

WEST VIRGINIA WORKFORCE INVESTMENT COUNCIL
3-30-09 AT 10:30 A.M.
GOVERNOR'S PRESS CONFERENCE ROOM
BUILDING 1, STATE CAPITOL COMPLEX

Council Attendees: Dave Bell, Joe Chronley, Mark Downs, Frank Ellis, Kelley Goes, Keith Gwinn, Mark Julian, Chris Kroger, Deborah Lovely, Angela Markham, Bill Menke, Jeff Moore, Wayne Morgan, Bob Newell, Butch Pennington, Kenny Perdue, Ron Radcliff, Nelson Robinson, Jim Rock, Alex Shook, Roy Smith, John Sorrenti, Diane Strong-Treister, Homer Sweeney, Kim Tieman, Joanne Tomblin, Will Turani, Sandra Vanin, Matthew Watts, Bill Wilcox, and Charles Young

Other Attendees: Beth Carenbauer, Valerie Comer, Steve Dailey, Barbara DeMary, Angie Fry, Russell Fry, Curtis Hardman, Jama Jarrett, Caren Jenkins, Rick Martin, Alice McVey, Mike Moore, Lory Morgan, Joyce Okes, Ben Parker, and John Williams

DRAFT MINUTES

Ron Radcliff called the meeting to order and asked for introductions. He discussed the contents of the packet distributed; then turned the floor over to Rick Martin. Rick gave a synopsis of the Workforce Investment Act of 1998 - improve quality, reduce welfare dependency, and increase competitiveness within West Virginia. One requirement is the Governor of the state appoints a workforce investment board. A majority of the Council must be representative of the private sector. Membership of the Council consists of the Governor; two members of each house of the West Virginia legislature; labor organizations; youth organizations; state agency officials for Economic Development; Juvenile Justice system; chief local elected officials; chief executive officer of community colleges, and community-based organizations. The Council's responsibility is to assist the Governor in development of a state plan; develop and continue improvement of statewide activity; develop linkages for coordination and non- duplication of services; review of local workforce investment boards (West Virginia has seven) plans. State plan by legislature – include identification of the needs of the state with regard to current and projected employment by occupations; job skills necessary to obtain jobs; skills and economic development needs of the state; and type of workforce activities in the state. West Virginia is in the process of ending the fifth year of a five-year planning cycle that will end June 30, 2009. One of the main challenges of this Council will be developing the next five-year strategic plan (2010-2015) under the Workforce Investment Act.

Ron extended Jerry Berry's apology for not attending. Jerry is the chair for Region 1's board as well as this Council. Anyone from the public wanting to comment, register with Lory and you will have that opportunity. The chair will immediately form several committees. Strategic thoughts that you may have coming from the private sector is a particular perspective not found in government. The Council has only been active to a degree after the first couple of years via the committees. Council has not met for several reasons for a couple of years. The Governor took careful consideration of everyone on this Council. The Council will establish the direction that the governor wants.

Ron then introduced Governor Manchin. Governor Manchin appreciates your commitment to help West Virginians. The challenges are great but we have more opportunities than ever before. West Virginia has the reputation of hard working people. We have the challenges of moving into a global economy – especially with the younger workforce. The bottom line is are you investing and getting a return? Rapid response activities need to happen quickly by taking all departments with assistance to the laid-off employees. We need to fight the downturn in the economy. West Virginia is in the best shape we have ever been, growing more rapidly than most states. Government cannot become too costly. We will be using stimulus money as we come out of the recession and not filling holes going into the recession. If not, we will have to cut services and raise taxes. Without investment, we cannot grow the economy. The Governor and the legislature both want to make West Virginia better. The bottom line is that people need jobs to add value to their lives, and give them the ability to take care of their family. Workers need skill sets to succeed. If this Council doesn't accomplish anything, there is no need to meet. There is considerable concern with the mining industry. The Governor has differences with President Obama on his energy policy. The President is very open to us. Without a skilled workforce, we cannot move forward. We are passing legislation that at 3rd grade level, certain skill sets must be attained and additional skill sets by the 8th grade. We will be tracking the private sector when it comes out of recession and make our move. Thanks for what you are doing. Stimulus money will be used to stimulate – not as filler or for dependency. Reinvest in the recovery and stimulate. The Governor was asked if West Virginia is accepting all of its stimulus money and he replied that some governors have politicized it. Governor Manchin thinks that is the wrong idea. Only the government is spending money right now. Not giving extended benefits to anyone who doesn't want to work. Make sure that everyone is held accountable. We have the ability to ask for waivers or considerations. We are not desperate to make a decision on Unemployment Compensation funds. Need to have legislation by September 2011. When encouraging a company to expand or attracting a new company, we go through the ceremony of what we have to offer. But it comes down to a workforce. Companies will not come to West Virginia without a skilled workforce. We are getting to where we need to be tying education with employers. We are working with Swearingen and hope that becomes successful. We are trying to get planes certified. They could not find 400 people with skill sets to work there. We put a class inside and then they can pick and choose the best. Try to give a company a relatively inexpensive look at skilled workers. Thanks for serving.

WorkForce West Virginia's funding decreased from \$55 million to \$14 million. We tried to move the WorkForce West Virginia programs into a workforce development system involving Rehabilitation, Department of Health and Human Resources, Vocational Education, etc. We attempted to form a database to find all participants in one place – Promise scholars, engineering graduates, certificates in welding, etc. When we have a company coming in, WorkForce West Virginia has a database with available skilled workers. Once they are entered into the system, we can track them through training, into jobs - even jobs in other states. This gives the Governor a great tool.

Stimulus money is beginning to come down with rules to follow. Our philosophy with WV Works is patterned after one in Georgia. Once employee begins to collect unemployment compensation, we might find a company with five jobs. We do the screening and let them have a free look, say 60 days. Then if need be, we will train them in skill sets to match the job. Need you to link us to business. Meet with all regional directors, and lay out what the summer youth program looks like. The federal government is immediately pumping around \$4 million for youth programs from May 1st to September 30th. Age range is from 14-24 this year. Would like for the Council to have input and act as liaison with the business community. Have a need for public employees – they are now older than private sector employees. Goal in youth program is to spend 70% of the money in the first year. Transparency and accountability are critical. The Governor wants those things in his office and trusts the people in this room to do that.

Rick asked that each Council member complete a data sheet. On the basis of what you have heard today, what would interest you? What do you want us as staff to craft on your agenda?

Flexibility is confined to regulations that are currently there. If there are programs we develop that meet the overall mission as we understand the administration, seems that might override some of the intricacies of the regulations. Our intent is to meet this week with other agencies and put all funds and requirements together to set the objective with business services representatives in each region and local community development entities. Identify all jobs available and work to shorten the critical path through training to get the job filled now. Roy Smith asked about the next meeting or frequency of meetings. Ron recommended this group come together within a month. Rick added that the federal government requires the Council to meet twice a year but the state requires meetings every quarter. The Governor said there is lots of competition within the states. Is there data to explain to this Council the gap between a skilled workforce here and other states? We will attempt to get that information for you.

Ron adjourned the meeting at 11:50 a.m.