



Meeting Minutes
Iowa Prison Industries Advisory Board
Thursday, October 19, 2017
Meeting held via teleconference

Present: Dr. Doug Hillman, Robert Carr, Sheila Wilson, Bonnie Winther, Terry Goodman, Dan Clark.

Absent: Jennifer Gardner, Dr. Jenny Foster.

Staff: None.

Guests: None.

Mr. Clark had requested that the Board meet via conference call on an emergency basis so that two employment projects could be reviewed by the Board without delay. Both companies had expressed their desire to begin offender work projects as soon as possible.

I. Call to Order.

Dr. Doug Hillman called the meeting to order at 4:05pm on October 19, 2017.

II. Offender Employment Project – Riverbend Industries.

Mr. Goodman made a motion to approve the private sector employment project for Riverbend Industries in Victor, IA. The motion was seconded by Ms. Wilson.

Mr. Clark described the project, in which 40 offenders would work as injection molding press operators. He reviewed the board handouts, which included notifications to local and state governments, law enforcement, businesses and organized labor. The unemployment rate in Iowa County is 2.4%, according to the information supplied by Iowa Workforce Development.

The Iowa AFL/CIO had expressed its opposition to offender work programs in an email to Mr. Clark, which was included in the packet. However, the project has been provisionally approved by the US Dept of Justice – Bureau of Justice Assistance, with the stipulation that the Iowa AFL/CIO be asked to provide documentation of civilian displacement within 90 days.

The company had emailed Mr. Clark that due to its inability to hire a sufficient number of civilian employees, it was transferring work out of state and to Mexico. Mr. Clark stated that representatives from the company were ready to join the teleconference if the Board wished.

There was extensive discussion of the project and of prison work programs in general. Mr. Carr stated that he had spoken with the company's plant manager and said the company paid civilians \$10.00 for the first 100 hours, and that the top rate was \$14.00 per hour. Ms. Winther stated her belief that low wages was the reason that the company was unable to attract a sufficient workforce. Mr. Carr and Ms. Winther stated that the company should be required to submit its financial statements to the Board, since an examination of the company's earnings might show that the company could pay employees substantially more. Mr. Carr and Ms. Winther expressed their displeasure that offenders working for private companies were covered by the state Worker Compensation program.

Mr. Clark informed the Board that the company was required to pay offenders as Press Operators at least \$9.06 per hour during 2017, a wage that is determined by the Iowa Workforce Development Wage Survey. This minimum hourly wage would move up to \$12.62 as of January 1, 2018 according to Mr. Clark, since the newest IWD wage survey was substantially higher for Press Operators in that region of the state. Ms. Wilson expressed concern that in 2018, offenders might be paid more than civilian employees of the company, which could put offenders in an unsafe situation. Ms. Winther stated that if offenders were paid more than civilians, this would meet her definition of Displacement. Mr. Goodman expressed doubt that the company would allow a situation where offenders would be paid more than civilians, since the civilian workers would likely quit en masse.

Mr. Clark confirmed that the company was responsible to pay for the transport of offenders to and from the worksite (about 45 minutes by van).

Mr. Carr made a motion to table the agenda item, which was seconded by Ms. Winther. Mr. Carr later restated the motion, proposing to defer the agenda item instead of tabling it. Mr. Carr subsequently withdrew his motion, and Ms. Winther withdrew her second.

Dr. Hillman called for a vote on the motion to approve the offender employment project at Riverbend Industries. Mr. Goodman and Dr. Hillman were in favor, and Ms. Winther, Ms. Wilson and Mr. Carr were opposed. The motion was defeated 3-2.

III. Offender Employment Project – West Liberty Foods.

Mr. Goodman made a motion to approve the private sector employment project for West Liberty Foods in Mount Pleasant, IA. No member of the board seconded the motion, and it was not discussed or adopted.

Mr. Goodman expressed his concern as to whether the Board was fulfilling its responsibility to provide work opportunities for incarcerated offenders. He asked Mr. Clark to email the relevant sections of the Iowa Code to Board Members.

Ms. Wilson stated that she still had questions about the projects, and recommended that Mr. Clark arrange another Board meeting in the near future and invite representatives from both companies to address the Board and answer questions. Mr. Clark stated that he would send an online poll shortly.

IV. Adjourn

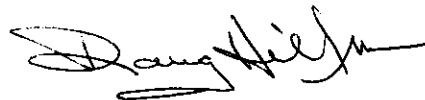
The meeting was adjourned at 5:23pm.

Minutes submitted by:



Dan Clark, Director

Minutes approved by:



Dr. Doug Hillman, Chair