

Alaska Workforce Investment Board
Business Meeting at Aspen Hotel Conference Room
Juneau, Alaska
February 24, 2005
MINUTES

Call To Order

AWIB Chair Andy Baker called the meeting to order at 12:13 p.m.

Roll Call

Commissioner Greg O'Claray, Katherine Farnham, Andy Baker, Richard Cattanach, Rose Ellis, Neal Foster, Kristen Forrester, Mayfield Evans, Wendy Redman, Chris Hayes, Jim Laiti, Ginger Stock-McKenzie, Molly Merritt-Duren for MJ Longley, Don Brandon, Ginger Stock-McKenzie, David Stone, Colleen Ward, Wally Stuart, Mike Black

Agenda

Chair Baker asked for approval of agenda. Chris Hayes moved to approve the agenda; Kris Forrester seconded. The agenda was amended as follows:

- The MOU with Native organizations and Youth Employability Standards (YES) were moved from **Action Items** to **Discussion Items**;
- Added bylaws change proposed by Employment & Placement Committee to **Action Items**; and
- Added Youth Opportunity Grant to **Discussion Items**.

The agenda as amended was adopted unanimously.

Approval of Minutes

Neal Foster moved to approve the November 17, 2004 minutes; Ginger Stock-McKenzie seconded. Mona McAleese had several minor corrections and will revised final version to all members. The MOTION passed unanimously.

Public Testimony

Chair Baker welcomed all the guests in attendance, asked everyone to introduce themselves, and opened the meeting to public testimony. Five minutes were allotted to each speaker.

Molly Merritt-Duren spoke briefly about the Youth Opportunity Grant while sitting in for MJ Longley. Right now, there are 3600 youth being served statewide that are mostly out-of school-youth.

Ken Selby spoke about Native MOU and the Youth Opportunity Grant. The youth proposal plans on serving 35 sites and targets the low-income youth. This proposal would require \$3 million dollars, allocating \$85,700 per site, to serve 700 youth statewide in rural Alaska. Most of the sites will be ending this year, which was a 5-year plan. Most of the sites are supported by community based support services like councils, youth center offices, village corporations, boys and girls clubs and regional mental health, and after school programs. These communities have helped those that have the highest suicidal, drop out, and teen pregnancy rates.

Eddie Brakes worked for four years with the Youth Opportunity Grant and recently transferred to the Child Support Program. He worked directly with the kids that were being served under the grant. The first summer 30 youth were hired and half of those were hired the second summer. He mentioned this is what the administration is looking for when advocating for training Alaskans for Alaskan jobs.

Unidentified Speaker. What better way to spend \$3 million dollars on kids than the Youth Opportunity Grant? She appreciates that Department of Labor is willing to help kids that need assistance in rural communities. She thanked the AWIB in advance for helping to continue the work the YOG has started.

Elaine Jack, from Angoon, who runs a program at the youth center, gave a presentation on her Youth Opportunity program. She highlighted success stories, explaining that job training is helping youth attain the skills necessary to be ready to go into the workforce.

Carlen Williams, the youth development specialist for the village of Saxman, gave a presentation. Saxman hires about 30 youth a summer and is growing, due to the tour company. Since Colleen has done the job skills training program the program is now mandatory for all youth. Cape Fox tour has now made it part of its interview process. Saxman community has support from councils, local corporations, Ketchikan Indian community, and other organizations. Many activities in Saxman for youth are occurring and developing.

Carlene Nore, youth specialist with Tlinigit-Haida, stated that the Youth Opportunity programs are making a huge impact in the State of Alaska. Angoon and Saxman alone were able to be serve 50 youth. 99 youth served in local jobs in Angoon and Saxman in the past four year ago. 38 have received their high school diploma, 25 are attending college, 15 attending college in the State of Alaska, 7 youth completed occupational training, 3 of those are attending here in Alaska, and 3 college graduates are working in Alaska. This program helps kids keep a healthy life style. Worksite partners were discussed.

Sharon Olsen, Central Council of Tlingit and Haida, mentioned the Youth Opportunity Grant is supported by contributing financially, volunteering, and keeping the programs alive. Drop out rates and youth on drugs are lowering because of these programs and having the State's support. MOU rewrite is non-financial, required by law, and could answer lots of questions that need to be answered. One-Stops are able to share resources and reach as many Alaskans as possible.

Alaska Senator Kookesh spoke regarding the Youth Opportunity Grant. He mentioned he is in full support of the grant and has seen children in the communities affected positively by the program. Senator Kookesh mentioned the biggest problem for children in the rural communities - nothing to entertain them. This Youth Opportunity Grant program has helped children stay out of trouble and stay in school. Senator Kookesh mentioned he would continue supporting the Youth Opportunity Grant program, seeking new general fund money for its continuation. He said that he has solid support from both political parties in both houses of the legislature to advocate for this.

