

**WASHINGTON COUNTY  
WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT BOARD MEETING  
WebEx Meeting  
October 21, 2020**

**Members Present**

Chris Dressel	Robin Anthony	Christopher Eng
Susie Evans	Jordan Fry	Tara Gearing
Cynthia Larson	Rachel Perez	Monica Ramirez
Greg Renne		Tom Yuska

**Action Team Members**

Tom Colosimo	Andrea Dunn	Stan Karwoski
Michelle Kemper	Ann Lindquist	Sara Shanley

**CareerForce Staff Present**

Tina Dudzinski	Robin Hakari	Rachel O'Connell
Karen Ritter	Rick Roy	Thai Yang

**WDB Partners**

Dawn Nickleson	Lee Okerstrom
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**1. Meeting Called to Order by Chair – Christine Dressel**

Chair, Chris Dressel, called the meeting to order. The attendance of Members, Action Team Members, Partners, and CareerForce staff was recorded. It was determined there was a quorum of business members in attendance. A Motion was made to approve the Agenda, it was seconded, and the Motion was approved. A Motion was made to approve the meeting minutes from September 16, 2020, it was seconded, and the Motion was approved.

**2. Washington County Workforce Development Needs – Rick Roy**

The Board previously submitted the following ideas and will prioritize them and assign to the Action Teams.

**Business Engagement:**

- Leadership development – How can we support business to help develop leadership skills in employees through job shadowing or participating in Emerging Leadership Programs? Several chambers have those programs.*
- Shorter Pipelines from Training to Employment – Synchronized and contextualized work- and classroom-based learning on and off site. This was done in the early 1900's when most training was done on the job. We could provide support to business to connect with post high school training and basic education such as ESL.*
- Access to Work Friendly Transportation – More access to transportation that addresses shift and weekend work schedules. Sheila Holbrook-White is working on transportation and will be a partner.*
- Culturally Competent Businesses – Support business development of socially dynamic workplaces that make people from all walks of life feel like they belong. This includes hiring and retention strategies. Employers have to look at the work environment after hiring to retain people. There is a lot of training available to help them.*

5. *Leverage Chamber Partnerships – Work more closely with Chambers to have more direct connections to businesses in our communities for promoting all our work.* Rick said he and Chris Eng have been meeting with chamber presidents to work more closely to promote our work and communicate how their efforts overlap.
6. *Situational Business Advocacy – Understand the larger issues impeding business growth and how we might have an impact in addressing it.* We can look at how to address political and social movements. Some industries have been harder hit by Covid and how can we support them?

**Questions:** *Tom Yuska: Have these conversations come up with chamber partners and others?* Rick replied he reached beyond WDB members and contacted our partner network of close to 30 organizations which includes chamber presidents and educational institutions.

### **Community Engagement**

1. *Coordinate with Community Activities – Promote and participate in food distributions and available health screening related to COVID-19 to promote workforce services and staying safe at work.* Community health is very important right now. Food distributions were held at Landfall and Cimarron throughout the summer. A rapid testing clinic has been set up in Oakdale. How do we promote these efforts and workforce services and staying safe at work?
2. *Provide More “Easy Access” Activities – Coordinate with partners to provide safe approaches to services for those who face barriers to employment – virtual, small group and/or drive by services.* Provide drive by services such as clothing for an interview. Ride share organizations are providing free rides for people to vote in the election.
3. *Develop a “Resource Services 101” – A comprehensive, yet easily understood tool of the resources that support social and economic stability.* Working with public health and other providers, create an online version of resources.
4. *Physical Integration of Services – Co-location of services on an intermittent basis.* The Career Lab has been moved into the library at Forest Lake and there will be intermittent services at Cottage Grove and Oakdale. Rick has been pushing for a statewide initiative for partnerships with libraries to become more centralized.

**Comment:** *Tom Yuska:* A paper resource of services has been done and discontinued. The United Way has a 411 number to connect to different services.

### **Education Engagement**

1. *Career Pathways Planning – Middle school on up, including Alternative Schools and ABE.* It’s important to start at the middle school age rather than wait until high school to start kids into career pathways. Alternative schools are focused on students attaining enough credits to get their diploma and don’t have a lot of time for career pathways. Possibly we could work with employers to introduce them to careers. Adult Basic Education is an important social and economic security net and the Board could promote that. The healthcare initiative working with smaller organizations is still going forward.
2. *Assist with Employer Engagement - Identify support needs of our schools to strengthen their efforts with employer participation in work-based learning and sharing of industry trends in Washington County.* Schools report they are having problems connecting with employers and there are opportunities to work with chambers to get employers involved.

