NCPRPDC Board Meeting
Wednesday, July 23, 2014

Board Members Present

James Thomas  Cameron County
William Bogart  Cameron County
Kenneth Straub  Cameron County
Mark McCracken  Clearfield County
David Greene  Elk County
Matt Quesenberry  Elk County
Jeffrey Pisarcik  Jefferson County
James McIntyre  Jefferson County
Joseph DeMott  McKean County
Robert Esch  McKean County
Dr. Livingston Alexander  McKean County
Ken Baldwin  McKean County
Thomas Jacoby  Potter County

Guests

David Mitchell  Governor’s Northwest Office
Jill Thompson  State Representative Kathy Rapp’s Office
Thomas G.G. Coppolo  Solicitor
Richie Lecker  Ridgway Record
Katie Weidenboerner  Courier Express

First Vice Chair Jeff Pisarcik called the meeting to order at 11:05 AM with the pledge of allegiance to the flag.

INTRODUCTIONS

First Vice Chair Pisarcik asked everyone to introduce themselves.

MINUTES

With no corrections, additions or amendments to the minutes of the April 23 Executive Committee and Full Board Meetings, May 27 Executive Committee Meeting, and the June 18 Executive
Committee Meeting, Jim McIntyre moved to approve the minutes as presented, seconded by Joe DeMott. Motion unanimously passed.

QUARTERLY REPORT

Eric briefly talked about the Quarterly Report. This report contains highlights from the programs for the last three months. If you have any questions regarding this, please contact Eric or any member of the Management Team.

Eric highlighted several items of importance from his Executive Director’s Report he presented at the Executive Committee Meeting.

The President signed the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act, the reauthorization bill to the Workforce Investment Act. He noted that Congressman Thompson is a strong advocate of workforce. Also Senators Casey and Toomey were also in favor of this bill.

PA FY15 General Fund Budget was signed by Governor Corbett on July 10. Eric noted that DCED didn’t fare very well. Export and PA Jobs1st funding was cut.

PRESENTATION

North Central JOBS! Initiative

Eric called on Pam Streich to give a presentation on North Central JOBS! which is through the Jobs 1st PA Grant. JOBS! stands for Joint Opportunities Bring Success! It is the PREP Partners as well as the Workforce Investment Board coming together to unite their missions and message and how they work with employers.

The primary objective is to ensure that our employers are competitive in a global economy and in our region. The first thing they are starting out with is a Comprehensive Strategic Plan. A third party consulting firm is needed to do this, so a Request for Quotes (RFQ) has been put together. All the PREP Partners submitted their bidder lists to Pam so they could be included in the mailing. The RFQ was sent out on July 18. Several questions have been received from consulting firms from throughout the area. Pam stated they don’t know where they will get proposals from but the RFQ was sent out all across the state and even some were sent outside of Pennsylvania.

The proposals are due back by August 8 with questions due to Susie and Pam by August 1. During August 11 – 15 all the Core PREP Partners and the WIB will review and evaluate the proposals. Pam noted that the Core PREP Partners, in addition to North Central Commission and the WIB are: Cameron County IDA, Clarion University Small Business Development Center, Clearfield County EDC, Jefferson County Development Council, McKean County IDC, Northwest IRC, St. Marys EDC and the Potter County Redevelopment Authority.
All the Core PREP Partners contributed to the awarded proposal and the RFQ, so there is quite a bit of strategic planning that is going to take place to get all those agencies on the same page. The consultant will be doing that with all the PREP Partners and the WIB, as well as doing some cross-training so that all the different agencies have a really good understanding of what each other does. Where we can work together is the goal of this project.

The Focus Groups will take place within each county. There will be funding available for each county, depending on the outcomes of the strategic analysis whether it be incumbent worker training. The IRC has a strong interest in ensuring that the CEOs of companies are heavily involved in the Focus Groups to the extent possible. There might be some surveys or individual conversations with the CEOs. We are permitted to do incumbent worker training as long as it does not replicate what the Industry Partnerships are doing. We anticipate hearing about the whole Business and Education Connect Initiative. Again there will be some funding available to each county to implement those initiatives and activities.

The activities would take place from January – June of 2015 because the funding has to be spent by June 30, 2015.

This is our opportunity to get innovative and creative without some of the restrictions and parameters from our traditional workforce development funding stream. We will be engaging all the academic institutions as well as our training partners to make sure they are aware of this.

