



CAPITAL AREA WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT BOARD
MEETING MINUTES
December 4, 2008

The Capital Area Workforce Development Board met in regular session on Thursday, December 4, 2008 at 8:30 a.m. at WakeMed Heart Center, Raleigh, North Carolina. Members present: Susan Jackson, Chair; Robert Barham, Ruby Bryant for Marie Watson, Bruce Clarke, Barrie Davis, Kenny Gibbs, Elaine Harrison, Dick Hoffmann, P.R. Latta, Howard Manning, Gerald Mitchell, Dr. Donald Reichard, David Rockefeller, Nelson Rose, Vicki Shore, Donna Steele and Michele Tavernise. Staff: Regina Crooms, Alfreda Barnett, Freeman Denton, Jessica Locklear-McLeod, Lisa Ramsey and Jane Sterner. Guests: Wayne Beverly, RTRP Region Office, Employment Security Commission; Darryl Blevins, Wake County Eastern Regional Center; Carmen Carroll, Capital Area JobLink at Swinburne; Mary Cichocki, AARP Mature Workforce Speaker's Bureau; Quenton Cooper, Wake County Human Services; Reginna Z. Ford, Labor Market Information, Employment Security Commission; Tomisha Hodge, AmeriCorps Member, Capital Area JobLink at Swinburne; Brent Jones, AmeriCorps Member, Capital Area JobLink at Swinburne; Cheryl Lloyd, North Carolina Cooperative Extension, North Carolina State University; Henry Mitchell, AmeriCorps Member, Capital Area JobLink at Swinburne; Andrea Moore, YES Program, Community Partnerships Incorporated; Jan Oakley, Yes I Can Program, Johnston County Industries; Zaida Partin, Capital Area JobLink at Clayton Corners; Beth Ritter, Burt's Bees; Nancy Stancil, Capital Area JobLink at Johnston Community College; Rosena West, Wake County Southern Regional Center; Jenny Wheeler, Wake County Human Services; and Tom White, Economic Development Partnership, North Carolina State University.

Chairman Susan Jackson called the meeting to order and welcomed everyone. She offered remarks on behalf of WakeMed Health and Hospitals and explained to meeting attendees that the facility is in a state of construction and growth. The WakeMed Heart Center hosts a 38-room hotel that is almost always to capacity. With rooms patterned after the Hilton Hotel chain, they offer very reasonable rates to patients and family members. Plans are to build a 50-bed patient tower and possibly a children's hospital. Chairman Jackson invited everyone to take a tour after the meeting.

Following an invitation for introductions, Chairman Jackson proceeded to ask if there were any corrections to the draft minutes of October 16, 2008. The minutes were approved as written.

The first item on the agenda was the Incumbent Worker Training Spotlight, and Chairman Jackson called upon Ms. Beth Ritter, HR Manager, Burt's Bees, to provide an overview of her company and how it has benefited from the receipt of incumbent worker training funds.

Ms. Ritter began by saying that Burt's Bees is the #1 personal care company in the United States with international satellite offices in Australia, Canada and the United Kingdom. Purchased by Clorox in 2007, Burt's Bees is Clorox's first entry into personal care products and the "going green" movement. Clorox faces the additional challenge of growing Burt's Bees beyond its current 20% annual growth rate.

Burt's Bees goal is to provide 40 hours of training to its employees each year. The incumbent worker training funds have allowed Burt's Bees to invest in their employees while improving efficiency. As a world-class manufacturer, it is critical that employees possess the necessary math, graphing and autonomous maintenance skills needed to compete in a global economy. Thus far, they have provided 200 out of 400 employees soft skills training in computer, sustainability and process implementation skills.

While most companies are currently in a no-hire or downsizing mode, Burt's Bees is hiring with a demand especially for engineers. Job openings are located on their website at www.burtsbees.com as well as listed with the Employment Security Commission. Chairman Jackson thanked Ms. Ritter for sharing this important update with the Capital Area Board.

The next item on the agenda was a presentation from the North Carolina Cooperative Extension at North Carolina State University. Chairman Jackson asked Ms. Cheryl Lloyd, State Leader of Urban Programs, to give an overview of their program.

Ms. Lloyd explained that the North Carolina Cooperative Extension gives North Carolina residents easy access to the resources and expertise of North Carolina State University. The organization's mission is to help individuals, families and communities put research-based knowledge to work for economic prosperity, environmental stewardship and an improved quality of life.

Through educational programs, publications and events, the Cooperative Extension field faculty delivers research-based information to North Carolina citizens. Available online 24/7 at www.ces.ncsu.edu, residents can receive answers to questions on a wide array of topics including agriculture and food, community, environment, health and nutrition, home and family, and lawn and garden.

