

SE MN Workforce Development Board

October 3, 2019, 1:00-4:00 p.m.

Workforce Development, Inc.
Rochester, Minnesota

Minutes

Members Present: Jinny Rietmann (Executive Director), Geoff Smith, Vicki McKay, Marleen Lundberg, Chad Kleist, Phil Sayles, Jim Kingsley, Nadine Holthaus, Dan Belshan, Joy Watson, Guy Finne, Jeffery Boyd, Andy Toft, Rick Gnemi, Diane Simon, Cheryl Gustason, Laura Link, Rob Van Craenenbroeck

Others Present: Jakki Trihey, Mike Postma, Wanda Jensen, Beth Christensen, David LeGarde, Sonji Davis, Susan Boehm, Bryce Bjork, Rebecca Zoubek, Jody Schaber, Lori Wright, Emily Wessing (note taker)

SUBCOMMITTEE BRAINSTORM DISCUSSION

Ms. Rietmann opened the subcommittee brainstorm discussion by presenting two versions of a potential sector/taskforce restructuring map, in response to the August 15th strategic planning session feedback. Some of this feedback included that the subcommittees don't meet often enough or long enough, there's not enough time to get anything done, there's too much time between each meeting to stay on top of plans and responsibilities, and the desire to cross-sector pollinate. Ms. Rietmann expressed her interest in implementing a system of collective impact and shared a few recurring goals to keep in mind when utilizing this – work towards a common agenda, shared measurement, mutually reinforcing activities, mutual communication, and backbone support.

Overview of Structure Proposal

The first version of proposed restructure was presented. It will keep a few of the equity taskforces that are meeting on their own and outside of board meeting dates, and introduce three new sectors – Emerging Workforce, Employer Engagement, and Career Pathways. The goal is that these new sectors will meet monthly, with each committee focusing on all priorities and focused strategies across the organization. We want to make sure we keep a regional focus in all efforts to develop innovative and sustainable workforce shortage solutions, focus on key industry sectors, increasing community and employer education, board members as chairs and champions, setting actual SMART goals and reporting on outcomes. Additionally, a template will be created on what committees should be reporting out on for each board meeting. The second structure was presented. It's like the first but adds the new strategy subcommittees while keeping the same equity taskforces.

Ms. Rietmann explained that her goal is to have each subject area be addressed as relevant at each committee meeting, with options to dive deeper each month. The first structure was approved, and the group divided into groups based on the new structure for a strategy breakout.

Overview of Breakout Sessions

Employer Engagement – Marleen Lundberg talked about how it would be great for the public to know what WDI does, the programs we support, and the services we provide. Rob Van Craenenbroeck added that it's important to look at things from an employer/employee perspective. How can we add value? How can we market the specific skills that our employees and clients have? What is the mechanism for the connectivity we foster, and how can we fuse and create a more granular focus on the value stream?

Career Pathways – Jakki Trihey noted that it's important to drive, advocate and promote our services, but to keep in mind that we may not be the best suited to do the hands-on work. Guy Finne added that we need to combine the right forces in order to create an optimal spinoff of success.

Emerging Workforce – David LeGarde talked about the potential for career exploration at the middle and high school level and offering options aside from a four-year degree. Additionally, he noted the value of parent education for career options. Other priorities for this sector would include a focus on the awareness and availability of jobs in the region, alignment of available jobs in the future with the available workforce, communicating pathways & realities of the workforce, a process for getting students started and helping them reach their career goals, using success data to encourage new clients, using data on career pathways, etc. It's important to examine the failures as well as the successes – why didn't it work, what were the barriers, etc.