3. *Promote All “Post-High School” Education – Identify and curate information on all opportunities for learning, including on-line options like Coursera, Digital NorthStar Literacy and others.* Post high school means any opportunity to increase skills such as on-the-job training and on-line options; there are many training opportunities to consider.
4. *Special Needs Student Support – Students on IEPs and at Alternative Schools need additional supports for successful career pathway navigation.* Rick said he worked with Tree Trust participants this summer connecting with their work coach and Vocational Rehabilitation. Career services staff can also become involved.

**Comments:** *Susie Evans* sees many ways to connect with their new director, nonprofits, the four principals of their middle schools, and other partners. For example, employers could have Zoom meetings with students and parents.

Rick Roy said we need to stay in scope and not overstep what we are capable of doing. The Workforce Development Board is positioned at the center of the common intersections of workforce, education and business. Along with our efforts to better coordinate activities is the ability to improve system communication within the Workforce Development System and our communities. Marketing strategies will be central to our success in all areas.

*Board members did polling to set priorities through Menti.com.*

### **Review of Action Team Purpose**

- *Oversight Action Team:* The team oversees what is required administratively in the Federal Law and reviews documents and agreements. It is led by the Chair and Vice Chair with Chairs of other action teams to share and coordinate activities.
- *Career Force Action Team:* Federal law requires a one stop operator which is a consortium of Adult Basic Education, Vocational Rehabilitation, and Wagner-Peyser to ensure all partners in our MOU are truly participating. This may be better named the Community Partners Action Team to reflect this broader view.
- *Career Pathways Action Team:* The team focuses on developing career pathways. To better connect with business, this may be better named the Business Engagement Action Team.
- *Youth Development Action Team:* The team focuses on youth funding and partnerships with our schools. The team may be better suited as an Educational Engagement Action Team looking at post high school education, connecting with employers and helping the school districts.

### **Questions and Comments:**

*Chris Dressel* recommended Board members join those Action Teams where they can make the greatest contribution and input.

*Michelle Kemper* asked if the name and focus of the Youth team is changed, will it still meet the requirement for youth. Rick replied a Youth Development team is not required by law but was an example.

*Sarah Shanley* said this aligns well with their goals in partnering strategies and Career and Technical Education awareness.

*Rick Roy* said the Action Teams will meet in November, discuss the items and prioritize them, make a presentation to the full board in December and start by January.

### **3. Other Updates**

#### **Board Member Updates**

*Susie Evans, Great Rivers Adult Education Consortium:* They have a partnership with Renewal by Andersen and WDB member Julie Stommen where 20 employees are taking English in the Workplace classes. Supervisors gave positive feedback on employees' progress and some students have joined the evening Microsoft Office classes. Their GED/High School Diploma classes in Hastings are full and very in demand.

*Greg Renne, Finishing Trades Institute Upper Midwest (FTIUM):* Their apprenticeship training programs where students are dual enrolled in high school and apprenticeship classes are going well. They are finishing another APEX Worker Readiness Program on Friday, with 16 graduating. The last class had seven graduates and six are now employed in union contract jobs.

*Chris Eng, Washington County Community Development Agency:* Thank you to Commissioner Karwoski and the County Board for their continued support of small businesses in the County. Almost 500 applications and grant awards have been made in the first and second round. The County Board approved a short window of applications for small businesses to apply by November 4th. Washington County's economy is based on small business with 95% of all companies having 50 or fewer employees.

*Stan Karwoski, Washington County Board:* The Board also made money available to Lakeview and Woodwinds hospitals to help with front line workers' expenses and costs incurred by the hospitals. A formula was established to help the schools meet the technology needs of students. Local chambers will also get assistance.

*Michelle Kemper, Washington County:* The County Board also approved money for rental and mortgage payment assistance for those affected by Covid.

*Tom Yuska, Family Means:* They received a grant through Partnership for a ConnectedMN for \$75,000 to purchase Chromebooks, laptops and Wi-Fi in Landfall and Cimarron.

*Commissioner Karwoski* added Washington County also helped private schools with funding.

*Robin Anthony, Greater Stillwater Area Chamber of Commerce:* Thank you to the County which has been invaluable from the inception of Covid. The Chamber has been working to understand the programs from the state and federal government and disseminate that information to the businesses in a timely manner. They have a coalition with all the Chambers in Washington County.

### **4. Motion to Adjourn – Chris Dressel**

A Motion was made to adjourn the meeting, it was seconded, and the Motion was approved.