

SWWDB – WORKFORCE SERVICES COMMITTEE

April 19, 2006

MINUTES

3:00 to 5:00 p.m.

Mr. Scaccia, Chairperson

The SWWDB Workforce Services Committee met on Wednesday, April 19, 2006 at the Rock County Job Center, Janesville, Wisconsin. Attendance was as follows:

Members Present:	Ms. Jennifer James-Baker	Mr. Steve Scaccia
	Mr. Tom Hogan	Mr. Bruce Palzkill
	Mr. Geoff Upperton	

Members Excused:	Dr. Gary Albrecht	Ms. Amy Banicki
	Ms. Suzanne Lee	Mr. Charles Elliott
	Ms. Cindy Harrington	Mr. Ken Hendricks
	Mr. James Otterstein	Ms. Regina Prude
	Mr. Scott Stocker (Ex Officio)	

Guests:	Ms. Lori Rhead, Blackhawk Human Resources Association	
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Staff Present:	Dr. Robert Borremans	Ms. Shannon Moe
	Ms. Barb Tucker	Ms. Amy Charles
	Ms. Stephanie Kerkenbush	

Mr. Scaccia agreed to act as chairperson for the meeting and called the meeting to order at 3:07 p.m.

1. Presentation on Workforce Readiness Issues

Ms. Moe introduced Ms. Lori Rhead representing the Blackhawk Human Resources Association (BHRA). She informed the group of BHRA efforts to identify a curriculum to help meet the employer need for “soft” skills training. The identified training source is entitled “Tackling the Tough Skills – a Curriculum Building Skills for Work and Life”, by the University of Missouri Outreach and Extension program.

Ms. Rhead gave an overview of the curriculum saying it was developed with the adult worker in mind. The curriculum, which runs 54 hours, is designed to be adaptable and flexible so it can be delivered to meet employer needs with a possibility add focus training on areas such as customer service skills, math skills or other industry-specific needs. Both pre- and post-testing are available to document skill accomplishment and a certificate to show achievement at the end of the course.

The cost of the Course is \$2,400 which includes a one time fee for the author to conduct a “train-the-trainer” session. Each person who is a trainer will need to have their own curriculum binder at a cost of \$55. Ms. Charles stated that SWWDB would pay for the “train the trainer” session. This course could be one of the first “fee for service” business activities.

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Mr. Scaccia asked if the training would be delivered in conjunction with the human resource departments. Ms. Rhead stated that up to 25 people could be involved in the train-the-trainer course, and they could be workforce development staff, human resources professionals, employer management staff, technical college faculty, etc. Mr. Palzkill asked if case managers would be able to pick and choose their areas of focus. The curriculum can be altered to add specific electives; however everyone would be trained on the same core material.

BHRA is currently working with Freedom Plastics to pilot this program. Mr. Scaccia pointed out that even “over-educated” people can have problems with soft skills. Ms. Rhead cited the statistic that approximately 40% of the workforce has some form of Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD). The bottom line is that people need to learn how to get along and be understanding of each other not only in the workplace, but in every aspect of life. This curriculum is also appealing because it is interactive and will maintain the interest of the adult learners.

Mr. Scaccia commented that the skilled worker shortage has come full circle. The Private Industry Councils (PICs) in the past struggled to deliver programs like this, but employers did not understand or appreciate the PIC’s efforts. Dr. Borremans said that the difference between the PIC efforts and this program is that this program evolved from a business community initiative. This should increase support for the training.

Ms. Rhead said that both the Beloit Chamber of Commerce and Forward Janesville are supportive of the program. Mr. Scaccia noted that this might be a good program to bring Beloit and Janesville together, especially with “train the trainer” sessions. Ms. Rhead requested the Board purchase the course and provide the training; and she would also like to move forward with Freedom Plastics pilot project.

This course is not intended as a one-time effort, but a long term program addressing employer needs. By collaborating with BHRA employers, the program should build and thereby create success and an advocacy group who supports our efforts. All agreed that the course will only be successful with support from upper management in conjunction with their HR departments. Mr. Hogan noted that a bad employer is not going to send employees to the class.

Discussion followed on building a successful model of the curriculum. It would be important to track pre- and post-test results and provide general feedback to improve course content. The idea of a management assessment should be considered to determine a company’s receptivity to addressing the employability needs of its workforce.

Mr. Upperton moved and Mr. Palzkill seconded the motion to recommend the purchase of the “Tackling the Tough Skills – a Curriculum Building Skills for Work and Life” curriculum.
Motion carried unanimously.

2. Discussion of Job Service Specialization Plan

Mr. Palzkill stated that Job Service is developing a Specialization Plan as a way to better manage staff assignments. He indicated that the Southwest Job Service has moved forward with specialization out of necessity. Many Job Service employees have been forced to handle multiple roles. He said certain areas have suffered including business services which have lacked a clearly defined focus. Implementation of the specialization

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plan will focus (specialize) staff either on jobseeker services or employer services. However, in certain small centers staff may be required to handle both functions.

