

# Pennsylvania

*Lehigh Valley Workforce Investment Board, Inc.*

## **LEHIGH VALLEY WORKFORCE INVESTMENT BOARD, INC.**

**March 21, 2006**

### **Minutes**

Committee Members Present: Ron Achey, Laura Azzalina, Jeff Bergen, Bert Daday, Robert Epsicopo, Eugene Ervin, Jim Faylor, Vito Gallo, Sally Gammon, Michael Gibson, Armando Greco, Mary Kay Grim, Teri Haddad, Alan Jennings, Gerald Kemmerer, John MacDonald, John Mehler, Victor Meyer, Michael Moorehead, Jack Pfunder, Sharon Scheirer, Gary Schmidt, Arthur Scott, Don Snyder, Raymond Suhocki, Rick Walters, Robert Wendt, George Werkheiser, Carol Young.

Committee Members Absent: Brad Bearman, Craig Becker, Bryon Boos, Brian Du Bois, Kelly Gould, Dr. Leo Heitlinger, Clyde Hornberger, Tony Iannelli, Drew Lewis, Edward Murray, William Newhard, Mark Reardon, Peter Rittenhouse, Jack Sharbaugh, Marc Troutman, Ed Zale.

The Lehigh Valley Workforce Investment Board, Inc. met on Tuesday, March 21, 2006 at 7:30am at LVWIB offices, 1601 Union Boulevard, Allentown, PA.

Eugene Ervin, Chair, called the meeting to order asking for approval of the December 12, 2005 meeting minutes. A motion was made by Robert Wendt, seconded by Sally Gammon. All in favor. Motion carried.

Chair Ervin, welcomed the following special guests:

- Beth Horwick, representing State Representative Karen Beyer
- Christopher Herrick, PhD, Professor of Political Science, Muhlenberg College
- Lisa Walter, representing Senator Robert Wonderling
- Clayton Faulkner, Penn State Intern

Chair Ervin reported that Assistant Secretary of Labor Emily Stover DeRocco sent a letter thanking the Lehigh Valley Workforce Investment Board, Inc. for our hospitality. She made a few comments on the high quality of the Lehigh Valley Workforce Investment Board, Inc. and commented that our WIBs responds extremely well to the regions economic driving forces and we change our strategy as needed according to the economic development strategy within the region.

Sally Gammon introduced Chris Herrick, PhD, Professor of Political Science from Muhlenberg College who reviewed an executive summary of an Earmark project called: Gap Analysis for Lehigh Valley Workforce Investment Board, Inc. of CareerLink Lehigh Valley. The Accountability Committee felt it was important for the Board to receive a first hand account of the gaps identified as follows:

**The report is subdivided into five main sections:**

- Key findings regarding existing clientele, and,
- Key findings of the under-served sectors of the Lehigh Valley workforce including representatives of the Hispanic community, and,

- Key findings of the Lehigh Valley business community/Lehigh Valley Chamber of Commerce, and,
- Comparative GIS maps for various occupational categories, and,
- Over 30 recommendations made on the basis of an analysis of the information obtained in the series of surveys and focus groups.

**Key Findings: The Attitudes of Existing Clientele Regarding CareerLink Services**

- Clientele were generally satisfied with the services offered by CareerLink Lehigh Valley.
- Clientele wished for greater clarity in initial orientation sessions and more guidance in the proper sequencing of services.

**Major Recommendations:**

- Review and revise the orientation given to individuals first entering the CareerLink system to better inform them of the variety of services available and the proper sequencing for accessing those services
- Develop or enhance existing specialized sessions for all CareerLink clientele to review the importance of a solid work ethic, the importance of arriving at work on time, keeping absenteeism on the job to a minimum, and accepting the need for performing menial tasks in many jobs, particularly as an entry-level person.
- Consider creative options for sequencing the various workshops offered by CareerLink so that the same workshop is not offered every week at the same time.
- Explore the possibility of providing career exploration workshops for all youth involved in the summer youth program.
- Consider developing as a component of existing training programs a segment that emphasizes developing writing skills.

