



THE VOICE OF WISCONSIN'S LOCAL
WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT BOARDS

Meeting Minutes: March 4, 2009

Location: Department of Workforce Development, 201 E. Washington Ave. (GEF-1), Room F305, Madison, WI 53702.

Association members present: Jerry Hanoski, Bob Borremans, Dick Best, Sally Cutler, Debbie Spevacek, Francisco Sanchez, Beth Norris, Pat Schramm, Mark Kessenich

Others present: Michelle St. Clair, WAJTE/WWDA Coordinator; Mari Kay-Nabozny, Workforce Systems Advocate; Department of Workforce Development (DWD) Representatives: Ron Danowski, Gary Denis, Lyrae Nadolski.

Sanchez called the meeting to order at 9:30a.

WAJTE Meeting

1. Approval of Minutes

Cutler motioned to approve the minutes, Borremans seconded. Motion carried.

2. Job Center Updates

Denis asked WAJTE Directors to report on Job Centers in their areas, the following comments were noted:

- I don't have any new information. There continues to be long cues and long-term unemployed. Resume workshops and job search workshops are in demand.
- There are the same issues as last month plus changes to the administration of social services in Milwaukee County; the state is taking over Milwaukee County and a redeployment of staff throughout job centers is expected.
- In February we saw another increase in visitors to the Job Centers in our area. We've increased general orientations to 2 per week. We have opened and upgraded a new computer lab - 14 more computers are available. We are doing a huge marketing campaign. We are still having a lot of UI complaints.
- We have recently begun training for a number of clients. We've noticed an influx of adult participants and we are looking at ways to make dollars stretch. We have computer labs working in Shawano, Green bay, Manitowac, and Marinette - we're exploring Sheboygan.
- We are meeting with CAP agencies to explore partnering with Job Center services to stretch dollars. County human service changes are affecting the Wausau Job Center. We need to increase services in outlying points. Cutler commented that the telephone system for UI is difficult for certain populations, particularly people who are Mung and/or Hispanic.

- We continue to see a huge increase in traffic. Job clubs are being offered at all of our offices and we're looking at how to fit in re-employment workshops. We've recently heard about a new layoff that is likely to affect about 30% of a town.
- Western Wisconsin was not typically as affected as the rest of the state during times of economic downturns, but there have been a lot of dislocations recently. When there are large dislocations, there tend to be more UI complaints – could UI respond to large dislocations? We're getting a lot of community people coming to the table to offer services: UW-Extension is offering financial planning, banks are offering workshops.
- Space and crowds are a huge issue for us. Right now we have to limit computer access to one hour a day. In April, we will be announcing our access points of service. Lots of our folks who are in training get work study funds, but the money has run out and they are dropping out. We need an opportunity to jointly plan with Job Service.
- Layoffs this year are on pace to exceed last year. Volume of need for computer training is very large, so we purchased laptops and will provide basic computer training at the union hall. (Blackhawk enrollment is up over 30%; they will provide services to those who are enrolled in full-time programs but services to others are limited – we're working on that). There are very few jobs in the six counties – over 260 total jobs were posted on JobcenterofWisconsin since January 1, 2009. It's consistently taking a long time for folks to register on JobCenterofWisconsin.com. We are working with monster.com – we're going to set up an autoworker database in Rock County and we're giving employers access to resumes (including employers in northern Illinois). In addition, Monster will be doing an economic analysis of the region. We're also working with the Community Economic Adjustment Program – standardized program for community redevelopment.
- Our two Job Centers are not that much different that two weeks ago – traffic is up and there are minimal line problems in Eau Claire. We continue to see layoffs in trickles and there is some confusion about "recalls" (employers are developing layoff strategies to hold onto workers). We're thinking about a quasi-labor clinic about layoff strategies.