Action Items

AWIB Bylaws Amendment

Kitty Farnham proposed amending the language under Article 10 - Committees, Section 6, regarding the Employment & Placement Committee “moving welfare recipients into the workforce.” Ms. Farnham moved to change the phrase to “moving low-income adults and youth, veterans, and disabled populations into the workforce as a priority of service”. Rose Ellis seconded motion. The MOTION passed unanimously.

Youth Opportunity Programs

Don Brandon moved that the AWIB and the Youth Council support continuation of the Youth Opportunity programs and ask the governor to work with the legislature to seek new funding for the development of this program. Rose Ellis seconded the motion. Dick Cattanaach stated that it is about time the state put some money on the table for training, but questioned whether this program should be the board’s priority if it can obtain funding from the legislature. He mentioned that the Denali Commission will have, potentially, \$1 million available for regional training grants that some of the Youth Opportunity programs may well be eligible for. Chair Baker supported the motion and envisioned the Youth Council developing a plan, with contributions from the Denali Commission via Mr. Cattanaach, to submit to the legislature. The MOTION passed unanimously.

Presentation

Customized Employment Grant (CEG) - Sean O’Brien, Project Director

Mr. O’Brien described the background of the five-year program. This grant is distributed through the Division of Vocational Rehabilitation to develop a prototype system to assist the One-Stop system in serving people with severe disabilities in the Kenai, Juneau, Mat-Su, Fairbanks, and Anchorage Muldoon job centers. Staff training and job center redesign have been major components of the program’s success. Customized employment is different in that rather than merely filling job openings with specified requirements, the terms of employment are negotiated with the employer to accommodate the disabled individual’s needs. Sustainability or positive outcomes is of paramount importance. The Division of Public Assistance has picked up the model to use in its own pilot projects in Fairbanks and Mat-Su.

Agency Updates

Employability Security Division - Tom Nelson

Ken Mill distributed a report regarding the One-Stop system. The Juneau redesign efforts are a result of the Customized Employment Grant efforts at that job center. Local groups and the partnership that did the redesign completion are responsible for the success of the redesign. This is the first of five overhauls. The veterans job fair at the Muldoon job center was attended by 1,100 veterans and 71 vendors participated; 395 individuals requested further service. There was recently a Transition Assistance Program (TAP) seminar in Ketchikan. This program that the AWIB has oversight for, but may not be aware of, provides assistance to separating service members of all branches.

Division of Public Assistance - Mary Rogers

Ms. Rogers spoke about Native TANF reauthorization - the division has House Bill 69 and Senate Bill C51 on the floor. TANF was introduced in 1996 with block granted money. They are now seeking permanent, statutory continuation and expansion, allowing the 13

federally authorized tribal TANF providers to participate. Currently, three tribal organizations administer their own program. DPA partners with T & H in Juneau, TCCF in Fairbanks, and ACPL in Bethel by providing ancillary services for families. CITC is coming on board in July and is among the largest TANF programs. The Alaska Partnership For Healthy Communities is a pilot program providing a support system to help needy families move into employment using the CEG model. Integration efforts throughout the One-Stop system is really coming together.

Division of Vocational Rehabilitation - Mark Dale

The job centers used to not be very user friendly. Programs used to be located on different floors, which made it difficult for consumers. The Customized Employment Grant has helped to collocate programs so the consumer can be assisted immediately. The Governor's Committee On Employment And Rehabilitation Of People With Disabilities serves as the statewide advisory council for DVR. The council sets regulations and establishes policies. The division is currently working toward preparing disabled Alaskans for employment in conjunction with the governor's natural resource development initiative.

Division of Business Partnerships - Corine Geldhof

The division administers all the employment and training funds for WIA Title 1B, the State Training and Employment Program, and the Denali Training Fund. The AWIB, AVTEC, and other institutions are included in its budget. DBP focuses on two issues: the strength of program outcomes and increasing accountability. Streamlining of the grant process is a priority for the division. STEP has received 32 grant applications; 6 were awarded. They are working closely with the Administrative Services Division and the Commissioner's Office to ensure accountability and that the process goes smoothly and accurately. DBP is in line with the governor's and commissioner's initiative of "Jobs Are Alaska's Future."

Guy Bell remarked that the draft Construction Summit report offers some very valuable suggestions that DLWD and other organizations should consider to address the needs of the industry. Chair Baker pointed out that the report would be distributed to the board prior to making any recommendations.

Discussion Items

Native MOU

The MOU was discussed in the Employment & Placement Committee and needs to be revised for federal law requirements. The old MOU that was in place between ANCET and the BOS WIB will be updated and serve as a starting point for the new document. The committee is close to bringing the draft to the board for approval, but not just yet. John Pratt will be distributing the MOU electronically. Comments from the board and Native grantees should be sent to him for compilation by March 14 so they can be taken up in the next E&P meeting on March 30.

