



The Southwest Ohio Region  
WORKFORCE INVESTMENT BOARD

**ODJFS Director, Michael Colbert Requested Special Meeting of SWORWIB  
SuperJobs Center-Conference Room C  
December 9, 2011 9:30 am-10:30 am  
Minutes**

**Members Present:** Beth Brannigan, Michael Conner, Timothy Devine, Margaret Fox, Crystal German, Brenda Gumbs, Sharon Hancock, Greg Hartmann, Joe Hummel, Paul Magnus, Timothy McCartney, Rene McPhedran,, H.A. Musser, Gregg Oshita, Jennifer Roeder, Tyronne Stuckey, Karen Wessel.

**Staff:** Sherry Kelley Marshall, Pat Massey, Anne Mitchell, William Ware, Kathleen Williams.

**Resources:** Kevin Holt.

**Guests:** Carla Chance for O'dell Owens, Michael Colbert, Gerrie Cotter, Daina Dennis, Kim Hopper, Matt Kyser, Chellie McLellan, Cathy Metcalf for Doug Sizemore, Carolyn Reynolds, Harry Snyder for Robin White, Tim Simpson, David Stonerock, Eileen Turner, Chuck Walters, Roxanne Ward.

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**Welcome & Introductions**

Conner welcomed everyone and began the meeting at 9:32 am by introducing Director Colbert and then asking everyone present to introduce themselves.

**Director Colbert Remarks**

Director Colbert thanked the Board, Conner and Marshall for allowing him to come and talk with the board members and their guests about the future direction of workforce development in Ohio. He prefaced his remarks by saying that he had been talking with WIBs all around the state. He believes the state is facing a real economic crisis. Even when the recession abates the federal government will not be providing levels of funding for workforce development anywhere near previous levels. The state has lost 322,000 jobs, 6% of its payroll and taken a 20% reduction in WIA funding. He expects another 20%-30% reduction on top of this current 20% in the coming budget year.

Colbert said when the governor took office he mandated three priorities:

- Balance the budget
- Keep and attract new employers
- Provide short term training, incentivize employers to hire and promote incumbent worker training.

The success of the workforce priority will be measured with three metrics:

- How many people found jobs?
- How many people stayed employed?
- What level of pay do they earn?

Colbert emphasized that it is no longer enough to train people if they don't get hired. Providers must move away from long term training programs to more work with connecting employers to those who have completed short term training as well as upskilling or re-training of jobseeking customers for immediate available employment. Colbert spoke with some urgency that if the efforts do not include success in finding people employment and keeping them employed with sufficient earnings, Colbert anticipates dollars will be re-directed. Marshall shared with the Director that these actions have been key directions of the SWORWIB since August 2008 when training related resources were directed to short-term training, industry credentials, and partnerships with regional career consortia in healthcare, construction and advanced manufacturing and soon with information technology. This direction also included sharing measurement expectations with the training providers who are required to meet standards for completion rates, placement rates, rates of pay, and industrial credentials and/or college credit transferability. Several board members commented on this shift since 2008 and the challenges the SWORWIB has faced for our

leadership from other WIBs throughout the state who support multi-year academic commitments and from training providers who want to be paid regardless of their success with our customers.

Director Colbert noted that the future direction will require resources to be focused upon turning existing WIA dollars from Rapid Response to On-The-Job Training (OJTs) and Incumbent Worker Training. Director Colbert reviewed the situation with work experience performance throughout the State of Ohio and the dire consequences of refunding the federal government if performance is not dramatically and quickly improved in the TANF system. Therefore, as the workforce investment system reformulates it will become increasingly important to get TANF customers into employment. He further shared that two hundred thousand people will roll off unemployment between January and June unless Unemployment Compensation is extended. Prison and former offender reform will also put many more unemployed people with additional barriers into the public workforce system.

He elaborated that success will depend upon how connections can be made to the employer that encourage them to hire. Colbert remarked that it will not be enough to encourage employers with incentives to do what they are already going to do anyway. We must grow the workforce thereby increasing dollars available to increase demand for goods and services. Success will also depend upon re-tooling current workers so they can stay employed or find other employment quickly using newly developed skills in their field or in crossover fields. Planning will need to include contingencies in decreasing overhead and program dollars by as much as 20%-30%. Focus must be upon reducing and maintaining overhead reduction.

**Discussion:**

Hummel asked where funding for our emerging workforce is headed. Colbert replied Ohio is trying to influence youth funding not be part of sequestration and to have more flexibility in how dollars for youth are spent, while re-emphasizing that Ohio must channel as much of the core dollars as possible to OJT. Stuckey and others encouraged Colbert to not abandon youth as they are the pipeline for future workers and need encouragement to stay engaged in education. McLellan asked about supportive services for youth noting she can get youth employed but keeping them employed, through teaching how to budget their paychecks, and managing their already developed families requires a bundle of services not typically funded through WIA.

Stuckey asked if OJT is going to be available for businesses under 250 employees. Colbert replied that with small businesses the question always is "Can I even afford to hire another person?" but yes with current OJT resources and the redirection of more funds to OJT, plans are that smaller employers will have a sliding scale for hiring incentives. He also encouraged the SWORWIB to work with large public projects that promise massive employment for many years, such as the MSD work currently underway for which Marshall responded that the SuperJobs Center had already been working with MSD's consultant on assessments required by local apprenticeship programs and possible contracting with MSD's largest construction contractor.

Marshall briefly reminded Colbert of the various efforts Area #13 is already involved in or has developed that support the Director's direction and noted that she is confident that the full SWORWIB welcomes his re-focusing of local workforce development efforts. She further reminded Colbert that the unavailability of the Unemployment Information data exchange poses a real challenge to confirming our customers' employment results and is an additional problem for being able to satisfy DOL grant expectations for this data, as well. Colbert noted that he is working on this challenge.

A question was also raised about comments some employers have raised: "When I have so many applications for any position why should I do any training?" Marshall replied this is where Prioritized Industry Sectors and Career Pathways become critical to employer engagement. It is true that for some employers there is an abundant labor pool from which to choose. However, many of the more skilled positions do not have enough skilled workers available and working with employers through these approaches is more likely to produce hiring and retention success than widespread unconnected training programs.

**Adjournment**

Conner thanked the Director for coming and providing good information about the future directions at the state level and noted that he hoped Colbert could stay for a few minutes as some members might like to talk to him after the meeting. Conner adjourned the meeting at 10:37 am.

