

SE MN Workforce Development Board

May 7, 2020, 2:30-4:00 p.m.

via Zoom

Workforce Development, Inc.

Rochester, Minnesota

Minutes

Members present: Beth Christensen, Emily Wessing, Wanda Jensen, Jeff Custer, Laura Link, Chad Kleist, Anthony Toft, Brian Cashman, David LeGarde, Dee Sabol, Desirae Dyke, Diane Simon, Erin Main, Geoff Smith, Jakki Trihey, Jeff Custer, Jess Anderson, J Kingsley, Joy Watson, Kenneth Johnson, Laurie Brownell, Marleen Lundberg, Michael Postma, Nadine Holthaus, Phil Sayles, Becky Zoubek, Burke Murphy, Sheldon Steele, Shelly Caldwell, Sonji Davis, Susan Boehm, Vicki McKay

A quorum was present, and Laura Link called the meeting to order. Introductions were made. **Laura Link motioned for consent of the May agenda and the April meeting minutes; the motion passed.**

Compensation package approval – Laura Link & Jinny Rietmann

Ms. Link and Ms. Rietmann provided an update on the compensation package presented at the Personnel/Management Committee meeting. It was made clear that flexibility and work/life balance is a priority for WDI employees. Ms. Rietmann shared a comparison of resources over the years regarding those we have served, the cost per participant, and a comparison of salary and wages with the compensation package added in year by year. Ms. Link announced that the Personnel and Management committees have approved the overall compensation package for staff, as well as the PTO purchase policy.

Laura Link motioned to approve the compensation package; the motion passed.

Approval of Joint Powers Board & Workforce Development Board Memorandums of Understanding – Jinny Rietmann

Ms. Rietmann provided an overview of the JPB & WDB MOUs. Only the dates – not content – has been updated from previous years and will extend these memorandums into 2023.

Laura Link motioned to approve the Joint Powers Board and Workforce Development Board Memorandums of Understanding; the motion passed.

Approval of Regional Workforce Development Board Memorandum of Understanding – Jinny Rietmann

Ms. Rietmann provided an overview of the Regional WDB MOU. This is an agreement between our WDB and the Winona's WDB, which comprises the regional workforce development region of Southeast Minnesota. Only the dates – not content – has been updated from previous years.

Laura Link motioned to approve the Regional Workforce Development Board Memorandum of Understanding; the motion passed.

Program Reports

Management Committee – Jeff Custer & Laura Link

- Jeff Custer and Laura Link shared the *Management* report. We devoted much of the meeting to discussing and approving the action items proposed above. In addition, we discussed several grants that were set to expire in June will be granted extensions based on the COVID-19 pandemic. Mr. Custer and Ms. Link concluded the report.

One Stop Operating Partners – Wanda Jensen

- Wanda Jensen shared the One Stop Operating Partners report. We discussed how employers are adapting and changing in response to COVID-19. Ms. Jensen provided an overview of the One Stop Operating Partners Memorandum of Understanding, which will need full board approval today. This memorandum of understanding is a requirement of the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA). It lays out the partners in a one stop system, what the roles and responsibilities are of those 13 required partners, and how that will function in the next three years. It will extend into 2023.

Laura Link motioned to approve the One Stop Operating Partners Memorandum of Understanding; the motion passed.

Taskforce and Work Group Reports

- Sonji Davis shared the *Employer Engagement*, *Emerging Workforce*, and *Career Pathways* reports. Our committees had a combined meeting today, and had a check-in as to how our individual organizations have been impacted by COVID-19, and what our employers are doing at this time to deal with it and what measures are in place to help employees feel safer. Ms. Davis concluded her report.
- Jess Anderson shared the *MaxAbility Employment* report. This group has updated some of their marketing materials; they can be found on the WDI website. They are still looking to put on the mental health first aid webinar that they are sponsoring on July 22 from 12-1pm. Disability inclusion bite-size learning for employers, managers, and HR professionals. They are brainstorming curriculum

materials currently. The reverse job fair originally planned for June 17 will be postponed until October. Ms. Anderson concluded her report.

- Jess Anderson shared the *Salute Southern MN Veterans Network* report. There is no change in update from last meeting. They are updating their social communication and doing some outreach currently. Ms. Anderson concluded her report.
- Susan Boehm shared the *Previously Incarcerated Individuals* report. This taskforce has not met since last meeting, so no update. The next meeting will be Tuesday, May 19 from 3-4:30pm. Ms. Boehm concluded her report.

Program Spotlight: Virtual Services Provided through COVID-19 Pandemic – Beth Christensen & Marleen Lundberg

Beth Christensen and Marleen Lundberg shared a presentation about virtual services and tools provided through the COVID-19 pandemic.

Director's Report – Jinny Rietmann

Ms. Rietmann shared the Executive Director's report. She introduced Laurie Brownell, new board member from the Southeastern Minnesota Area Agency on Aging.

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.

Other Area Activity/Upcoming Meetings

- Next meeting: June 4th – 2:30 p.m.
 - Presentation of MN DOLI on Apprenticeships

The meeting was adjourned.

Respectfully submitted,
Emily Wessing
Workforce Development, Inc.