WORKFORCE ADVISORY COMMITTEE
Minutes
Wednesday, April 6, 2010
12:00 – 1:30 pm
Board Room, 1000 Building

Present: Charlie Best – King County AFL-CIO Worker Center, Gordon Denby–GeoEngineers, Bobbie Peterson – Shoreline School District, Eric Wahl – CAD-Based Solutions, Pam Gee-Oliver – Bio-Rad Labs.

Charlie opened the meeting; introductions were made.

Minutes: approved

Labor Market General Discussion:
What are some of the shifts in development, signs of growth or not?

*Pam – Bio-Rad Labs*
- doing great financially but has been very conservative with very little recruiting and hiring; just posted the first job of 2010
- the company has made other investments picking up little companies that were going under rather than hiring
- no lay-offs, but the company has been doing “pruning and maintenance”
- lots of customer demand and sales are up
- focus is on reserving capital and making investments where there are “sale” prices
- “cash flow initiative” for all employees

*Gordon – GeoEngineers*
- the engineering industry is really suffering; the real estate market may not recover for 10 years
- Benaroya saying jobless recovery may not occur until 2014-2015
- the federal market is currently the strongest
- his company has a year of back log, but the work is not coming through
- making cuts in staff and hours
- Boeing outsourced a lot of its work

Are companies hiring temporary workers?
Bio-Rad Labs has kept temporary workers longer because it cannot hire more people.
**Eric – CAD-Based Solutions**
- auto & aerospace have their cyclical nature, but last year consumer product development almost went to zero
- triple the number of quotes this quarter than all of last year, but quotes have not been converted to actual work yet – companies are still testing the waters

**Kim** heard from nursing students that the rate of hiring nurses is not as high as in the past; the demand seems to be higher for those with BS degrees than AAAS.

**Charlie – building & construction trades**
- stimulus money is there but where is the work – 60-65% of unemployment is in the trades
- the unemployment rate is currently the highest since the 1970’s
- the good news is that lay-offs are down with about 4000 this year – 40 employers.
- building trades are still in recovery; contactors cannot get capital; the infrastructure is still in the planning stages; many commercial buildings in Seattle are vacant; many projects are on hold.
- Boeing has outsourced a lot of work that has impacted positions locally
- the current outlook is one of “WAIT and SEE”

**Worker Retraining Program**
Kim reported the number of worker retraining students funded per quarter: 292 Summer 2009; 380 Fall 2009; 328 Winter 2010; 385 Spring 2010 for a total of 1385.

Stephanie Tschanz was hired into the Employment Security Dept co-located position.

**Proposed WRT Plan**
As per the SBCTC, a total Worker Retraining plan is not required yet because of the uncertain status of the financial situation.

Concern was expressed by Charlie regarding the SBCTC’s suggestion to suspend face to face advisory meetings. Barbara commented that similar action has been suggested for the WorkFirst grant; however, in her opinion the intent is not to lessen the effectiveness of advisory committees but rather to know their role; the SBCTC wants to insure that advisory committees are involved.

Dave encouraged advisory committee members to send an email to SBCTC emphasizing that advisory committees not collapse into last minute emails.

*A motion was made by Charlie that the Workforce Advisory Committee adopt Dave’s suggestion; Dave will send this to the SBCTC. The motion was seconded.*

Charlie does not agree with the statement that the manufacturing industry is on the upswing; he cannot validate that machinists are in demand. Eric agrees; 60 employees were laid off at Synergy Systems; these are highly qualified people will be re-hired before SCC graduates.
As stated by Charlie, the WIA Demand/Decline List is the response to “what jobs are in demand”. The list is vetted in July, so the list today is nearly up for revision. LEMA data is submitted to WIA; annual surveys come from businesses; the Demand/Decline list must show labor market sources. Dave mentioned that compared to 10-15 years ago, labor market tools are more developed nowadays.

There is a lot of interest in SCC’s solar program; many construction workers are coming into the Job Connections Center wanting to get into the solar program. Charlie noted that only 3 out of 20 trained in Weatherization at South Seattle CC are currently employed. Dave added that there are not a lot of family wage jobs right now, but the program has been functioning in the role of re-training construction workers, so they will job-ready once the industry picks up. The McKinstry model is train to keep buildings green - to get into the maintenance of “green” by updating systems regularly, etc.

SCC is in the process of building the infrastructure to support production of re-charge units for hybrid electric vehicles.

WSU published a new green jobs report.

These questions are posed to unemployed people who come to Kim’s office: What am I going to do in two years? Where do I want to be in 2 years? Most often people express interest in the medical field, solar/green technology, and automotive technology rather than business technology.

Gordon commented that it may be 4-5 years before economic recovery occurs, so now is the time for long range, strategic planning. Community colleges have an opportunity to benefit from pooling resources. Along these lines, it was noted that Centers of Excellence and Consortiums currently exist within the community college system. Gordon also highly recommended inviting Jim Hebert to share his perspective on where the jobs will be in the next 5 years.

**Worker Retraining Supported Programs Percent of Instructional Budget**

Healthcare 51%, Visual Communications Technology 22%, Biotechnology 15%, Automotive 3%, Manufacturing 3%, Business Technology 6%.

Meeting adjourned at 1:45 pm.

Minutes recorded by Jeanne Skaare.