**Key Findings: The Attitudes of the Underserved Sectors of the Lehigh Valley Labor Force**

- 69% of individuals in the targeted Hispanic community in the Lehigh Valley might be reluctant to go to CareerLink services because they believe that they will not be helped in their first language.
- Approximately 6 out of 10 individuals from the targeted Hispanic community in the Lehigh Valley that have used CareerLink services believe that the CareerLink website does not provide enough information in their preferred language (other than English) and that there are not enough personnel to help them in their preferred language at the career center.

**Major Recommendations:**

- Review with CareerLink employees the importance of conveying respect to the Hispanic population. Address the misperception that all Hispanics with limited English are seeking work in restaurants or factories. Weak skills in the English language do not mean weak skills in professional areas.
- Review all bilingual materials and signs to determine whether the translation from English to Spanish is faulty or stilted.
- Explore various methods to advertise CareerLink services more creatively to the Hispanic community.
- Structure CareerLink advertising in such a way as to address the perception among a variety underserved sectors of the Lehigh Valley workforce that CareerLink will not be able to help them in their first language.

- Consider offering a greater proportion of CareerLink services during either evening or late afternoon hours, which appeared to be somewhat more attractive to members of the Hispanic community.

### **Key Findings: Attitudes of the Lehigh Valley Business Community**

- The majority of those businesses interviewed indicated that they had not interviewed a candidate who had received training through CareerLink Lehigh Valley.
- Large businesses are more likely to hire employees that have received training from CareerLink Lehigh Valley services than small or medium-sized businesses. 50% of large businesses that were surveyed have hired employees trained by CareerLink.

### **Major Recommendations**

- Explore ways to better publicize CareerLink, particularly among small businesses within the Lehigh Valley.
- Offer additional services to small businesses such as: Conducting workshops for small businesses regarding effective interviewing techniques and the preparation of position descriptions for job advertisements.
- Explore the possibility of a public-private partnership between an employment agency and CareerLink to develop smaller satellite offices.

### **Major Recommendations**

- Explore ways to publicize CareerLink services better to all constituencies.

### **ENVIRONMENTAL SCANNING:**

Jack Pfunder updated the Board on the Incumbent Worker Training Grants, Chemicals, Plastics, Rubber and Metals/Metal Fabrication, and Nancy Dischinat reported on the Health Care Industry Partnership Grant.

### **WIRED Initiative**

Vito Gallo updated the Board on the Workforce Innovation in Regional Economic Development (WIRED) initiative. This is a \$15 million dollar, 3-year grant awarded to the Northeast Pennsylvania Regional Partnership. This initiative is aimed at integrating workforce, education and economic development, the three pillars necessary to align and transform our regional economy. (Please see the complete proposal on our Website).

### **Education 2010**

Don Snyder reported on Education 2010 initiative. A final report will be available on April 6th at 7:30 a.m. at the Lehigh County Government Center. He indicated a WIB committee meeting was held for members to broaden their scope in terms of looking at economic, educational and workforce initiatives to align with the Education 2010 initiative.

Mike Gibson reported on Construction Career Day which will be held on Wednesday, October 25, 2006 in partnership with the Lehigh Valley Workforce Investment Board, Inc, and CareerLink Lehigh Valley.

Ray Suhocki reported on the Latino Study and the need for coordination of services. He indicated one committee both he and Nancy serve on is working on establishing a comprehensive assessment system for job seekers.

Ray Suhocki and Nancy Dischinat reported on their recent trip to the National Association of Workforce Boards Legislative Conference in Washington, D.C. Mr. Suhocki noted that they visited many Legislators to advocate for full funding of WIA and also for the continuation of local control. During the conference, they spoke to Emily Stover DeRocco, Assistant Secretary of the Employment & Training Administration, regarding President Bush's budget proposal which significantly reduces Workforce Investment Act funding. Assistant Secretary DeRocco invited LVWIB representatives to continue the conversation with her over the next few weeks and come to Washington for a meeting. Members of the Alignment Committee offered to help educate and inform.

Alan Jennings commented on not having enough diversity on the Board. The Accountability Committee will continue to work on recruiting a more diversified membership with the help of Mr. Jennings.