The 4-H component of the Cooperative Extension is also alive and well serving more than 187,000 young people throughout North Carolina. Clubs, special interest programs, summer camps, school enrichment and after-school childcare are offered through 4-H. This program allows North Carolina youth to gain knowledge, skills and experience to help them become responsible citizens and leaders. Ms. Lloyd concluded that it is the desire of Cooperative Extension and its County Centers to work closely with the Workforce Development Boards across the state of North Carolina.

Mr. Thomas White, Director, Economic Development Partnership at North Carolina State University added that the opportunity exists to forge partnerships between workforce development boards and the University's extension for teaching, research and technology transfer capabilities in order to enhance the productivity and competitiveness of North Carolina's existing and traditional industries as well as technology-based emerging companies. He further commented on the Capital Area Board and its effectiveness, and looks forward to an expanding partnership with the Board.

Chairman Jackson thanked Ms. Lloyd and Mr. White for this informative presentation as Capital Area Workforce Development Board looks forward to broadening their relationship with the Office of Extension, Engagement, and Economic Development at North Carolina State University to aid the citizens of our area.

In reviewing the next agenda item, Chairman Jackson reminded Board members that the Chairman of Wake County Board of Commissioners appoints members to our Board through a nomination process. Chairman Jackson and Ms. Crooms recently had the pleasure of meeting with the newest appointments Ms. Donna Steele, Ms. Elaine Harrison and Mr. Howard Manning. Chairman Jackson called upon each new appointment for introductions.

Ms. Donna Steele is the Performance Development Manager for Talecris formerly known as Bayer Biological Products. Talecris employs over 2000 individuals with a manufacturing site in Clayton, North Carolina, a laboratory in Raleigh, North Carolina, and a research and development facility at North Carolina State University. Relocating from Richmond, Virginia over five years ago, Ms. Steele was formerly employed with Wyeth Laboratories as the Performance and Continuous Improvement Manager.

Chairman Jackson welcomed Ms. Steele and presented her with a Capital Area lapel pin.

Ms. Elaine Harrison is the Human Resources/Environmental Health & Safety Manager for Ajinomoto AminoScience LLC. As a leader in the manufacturing of amino acids, Ajinomoto employs 140 individuals at their Raleigh, North Carolina location. Prior to joining Ajinomoto, Ms. Harrison was employed as the Human Resources Manager for Merck & Company, Inc.

Chairman Jackson welcomed Ms. Harrison and presented her with a Capital Area lapel pin.

Mr. Howard Manning is the Executive Director for Christian Community in Action (CCA) in Cary, North Carolina. Christian Community in Action's mission is "To provide any resident of the service area who meets the necessary criteria with emergency assistance for their essential human needs, including, but not limited to, shelter, fuel, utilities, clothing and food." Prior to joining CCA in 2004, Mr. Manning's dedication afforded him to hold only two prior positions in his lifetime career; he was the Director of Technical Training at Glaxo, Inc. and a Quality Supply Manager with Revlon Cosmetics.

Chairman Jackson welcomed Mr. Manning and presented him with a Capital Area lapel pin.

Moving onto other business, Chairman Jackson reminded the Board that at the NC Partnership Conference in October 2008, Capital Area received 2 chartering awards for regional centers in Wake County. She called upon Dr. Donald Reichard, JobLink Committee Member, to announce the charter presentations.

Dr. Reichard responded that the Executive Committee on behalf of the Board approved the JobLink Career Center at Wake County Eastern Regional Center for Level II chartering status in May 2008. The chartering status was confirmed by the State on August 15, 2008, and the center was recognized at the State Workforce Development Conference in Greensboro, North Carolina on October 23, 2008. They will receive JobLink Center chartering funds for this achievement. At this time, Dr. Reichard asked Mr. Darryl Blevins, Director of the Wake County Eastern Regional Center to come forward for the presentation.

Chairman Jackson presented the Level II Charter to Mr. Blevins and thanked the center for their continued hard work and dedication to serving the citizens of Capital Area.

Dr. Reichard continued with the announcement of the second charter presentation. The Executive Committee on behalf of the Board, approved the JobLink Career Center at Wake County Southern Regional Center for Level II chartering status in May 2008. The chartering status was confirmed by the State on August 15, 2008 and the center was recognized at the State Workforce Development Conference in Greensboro, North Carolina on October 23, 2008. They will receive JobLink Center chartering funds for this achievement. At this time, Dr. Reichard asked Ms. Rosena West, Director of the Wake County Southern Regional Center to come forward for the presentation.

Chairman Jackson presented the Level II Charter to Ms. West and thanked the center for their continued hard work and dedication to serving the citizens of Capital Area.

Dr. Reichard concluded by informing the Board that currently Capital Area has 3 Level III JobLink Career Centers, 4 Level II JobLink Career Centers and 1 Level I JobLink Career Center.