A quorum was present, and Cheryl Gustason called the meeting to order. Introductions were made. **Cheryl Gustason motioned for consent of the October agenda; Diane Simon moved, Rick Gnemi seconded, and the motion passed. Cheryl Gustason motioned for consent of the September minutes; Guy Finne moved, Jim Kingsley seconded, and the motion passed.**

Program Reports

Management Committee – Laura Link

- Laura Link shared the *Management* report. She gave a review of the fiscal report, noting that we did not receive

the Higher Education Career Advisors Project (HECAP) grant. We did receive a youth support services grant, however the total funding decreased by \$28,000 in comparison to last year's total. Ms. Link gave an overview of the dislocated worker report, announcing that K-Mart, JC Press, Del Monte foods, and Great Lakes Polymer are closing. The youth report included a discussion on the HECAP grant not being funded, Lauren Brown being hired, and Jennifer Finch-Mitchell completing her time in September. Ms. Link concluded her report.

One Stop Operating Partners – Marleen Lundberg

- Marleen Lundberg shared the *One Stop* report. Ramona Redig is retiring. The Manufacturing & Wabasha Career Planner positions are open, and Rice county was awarded a grant among only 12 agencies in the nation. Keep in mind that it would be great to have board members attend the CareerForce open houses we are rolling out a CareerForce instructional manual as well.

Taskforce and Work Group Reports

- Sonji Davis shared the *Previously Incarcerated Individuals* report. At the last taskforce meeting, the discussion included successes in the housing market for the previously incarcerated. It's been determined that there are no significant housing biases for offenses, so while there are still challenges, a criminal background may not be as much of a barrier as originally thought. Damascus Way attended and discussed area job markets. There was also a discussion about the driving diversion program.
- There was no *Women and Minorities* report.
- Guy Finne shared the *Salute Southern MN Veterans Network*. Mayo Clinic is working on hiring an employee who can focus solely on veteran recruitment. With Ed Duda's retirement, leadership is uncertain right now but conversations on how to address this are in the works.
- Guy Finne shared the *MaxAbility* report. We hosted a Career Connections today (10/3) with 15-16 employers in attendance. The organization continues to provide great educational opportunities. At the last session in August, we talked about job descriptions. Mr. Finne encouraged all employees and employers to attend these meetings in order to garner more board presence. International Celebration for Individuals with Disabilities Day coming up.
- There was no *Emerging Workforce* report.

Presentation on FutureForward portal – Lori Wright (see attached handout)

Employer Profile – Jim Kingsley, Wenger Corporation

- Wenger Corporation has been in business for 73 years. Their core business is anything music-related that isn't instruments – acoustics, manufacturing, athletic storage – wood & metal lockers, etc. Based in Owatonna. Customers are primarily in the education industry – main business peak is in the summer, with lots of temporary work (college break, etc.) We try to work through the community as much as possible. Working with Steele Co. Works – local businesses and educators in area to try to have a pipeline for those who don't have a career plan to try to find a career plan. About 25% of students do not have plan post high school. Currently have a counselor who sits at schools to foster workforce. FutureForward portal is going to be useful for streamlining that communication.

Program Profile – Bryce Bjork & Jody Schaber, Laborer Program

Director's Report – Jinny Rietmann

- On Thursday, September 26, the Senate voted 53-44 to confirm Eugene Scalia for Labor Secretary. President Trump nominated Scalia in late July after Alexander Acosta resigned. Scalia's career at the law firm Gibson, Dunn & Crutcher included powerful corporate clients in cases that dealt with government rules. The client list that Scalia provided to the Office of Government Ethics last month included some of America's most powerful corporations, including Goldman Sachs, Bank of America, Ford, Facebook, Delta Air Lines, Marriott and Juul Labs. Scalia has said that for one year he will not participate in any decision that could affect a former client without first obtaining a written waiver, raising the prospect that he may have to recuse himself from key Trump administration policy initiatives such as the Department's highly anticipated joint employer proposal. The American Hotel and Lodging Association, which represents Marriott, submitted comments supporting the proposed rule. Another group Scalia provided legal services for, the Retail Industry Leaders Association, also supported the joint employer proposal in public comments. Republicans and business groups say Scalia's legal career in labor and employment law makes him "well qualified" to lead the agency.
- On Friday, September 27, President Trump signed a short-term stopgap spending bill, avoiding a government shutdown and extending current funding levels through November 21st – the last day before Congress leaves for Thanksgiving holiday recess. The funding bill includes a provision requiring the Department of Agriculture to provide state-by-state data on the effects of President Trump's trade war but left out an Administration request that Congress lift a restriction on where the administration can build southern border barriers.
- Although they have now bought themselves 8 weeks to negotiate a longer-term spending deal, Congress is still looking for a way to break the stalemate over how to prevent a shutdown fight. Senate Appropriations Chair Richard Shelby (AL) is set to meet with President Trump on Friday, as they work to figure out how to get funding

