

**Business Services Technical Workgroup
PA Partners Office, Camp Hill, PA**

Meeting Minutes

October 26, 2007

Present: (list forthcoming)

Next meeting: December 12, 2007 9:00 a.m-11:00 a.m. Harrisburg Hilton

I. Opening Comments

Prior meeting minutes were handed out to those present. After a few minutes to peruse, minutes were approved.

II. Discussion

Vicki opened the meeting commenting that we, as a group, need to define our mission and goals, what we are striving for, measurable goals, etc. What are we trying to accomplish? What does the group see and want to do? Why are we here? Where do we need to focus our efforts?

Patty asked if this had been done before (asked these questions)?

Group indicated that it had been, found copies of the minutes from the first meeting.

Helen read the mission statement that had been created. This is still valid.

Nancy suggested we have a flip chart at our meetings to record and display our statements.

Nancy also said she doesn't care for the term "Technical Workgroup" – it doesn't seem to fit what we market and sell. Vicki said we can call ourselves whatever we want....

Nancy also said in her area they design initiatives and make work plans. Should we create a subcommittee for each of our strategies?

- a) develop uniform assessment tool
- b) build template
- c) role of Business Services team

(Nancy wants to be on 'c'.)

Nancy also said she attends the PA WIB meetings and feels the "big picture" of the WIB is not provided so she will do her best to get this information out to us. Up until this year, there has not been a local chair on the state WIB. Across the state, local areas wanted to know if the state WIB had a local flavor. The governor is putting 3 local WIB chairs on the state WIB to be sure plan is being followed and to understand the agenda. It's mostly Sandy Vito, Job Ready PA, but only a small piece. Nancy will ask Dennis Rhen to send out the agendas of future state WIB meetings to us. She also made the offer to attend these meetings since they are public.

At the state WIB meeting on October 25, Sandy Vito described the process we went through to make sure the money for JobReady Pennsylvania remained in the budget. Employers contacted their legislators to be sure \$20M was back in the budget. WIBs felt strongly the money needed to be there. WEDnet is half there. (Money to employers vs. money in system to serve under privileged population.) Business

Services Teams need to be current with this information. Business Services is huge across the State. Get involved in Industry Partnerships to ensure the CareerLink is properly represented. Get employers to understand that they need to determine what they need to make their industry more competitive. Business Services Teams (BSTs) needs more training. Should BSTs be the lead in an Industry Partnership? Nancy wants to work towards this. The IRCs should not run these programs. Business Services will stay in the system.

Larry Horning agreed. He said there has been discussion of who the money goes to. Most WIBs in the State have hired a facilitator, not the CareerLinks, to implement the industry partnerships. WIBs get the money and then determine who gets it. Gap is there to hire outside rather than have the Business Services lead. Vicki said our charge here is to take questions back. Why should we hire a facilitator when our teams can do this?

Someone asked if this was a local WIB decision?

The group is attached to programs within the CareerLinks. Technical schools need to sit on group so they can adjust their curriculums accordingly. By 2012 there will be a 12 million worker shortage.

Find out about your IPs and which employers are involved. Make sure all employers you come in contact with know about them so we can send employers to the proper resource. Dennis stated there is information available on the PA Partners' website.

Nancy also said we need to promote Career and Technical Education. She will moderate a public hearing on the State Plan for Career and Technical Education in Lehigh County in December. She will also have business people there to offer comments, which are welcomed.

Council for Workforce for Tomorrow – are we involved in our youth councils? What direction can we provide to connect youth to business? Need ideas to get information into plan. Bring businesses to the table.

According to Eileen Connelly, 47% of nurses can retire in the next few years. Nurses can make excellent money.

Performance standards for WIB – take CLWR and WIB standards and merge.

Vicki Lori stated they want to look at the system, not have it scattered. This would be an overall report and finding on the system. Will eventually look at regions, connecting WIBs to CareerLinks and how they work together.

Nancy then said they talked about Industry Partnership funding – how many there were and what the return on investment is. Best of all, the outcomes were great showing an increase in skill level and wages among the participants.

Nancy mentioned the National Incentive NGA grant and the proper alignment of workforce development system. It's all about growing, not eliminating.

Vicki stated we need to leverage limited resources and increase efficiencies.

Nancy then brought up work readiness standards. Do we have a right to impose? She did see that work readiness was a good thing with employers. Larry was concerned that the skill standard is coming from the educational community or elsewhere. They aren't going to employers to see what they want. They are frustrated that candidates can't do a resume or complete a job application. Nancy said this needs to be consistent across the State. Employers will just take what they need. The EARN program is pushing for certification.