It was clarified that the reports to the Governor about the status of Job Centers have not been shared with WAJTE directors; Denis will ask the Secretary about sharing that information. Denis also commented that the Call Center for JobCenterofWisconsin.com has no backlog, so there should be no delays in processing job orders.

3. Chair's Report

Sanchez reported on his last meeting with Secretary Gassman. He relayed that the Secretary did not want to receive a statewide application for green sector strategies across the eleven workforce development areas. Sanchez commented that the WOW WDB will be looking at aligning applications on a regional basis in Southeastern Wisconsin. Sanchez also commented that that meeting included some discussion about the dislocated worker action group and the summer youth program. Regarding dollars from the 2009 American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (ARRA), Secretary Gassman would like to see local areas direct as much money as possible towards training.

Sanchez also discussed the February 12, 2009 WWDA Day at the Capitol and the Public Hearing of the Assembly Workforce Development Committee, at which Don Sykes presented. During his presentation, Mr. Sykes relayed the 2009-11 WWDA state legislative agenda. Kessenich clarified that that this committee has been in existence for quite some time, but only met twice. He also commented that this group is a good group for the association to potentially partner with in the future.

Sanchez commented that the state will be releasing sector applications within a month. He then talked about ARRA workgroups at the state level. The Secretary had asked for nominations and then reduced the number of workgroups, but he hadn't seen anything. Discussion ensued about WAJTE Director representation on ARRA work groups.

It was agreed that boards should participate in the planning in order to ensure that ARRA policies and procedures minimizes bureaucracy:

- 1) WAJTE Directors should be fully involved in communications regarding ARRA's implementation in the State of Wisconsin.
- 2) As DWD engages in planning (including planning for Job Service, DVR, and UI), there should be local board representation at the table.
- 3) WAJTE Directors agreed on the position that ARRA funds should flow through the same channels as WIA program dollars.

St. Clair would relay communication requests to Rose Lynch as DWD's point person to ARRA work groups and the Office of Recovery and Reinvestment, including WAJTE Director nominations for work groups.

4. Coordinator's Report

Summary of Follow-Up Actions:

1. St. Clair sent out invoices for the Day at the Capitol event.
2. If they hadn't already done so, WAJTE Directors were to send personal invitations to their federal representatives for the March 10th federal visits.
3. Directors sent articles to Kay-Nabozny for the February WWDA newsletter.
4. Kay-Nabozny organized the 2009 Day at the Capitol and materials.
5. WAJTE Director recommendations on the pursuit of tax exempt status were brought to the February 4th WWDA meeting. The association approved WAJTE Director's recommendation and authorized the association to pursue a 501(c)3 tax exempt application with the IRS in the future, as necessary. St. Clair would update articles of incorporation and bylaws for the next WWDA meeting.
6. St. Clair surveyed Business Services Staff across the state; data would be compiled and shared with WAJTE Directors (note that data entry is required prior to its release).
7. St. Clair was waiting for areas to identify an Operations Lead person for their board; once that information was received, she would convene a statewide meeting.
8. MAWIB was working with DWD to host a working symposium for the summer youth program on March 5, 2009. A draft agenda for the symposium was distributed.

Fiscal Report

St. Clair pointed to the latest financial information in WAJTE Director's packets. She commented that invoices for the 2009 Day at the Capitol had been mailed out to boards; but only a few boards have made their payments for event. Schramm requested the invoice be sent out again.

ASSET User Group

St. Clair commented that ASSET minutes were in Director's meeting packets for their review. She then relayed the following WAJTE highlights:

- Replacing Policy/Reports Staff (Nancy Bryan and Duane Frisch) The AUG feels it is very important the state replace these two vacated positions, both positions are needed for Policy Guidance and reporting help.

- Manage Employment and Follow-up data needs to be made available in the warehouse. These data elements are important for reporting purposes on both a local and state level.
- O-Net Codes Local Policy need to be made on data fields being filled in. (O-Net) codes should be mandatory in the Manage Employment screens. This will allow for better local and state reporting.
- Tessa Update: Worksite agreement and time sheets applications available as a TESSA ad-on, and would greatly reduce time spent producing paperwork for Summer Youth Program and Work Experience participants.

