

**MINUTES OF THE
EDUCATION AND TRAINING COMMITTEE**

THURSDAY, JULY 23, 2009

At a special meeting/public hearing of the **Education and Training Committee**, held Thursday, July 23, 2009, in the Board Room, on the 9th Floor of the Administration Building, Mount Clemens, the following members were present:

D. Flynn-Chair, Bruley, Camphous-Peterson, Crouchman, Doherty, Mijac, Mocerri, Rengert, Sprys and Gielegem (ex-officio).

Other Commissioners Also Present:

Brdak, Brown, Carabelli, DiMaria, Duzyj, J. Flynn, Kepler, Lampar, Rocca, Tocco and Vosburg.

There being a quorum of the committee present, Chair D. Flynn called the meeting to order at 4:30 p.m.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

The Pledge of Allegiance was recited.

AGENDA

MOTION

A motion was made by Rengert, supported by Doherty, to adopt the agenda, as presented. **The Motion Carried.**

INTRODUCTORY COMMENTS

Chair D. Flynn explained that the purpose of the hearing was to state the facts about the upcoming sharp rise in number of Macomb County residents whose unemployment compensation benefits will be exhausted, provide a forum for affected individuals to explain their situation, allow providers the opportunity to talk about the effect this will have on demand for essential services and hear from various legislators about what is being done at the state and federal levels.

U.S. Senator Debbie Stabenow participated via telephone conference call. She complimented the Board for initiating the hearing, seeking to raise awareness and proactively looking for ways to address the upcoming demand.

**REPORT FROM JOHN BIERBUSSE, DIRECTOR OF MiWORKS!, AND
INDIVIDUAL TESTIMONIES OF AFFECTED INDIVIDUALS**

Mr. Bierbusse provided an overview of the impending rise in benefit exhaustion for people currently receiving unemployment compensation in Macomb County and the region. He highlighted the opportunities for retraining, spoke about the wait list and

talked about the difficulty for people to get new employment when very few or no opportunities exist.

U.S. Congressman Sander Levin participated via telephone conference call. He spoke about the situation in Macomb County and said that legislation was near to being introduced that would provide an extension for those people whose benefits will be exhausted. He commended the Board for holding this event and expressed support to those going through hard times.

Mr. Bierbusse continued his presentation and then introduced individuals who are nearing benefits exhaustion: Jason Oziem, Thomas Thieda, Jery Klein, Sr., Dennis Keena and James Knight. All spoke about their individual circumstances.

PRESENTATIONS BY PUBLIC SERVICE PROVIDERS

Mr. Frank Taylor, Director of Macomb County Community Services Agency, presented an overview of services his agency currently provides and talked about the increase in demand for emergency food and Head Start services and the number of customers in the system, many of them first time. He presented a new "Essential Resources Guide" and said it will be published on the Macomb County website and copies will also be made for distribution. He said the Guide contains contact details for helpful information and services that are currently available for people who need help with food, shelter, bills, medical care, etc.

Ms. Kay Andrzejak, Acting Director for the Macomb County Department of Human Services, provided testimony about the increase in applications, number of active cases and available services provided by her department. She also spoke about the process of applying and what type of help people can expect to receive from DHS. She said they hope to have an online application process in the very near future.

Mr. Bill Sullivan, Director of United Way 211, provided a presentation about the complexity of the problem and said that focus has to be on developing a road map for social change here in Southeast Michigan and talked about the case for action. He said United Way 211 provides callers with opportunities to seek solutions. He talked about implementation of a five-year plan and said that success will depend upon a detailed work plan and should focus on critical factors and will also require a cooperative effort between public, private and non-profit sectors. He also mentioned a need for help with the school breakfast and snack program.

REPORTS FROM FEDERAL/STATE OFFICIALS

Lt. John D. Cherry, Jr., thanked committee for provided testimony in which he acknowledged the gravity of the current economic climate and continuing related problems, including the number of unemployed people whose benefits will exhaust soon. He urged federal support for the continuation of unemployment compensation benefits. He also highlighted efforts by the current administration to address the situation and improve Michigan's future.

Ms. Vicki Selva spoke on behalf of Senator Levin and thanked the Board for highlighting the issues being faced in Macomb County.

Ms. Czernel, District Director, spoke on behalf of Congresswoman Miller and shared her thoughts on unemployment issues in Macomb County.

Testimony was heard from the following State Representatives: Jon Switalski, Kim Meltzer, Fred Miller, Tory Rocca and Harold Haugh.

PUBLIC HEARING/TESTIMONIALS

James Hanna, 38960 Hazel Street, Harrison Township
Steve Murphy, 31707 Fuerstenau, Richmond Township
Sherry Harley, 24745 Wagner, Warren
Mary Byrd, Clinton Township

COMMISSIONER COMMENTS

Commissioner Doherty spoke about the County Health Plan.

Commissioner Vosburg stated that MSU Extension can provide assistance to homeowners and mortgage holders who need help in accessing available programs.

Commissioner Mijac spoke about looking at waiting lists for job training at a community college due to lack of money. He referred to the Central Resource Guide and spoke about coordination in getting this information out to individuals who are currently unemployed in the county and stressed the importance of personal contact.

Commissioner Bruley spoke about the importance of extending the unemployment benefits.

Commissioner Brown urged people to contact their county commissioner for assistance with available programs.

ADOPT RESOLUTION URGING THE FEDERAL GOVERNMENT TO EXTEND UNEMPLOYMENT BENEFITS (OFFERED BY BOARD CHAIR ON BEHALF OF BOARD)

COMMITTEE RECOMMENDATION – MOTION

A MOTION WAS MADE BY MOCERI, SUPPORTED BY MIJAC, TO RECOMMEND THAT THE BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS ADOPT A RESOLUTION URGING THE FEDERAL GOVERNMENT TO EXTEND UNEMPLOYMENT BENEFITS.

The following commissioner spoke: Gieleghem.

Chair D. Flynn called for a vote on the motion and **THE MOTION CARRIED.**

NEW BUSINESS

Chair J. Flynn thanked staff who participated in the preparations for this meeting.

ADJOURNMENT

MOTION

A motion was made by Camphous-Peterson, supported by Rengert, to adjourn the meeting at 6:33 p.m. **The Motion Carried.**

Corinne Bedard
Committee Reporter