

SE MN JOINT POWERS BOARD

May 14, 2020, 10:00 a.m.

Workforce Development, Inc.
Rochester, Minnesota

MINUTES

Attendees: Emily Wessing, Mike Postma, Wanda Jensen, Cheryl Key, Dan Belshan, Jeff Baldus, Jinny Rietmann, Linda Flanders, Mike Lentz, Steve Underdahl, Teresa Walter

Dan Belshan called the meeting to order. A quorum was present.

Compensation package presentation – Mike Postma & Jinny Rietmann

Mike Postma shared the compensation package presentation. About 40% of our workforce has been at WDI 10+ years, and about 50% have been with us less than five years. About 2/3 of our staff are career planners or navigators. Interestingly, many of our staff are joining us mid-career. As far as benefits go, salary ranks most highly. Our PTO structure is regarded positively, with suggestions for the ability to rollover more than 40 hours, or to purchase an additional 40 hours of PTO yearly. We score highly in regards to flexibility at work. Suggestions include the ability to work from home on occasion, four 10-hour days, and the ability to start and end their day at different times. Better pay and job security are the top reasons individuals consider leaving WDI. 2/3 of individuals find program-specific training most beneficial. The PTO purchase proposal was presented, and a brief discussion ensued. The compensation package proposal was presented, and a brief discussion ensued. Jinny Rietmann presented WDI's notable accomplishments from 2019-2020 and information on ROI. She then presented her own compensation package proposal.

There was a closed session to discuss the compensation package and Executive Director compensation package.

Dan Belshan motioned for consent of the compensation package and Executive Director compensation package; Cheryl Key moved, Mitch Lentz seconded, and the motion did not pass on a vote of 4-3. Jeff Baldus motioned to approve all other benefits proposed, with the exception of the compensation increases proposed; Linda Flanders seconded, and the motion passed on a vote of 5-2.

Dan Belshan motioned for consent of the May agenda; Jeff Baldus moved, Mitch Lentz seconded, and the motion passed. Dan Belshan motioned for consent of the March meeting minutes; Teresa Walter moved, Cheryl Key seconded, and the motion passed.

Approval of Joint Powers Board Memorandum of Understanding

Dan Belshan motioned to approve the Joint Powers Board Memorandum of Understanding; Steve Underdahl moved, Mitch Lentz seconded, and the motion passed.

Approval of Regional Workforce Development Board Memorandum of Understanding

Dan Belshan moved to approve the Regional Workforce Development Board Memorandum of Understanding; the motion passed.

Approval of One Stop Operating Partners Memorandum of Understanding

Dan Belshan moved to approve the One Stop Operating Partners Memorandum of Understanding; Jeff Baldus moved, Mitch Lentz seconded, and the motion passed.

Approval of Wanda Jensen as Signatory Authority

Dan Belshan moved to approve Wanda Jensen as signatory authority; Cheryl key moved, Steve Underdahl seconded, and the motion passed.

Seat New Workforce Development Board (WDB) Member

- 1. Laurie Brownell (Southeastern Minnesota Area Agency on Aging) (Action)**

Dan Belshan motioned for approval of new Workforce Development Board member Laurie Brownell (Southeastern Minnesota Area Agency on Aging); Steve Underdahl moved, Mitch Lentz seconded, and the motion passed.

Program Reports

Fiscal Report – Brian Ashton

Mr. Ashton gave the fiscal report. There is one addition to the budget since the last reporting period. We have the contract signed for the Hiawatha ABE P2P Public Sector grant. We are a subcontractor of this grant, and we will receive another allocation next year as well. We are currently 83% through the year with exception of salary and fringe which is at 75%. Our expenditures are on track – classroom training is down slightly due to cancellations and delays. We anticipate ending the year around \$7 million and are requesting extensions on grants due to COVID-19. Our health insurance costs have been declining as well. Mr. Ashton concluded his report.

Dan Belshan motioned for approval of the fiscal report; Teresa Walter moved, Cheryl Key seconded, and the motion passed.

Dislocated Worker (DW) – Sonji Davis

Ms. Davis gave the dislocated worker report. We have sent out press releases to all of our counties providing an overview of our program and how to access services. Recently, our Rochester office created a dislocated worker orientation PowerPoint for use in all offices. Our counselors are looking at new and innovative ways to attract traffic and are expecting an uptick in traffic once our doors open again. There are quite a few companies that are undergoing temporary layoffs due to COVID-19; we are reaching out to them directly. These companies include Energy Economics, Inc., Valentino's Restaurant, Daube's Bakery, Benike Construction, Staples, the Post-Bulletin, Tonic Local Kitchen and Juice Bar, S.B. Foot Tannery, Red Wing Shoes, Treasure Island, Northern Engraving, OTG Management Midwest, LLC, Kemps, and Tenneco. Ms. Davis concluded her report.