Nancy Dischinat discussed the March 31, 2006 visit at the request of Senator Rhoades to present the Schuylkill and Luzerne Counties workforce investment area with information on how we collaborate as a workforce, economic development and education community.

### **FINANCE COMMITTEE REPORT**

*The Finance Committee reviews financial statements and audit reports, and makes recommendations to the Executive Committee as needed.*

The Finance Committee met on March 8, 2006 at which time Gerry Kemmerer reviewed the LVWIB Financial Statements.

Gerry Kemmerer reported that Jeff Dobeck from Buckno Lisicky & Company reviewed the Program Year 2004 Private Industry Council of Lehigh Valley, Inc. Audit of Schedule of Workforce Investment Board Grants. He reported that the Private Industry Council and accompanying schedule of Workforce Investment Board grants were given an unqualified "best" opinion of financial reporting. The audit process included grant testing and a sampling to test transactions and eligibility. Mr. Dobeck summarized his findings and no exceptions were found in the audit report.

In response to Mr. Kemmerer's question regarding the necessity of a management letter, Mr. Dobeck stated that a letter was not necessary and not a requirement as a result of the audit. A management letter is only necessary if there are findings from the audit.

Robert Episcopo asked that the minutes reflect that the Board congratulates Gerry Kemmerer and the entire Finance Committee and Fiscal Staff to the Board, Marie Becher, for their exceptional work.

A Review of the Statement of Revenue vs. Spending Plan by Funding Source indicated that the Lehigh Valley Workforce Investment Area received additional funds of \$586,779 since December 2005.

The committee also reviewed the Projected Spending Plan by Account and Function Statement which shows a total revised spending plan of \$7,531,294. It was noted that \$577,287 of the additional program revenue was added to the spending plan.

The revised Spending Plan by Account Statement shows the increases to the plan by account detail.

The Expenditures by Account and Function Statement was also reviewed. The total actual expenditures for the period July 1, 2005 to January 31, 2006 was \$2,634,282.99. Marie Beacher noted that the expenses were on target for this point in time.

### **AWARENESS COMMITTEE REPORT**

*Create a sense of urgency at the State Regional and local level about the importance of a competitive workforce (CW), and assure that the industry clusters, employers and workers know of the available workforce development support services.*

The Awareness Committee reviewed information on the President's proposed budget as follows:

The federal budget markup process began in the House on March 8, 2006. During this process, the Budget Committee decides how much money is allocated to pay for education, health, workforce and all domestic spending appropriations.

In President Bush's budget proposal, WIA and Employment Service funding would be cut by \$680 million, a 15% cut.

The Administration's proposed federal budget for Fiscal Year 2007 would make substantial changes to the current workforce investment system, almost totally revamping the way workforce development programs are operated.

What the Administration failed to accomplish in legislation to reauthorize the Workforce Investment Act, it appears to be attempting to do within the budget proposal. If enacted as proposed, the changes could jeopardize the very future of local one-stop centers and local boards.

Highlights of the spending proposal are: (see attached report)

1. Block Grants to States
2. Significant Funding Cuts
3. Required Funding for Career Advancement Accounts
4. Limit on Administration Funding
5. Ability for States to Replace CareerLinks and Boards with Community Career Centers

Our position on these issues is reflected in the attached *Pennsylvania Workforce Development Issues* information noting four major areas of concern:

1. Local Governance of Workforce Development Programs
2. Fiscal Year 2007 Funding for Workforce Development
3. Adequate Funding for Infrastructure
4. Movement on bipartisan Senate WIA Reauthorization Bill

Senators Specter and Harkin introduced an amendment to restore funding which allocates roughly \$1 billion in additional WIA and employment service funding. This amendment passed the Senate 73-27 with both Specter and Santorum voting for the amendment.

The Board was thanked for their support in writing to Senators Specter and Santorum for supporting this Specter/Harkin amendment. It worked!

