

Workforce Investment Board of Columbia & Greene Counties

*Board Retreat Minutes
Thursday, July 10, 2003
Staff Cafeteria
Columbia Greene Community College*

Attendance:

Present: Karen Diffley, Rikki Beal, John Betts, Jim Cullie, Paul Dellio, Peg Hopper, Al Hulick, Joyce Lissandrello, Jim Molloy, Irene Norsworthy, Hilton Perez, David Segalla and M. A. Wiltse,

Consultant: Betty Ann Falkner

Facilitator: Debby Greene

Welcome

M. A. Wiltse welcomed all members to the Retreat. Members are meeting here today to discuss the results of the recent Board self-assessment survey and determine what direction the Board would like to head in during the upcoming program year.

I. Overview

Debby Green outlined the work of the Board today. The Board will do action planning along with keeping a strategic look to the future by covering the following areas:

1. Discuss new WIB role/direction.
2. Do Specific planning around four action items from board self-assessment.
3. Set up a framework for continuous improvement.
4. Discuss next steps for the future.

II. Preliminary Discussion of Workforce Summit and new WIB role

Debby asked the members this question, "Why does the community want the workforce system to exist?" Answers were as follows:

1. Pull all programs into one place as voice for the community.
2. Obtain state funding
3. Allocate funding
4. Monitor use of funds.
5. Get various parts of community enriched, develop and increase productivity of community
6. Stimulate the economy of local community
7. Match workers to job openings
8. Keep community knowledgeable about what's available

Debby then asked the members; “How good a job are we doing?” The members responded as follows:

- We are still flying below the radar of the community
- Although the one stop is in good shape-there is still work to do as a system

Debby identified and broke down the organization and the system. She defined the Workforce organization as the WIB and anything in its purview (WIO); the Workforce Board is the WIB and the Workforce System is all the programs that have to do with workforce issues.

The WIB’s new role in the workforce system is seen as:

- Being more proactive in the community and globally aware
- Having more of a connection with economic development
- Being more aware of what the system does
- Policy governance
- Being leaders and ambassadors in the community (movers & shakers)

Debby then asked us to answer six questions under the heading

Based on What I know . . .

1. *one way our community would benefit is. . .*
 - a. the whole community would be working on a common goal,
 - b. we would be working together to share ideas and learn from our mistakes,
 - c. they would be giving more input on their needs,
 - d. we would become more competitive in attracting new business,
 - e. it would help stabilize existing businesses.
2. *one condition that makes this a good time to do it is . . .*
 - a. there are many initiatives in between both communities that would support such growth,
 - b. the economic conditions in our area need help-it’s the right time
 - c. rural areas are very high priority for development right now because the other areas are filled up,
 - d. global economic pressures are putting the pressure on us.
3. *one challenge we could encounter is . . .*
 - a. the need to prioritize the competing demands on us and
 - b. not having enough of a workforce to attract/retain/accommodate business needs
4. *if we don’t move in this direction . . .*
 - a. we won’t provide the community the competitive advantage it needs to perform in the global economy,
 - b. we won’t use our resources appropriately and our resources will be depleted,
 - c. we will be passed by,
 - d. we won’t be reauthorized.

5. *if we do move in this direction it will mean my role as a board member will . . .*
 - a. become more complex
 - b. become a student
 - c. be regionally and globally aware
 - d. be to be really committed to the task
 - e. be to not just show up at meetings

6. *one difference in how we operate would be . . .*
 - a. to include more partners in our activities
 - b. be less day-to-day minded, more focused on long-term planning.

Summary:

Two tracks of activity to pursue our new role:

- A. Content focus: looking at the work the WIB organization does
- B. Infrastructure focus: Looking at how we operate to make the work possible or get the work done.