Youth – David LeGarde

Mr. LeGarde gave the youth report. We have been awarded a CP3 grant for \$190,000. We will be serving a wide variety of youth with youth experiences and on-the-job trainings. Our Youthbuild program continues to operate virtually and is providing twice weekly online curriculum. Our Rochester Youth Career Planners have been hosting live Zoom meetings providing overviews of our youth program. They have been utilizing Facebook for conversational videos with clients as well. We are still providing services virtually to enrolled youth and are working through challenges such as cancelled career fairs, etc. Mr. LeGarde concluded his report.

Welfare Reform (MFIP/DWP/SNAP)/Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA)

Wanda Jensen gave the welfare reform report. At the beginning of the COVID-19 pandemic, the state advised all counties to stop the diversionary work program as individuals are not able to quickly access employment at this time. We have been very successful in connecting with customers as individuals and our career planners are working remotely. Our enrollments almost doubled from March to April. We expect an uptick in traffic once unemployment benefits expire and are helping individuals with budgeting and other initiatives in the meantime. Finally, we have been approved as a SNAP employment and training provider. This will become effective on July 1st. For WIOA, the state received a decrease of funding of 9% going into July of 2020. This will unfortunately equate to a 15% reduction for WDI. We have been working hard to spend down this year's funds. Ms. Jensen concluded her report.

Director's Report – Jinny Rietmann

Ms. Rietmann shared the Executive Director's report.

On the federal level, the Senate returned from an extended coronavirus related recess. There are 12 appropriation bills due by the end of June. Within the next few weeks, the expectation is that there is going to be a fourth coronavirus tax relief package released. This will hopefully provide more support for state and local economies. There is a new bill being proposed called the Relaunching America's Workforce Act. This act calls for \$15.1 billion dollars in investment in the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA), adult education and career and technical education as part of the COVID-19 response. At the local level, that could mean somewhere around \$2.2 million dollars in funds to workforce development programming. This is significant for us because we are getting ready for and ramping up for an incredible increase of folks coming into our doors. We are not sure exactly what that is going to look like yet or what the impact of this is going to be long term, but we have heard projections anywhere of up to thirty percent unemployment in our region.

The state is currently in session and planning to wrap up on May 18th. There is a funding proposal being moved forward to support supplies and equipment to the CareerForce locations for a safe reopening plan. We are hoping that moves forward and moves forward quickly. It would certainly help to have the backing of DEED and our state partners to fund some of that as well as those supplies and equipment. The Department of Labor is awarding National Dislocated Worker Emergency Grants right now. They are always available as emergencies arise and it is something that we have tapped into in the past and are currently working on a proposal to submit, hopefully next week. We were chosen as a recipient of a new grant through DEED called the Career Pathways Pilot Program, or CPPP. This is a grant that is specific to our youth programming and will be utilized to strengthen access to work experience opportunities. We were one of three programs that were chosen from around the state and we were funded at \$190,000 over two years for our youth programs.

We are currently working on our reopening plans, in a several phase approach. We are looking at a soft opening of sorts to

be able to serve customers, possibly by appointment only for the first few weeks. WDI has ordered supplies including masks, cleaning supplies, gloves, and plexiglass to safely serve customers and ensure our staff is safe onsite as well. We are trying to make sure that we make the best decisions as we can.

The last couple of things I wanted to share are our two documents that we try to put together every year. They usually coincide with our personnel package or with our compensation approval to showcase some of the good work that we are doing.

The first is a one-page list of accomplishments from the past year. We served 5,256 people, placing 1,674 in living wage careers. We also served another 640 youth. Our average wage at placement was \$15.92 per hour. It was a slight increase from last year, an increase of 24% from five years ago and an increase of 13% from two years ago. We have met or exceeded at least 90% of our standard measures and have greatly expanding our programming throughout the past year with more emphasis on career pathways, manufacturing, and trades, etc. We have also worked on building out new committees and are focusing more heavily on marketing and outreach. Our return on investment has been very positive as well. For every dollar that is being invested into our workforce development programming, we are putting \$5.56 back into the economy in terms of employment wages and taxes. We are very proud of that number especially since we have had a decreased budget this year. We have not had a decrease in our impact, or our numbers served and are still getting a 500% return on investment. It just shows that we are giving back and that you are getting you are getting a good bang for your buck when it comes to workforce development funding.

Ms. Rietmann concluded her report.

Dan Belshan adjourned the meeting.

Respectfully submitted,
Emily Wessing
Workforce Development, Inc.