Youth Employability Standards (YES)

Colleen Ward asked to postpone discussion the YES program. Chair Baker asked for a one-minute overview. Ms. Ward stated YES was developed as a result of AWIB Resolution 02-17. AWIB funded a Youth Employability Skills pilot project about two years ago. This is a top priority for educators, but they don't have a mechanism to deliver at this time. The Workforce Readiness Committee is trying to figure this out; policy-wise

they are trying to move it forward. Don Brandon indicated this is a topic the Youth Council will be taking up as well. A request was made for staff to arrange a meeting of the chairs of Workforce Readiness, Employment & Placement, and the Youth Council to strategize.

Commissioner O'Claray's Address

Commissioner Greg O'Claray stated that there should be a vision of extreme optimism with respect to workforce issues in the state. He focused on the governor's vision of resource development and jobs for Alaskans. The earliest construction for the gas line could begin is 2008. There are two proposals: one through Alaska and Canada that would terminate in the mid-west, and another that he didn't expand on. In addition, there was a ballot initiative for a trans-Alaska route. When construction can begin depends upon when the Alaskan workforce will be able to handle the demands of the project. A key consideration is how to prevent having a huge pool of unemployed workers after this big build-up; we have to avoid the situation that occurred after construction of the Trans-Alaska Pipeline was completed. There will be \$100 million available for training over four years. \$40 million will come from the USDOL, \$40 million from STEP, and \$20 million as a match for the gas line from the producers. At this point, what makes the most investment sense is to partner with those relevant training entities that adhere to nationally accepted standards and have the highest completion and placement rates. AWIB needs to provide the governor with the best advice on how to invest these funds. He would like to see the best use of existing infrastructure and target industries that have good paying jobs and guarantee employment.

Budget Overview - Assistant Commissioner Guy Bell

Mr. Bell gave a presentation on funding and distributed a handout to the board. He also explained year-to-date expenditures and allocations between programs, the AWIB, the Division of Business Partnerships, Employment Security Division, and other agencies. \$13.2 million is expected to be distributed as grants during SFY 2005.

Committee Reports

Assessment & Evaluation - Chris Hayes

The committee has been discussing the mandated federal and legislative reports, determining the exact requirements of each. The committee is making sure they are doing what they board is asking for.

Employment & Placement - Rose Ellis

Ms. Ellis recapped the discussion about the Native MOU. The committee is reviewing its goals and priorities in preparation for the strategic planning the board will commence in the fall.

Workforce Readiness - Colleen Ward

Ms. Ward expressed appreciation to Dick Cattnach and Rod Betit for chairing the construction and healthcare subcommittees respectively. They are now looking at the transportation industry. Mr. Cattnach talked briefly about the very successful second construction summit and the resulting draft report. He asked the board to develop a strategic plan for construction. The two important issues to address are ramping up for the gas pipeline megaproject and the long-range problem of the gap between labor supply and demand.

Youth Council - Don Brandon and Chris Hayes

Ms. Hayes reported that the Youth Council bylaws have been drafted and the strategic action plan is outlined. Ms. McAleese mentioned that the AWIB would be hiring a staff person to assist the Youth Council. Mr. Brandon spoke about creating three standing committees: Planning & Marketing, chaired by Karen King; Operations, chaired by Kathleen Barrows; and Executive Committee, co-chaired by Sara LaForest and himself. The next Youth Council teleconference will be April 21, 2005 from 11:00 a.m. to 12:30 p.m. The next face-to-face meeting will be on August 10th.

Legislative Committee - Neal Foster

The annual AWIB report to the legislature was due on February 10, 2005. Chair Baker, Mr. Foster, and Executive Director McAleese went to the Capitol this morning and visited about a dozen legislators, discussing Regional Advisory Councils and how they can help.

Staff Updates

John Pratt reported that the workgroup responsible for drafting the state WIA plan only recently received official, federal guidance on form and content. The plan is due to USDOL by May 31, 2005. This short timeframe includes a thirty day public comment period. The authors will be under a great deal of pressure to have it completed on schedule. Rather than a full Unified Plan this state plan will be limited to WIA Title I-B and Wagner-Peyser for a two year period.

Mona McAleese reported on the Employment and Training Administration and the president's job training reform. The proposed budget would consolidate the WIA Adult, Dislocated Worker, Youth, and Employment Service funding streams into a single grant to states for employment and training services. Governor Murkowski did endorse this concept.

Other Business and Comments

Chair Baker asked that all documentation and presentation materials be provided to board members well in advance of meetings.

Dick Cattnach reminded everyone that Kris Forrester is leaving the state in June and, therefore, will be vacating her seat on the board. He recognized and thanked her for her years of service and good work.

Mr. Cattnach urged the AWIB to talk to the Denali Commission regarding their \$1 million in rural training funds.

Chair Baker adjourned the meeting at 4:53 p.m.