

Baltimore Workforce Investment Board

Full Board Meeting
Wednesday, December 10th, 2008
Baltimore City Hall

Welcome, Introductions, and Meeting Overview

BWIB Public Policy Committee Chairman Larry Walton called the meeting to order at 8:00 am. Mr. Walton noted that BWIB Chairman John Ashworth was unable to attend today, for the first time in his tenure as BWIB chair, in light of an important meeting of his Board of Directors. Mr. Walton indicated that Chairman Ashworth asked him to lead the meeting in his absence, since so much of the focus today relates to public policy issues.

As Mr. Walton began this meeting, he noted that Chairman Ashworth wanted to convey to the board a recognition that, in light of the challenging economic climate facing our nation, state, and city, it is clear that the activities of this workforce board are going to be more relevant than ever. He noted that board members should take comfort in the fact that Baltimore has many strengths on which to build, even in the midst of adverse conditions.

As just one example, Mr. Walton indicated that the City is actively exploring the potential that green collar jobs might have for job-seekers. The City Council recently introduced legislation to establish a Green Collar Jobs Creation Coalition. In its comments on this bill, the Mayor's Office of Employment Development pointed out that the existing expertise and public and private sector contacts of both MOED and the BWIB to be uniquely suited to initiate this task.

Mr. Walton shared with the Board that Ms. Molly Magrath, the new Director of Baltimore's Department of Social Services was appointed to the BWIB.

Mr. Walton then acknowledged that the various members of the Baltimore City Delegation to the Maryland General Assembly were invited to today's meeting and that Senator Catherine Pugh would be joining the meeting representing the delegation. Additionally, Mr. Walton recognized one of our regional partners, Mark Habicht, Chair of the Baltimore County Workforce Development Council.

At this point, Mr. Walton acknowledged another important BWIB organizational update. As the board may recall, both former BWIB Vice-Chair Alicia Foster and long-time Youth Council Chair Skipp Sanders have stepped down from their roles with the BWIB.

Mr. Walton announced that BWIB member Susan Butta, Vice President for External Affairs for Verizon, has agreed to serve in both of these roles. Mr. Walton spoke for the entire board when thanking Ms. Butta for her willingness to take on these two important leadership roles.

Review and Approval of 09-09-08 Meeting Minutes

Minutes for the September 9, 2009 meeting of the full BWIB Board were presented for approval and subsequently approved by voice vote.

Review and Approval of 2008 – 2009 Public Policy Priorities

Mr. Walton provided an overview of the recommended 2008 – 2009 BWIB Public Policy Priorities and noted that the modified Public Policy Priorities presented were a refinement of those used during the previous year. The Public Policy priorities were approved by a voice vote of the board.

Mr. Walton briefly reviewed the advocacy strategies to be used in promoting these priorities. These strategies are: 1) presentation of BWIB Public Policy Priorities to the Baltimore City Legislative Delegation; 2) attendance and participation in Workforce Investment Network for MD 2009 General Assembly Legislative Breakfast; 3) individual meetings with key Baltimore City legislators, Members of Congress, City Council members, and legislative staff; 4) individual meetings with key legislative budget committee members; and lastly, 5) development of "talking points" for use by BWIB members in their discussions with legislators as part of any of the strategies listed above.

Remarks – Mayor Sheila Dixon

Mr. Walton then introduced The Honorable Sheila Dixon, Mayor of the City of Baltimore. First, Mayor Dixon thanked BWIB Chairman John Ashworth and MOED Director Karen Sitnick for their efforts in coordinating this exchange and even more so for their leadership over the years.

The Mayor also thanked all the Board members for the time and energy dedicated to the work of this board. Mayor Dixon noted that board members play a key role in our continuing efforts to train our City's residents to be ready for meaningful careers that help them sustain their families and support our businesses which are the economic engine that keep Baltimore prosperous.

Mayor Dixon noted that the financial challenges facing our nation's economy are sure to have an impact on all citizens, which makes the work of the BWIB even more important.

Mayor Dixon stated that visits to the City's three One-Stop Career Centers have increased by about 20 percent for this year. With a greater number of Baltimore residents now looking for employment, it is vital that the progress that has been made in our City continues.

Mayor Dixon challenged board members to think if ways to spread BWIB's message and educate decision-makers in both Annapolis and Washington, DC, about the importance of a multi-jurisdictional partners in support of workforce activities.