The next step is the House Budget Committees mark-up, a House Budget Resolution which is tentatively scheduled for April 5, 2006. The House budget committee is expected to offer a budget closer to the administration's requested budget levels. The budget will then go to the full House for a vote. If there is a difference between the House and Senate Bill it will be sent to Conference Committee.

The Conference Report must be agreed upon by both the House and Senate and then, when the agreed upon budget levels are approved, the Appropriations process starts. Pennsylvania does not have anybody on the Budget Committee and does not have a workforce development Champion.

Our next step is inform and educate Congress who reports to the House Budget Committee that we support WIA funding and support any efforts on the floor of the House that puts more money into workforce development.

The Committee also suggested holding a legislative breakfast at the LVWIB to get feedback from the business community on workforce issues. Mike Gibson offered to facilitate this event. Brian Du Bois a new Board member from Wakefern reported on his experience with the New York State WIB where they pooled resources and knowledge from four counties to create a collaborative workforce system. Brian offered to provide his New York model to Nancy Dischinat and will facilitate a meeting, if necessary. The group discussed bringing the following counties together for an exploratory meeting: Schuylkill, Luzerne, Carbon, Monroe, Berks, Bucks, and Warren County, NJ. This collaboration would develop a "State of the Workforce Board" and a regional plan to focus on workforce issues, such as foundation skills.

The Board was asked to review the upcoming Community Forum on Jobs and Careers in the Lehigh Valley to be held at Lehigh Carbon Community College on March 27, 2006.

### **ACCESS COMMITTEE REPORT**

*To look for and eliminate barriers which inhibit workers from getting the education/training needed to be employable and employers from getting the quality/quantity of the workforce needed.*

Sharon Scheirer, Co Chair reported on behalf of the Access Committee which met on March 10, 2006.

The Access Committee met and discussed the recently held CareerLink Quality Review conducted by the Department of Labor's Pennsylvania CareerLink Review Team. We are still waiting to hear the results.

Also reviewed were plans to open a CareerLink Access Center at Lehigh Career and Technical Institute which will provide minimal CareerLink services at LCTI. We are currently in negotiations with Clyde Hornberger, Executive Director of Lehigh Career and Technical Institute about what these services will include.

Sharon Scheirer made a motion to the Chair of the Board to open a CareerLink Access Center at Lehigh Career and Technical Institute, Armando Greco second the motion. All in favor. Motion carried.

Please check the web site if you want updated copies of the Lehigh Valley Outlook and employer activities happening through our workforce system.

CareerLink is hosting a Training Information Fair on March 23, 2006. This is in keeping with our strategy to make sure the public understands the training available and the skill sets that are needed by employers.

Our CareerLink Lehigh Valley Virtual Tour Web Site Video is being produced by Lehigh University's Enterprise Systems Center and will be presented for review by at the June WIB meeting.

### **ACCOUNTABILITY COMMITTEE REPORT**

*Develop systems to measure and report the local and regional impact of a workforce development system.*

Sally Gammon, Co-Chair reported on behalf of the Accountability Committee which met on January 13, 2006.

The Committee reviewed the Gap Analysis for the LVWIB and CareerLink Lehigh Valley and recommended that Chris Herrick present the findings at the March 21, 2006 WIB meeting. The Committee will further discuss the findings with staff and then place action items into appropriate WIB Committees.

The Accountability Committee received an update on the Self Employment Assistance Program operated for our workforce system by Lehigh Carbon Community College. Since the first program began in 2001, 212 participants have been accepted into the program, 150 started a business which is 71%, and 106 of the 150 remain in business today. A further review of this program indicates that 23% of the participants cited that their biggest challenge was funding and capital.

The Accountability Committee recommended that we create an Action Plan to address the sustainability issue.

The Committee also reviewed:

- The issues compiled from the September 2005 LVWIB Strategic Planning session with Ed Barlow, and,
- Reviewed the Resource Mapping Report from the State, and,
- Reviewed an Olympus Hiring and Wage Gain Report prepared by CareerLink Lehigh Valley staff to begin to take a look at our return on investment.

