

Operations & Performance Committee

April 25, 2006

Attendees: John Nixon, Jolyn Bevan, Stan Eckersley, Melissa Finch, Deb Dull, Greg Diven, Jon Pierpont, Katherine Keydsman, Christine Ward

Welcome and Introduction: John Nixon welcomed the committee and asked the members to introduce themselves. Deb Dull moved that the minutes be accepted from the last meeting. Greg Diven seconded the motion.

Budget: Jolyn Bevan spoke about DWS funding cuts, showing a breakdown of each cut. John Nixon spoke about how we can best react and plan around these cuts. Jolyn remarked about how the approval by the State Council for 100% transfer of the funds will assist DWS in spreading the funding to where it is most needed. The committee discussed some possible reasons for the funding cuts. The group questioned whether training funding has been utilized lately. With so many high school graduates getting high paying jobs right after high school, there is no incentive to get additional school and training. We need to educate these graduates that obtaining a skill for a long term, higher paying job is important. Melissa Finch said that more employers are requiring high school diplomas. Our focus should be helping as many youth as possible get progressive, career mobility jobs. In many of the rural areas construction or farm jobs are more enticing than graduation.

Performance Measures: Jolyn Bevan explained we are meeting or within 80% of all WIA 17 Performance measures. If we do get approval from DOL to only report on common measures, we will be meeting all of the measures. The Federal Government wants us to deal with more difficult to serve customers but still requires us to meet the negotiated performance outcomes on 17 measures. We will be submitting a waiver to eliminate the reporting requirement of the 17 WIA Performance Measure and only report on the 9 Common Measures. The SWIB reviewed and approved it to forward to USDOL. Both the Governor's office and the legislature are interested in these measures.

Electronic Benefit Transfer (EBT): As Jolyn explained at the last meeting we are implementing a new payment process. Currently we use a paper voucher process. The date was originally scheduled for August 2006, but a

new date is set for January 2007. The question was posed regarding if EBT can be used in purchasing materials for training. There will be two separate "accounts" per EBT card, one account restricted for approved training providers, the other account will be an unrestricted account. Moving to EBT guarantees a closer relationship between the amounts authorized and the actual expenditure of those funds. Our funds must be 70% spent by the end of the year. We will continue to update the committee on this.

Montana Peer to Peer: Jolyn Bevan, Connie Laws and Jane Broadhead had an opportunity to visit Montana to present our Best Practices. Montana is currently implementing a system similar to Utah's to become a single service delivery state. Utah is fortunate to have the entire funding under 1 department.

Strategic Planning: John Nixon explained with the onset of the Huntsman administration DWS was given a charge to make our department more efficient. Tani Pack-Downing our Director knew the department well and knew what improvement could be made. Several director positions were eliminated. Finance and Administrative support were consolidated into 1 division. We were able to consolidate many policy areas. So far this has worked well.

Our Family Employment program caseloads have gone down about 20%. We need at least 50% participation. There are new regulations being considered that will allow Utah to be more flexible. We have been doing well in keeping people out of the system by giving them long-term employment. This shift will have an impact in the department. They are confident they are moving forward to bring rates up. DWS has anticipated this change. Melissa Finch pointed out that one of the participations that count is work-site learning. Tani Pack Downing, our Executive Director is working with other cabinet members to become involved.

As we move forward in the department it is important that we focus on core services. Most core services do not require qualifications. John Nixon distributed a list that showed our core services. He had each committee member comment on which core services were the most important.

Many committee members were concerned with which services were the most costly. John Nixon pointed out that the most costly of our services are the ones that require employees. 67% of our clients have Internet access. More utilization of the Internet is a main goal.

Members asked about training provided to employers to use online services. Could instruction be on a website? Could there be an online or telephone help desk to assist?

The question was raised whether DWS does anything that private industry provides. Private industry should work with DWS rather than compete, and augment each other

Members asked about Employer Seminars and Employer Committees. DWS is currently partnering with the Department of Commerce to do Job Fairs. Our round tables can be sponsored by private businesses, which then benefit directly from this. Some examples are Motor fest and Construction Career day.

We need input from the region councils to give us guidance to run our programs and use funding where it is needed most. John Nixon thanked the committee for their input in the previous meeting. It helps us focus on the most important needs.

John Nixon concluded the meeting by reiterating that DWS is trying to put many more services online and make our agency much more efficient.

Deb Dull made the motion to adjourn. Greg Divin seconded it.