Fed auditors' are punishing banks for loans that don't meet very high credit standards.
    - d) The economic tools available to help unemployment (retraining, support for education, stimulus) have worked when unemployment is at the "frictional" levels (3% to 4%). We do not have tools adequate to address the current persistent levels of 9 to 10%
    - e) Previous economic recoveries have been led by the sectors which lost employment, like recalls to factory jobs. That is unlikely in this recession, so we don't know where the job growth leadership will come from.
- 4) Unemployment benefit expiration is a major concern. Some advocate further extensions, but others question "what will change" unless we find a way to redirect workers to new, perhaps lower paying, jobs which will require extensive retraining.

- 5) WIA reauthorization is unlikely this year, and Jane Oates gives it less than a 50-50 chance in political environment following the fall election. Job training isn't at the forefront of political solutions being discussed.
- 6) Green jobs have not yet proven to be "job creators". Some new trainees are having poor job placement results. Upgrading skills of existing workers seems the path most favored by employers.
  - a) The speakers on this subject seem to be stuck on the traditional technologies of insulation and physical efficiency steps.
  - b) Not much mentioned about using information technology to improve building performance.
  - c) Continued belief that the efficiency gains are going to be available in residential housing and not a focus on high use in industry and commercial.
- 9) Some good examples were discussed of programs designed to better fit vets and older workers. Key is to have educational institutions be willing to adapt to assessing and crediting experience and ability. Also, traditional approaches (take a test first ) tend to drive away potential learners.
- 10) Political instability in states (37 Governors, mostly new faces) indicate a complete shakeup of the leadership in workforce issues in many states. Much was made of how workforce chairs and leaders could plan to "survive the transition", particularly with exceedingly tight budgets. Not an uplifting prospect.