



Humboldt County Workforce Investment Board

Draft Notes

Friday • December 11, 2009 • 8:30 - 10:30am
Humboldt County Office of Education • Annex
901 Myrtle Avenue • Eureka, CA

Members Present: Terry Coltra, Maura Eastman, Ahn Fielding, John Frahm, Maggie Gainer, Evelyn Giddings, Linda Grimm, Mariann Hassler, Carol Hill, Michael Kraft, Barbara LaHaie, Mark Lovelace, Cedar Reuben, Jerry Saner, Jon Sapper and Liana Simpson

Members Absent: Emlia Bartolomeu, Helen Callahan, Ben Fewell, Barbara Groom, Randy Hansen, Bob Laffranchi, Val Martinez, Libby Maynard, Jeff Nelson, Tina Nerat, David Perry, Bryan Plumley, James Smith, Sallie Speaker, Alex Stillman, Alison Talbott and John Woolley

Others Present: Bruce Alexander, Janet DePace, Jackie Dyer, Dan Heinen, Timothy Hoone, Michelle Hutchins, Connie Lorenzo and Dona Wheeler

1. OPENING

- 1.1 Call to Order: Chair Maggie Gainer called the meeting to order at 8:44am
- 1.2 Self-introductions of WIB members, staff and public present: Introductions were made around the table
- 1.3 Adjustments to the Agenda: Maggie's trip down to Sacramento to attend the Many Shades of Green Seminar. This is in conjunction with Collaborative Economics. Soon this information will be on the state WIB website with reference to Humboldt County; more accurately defined as the Redwood Coast. There was a logistical change to the Redwood Coast Region; it now encompasses a wider area. Main topic was different strengths within the "green arena". Green jobs will be the comeback for California's economy. Northern California is far ahead of the curve when it comes to going "green".

2. PUBLIC COMMENT - None

3. DISCUSSION & ACTION ITEMS

- 3.1 Minutes: Not enough members for quorum; no motion made.
- 3.2 Headwaters Fund Workforce Initiative: Following are highlight from Jon's PowerPoint presentation:
 - Background: Most significant issue raised; we cannot find a ready, willing and capable entry level workforce
 - Why is it difficult for employers to find qualified entry-level employees?
Transition from resource based industries to a more diversified economy on the north coast and declining enrollment in local schools
 - Related issues: Approximately 20% of HC youth do not complete high school. Less than 50% of high school graduates receive additional training and education.

- What we need to do: Begin a multifaceted, multi-year commitment to develop the entry-level technical and professional workforce needed by local business and industry.
- Overarching strategy: We need to grow our own.
- How do we do this? Use solid research proven strategies
- To develop a quality entry-level workforce for local employers we need to do three things: Better align education and training with local business and industry needs. Increase the achievement and graduation rates of local students.
- To accomplish these three goals we must: Develop laser-focused strategies. Commit to those strategies for the long term and measure progress with benchmarks and outcomes.

Jon handed out an outline of the initiative for the Board to look over. *What role should the WIB play in this initiative?* Broke down into small groups to discuss this question. Following are a few suggestions:

- Service Learning
- Community Involvement
- Funding
- Input to career materials
- Endorse partnerships that work
- Stay up on economic data/trends
- Targets of Opportunity viable living
- Communication needs/work to public
- Policy in the way
- Much WIB work already aligned
- How do we set up so employees and employers connect organically
- Targets started, CR secondary education
- High school not an end point, should be better preparation for work
- Parents role - hear it from workforce community
- WIB Speakers Bureau
- Pre-Kindergarten
- Encourage employers to give employees paid time off for community service
- Adult job shadowing...seeing professional careers
- Link initiative to business, employees and careers

3.3 Update on ECF TANF: Social Services received money for employment opportunities with ARRA stimulus funds. Keeping a skill base in the community with CalWorks initiative. CalWorks families are eligible if income falls at the 200% above poverty level. There is no cap at this point. Over 100 jobs will be available throughout the county. These funds need to get out to the community and they need to get out quickly. Families that have lost jobs or housing may be able to get help as well. The Job Market will be screening for all public and private jobs. There are some very exciting opportunities. Because of the doubling of the poverty level people not normally qualified will now be helped. Employers will only be charged 20 cents on the dollar. The hope is that these jobs will become permanent. Funds will pay for one year's employment

3.4 Presentation by John McClurg from Fire & Light: Quick 3 minute video gave a background of Fire & Light. They have been in business for 10 years; up until 2 years ago people did not really care about recycling. This has been the worst year ever due

to the economy. Very difficult year but ended last year with growth. They do two show seasons per year, one locally and one in New York. Last spring they had to shut down for 7 weeks due to the downturn economically. After such a rough year loan documents are being signed today that will allow them to pay off two loans and help them get working collateral. Things are starting to look up. Last year was a real growth experience for them with much support from friends and customers. At their local seconds sale 12,000 pieces were brought in and only 5 pieces were left at the end of the day. During peak business they employed 21 people but now are down to 16. They train all their own glass blowers. They've learned they have to take changes; one example of this is 10 years ago a friend wanted his brother-in-law to be hired. He is now the production manager; he runs the full hot shop. He started out at the bottom and now has 10 people working under him. John feels he couldn't have gotten through the bad times without the commitment from his employees. There are issues with overseas competitors making knock offs.

4. **ANNOUNCEMENTS** - January 19th there is an all day water workshop; Economic Development challenge. What and where are the opportunities to use out local water? DOL grant was finally awarded; we received \$250,000. Fifty thousand dollars will be used to update the Targets information. The state of California released an RFP using Humboldt County as an example. Dislocated Worker Funds; Veterans Day we received news that we were awarded \$750,000 - \$1,000,000 for Veteran retraining. Cedar Reuben has started a new business: Humboldt Investment Capital.
5. **REPORTS** - None
6. **CLOSING** - Meeting adjourned at 10:42am