Best explained that another obstacle is blocking the implementation of TESSA. Best also commented that his estimate for recovery funds did not match what the state distributed. Danowski clarified that he did not factor in “hold harmless” while Best’s calculations included hold harmless.

5. Industry Partnership Application

Given time remaining, Sanchez commented that as he previously mentioned during the Chair’s report, the association would not pursue a statewide green sector application. He clarified that an area will need to establish an industry partnership in order to get training dollars; and areas without partnerships would be eligible for funds to support planning activities. Sanchez also commented that the boards should communicate with one another about this application.

6. Working Symposium

WAJTE Directors commended Kessenich for the MAWIB’s ability to organize the event so quickly; boards will be represented at the symposium and appreciate the peer-to-peer technical assistance.

7. 2009 Day at Capitol

Kay-Nabozny distributed evaluation results for the 2009 Day at the Capitol. In general, feedback was very positive (in the excellent category). The association visited 26 senators and 51 assemblymen at the February 12, 2009 Day at the Capitol event. She commented that the costs of the event are inexpensive. She also commented that Thomas Nelson’s office is working on drafting legislation to recognize the workforce development boards and working with her on it. She has provided them with examples of legislation from Texas and Minnesota about statutory recognition of boards and their role in workforce development. She clarified that the legislative reference bureau will actually draft the legislation and perform the research.

Kay-Nabozny reported on the February legislative newsletter. She commented that the link that is most used is the data dashboard; she also reminded WAJTE Directors that newsletter articles are due March 17th for the next newsletter.

8. Federal Legislative Visits

Kay-nabozny reviewed the meeting schedule and the federal legislative agenda for the March 10, 2009 WWDA delegation visits with federal representatives from the State of Wisconsin.

9. Unemployment Modernization

Kessenich reported on the Unemployment Modernization Act that was part of the stimulus bill. He commented that the provisions of HR290 allow individuals who are unemployed and enrolled in WIA Program to access additional Unemployment Insurance benefits if their state pursues modernization. Another provision of the law would require the UI benefits to be extended to part-time employees, who are currently not able to access the UI system.

Wisconsin may or may not pursue modernization. MAWIB supports the provision in the law that allows people who are in job training programs to access benefits.

11. Generic Template for Waivers

Kay-Nabozny commented that Welch had suggested that a generic template for waiver requests be developed. She reported that she just completed a waiver request and would be willing to share it with Directors.

12. Reports

No reports were made due to time considerations.

13. Other Business

Best proposed that WWDA provide Congressman Obey with a plaque of recognition to acknowledge him for his efforts to protect and promote workforce development. Best motioned for the plaque of recognition, Borremans seconded. Motion carried.

The WAJTE Director meeting ended at approximately 12:15.

Summary of Suggested Actions:

1. St. Clair would resend invoices for the 2009 Day at the Capitol to WAJTE Directors.
2. Though the association would not pursue a statewide green sector application, WAJTE Directors would communicate with one another about which applications their areas would pursue.
3. Each board would send representatives to the March 5th Youth Summer Program Working Symposium hosted by the MAWIB and DWD.
4. Kay-Nabozny would continue to provide support to Thomas Nelson's office in drafting legislation to recognize the workforce development boards
5. WAJTE Directors were to provide Kay-Nabozny with newsletter articles by March 17th for the March WWDA legislative newsletter.
6. On March 10, 2009 WAJTE Directors would visit with federal representatives from the State of Wisconsin on behalf of WWDA to promote the association's federal legislative agenda.
7. Wisconsin may or may not pursue unemployment insurance modernization.
8. Kay-Nabozny would share the youth waiver request that she recently prepared for her area as a generic template for Directors to consider.
9. Best would give Congressman Obey a plaque to recognize his efforts to protect and promote workforce development.
10. St. Clair would draft a letter on behalf of the association to request a clarification on how Vet Staff, DVR, and Business Services staff would coordinate to provide outreach to employers.
11. St. Clair would contact DWD's lead staff to communicate Sanchez's recommendations for WAJTE Directors to DWD's ARRA work groups.