Larry said when the CareerLinks started about 10 years ago, they attempted to mandate state training. We became broken to employer. The University of Pittsburgh at Bradford changed to 18 week certification programs. Employers are not waiting; they are getting experienced people and sending them to these 18 week courses. Employers are participating in career fairs who haven't before. They are targeting 50% of kids who aren't going to college. As the economy tightens, they will take who they can get.

Ray Spencer said the EARN program was designed to target the general population. Nancy said this is addressing the soft skills end (attendance, etc.)

Nancy then talked about the STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering and Math) initiative. We need to be aware of this – ask your WIB directors what their strategy is to address this. It is worth reading about so we should find information on it.

Vickie suggested we invite Sue Mukherjee, the coordinator of the STEM initiative, to the next meeting. We are one of six states in the nation to receive a state grant (\$500K) that is being administered by the Department of Education.

Nancy said we need to know what is happening at the State level and she will continue to share with us. Vicki will see that this gets posted as a link to a website.

Nancy said in her CareerLink, every Tuesday, they are talking to the technical schools to see who needs help. They are also talking to guidance counselors. Can target "720" schools.

A member asked if there can be a workshop to get CareerLinks and BSTs to strengthen communication with industry partnerships, etc.? Nancy said good idea and Vicki will put on the agenda for future meetings.

Nancy said she gave a copy of her WIB's strategic plan to the BST so they can have a role in it. "Give them a reason to look at you". Vicki said this is not new – having people involved in writing plans, etc. This is how high performance, quality organizations get this way. The newly combined standards will push that.

Clare Lawrence asked what happens when you are not "high performance"? Nancy said the incentive is \$100K to do with what you want. Need to plan things, like working with Economic Development, etc. How do you use partners to move forward? Do you share your strategic plan with economic development? Vicki said that they are not looked at as "can't" – show they are working on initiatives and achieving, how changes take effect, etc.

Nancy then talked about the 2008 State Fair. She went to Bob Garraty, executive director of the State WIB, because of Wall Street West (WIRED grant). Lehigh Valley has one for the finance industry to help people build back-office operations in their

area. Looking at vendors to do initiatives, need to do job fair. She talked about a virtual job fair in PA. OVR agreed to participate. This team (the Business Services Technical Workgroup) should take the lead on it. A future meeting of group will be on this subject. All jobs will be on display for one day for a statewide job fair – state will help with marketing. We can assist in the development. Vicki said there needs to be consistency in the fair – from Philadelphia to Erie. We would build a template, messages, toolkit, how to's, etc. We can engage Tierney and L&I press to help build the toolkit.

Nancy suggested we use this as an economic development tool. Get them involved too.

Vicki talked about a Career Awareness month with each industry cluster. Sandy Vito has given approval to do this. Work with schools to find out the best time to do this. It was suggested that this be done in January/February when students pick their coursework.

Nancy then mentioned Entrepreneurial Conference with high schools seminars. Are we developing entrepreneurs? There will be a pilot running in April to do this. It will have an employer showcase as well, giving the students an idea of what industry looks like.

Patty asked about PA Enterprise Week – since this already exists, can we use it?

Christie Young presented a calendar she has developed that shows students who have teamed up with alumni in targeted occupations. Nancy thought it was a great idea and something this team should do with CareerLinks.

Vicki said it could show career ladders/lattices. Make this a project!

Christie said Middletown HS has a great curriculum for career awareness ~ a “Did You Know” video, Futures 100 class, etc.

Nancy asked who was going to the Youth Services Academy? This entire team should go to Career Gates, Wednesday, Dec. 12 at Harrisburg Hilton. In fact, our next meeting should be there, prior to the kickoff.

DCED/BREP –

Vicki said she is working with Carol since there was a divergent understanding from the last meeting. Vicki, Carol, John, Bob, Nancy and the policy director talked to Dennis Yablonsky, Secretary of the Department of Community and Economic Development (DCED) and he supports what we are doing. The policy director was very receptive to training staff to a standard BREP interview. The members talked about the territory/turf issues. Vicki will share with Carol the BST training and will discuss the criteria for business calling representatives. There are no real job qualifications.

What will the document look like? Nancy and Vicki will develop a model and we can review. Can we consolidate or not? Can we make this a statewide approach? Nancy would like to have a subcommittee to work on this. She also said they will wait on us to do this.

Ray asked what the timeline is for completion of this task? Vicki said there is no timeline at the moment, but we should move quickly.

Patty said we have more support now that we have the policy director involved. Nancy agreed. Larry stated that 2 meetings ago, we spent a lot of time developing this tool – can we start with that?

Ray said it's a process tool. Larry asked where it was. We should drive the process around the tool.