III. Review of actions items selected for planning

Assumptions and Rationale

1. Develop a comprehensive marketing plan
 - o *Rational-* Community needs to get more involved in becoming more competitive
 - o *Assumption-* We lack good marketing
 - o *Rational-* To broadcast results-show we are successful
 - o *Rational-* to form, shape/direct and heighten awareness in the community
 - o *Rational-*To provide greater (either to a larger number or better quality) service –grow WIB (participation, \$)
 - o *Assumption-*Marketing = Success

2. Upgrade new board member orientation and provide a tool for continual development of board members
 - o *Rational-*Underutilization of each other’s expertise
 - o *Assumption-* Board members don’t understand their role
 - o *Rational-* Need to make sure we build their capacity to fit into whatever/however we structure ourselves as a ‘ policy governance’ board

3. Obtain and better utilize economic & employment outlook data for strategic planning
 - o *Assumption-* We don’t have the data to do strategic planning
 - o *Rational-*We need this data to tell us if our marketing is successful
 - o *Rational-* There are things going on out there that we don’t have up to date data on or it’s not local enough

4. Increase board communication between meetings, with other WIB's, the state and partners
 - *Rational*- There is a lack of continuity
 - *Assumption*-meetings are too far apart for us to communicate effectively
 - *Assumption*- There is a lack of investment on the part of board members
 - *Assumption*- Board members lack understanding
 - *Assumption*- There are a number of unstated assumptions that lead to this lack of understanding

IV. Action planning exercises

The members were divided into four groups and given action planning instructions on the four areas of concern:

- Developing a comprehensive marketing plan
- Upgrading new board member orientations and providing a tool for continual development of board members
- Obtaining and better utilizing economic & employment outlook data for strategic planning
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Each group was to:

1. Identify a reporter, recorder and timekeeper
2. Write a strategic priority statement reflecting the full group discussion; identify any parameters or other direction offered by the full group-this would be a summation of the area we are working on-it must be clear and concise.
3. Discuss the key components of the strategic priority; i.e. major actions needed to implement it; if helpful, break them down into short and long term actions
 - a. Be deliberate in considering whether the actions for your assigned item are straightforward, logical, self-evident-or whether there will be many options from which to choose
 - b. Agree on whether brainstorming should be used to first identify the full range of possibilities before choosing the final recommended actions
 - c. As appropriate, follow brainstorming rules; use post-its to record all options on flip chart
 - d. When choices must be made to narrow the options down, use adhesive dots to make selections from all the brainstormed items.
4. List *recommended actions* and select one to start action planning.
5. For the first recommended action, develop a workplan for how it will be implemented:
 - a. What (all tasks needed to complete the action; including resources needed)

- b. Who will be responsible for the task
 - c. When the task should be completed
6. Repeat for all recommended actions
 7. Prepare to report out

V. Report Outs and discussion

The groups reported on their progress and discussed the sequencing, overlap and accuracy of the action plans in addressing the original action items. The group discussed doing an analysis of what we've got here and figuring out what to do with it next. Those members of each group that took the role of recorder agreed to clean up their notes and then send them to Betty Ann Falkner so she can create a final report to distribute to all Board members.

The group also talked about having a strategic plan-just because we need it, not because someone says we have to do it. The consensus of the group was to schedule another facilitated meeting. Today's group will act as an ad hoc committee and will meet again before the October Board meeting to try and complete its work.

VI. Next Steps

The members discussed how to continue the discussion about the "new" WIB role. We will first have to define what we mean by this new initiative:

1. Proactive leadership role (convening, forecasting, etc.),
2. Being demand/data driven,
3. Aligning workforce development with economic development
4. Aligning workforce services and programs with needs.

This discussion will be continued by the Executive committee initiating a meeting of an ad hoc committee. The notes will be written up and sent out to solicit the input of other member's who were unable to be at the retreat. The ad hoc committee will meet in late August.

Parking Lot:

During the retreat members were asked to write up any additional ideas they had on post-it notes. These ideas, statements and/or questions are included here:

- A. How do we and when do we network with other WIB's?
- B. We need more interaction with decision makers on economic development in the two counties
- C. Bring this discussion to the full board
- D. Provide bios on all the board members to identify skills
- E. Business/Private sector wants immediate results
- F. Revisit the By-laws-members don't know them
- G. What is role of WIB?
- H. Employment resources-Bedroom community
- I. How do we get the data we need?
- J. Large number never heard of the WIB
- K. Knowledge is power
- L. Assumption of private industry is ungrounded
- M. Simple overview of each committee and what they do
- N. Ad Hoc committee (use as needed)
- O. Meet a business, a candidate, a youth who utilized programs
- P. Introduce WIO Office staff
- Q. Turn each Board member into a marketing executive
- R. Compare us to other WIB's (where are we?)
- S. Learn what staff (each person) does