DWD-WDB meeting

Call to order & Announcements

Larson announced that the continuity of operations plan simulation would take place during the week of March 10th; boards would be contacted and asked to respond to confirm receipt of the message (nothing else is needed).

Denis distributed slides on a portal about STEM education in Wisconsin: <http://wistem.org>.

An adult basic education conference would be conducted by the Wisconsin Technical College System in early April; preliminary discussions were underway about how job centers could/should be represented at the conference. Hanoski suggested that the boards and technical colleges should address the flow of dislocated workers from Job Centers to training at technical colleges.

DET VET's Office updates

Grant introduced himself to WAJTE Directors; he would be responsible for managing employment services for veterans at Job Centers across the state. He commented on current staff levels, provided an update about vacancies, and discussed funding limitations on VET staff services. He also commented that priority of service has been expanded to veterans under all employment & training programs.

Grant then explained that veteran services have been shifted to focus on job placement. The State Veteran's Office has specific performance goals for each of its staff on placement.

Discussion ensued about outreach to employers and the need to integrate Veteran's staff efforts with overall business services efforts at Job Centers. A formal request was made to clarify how Vet Staff, DVR, and Business Services staff would coordinate to provide outreach to employers.

WIA Planning calendar

Denis commented that the state plan has been modified and is available for public comment; the State's Plan will be submitted to the U.S. Department of Labor because there are significant organizational changes. The state will also soon be developing a "recovery modification plan" (due to DOL in June). Similarly, local areas would be required to submit their updated local plans in April and recovery modification plans in the summer of 2009. There was some discussion about the 35% rule and training priorities for middle-skill jobs.

Informal Touch Base with Secretary Gassman

Secretary Gassman provided WAJTE Directors with an update on the workforce development pieces of the American Recovery & Reinvestment Act (ARRA). Training and Employment Guidance Letters (TEGLs) would soon be coming from the U.S. Department of Labor. Gassman clarified the role of Wisconsin's Office of Recovery and Reinvestment and the relationship between DWD and ORR. Discussion ensued about DWD Recovery & Reinvestment Task Force Workgroups and leads; per the discussion, Sanchez would relay recommendations about WAJTE representation for those workgroups.

Kessenich spoke about the need to improve the interface between DWD and WAJTE Directors about the Recovery Act and funding. Discussion ensued, Sanchez indicated that St. Clair would act as the

liaison between DWD and WAJTE Directors; St. Clair would contact DWD's lead staff to communicate that responsibility.

Gassman also commented that the Governor would release his plan to address workforce development issues at the Milwaukee 7 meeting on March 5th; funding would be available in Wisconsin for opportunity grants, skills jump start grants, and for a number of additional employment and training initiatives.

Department of Children & Families Update

Kerksick and Ways from the Department of Children & Families came to talk to WAJTE Directors about ways in which WIA and W-2 could work together to stretch dollars and serve more people. Co-enrollment could be a possibility and was discussed as a concept.

Kerksick also reviewed the Real Work, Real Pay pilot program being tested by DCF, which is a model that pays up to minimum wage for employees (e.g. subsidized employment) and also provides W-2 participants with intensive case management.

Policy & Other Updates

The state has yet to negotiate performance standards for this program year and next year; they will be negotiating lower performance standards with the US Department of Labor with the assumption that the boards will likely serve greater numbers of special populations given current economic conditions.

It was noted that a joint statement would be issued from DWD and DCF on co-enrollment.

Submitted by Michelle St. Clair.