



Meeting Minutes – Workforce Working Group

Date: March 14, 2017

Time: 11 AM – 12:30 PM

Location: Prior Lake City Hall – Parkview Conference

Work Group Members:

Michelle Choudek (Chair)		Lee Foley		Nick Slavik	
Darren Kermes (Chair)	X	Madelyn Hertaus	X	Patricia Timmons	
Mike Beard	X	Brenda Lieske	X	Dr. Rod Thompson	X
Joy Bodin	X	Kathryn Reeder	X	Tim Wynes	X
Heather Fitzloff		Annie Sheehan-Kerber	X		

Staff Members:

Stacy Crakes	X	Mark Jacobs	X	Jean Sinell	X
Barb Dahl	X	Tim O’Neill		Jo Foust	X

Guests:

Melanie Smieja		Kathy Nielsen	X		

The meeting was called to order at 11:00 a.m. by Dahl.

Agenda Item 1: Retreat Recap. A summary of the 50 by 30 Project Retreat meeting, held on February 28, 2017, was provided. “Discussion Notes”, from each of the eight tables, were referenced. Surprising outcomes and common themes were discussed. Committee members discussed the following:

- The Retreat provided a comprehensive review of all areas and how the four focus areas are intertwined.
- There were common themes among the various groups which should help us focus on the development of goals.

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- It was recommended we modify the statement “Not everyone has the same ‘opportunities’ to same ‘circumstances’.
- The county is becoming very culturally diverse. We should look at opportunity gaps and ways to fill these gaps. I.e. learning English as a second language.
- It is important to cite sources and the context of data (an example was provided relating to the discussion and percent of students on “free and reduced lunches” as well as how some students attend school because they can get breakfast and lunch there).
- The shortage of housing, the cost of housing and percent of income being spent on housing was noted as an important topic. Discussion relating to cities analyzing their housing needs, county-wide financial participation and review of comparative fee schedules occurred. The use of tax increment financing as a financial incentive in which the city, county and school shares of taxes are utilized was noted.
- The high cost of daycare and disconnect with pay for many jobs in the county was noted. The higher cost of daycare in Scott County versus other areas was also recognized. It was noted the cost for daycare centers to comply with state regulations impacts the cost of daycare and/or ability of small providers to continue to serve children. It was suggested the group look at methods of addressing the daycare affordability gap.

Agenda Item 2: MNCAPS Project Update.

Barb reported that she and Stacy met with students of the MNCAP program. They briefly discussed how teenagers find jobs, the lack of transportation to get to and from work and survey questions. Students are working on the development of a survey, to obtain input from youth, at this time.

Agenda Item 3: 2017 Planning.

The establishment of priorities for the Workforce Readiness Group was discussed, with the overall goal or focus to, “Sustain or maintain economic vitality”. Statistics from GreaterMSP were reviewed. Categories to focus on included the unemployment rate (drilled down by age and race), the Median Household income, labor force participation rates, percent of population that travels less than 30 miles to work, and the percent of residents working outside of the county.

It was suggested the Workforce Readiness Group, the county and cities become involved in furthering connections between school districts and businesses to provide authentic work experience in and outside of the schools and within Scott County businesses. Dr. Rod Thompson noted the Shakopee school district has developed six academies with a goal to get mentors with real life experience in the school to work with students. The school district currently has classrooms at Mystic Lake and Shutterfly, among others. Businesses in the area contribute time, talent and treasures with employees teaching with instructors in the school. Students learn what they like and what they may not like prior to paying for a college education. They also receive career college credits for participation in high school. Businesses are exposed to potential employees and receive recognition for their participation. Education about manufacturing opportunities and trade school opportunities were recommended. Dr. Thompson noted the tracking of student education and employment after high school participation in CAPS or academies is beginning with MN DEED and the University of Minnesota. An idea was suggested to consider a possible incentive that would be available for companies to give employees time in schools.

The need to develop a few goals, start working to achieve them, celebrate our successes and then move on to new goals was stressed as an important next step.

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The following six action items were recommended:

- Develop better connections between employers and school districts, identifying mentors to participate in school programming.
- Educate students on what careers are available and parents on career pathway options, working to remove the stigma on non-four year college options.
- Explore post-secondary education options within the County as it relates to expanding locally offered programs versus new brick and mortar educational facilities.
- Expand early education opportunities through a program which would bring educators to areas of need (i.e. low income neighborhoods) to work with and screen children and offer educational programming for parents of pre-school age children. This may also include the development of a book-mobile to travel to targeted areas to serve 3-4 year olds. Discussion was held relating to the coordination of this effort with the Education Group, which could focus on the children while the Workforce Readiness Group focuses on education for the parents.
- Identify reasons the unemployment rate is higher among 18-24 year old residents who are in the workforce.
- Complete a local Business Retention and Expansion Survey to obtain input from large employers.

The “Big Picture Questions” which were part of the original charter were reviewed including:

- What are local employer needs/gaps/concerns for the workforce?
- Are there alternatives and creative workforce solutions to help local employers/job seekers based on best practices and industry trends?
- What are the gaps between post-secondary opportunities in the community and workforce skills training needs?

Based on committee member input, staff will review the identified gaps and opportunities and bring a list of possible goals to the next meeting.

It was recommended the Workforce Readiness Working Group be expanded to include long term county employers (i.e. Chart Industries, Emerson, TE Connectivity) and a representative from a temp/hiring agency.

Agenda Item 4: Employer Survey Feedback.

The group discussed the next steps to completing an employer survey. It was recommended a sub-committee be established to work on the employer survey and determine items such as; who should complete the visit, what final questions should be included, which employers to include, timeframe for completion, etc. Tim Wynes, Mark Jacobs and Annie Sheehan-Kerber, volunteered to join Barb Dahl and Stacy Crakes on the subcommittee.

The next meeting will be held on Tuesday, April 11, 2017 at 11:00 a.m.

The meeting adjourned at: 12:30 p.m.