RoseAnn Kisilewicz updated the Board on the Policies and Procedures for Certifying Training Programs/Providers. The WIB is responsible for approving programs from the Statewide Eligible Training Programs/Providers List. WIA and Trade Act eligible training participants must select training programs from this statewide list.

There are two areas that have been revised in the certification process. One is the High Priority Occupations section. Starting in July, 2006 the State will require that all certified training programs must lead to employment in an occupation on PA's High Priority Occupation List. If an occupation is currently not included on the High Priority Occupation List there is a petition process whereby the Local Workforce Investment Area can petition the Department of Labor and Industry to consider adding an occupation to the Local Workforce Investment Area's High Priority Occupation List.

The second change is the Performance Requirements. Under new State requirements training programs will be required to meet eight of ten performance measures versus four out of seven as required in the past. Also, the State will be calculating some performance measures using state wage record data which will reduce the burden for training providers obtaining employment and wage information from individuals graduating from their programs.

Sally Gammon made a motion to approve the revised Policies and Procedures for Certifying Training Programs/Providers. Robert Episcopo second the motion. All in favor. Motion carried.

### **ALIGNMENT COMMITTEE REPORT**

*Align workforce development, economic development and education. Build a demand-driven workforce system, which clearly reflects the employment and training needs of industry clusters, knows the status of the available labor pool, and promote strategies to assure a competitive labor pool in terms of quality/quantity.*

Ray Suhocki, Co-Chair reported on behalf of the Alignment Committee which met on March 7, 2006.

He updated Committee members on the outcomes of the January 18, 2006 Ed Barlow's 21<sup>st</sup> Century Literacies presentation. The event hosted over 325 educators and workforce professionals. The next step is to have Mr. Barlow return for a two-day session for teachers.

John Mehler reported on the LVWIB's Aging Workforce Study which will address workforce retirements and the impact of the aging workforce on targeted industry clusters and high priority occupations.

Nancy Dischinat discussed the Lehigh Valley Workforce Investment Board's alignment with the Lehigh Valley Business/Education Partnership. Bill Bartle accepted another position with Pennsylvania Partnerships for Children, a non-profit youth advocacy group based in Harrisburg. The purpose of an alignment with Lehigh Valley Business/Education Partnership is to take a look at opportunities and barriers to collaborate between Lehigh Valley Workforce Investment Board, Inc. and Lehigh Valley Business/Education Partnership.

A community forum regarding the Sunshine Act sponsored by the Lehigh Valley Workforce Investment Board, Inc. and Lehigh Valley Business/Education Partnership will be held on Monday, March 27, 2006 at 4:00pm at Lehigh University's Mountaintop Campus.

LVWIB received \$106,000 from the Pennsylvania Department of Labor and Industry to use on the following CareerLinking initiatives:

#### New Career Gates

One of the major marketing strategies is an e-media program call New Career Gates to be developed, designed and produced in partnership with PBS Channel 39. The goal of New Career Gates is to produce a series of workforce and training e-media tools, including CD's, and use the Digital Learning Channel television network through PBS Channel 39 to highlight Lehigh Valley's job and labor market information, critical workforce needs, industry clusters, training services at CareerLink Lehigh Valley, high priority/high demand occupations, career pathways and much more.

### STAR Academy

The second component of CareerLinking includes a partnership with Lehigh University's STAR Academy program which serves economically and academically disadvantaged and/or at-risk middle/high school aged children.

### CareerLinking Academy

A Pilot initiative with 50 Northern Lehigh High School seniors who will spend one week at CareerLink Lehigh Valley during the week of June 19, 2006. They will explore career interests and become better linked to work. This new initiative is aligned to the new Pennsylvania Department of Education's Academic Standards in Career Education and Work and adheres to federal, state and local career education initiatives such as Project 720, High Schools That Work, and Lehigh County Career Pathways.

### **YOUTH COUNCIL REPORT**

*The Youth Council provides the framework for developing comprehensive and effective strategies that ensure youth acquire the education, skill, work experience and support they will need to reach their full potential and successfully transition to productive adulthood.*

Don Sullivan, Co-Chair reported on behalf of the Youth Council which met on March 10, 2006.