Open Forum with Members of the Baltimore City Delegation to the Maryland General Assembly

Mr. Walton introduced Senator Catherine Pugh, representing the 40th Legislative District. Senator Pugh outlined her intent to reintroduce legislation, which would require that the Commissioner of Correction issue an identification card to all inmates upon their release from a State correctional facility that conforms with the requirements for secondary identification as determined by the Maryland Motor Vehicle Administration.

Senator Pugh noted that one major stumbling block to the successful re-entry of ex-offenders is in reclaiming their identities, both literally as well as emotionally. The provisions of this bill will help to streamline this process. Possession of a recognized government agency identification card will help returning ex-offenders to obtain driver's licenses, copies of birth certificates, and other necessary documentation.

More specifically, Senator Pugh indicated that possession of such identification cards can greatly aid ex-offenders as they seek employment. Presentation of valid identification is a required element of any businesses' hiring process. Additionally, ex-offenders can utilize these credentials to obtain driver's licenses, thereby increasing the range of jobs that they could access, as well as allowing them to be eligible for jobs requiring vehicular duties. By facilitating the successful reintegration of ex-offenders back into the community, this legislation can help to reduce the overall rate of recidivism in the long run.

Senator Pugh concluded by thanking the BWIB for its past support for previous versions of this bill, and requested that the board consider supporting the 2009 bill addressing this important public policy issue.

Informational Presentation – Workforce Priorities in the Obama Administration

Ms. Mary Gardner Clagett, Deputy Director of National Center on Education and the Economy, provided an overview of the workforce priorities of the incoming administration of President-elect Barack Obama. Ms. Clagett provided a review of some of the elements of then-Senator Barack Obama's campaign platform that have relevance for workforce development. For instance, Obama has pledged to invest \$1 billion over five years to support transitional jobs and career pathways programs for low-income workers. This investment would be supported by unspecified measures to increase private sector and state and local involvement in these programs.

She stated that President Obama has also proposed the establishment of a new "Community College Partnership" grant program. Grants could be used to conduct more thorough analysis of the types of skills and technical education that are in high demand from students and local industry. Senator Obama proposes to invest \$150 billion in clean energy projects over ten years, including investments in "America's highly-skilled manufacturing workforce and manufacturing centers to ensure that American workers have the skills and tools they need to pioneer the first wave of green technologies that will be in high demand throughout the world."

In addition, the new President would establish a program called either the Green Job Corps or the "5-E" (Energy Efficiency, Environmental Education and Employment Disconnected Youth Service Corps). The program would engage disconnected and disadvantaged youth in environmentally-focused service projects, and would engage employers and labor unions to provide apprenticeship opportunities.

Ratification of the BWIB Strategic Plan for 2009 Calendar Year

Mr. Walton began this item by reminding the BWIB members of the tremendous progress that was outlined, with regard to the varied work products coming from the BWIB's five standing committees. Clearly, as part of the updates presented at the September 2008 BWIB meeting, the board heard that the existing BWIB strategic direction, as outlined in the 2008 – 2010 Strategic Plan, continues to have relevance to our ongoing mission of creating a public workforce engine driving Baltimore City toward sustained prosperity.

Mr. Walton indicated that copies of the current Strategic Plan have been provided within the meeting packets, and asked the members to briefly review this document. He then noted that during 2009, there will be preparation for the task of assessing the future strategic vision for the BWIB. For instance, Mr. Walton pointed out, that the Training and Postsecondary Education Committee, as an outgrowth of its work on reviewing the existing talent development pipeline for the current seven industry sectors, will assess the ongoing validity of these sectors, and review the ongoing validity of these seven sectors, and determine if any new sectors might be appropriate additions.

Mr. Walton asked for a motion to ratify the 2008 – 2010 BWIB Strategic Plan, for use during the 2009 calendar year. Such a motion was offered and approved by the full board membership.

In conclusion, Mr. Walton reminded the board that during September 2009, the BWIB will initiate its process for the development of a new two-year strategic plan, to cover the period from 2010 – 2012.

Final Comments and Adjournment

Mr. Walton noted the next meeting of the board is scheduled for Tuesday, March 3rd, starting at 8:00 am. The meeting location remains to be determined. He thanked the members for their attendance today, and encouraged them to remain active on the board and its committees.

Lastly, Mr. Walton noted that the Mayor will be having a press event on Friday, December the 12th at 10:30 am in City Hall, to kick-off the 2009 YouthWorks campaign. He encouraged any board members who have the time to come and support this effort.

In closing, on behalf of John and the staff of MOED, Mr. Walton wished each of you a festive holiday season.

The meeting was adjourned at 9:31 am.

Submitted by,
Jeffrey W. Smith