bills to the President's desk and avert a showdown over the border wall. Senate staffers have also begun serious negotiations on how to jump-start fiscal 2020 spending bills, but even if the Senate manages to move its spending legislation, the House and Senate will have to reconcile their competing bills and work out their differences on top-line spending. It appears the two chambers are far from a deal to avoid another government shutdown fight before Thanksgiving.

- On Thursday, September 16, Senate Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions (HELP) Committee Chairman Lamar Alexander (TN) introduced a package of eight bi-partisan bills that would make piecemeal updates to the Higher Education Act (HEA), without a broader deal to comprehensively overhaul it. The Student Aid Improvement Act (S 2557) would simplify the FAFSA and financial aid letters, expand Pell Grants for short-term training programs and reverse the ban on federal aid for incarcerated students. Alexander is also working on adding the College Transparency Act into the package, which would track student outcomes in higher education more expansively.
- On Tuesday, September 17, the U.S. Department of Labor (DOL) announced that the fifth annual National Apprenticeship Week (NAW) will be held from November 11-17, 2019. Established by the U.S. Department of Labor, NAW is a nationwide celebration that brings together business leaders, labor, educational institutions, and Americans interested in apprenticeships to showcase the impact apprenticeship programs have on closing the U.S. skills gap and preparing the American workforce for the jobs of today and tomorrow.
- Ms. Rietmann shared how her director journey is going. She is proud of our engaged and passionate staff and board, as it creates a great environment for new leadership. Went to a training with 25 other directors and learned best practices in addressing challenges, concerns, etc. She met with about 50% of the board about their thoughts moving forward under new leadership. As of now, her number one priority is to solidify the WDI board position and market that position moving forward. She announced that we've pulled back together our employer services team and are revitalizing our collaboration with Winona. Additionally, technology is going to be another priority in the coming year, as we are moving forward with a website redesign, as well as a portal where we can house and access all digital files.
- Ms. Rietmann provided an update on grant submissions. Overall a net gain, excited to get them going and continue programs already in the works.
 - Not funded for Higher Education Career Advisors Project (HECAP) - \$50,000 decrease
 - Did not receive the Youth at Work competitive grant - \$100,000 decrease
 - Pre-employment & training program – contract for service, potential to earn up to \$150,000 a year, process is brand new so nothing we can plan for but are going forward with it just to see
 - Not refunded for construction & trades program
 - Youth Support Services Grant – will continue
 - Southeast Asian Grant - \$180,000/year for two years
 - Women Economic Security Act (WESA) - \$100,500/year for 2 years
 - P2P Manufacturing River Region - \$200,000/year for two years
 - Rice County Manufacturing
 - P2P Public Sector Programming - \$80,000/year for two years

Other Area Activity/Upcoming Meetings

- Next meeting is Thursday, November 7th
- EquityLogic 2.0 for Businesses – October 15th
- New board member orientation is Thursday, November 7th – details to come
- The Construction Trades and You? For Farmers! – November 14th

Motion to adjourn meeting was made by Cheryl Gustason; Guy Finne moved; the motion was seconded by Jim Kingsley. The meeting was adjourned.

Respectfully submitted,
Emily Wessing
Workforce Development, Inc.