The Board reviewed the 2006 Youth Council recommendations for youth programming, as recommended by the Youth Proposal Review Team, as acceptable subcontracted Youth Training Options.

It was noted that the proposal from Communities in Schools of the Lehigh Valley was not recommended for funding since the proposal received the lowest rating from the Review Team. The proposal from the Allentown Career Institute was not even reviewed by the Team because it was submitted without all the information required by the Request For Proposal.

A motion to approve the 2006 recommendations for Youth Programming as acceptable for subcontracted Youth Training Options was made by Robert Episcopo, seconded by Ray Suhocki. All in favor. Motion carried. (Attachment)

Let the minutes reflect our thanks and gratitude to the Youth Proposal Review Team which included: Don Sullivan, Ron Achey, Bill Bartle, Bryon Boos, Alan Jennings, John MacDonald, Carol Obando Derstine, and Sharon Scheirer, as well as WIB and CareerLink staff who spent many hours reviewing the proposals and offering their valuable feedback.

A Criminal Background Checks and Child Abuse Clearance Policy was reviewed by RoseAnn Kisilewicz indicating that a Criminal Background Check and Child Abuse Clearance Policy was developed for the Lehigh Valley Workforce Investment Board, Inc. because the PA Bureau of Workforce Development Partnership believes that PA must have a policy to ensure the safety of youth within the workforce investment system. The safeguards established by Section 1-111 of the PA School Code meets the needs of this new policy to safeguard children and youth.

While Section 1-111 does not specifically require compliance by the local area workforce staff or workforce investment youth providers, the Governor does have the authority to determine the standards for youth providers. This policy states is that all local workforce investment area staff and youth providers are required to have a criminal background check and child abuse history clearance on file from all employees who have direct contact with youth. The WIB will notify

youth providers of this policy and will perform oversight. This policy is being put in place to ensure the safety of our youth and protect the organizations that deal with youth.

### **OTHER BUSINESS**

Tom Harp, Director of the Office of Vocational Rehabilitation's Bureau of Office Operations and one of the CareerLink Lehigh Valley Operators since 1999 has retired. Let the minutes reflect that the LVWIB recognizes and thanks Mr. Harp for his commitment to the Lehigh Valley Workforce Investment Board, Inc. and its workforce system

The Board was informed that all Statement of Financial Interest Forms must be submitted no later than May 1, 2006.

The Board acknowledged Sally Gammon for winning the 2006 Women of Distinction Award from Girl Scouts-Great Valley Council.

Roseanne Kisilewicz reported that State Monitor, Roger Mattson monitored for WIB compliance and the WIB oversight system in September of 2005. WIB compliance included: reviewing the Board member certification and nomination processes; reviewing WIB agreements including any changes to the By-Laws, Memorandums of Understanding, WIB committee meetings, and Board meetings and minutes. WIB's oversight system was also reviewed to see if the WIB is following the state's monitoring guidelines. He also monitored the National Emergency Grant. The WIB was in compliance for all the areas monitored.

**A motion was made to adjourn the meeting by Robert Episcopo, seconded by Alan Jennings at 9:15 am.**

### **Handouts**

Agenda	Alignment Committee Report
2006 Meeting Schedule	Access Committee Report
Finance Committee Report	Awareness Committee Report
- Financial Statements	Accountability Committee Report
Youth Council Report	

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### **ADDENDUM – MARCH 29, 2006**

The Pennsylvania Department of Labor and Industry has implemented Standards for High Performance LWIBs (Local Workforce Investment Boards). This statewide initiative is focused on improving the overall performance of all workforce investment boards throughout Pennsylvania and includes a Self-Assessment process.

The Lehigh Valley Workforce Investment Board, Inc. was required to complete and submit the Self-Assessment document to the State by March 31, 2006, and notify the State that the Board reviewed and approved the document.

The Self-Assessment was distributed to the Lehigh Valley Workforce Investment Board, Inc. via email and on our website for edits, suggestions or approval of document as written.

The outcome of this electronic approval process indicated that 42 out of 47 members (89%) edited and approved the Self-Assessment on March 29, 2006.