The next segment on the agenda was an overview of the AmeriCorps Program, and Chairman Jackson called upon Mr. Kenny Gibbs, Vocational Rehabilitation Manager, to provide an update. Mr. Gibbs asked that Ms. Jane Sterner, Capital Area Information Technology Officer & JobLink Liaison and Mr. Freeman Denton, AmeriCorps Program Manager assist in the update.

Vocational Rehabilitation has operated the AmeriCorps Program for several years, and Mr. Gibbs noted that he is very pleased Capital Area decided to collaborate on this endeavor. The AmeriCorps Program members serve throughout Wake and Johnston Counties in the JobLink Career Centers and at the Capital Area YouthBuild site. AmeriCorps members help “fill the gap” in the JobLink Career Centers as they aid customers who have barriers to employment. Mr. Gibbs continued to explain that his role is to provide continued support for the success of the program.

Mr. Denton thanked Vocational Rehabilitation, Builders of Hope and Capital Area Board and Staff for bringing the AmeriCorps Program to fruition. As an AmeriCorps Vista Alumni, Mr. Denton is extremely familiar with the AmeriCorps Program and what it brings to communities. Currently, he oversees 18 AmeriCorps members, 14 full-time and 4 part-time that will provide over 25,000 hours of service during their one-year commitment.

The feedback that Mr. Denton has received from the AmeriCorps members has been very favorable as they provide one on one assistance to customers with significant barriers to employment. Mr. Denton also thanked the JobLink Coordinators for their support and oversight of the AmeriCorps members at the JobLink Career Centers. He then introduced 3 AmeriCorps members from the Capital Area JobLink at Swinburne: Ms. Tomisha Hodge, Mr. Brent Jones and Mr. Henry Mitchell.

Ms. Sterner responded that she is tremendously pleased with the work that Mr. Denton has accomplished since joining Capital Area as the AmeriCorps Program Manager. She added that Capital Area has an excellent group of AmeriCorps members that immediately bonded as a team. Capital Area Workforce Development Board is the first board to have received an AmeriCorps Grant in North Carolina, and we are receiving significant state-wide recognition for this achievement.

Chairman Jackson thanked Mr. Gibbs, Ms. Sterner and Mr. Denton for their accomplishments on this project.

In the Chair's Report, Chairman Jackson revealed that this year's message at the NC Workforce Development Conference encouraged boards to create structure about their work and to have active committee involvement. Boards should begin to operate more like a traditional business and focus on sustainability in absence of Workforce Investment Act funding. Moving forward, Capital Area wants to engage the Board on works of the committees and sector strategies aimed at creating a template for quick action. Therefore, Chairman Jackson asked all Board members to finalize a committee of interest in which to serve and to indicate their committee preference by responding via e-mail to Ms. Crooms or to her.

Plans for the 2009 Capital Area Board Retreat are underway and a date needs to be confirmed. Chairman Jackson presented two dates for consideration: Tuesday, March 17, 2009 or Wednesday, March 25, 2009. She asked Lisa Ramsey to send an e-mail to all Board members requesting their preference and response by 5:00 pm on Friday, December 5, 2008. Board members will be advised as to the date the majority selected.

Chairman Jackson reminded members that the Division of Workforce Development would conduct the Board Standards review on January 22, 2009, and that the Board is in exceptional shape for the review.

Under Current Workforce Issues, Chairman Jackson requested that Ms. Regina Crooms provide an update on the State of the Workforce in Capital Area.

Ms. Crooms commented that in the last 30 days Capital Area had 16 reported closings/layoffs from area businesses. As of October 2008, North Carolina Labor Market Information indicates that there are 319,000 people unemployed in the state that were previously working. The state's unemployment rate is 7.0% while Wake and Johnston Counties are at 5.0 % and 6.1% respectively. This is the highest unemployment rate that Capital Area has experienced in over 10 years. As the largest local area in the state, this number is significant as we look at the total number of individuals affected.

Although 5000 people gained employment across the state in October 2008, the amount of individuals that were laid off dramatically exceeds the number that obtained employment. Of those obtaining employment, many are accepting lower wages up to a \$4.87/hr decrease from their previously earned wage.

Ms. Crooms concluded that everyone who is employed should consider him or herself very fortunate, and remarked that the work we do continues to be extremely important. As we move forward, we need to be strategically planning and earmarking our Incumbent Worker and WIA training funds for current and future industry demands.

Chairman Jackson thanked Ms. Crooms for providing this insight on the State of the Workforce in Capital Area.

Additional business/announcements included:

2009 Calendar Distribution

Revised Board Manual Distribution

The North Carolina Workforce Investment Act Annual Report is available for review. You may access a hard copy by going to www.capitalareawdb.com, click on "News", click on "Publications". It is listed under Special Reports as: NC Workforce Investment Act Annual Report PY 2007.

Chairman Jackson thanked everyone for attending and reminded the Board that the next meeting is scheduled for Thursday, February 26, 2009 at 8:30 am in Wake County. The meeting was adjourned at 10:00 am.