Vicki said it is used in Southern Alleghenies only, not statewide. They changed it with their dollars and started the pilot. The regional director was not amenable to using it statewide. They go back and forth on database and questions.

Larry said we worked on the document, we need a copy to use as ours. The WIB and business partners use this now.

Vicki said the regional director was here last time and did not want to streamline. CareerLink staff is not disclosing confidential information about companies. Francis asked if this was an assessment tool and would the committee look at all of this? Yes, per Nancy.

Larry said when this discussion started, it was to be the assessment tool. The WIB's and BREP's were similar so we created one tool to be used by all. If the tool is blessed, and local decisions are the problem, that's something else. Let's work on the tool and build best practices. We can use this as a guide to respond to either economic development or workforce development. Vicki said we added our basic needs, but need to add other items and to make it a model of what will work.

CWDS~

Nancy asked on a scale of 1-10, how bad is CWDS?

Larry spoke first. Said it has a lot of information and it is useful but functionality is terrible. They are spending a lot of time working with employers to enable them to use it. The Help Desk is worthless; the assistants are offensive. The business partners are not trained properly. Employers shouldn't be compromised.

Ray agreed that certain functionality is impossible. Helen stated there is a definite lack of job seekers for employers to choose from. Vicki said as an fyi – at the last 2 symposiums (St. College and Tannersville) they invited Mike Fuller from Deloitte for an open forum so he is aware of some of the issues. Ray mentioned that there will be 23 major fixes released on October 27. Vicki said to send any issues directly to Mike Fuller. Larry said Mike is responsive. Others agreed. Ray stated that the staff is copying Mike and Kathy on the negative comments from employers. In Westmoreland, they created a work guide. They identified high profile users and worked with them. However there were some time restraints and they could not reach them all. They have scheduled 3 hour-long workshops until the end of the year. Prior ones have been well attended.

There was further discussion about the frustrations, lack of participants, added steps, functionality, losing good, skilled people, login failures, etc.

Vicki talked about the 200 Series of CareerLink training. Use this as an opportunity to reach more employers; proactively get to them.

It was suggested that a "shopping cart" for the job seekers so they would know when to "check out". Still needs help for employers.

In Westmoreland, their technical people can't maneuver through the system. Ray said the auto-fill of ONet codes disappeared. Marty Culp said there has been some positive feedback given. A suggestion was made to have CareerLink staff and BST place the job orders until the employers are trained. John Haupt said the staff is not sure how matches are supposed to happen. More training is needed to know all the detail. Larry said CWDS should be on every agenda. Make sure everyone understands how to do the functions. Search the area for experts.

Christy asked what was converted from the previous system to CWDS? Helen said if an employer checks a box, it negates what they are looking for. If someone from 2 different partners is in the same record making notes, the last person who saves has the detail but the other notes are lost.

Ray has copies of 14 different searches of what staff needs to be doing. Ray said in the old system, the list was comprehensive, now they have to go 12 different times. Email him and he will send the grid. He also said there is huge list of incomplete job orders; staff needs to look at their lists constantly.

Vicki ended the meeting by asking for a list of committees. Copies of curriculum for Business Services will be piloted in late January and rolled out in March. Please review – 10 modules. Let her know comments/feedback. Are we interested in participating in a pilot? Copies were handed out. This was developed by subject matter experts in the field. Staff training started this week.

Committees for the State Job Fair, Role of Business Services, Portfolio Template and Assessment Tool Development were established and those present indicated which team they wished to be on. Chairs of each committee were also named. The committees should meet at least once before the next workgroup meeting and they will report out then. Dennis agreed to send out the lists immediately after this meeting so others who were not present today could add themselves to the committee.

Committees:

Portfolio Template

Jeanne Block ~ co-chair
Donna Garritty ~ co-chair
Helen Amole
John Haupt
Christie Young

Assessment Tool

Larry Horning ~ chair
Darlene Buttery
Sharon Tropp
Connie Frantz
Alan Dudley/Christie Young
Patty Goldbach

State Job Fair

Ray Spencer ~ chair
Barbara Allen
Larry Alexander
Clare Lawrence

Role of BST

Helen Amole ~ chair
Eric Karmecy
Ray Spencer
Jeanne Block

Cindy Vecchio
Sharon Tropp

Rodney McMichael
Patrick Bond
Nancy Dischinat

III. Next Steps

Chairs will set up respective committee meetings between now and next meeting.

Next meeting will be prior to the Career Gates launch in Harrisburg at the Hilton, Wednesday, December 12, 2007 from 9:00 to 11:00. We will then attend the Career Gates presentation/luncheon.

Submitted by,

Connie Frantz
Northwest Region