This is going to be moving quickly and we are making this a consultant-based process because of the timeframe.

Susie and Pam, and primarily Pam, will be North Central’s liaison to this so we will see Susie or Pam’s name on virtually everything that comes from this. This is a partnership between the Department of Labor and Industry and DCED with the principal driver behind this being the leadership under the Governor’s Office.

The Workforce Investment Board directors have been apprised of this and there have been numerous conversations within our PREP partners, who are ready to move on this.

Matt Quesenberry asked if this was focused mainly on industrial manufacturing or will it focus on other areas such as health care.

Pam stated that the focus is not on manufacturing. Actually it’s on all industry sectors. And that is why it will be critical to engage our partners on the county level to make sure we have the right people.

It is hoped that the county people will be able to drive a lot of this. What is already being done we want to be partner of. We don’t want to start over. Since we already have a Manufacturing and Healthcare Industry Partnership, they are going to be part of this because those are the two largest
sectors and employers. There are a lot of other industries that this opportunity will allow us to work with and possibly provide training they have not had access to before.

If you have any questions on this, please feel free to contact Susie, Pam or Eric.

**Youth Entrepreneurship Business Fund Proposal**

Eric stated at the same time as the Jobs1st process, the Department of Community and Economic Development reached out to each of the PREP Coordinators stating they had resources from the Discovered and Developed in PA (D2PA) program. They wanted to put those dollars on the street throughout the regions to do some innovative collaborative-types of activity. There is certainly a long list of suggestions and ideas we have in the queue to do.

The PREP Partners were called together and numerous conversations about what we wanted to do were held. Eric has always had an interest in entrepreneurship, but more youth oriented/youth targeted entrepreneurship, under the guise of when is really the best time for youth in our region to get exposed to the idea of entrepreneurship and getting into business for themselves.

In our region we are fortunate to have a particular elevated commitment on this entire issue through the PA Wilds Initiative. One of the components of the PA Wilds team focuses on entrepreneurship in a natural heritage, natural environment tourism way. Ta Enos, who is the director of that, has created and established an IRS-recognized non-profit that is about elevating the conversation and commitment in focusing on entrepreneurship.

After many discussions they came up with the Youth Entrepreneurship Business Fund Proposal.

We have been able to secure resources that will allow us to work with up to 12 school districts. We have reached out to the school districts asking them to send us a simple “Request for Interest” stating they are interested and what they will commit to this program. Funding will be contingent with the number of schools we will be working with. The PREP Partners will review these submissions and select which schools we want to work with.

The SBDC in Clarion is hosting a Mini Entrepreneurship Conference on October 14 which will be a fairly targeted half day-long conference specific to this topic. And there will be a special time for the youth engaged in this program. The sooner we can get the youth to appreciate and understand there is a supporting system out there to help them develop their ideas and that there is a network willing to come to the schools and work with them, our hope is the youth will recognize there is a value in companies and existing entrepreneurs to offer mentoring.

We are trying to reshape the entrepreneurial systems and tools and activities that are available to fit them into an academic environment all designed to help kids develop meaningful business ideas.

Some of the things we are doing is we will be providing upfront scholarships to all the schools that participate in this will get a scholarship to ultimately be incorporated into their system’s scholarship
fund. There will be resources available for fund Entrepreneurial Clubs. Through these funds, those E-Clubs within the schools working with partners will actually start learning how to identify a business idea. This is where some of the practitioners who work with individuals on developing and refining ideas would come into play. Once an entrepreneur has implemented the business and generates proceeds, the idea is that these proceeds will be reinvested in the school’s scholarship fund to be used to continue to reinvest into those clubs and subsequent projects or activities.

We are willing to introduce, where necessary, the Junior Achievement Company curriculum for schools that want to use that. If schools have their own entrepreneurial or different type of curriculum they want to use, we will review that and they can use that as well.

The main idea is to get youth, who have not figured out what they want to do or haven’t developed an appreciation, even as a 8th, 9th, 10th or 11th grader, that their ideas and aspirations of things they would like to try do have value and can ultimately potentially work.

The advantage of both of these initiatives is by establishing the base work and focusing up front we are hoping that we will be able to build own institutional capacity to carry some of these things moving on.

