

MINUTES
WORKFORCE ALLIANCE LEGISLATIVE COMMITTEE MEETING
February 4th, 2010, 8:00 am

Committee

Members Attending: Randy Johnson, Steven Parrish,
Telephonic Attendance: Vern Crawford
Alliance Staff Attending: Kathryn Schmidt, Steve Craig, Suzanne Rodrigues

- I. **CALL TO ORDER:** The Legislative Committee meeting was called to order by Steve Parrish. No additions, deletions or corrections were made by Committee members to the agenda.
- II. **APPROVAL OF MINUTES:** The draft minutes from the December 3, 2009 Legislative Committee meeting were approved unanimously (Steve Parrish/Randy Johnson).
- III. **LEGISLATIVE UPDATES**

STATEMENT OF HILDA L. SOLIS, U.S. SECRETARY OF LABOR BEFORE THE COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION & LABOR, U.S. HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Vern Crawford provided copies of the Secretary's statement. The statement included such topics as worker retention, safety needs, union card check initiative, along with many other subjects. The mantra throughout the statement is "Good Jobs for Everyone". Definition of a good job incorporates such items as safe and secure, sustainable, adequate and affordable health coverage, to name a few. The stated goals for the reauthorization of the Workforce Investment Act (WIA) are key to remember with the most notable goals being improving accountability and promoting innovation. There is an emphasis on engaging employers. Vern provided a caution to watch closely what the definition of "regional" can be. It could mean 5 or 6, or maybe 8 boards, rather than the current 24. Vern suggested that during the Washington trip the attendees need to keep regional status, meaning the current 24 regions, as status quo. Vern will write up talking points for the Washington trip and he will include the need for 24 regions as one of them. Kathryn stated that improving accountability was of particular interest to her. She agrees that performance measures must be designed to hold programs accountable for better results, without creating incentives to deny services to those most in need of assistance. She would like to stress the point of breaking down barriers to enable us to serve everyone. Vern suggested that a conference call take place the first week of March to work up key points prior to the trip. Vern said that the Department of Labor has a webinar with Secretary Holis providing her statement and that he would forward the link for same to Steve Parrish and Randy Johnson.

BUDGET/FISCAL YEAR

Vern stated that FY11 budget for us is our 2011/2012 fiscal year. We are dealing with one year out. Kathryn told the attendees that she received an email from Commission Koons inquiring about the summer youth program. Kathryn feels that funding for summer youth program is a possibility; however, for the following year, the program could be supported in a grant driven manner. Vern stated that he had the same understanding. This current administration believes in competitive grants. This translates into the best grant writers having the best chance of being awarded a grant. Everyone agrees that we will need strong grant writers. Kathryn informed the group that we do have a new grant writer; however, she is new to the job. Kathryn will monitor and make sure that the new grant writer is plugged into resources, etc. in time for this change in funding. Kathryn will present our grant status at the next meeting. She stated that there are not as many grant opportunities as there were years ago. One strong point over-riding budget is that partisan politics is at its zenith. Republicans are trying to regain more seats from the democrats. There is an attitude happening across the board. May not have harmony particularly with it comes to budget.

As for our Governor's budget, that is out and nothing in it impacts us. The Governor is optimistic. Vern anticipates a drag-down session at the State level. He also feels the real budget crisis will be in 2012.

PRISONER RE-ENTRY PROGRAM

Within Secretary Solis' narrative, there are comments stating the importance of prisoners having the ability to re-enter into gainful employment. Kathryn stated that we did receive an email from the State inquiring what we were doing for this particular population. She also stated that we are in the process of an RFP designed to support ex-offenders, homeless and veterans. The anticipated start-up date for that is April 1st, 2010. Kathryn went on to say that we are developing a good connection with CJC and we are holding re-entry fairs to assist. We also offer bonding and tax credits. The next planned workshop for this population is on February 17th.

WIA REAUTHORIZATION

Steve Parrish asked if there are any signals that should concern us that they are going to turn this upside down. Vern anticipates a blend. He has no indication when a bill will come about. He did say that if they get a bill out in the next month or so, it would probably pass. Rochelle Daniels predicts the bill will not pass. She feels WIA, as we know it, will now become a labor based bill. Vern stated that we need a bill in place or else we won't get one. Kathryn thanked Vern for supplying names and contact information for legislators and confirmed that a letter had been sent to each. Vern added within Sec. Solis' narrative, she states national figures of 1.34 billion going to 1.41 billion for next year. 2011/12 year is flat funded. Vern added that this should be another talking point for Washington trip.

IV. NAWB CONFERENCE

Randy Johnson asked the group what they saw happening with David Bradley. Vern stated that he could be a major force and play a major role, particularly on the House side. The Senate is focused on health care. Randy asked if the group going to the conference was doing any special event with David Bradley. Vern said that is not known yet. Vern did say a conference call with David Bradley was going to take place while he, Kathryn and Steve were in Tallahassee and that they would join this call. Kathryn asked if the group should see only our own delegations or if they should consider others, i.e. appropriations. Vern said it would be difficult to have legislators visit with folks not from their state. Vern suggested meeting with staff writers as he felt they could be just as beneficial. Steve Parrish suggests priority be given to our local people. Kathryn asked how they could make an impact on the people writing the bill. Vern said we have no one from Florida on either the House or State side. Vern did confirm that our local delegates do have the opportunity to provide input to the bill. Vern's thought is that people attending the conference have to influence the direction.

V. ALLIANCE BOARD MEMBERSHIP

Randy would like to get more Board Members involved. He said that the recent Board Member Orientation session was a very good one and that he was pleased about that. Kathryn said that with Steve Parrish coming on as Chair, he may want to get a commitment from Board Members to participate more. Steve suggested that other Board Members be considered for the Washington trip/conference. Vern also feels that board action and support would be helpful. Kathryn is open to any suggestions that the group may have.

ADJOURNMENT: With no further action, the meeting was adjourned by Kathryn.

DATE FOR NEXT MEETING – APRIL 15, 2010