Mr. Palzkill said that as of January 1, 2006, Job Service has pulled staff out of the Darlington Job Center, and as of July 1, 2006 there will no longer be staff in the Lancaster Job Center. This change is consistent with the WIA plan that SWWDB has put together.

The Disabled Veterans Outreach Program (DVOP) representative provides jobseeker services, while the Local Veteran Employment Representative (LVER) works with business services. The staff in these two programs must be veterans. The individual hired has in the DVOP program must be a disable veteran.

3. **Review of the Job Service 2005-06 Operations Plan**

Mr. Palzkill presented an overview of the Job Service 2005-06 Operations Plan. He went over a "report card" of the past year's performance. Job Service has held some much defined performance standards. When the program year is over, Mr. Palzkill will combine the data and share it with the Board.

Mr. Upperton commented that the retention rate is high for TAA and he asked if they go through extensive training. The answer is yes, and there seems to be a direct correlation between more in depth training and having a higher retention rate.

The ultimate goal of a Job Center is to go from being multiple entities in one building to a collaborative system of service delivery working together as one job center. When Job Service staff contact employers they should be introducing themselves as Job Center representatives. All marketing campaigns are being directed from the job center. Mr. Scaccia asked if the term "job center" should be changed. It was noted that DWD is promoting the name "Job Center" and requiring the use of the Job Center logo.

4. **Workforce Investment Act Business Plan Guidelines**

Ms. Charles discussed the business services plan guidelines that must be developed for each WDA's Comprehensive Job Center (CJC). The plan must be developed using a series of questions supplied by DWD. Ms. Charles has finished a draft response to the questions which she distributed at the meeting. The business services team will be chaired by Ms. Charles (Director of Business Services) and consist of representatives from Job Service, AFL/CIO LETC and other Job Center partners. Mr. Scaccia requested an organizational chart be distributed to the members of the committee.

It is very important for the business services team to provide customer service. For example, most employers who use Job Center services place job orders (post job openings). The current system encourages employers to post their own jobs; however, many employers are not comfortable posting job orders. If an employer is not comfortable placing their own job order, a business service representative will assist in posting the job order. Approximately 38% of all job orders are entered by the employers. This percentage has gone up since Job Service business representatives have been out talking to employers. The business services team needs to understand employers on a deeper level, and perhaps assess the employer strengths and weaknesses to make the employer/Job Center relationship more productive.

Mr. Scaccia noted that any duplication that can be eliminated will be a benefit. Part of Ms. Charles' job will be to find people to do this on a fee for service basis and identify a

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network of resources. It should be seamless for the HR people, and finding the expertise is the key.

Dr. Borremans noted that SWWDB business service and “fee for service” activities may be controversial. The technical colleges contract services directly with business and they may see Job Center business services as an infringement. The technical colleges have statutory restrictions that limit flexibility and responsiveness and control the fees charged. Job Centers do not have the same statutory restrictions. Mr. Scaccia suggested that staff talk with the technical colleges about collaborating on business services. However, everyone agreed that the employer should not be put in the middle.

5. **JobFit Wisconsin Healthcare Opportunity Network Grant**

The Wisconsin Healthcare Opportunity Network Grant, which is a Department of Labor (DOL) earmark grant, will start in 2006 and continue for 2 years. It will allow SWWDB to use JobFit software that will match job seeker skills with employer job requirements. Jobseekers will complete a career compatibility assessment and receive a report identifying the jobs that the person possesses the skills to do. Mr. Scaccia asked if the results of the report have been validated as correct. Ms. Charles stated that it has been validated and is approved by the Equal Opportunity Commission. Mr. Scaccia stated that the test could be perceived as a dangerous tool if the results are not interpreted correctly.

JobFit could be a first step in a career exploration process. JobFit provides a jobseeker with information about various jobs such as job duties/tasks, typical wages, working conditions, etc. This information will enable a jobseeker to make choices regarding career options.

JobFit also can be used by a jobseeker to prepare a resume and place it on file electronically where the worker’s qualifications can be matched with available jobs. The software can also be used as a career laddering option. It is a tool intended for job matching, not for testing current employees.

6. **WARN Notices for the First Quarter of 2006**

Copies of the first quarter 2006 WARN notices were handed out to committee members. Employers are required to notify the Department of Workforce Development (DWD) if they intend to layoff workers. That information is collected and reported monthly.

There was discussion regarding the information contained in this report. It was noted that the report represents the employer’s intention to lay off workers, but not necessarily an actual lay off. For example, Shullsburg Creamery is on the list but no layoffs occurred. And, once an employer is placed on the list, the business remains on the list regardless if the layoff actually occurs.

This WARN report will be handed out at the next few meetings to see if the information is helpful.

7. **Other Business**

None.

8. **Adjournment**

Mr. Palzkill moved and Ms. James-Baker seconded a motion to adjourn the meeting at 5:02 p.m. The next meeting is scheduled for Wednesday, July 19, 2006 at the Rock

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County Job Center from 3:00 to 5:00 p.m. in Room D/E.