DCED has intimated they are very excited about this proposal and very intrigued about what it is we are trying to do and optimistic about the outcome. Depending on how impactful we are, this is the type of project that will resonate in the future years as well. This is all program money. All the partners’ time has been donated. The $98,000 grant money is going into activities. This exemplifies the commitment and importance that the partners and some of the other people that are working on this.

Pam said they sent an email out with a short, easy to complete application to all the superintendents and the administrators at the private schools, principals, anyone on the contact list. The Workforce Development staff and Youth staff sent it to their contacts trying to reach as many people within the school districts as possible.

She stated they have heard back from about 15 different schools and have received five applications so far. The applications are due on July 25. She anticipates they will end up with 12 or more applications, but 12 would be ideal because they wouldn’t have to turn anyone down. A lot of them are requesting the Junior Achievement Company curriculum so that will keep the JA people very busy.

There is always a need for volunteers when talking about entrepreneur clubs and just too perhaps come in and talk to the students or offer a field trip at your company. Each PREP Partner and WIB staff will be adopting a school so we will serve as a contact person for the club advisor to meet with.

The five schools that have submitted applications so far are Bradford, Brookville, St. Marys High School, Port Allegany and DuBois. Pam has heard from Kane, Elk County Catholic, Cameron County and several schools in Clearfield County that have asked questions.
Dr. Alexander stated that there is a very extensive entrepreneurship curriculum at the college level that provides education about business principals and how to establish a business, and how make sure you have a better chance to succeed. To what extent does this program allow youth to get into curriculum about entrepreneurship and is there any connection to that very extensive curriculum?

Pam stated that if the school wanted to use that curriculum or any curriculum, it is up to them. We are not pushing any certain curriculum. It is up to the school to apply for what they want to do. They are not tied to use Junior Achievement or any curriculum at all. Pam asked if Dr. Alexander would send her more information on this.

Dave Mitchell wanted to know if there is presence of the Manufacturing Association in our region. They are based out of Erie and Harrisburg. They run business week programs in the northwestern schools and they have a set formula. They are excellent programs that run for a week and have volunteers come in. The 11th graders create a company and sell products and make it run and be profitable. They bring the community in at the end to see the product and evaluate who the best entrepreneur of the group is. There is a model that perhaps you can explore with the Manufacturers Association as a component.

Eric stated it would be a good idea to get in contact with these people and see what they can contribute. He will follow up with Dave to get pertinent information.

There is a lot in this program that we probably won’t be able to do but it will be a start and hopefully will be successful. With the unique tools and unique opportunities and unique people we have and the commitment we are getting from everyone that is touching this, Eric sees this as an enduring and sustainable type of activity.

**DISCUSSION**

Pam reported that Governor Corbett will be hosting a conference in Pittsburgh, August 25-26. The agenda lists great speakers and topics to be discussed. Pam heard the main audiences they want are employers. From North Central Pam, Susie and Eric will be attending, along with Bob Esch and Sharon Engle, the WIB Chair, will be attending.

Pam said one of the topics that companies are asking is if North Central can do a seminar entitled “Attracting, Motivating and Retaining Employees Particularly Gen Y Individuals for the Manufacturing Industry.” There is an RFQ out to get people in to talk about this. Even though there is a lot of information out there, industries still want someone who can help them step-by-step what can we do to keep these youth, and it’s not just youth. Gen Y is people born between 1977 and 1994. This is also one of the topics being discussed in Pittsburgh.

Eric noted that at a recent conference he had the opportunity to talk to the President of the online company Zappos. The gentleman told Eric they have a child care facility not only for their
employees, but for the community. Incorporated into that is a deliberate focus into those kids being potentially the next generation of his workforce.

Dave Mitchell noted he is working with a company who may have to turn down 200 jobs because the company can’t expand the workforce. Reasons for that are it’s a low entry company and secondly people have to pass a credit check, criminal background check, drug/alcohol test to pass the security clearance.

Dave’s point is we need to get to this generation early and this entrepreneur program should have a component in it that tells the kids to keep their noses clean. Don’t post things on Facebook that may come back to haunt and hurt them in the future.

The next full Board of Directors’ Meeting will be held on Wednesday, October 22, 2014, starting at 11:00 AM in the Teleconference Room at North Central.

ADJOURN

With no other business to be discussed, Mark McCracken moved to adjourn the meeting, seconded by Jim McIntyre. The meeting adjourned at 12:10 PM.

Respectfully submitted,

June H. Sorg
Secretary/Treasurer