

DRAFT
WASHINGTON COUNTY
WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT BOARD MEETING
WebEx Meeting
December 15, 2021

Members Present

Chris Dressel	Tom Yuska	Chris Eng
Erin Kampa	Julie Strommen	Bobby Hammons
Rick Roy		

Action Team Members

Lee Okerstrom	Stan Karwoski	Cheryl Jogger
Sharon Blomgren		

CareerForce Staff Present

Henok Fanta	Karen Ritter	Deb Cunningham
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1. Meeting Called to Order by Chair – Chris Dressel

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 not a quorum of WDB members in attendance. Approval of agenda, September 15, and May 19, 2021, meeting minutes on hold for next meeting. Cheryl Jogger introduced herself as new to the meetings. She is the Community Engagement Coordinator for South Washington County Schools and works with Susie Evans' team. Susie invited her to attend.

2. Board Membership Openings/Vice Chair Appointment

The Board has two openings representing business. The Board requirement is 19 members with 10 representing business. There have been applicants, but during the process, ended up taking other jobs. Century College has referred one of their staff to replace Monica Ramirez who retired. Greg Renne from the Finishing Trades Institute has moved to a different position. Jordan Fry is connected with organized labor & working with Rick to look for a replacement for Greg. Jordan's term on the Board is up but is seeking permission to stay on.

The Board is in need of a Vice Chair. It's a 2-year term not requiring much additional work/time. Rick and CareerForce staff do most of the leg work with agenda's and other items needing response or approval from the Chair & Vice Chair. The Vice Chair backs up the Chair's position and would facilitate the meeting in the Chair's absence. Anyone interested should contact Rick. Without a quorum, this will carry forward to the next meeting.

3. Action Team Reports

Business Engagement Action Team – Rick Roy - The team reviewed priorities established last fall after Board members and attending community partners were surveyed. A shorter pipeline of talent for employers was discussed. In an effort to help with that, CareerForce has the P2P (Pathways to Prosperity) program. It targets low-income individuals. Office

Technology has been offered in the past. The last two years have focused on Intro to Manufacturing. Julie Strommen has been involved along with Susie Evans & Shane Mueller from So. Wash. School District providing key basic training with Century College providing more of the technical pieces. Waiting to hear from DEED on approval for the next P2P grant which will be Office Technology.

Worker friendly transportation - Washington Co. has a unit specific to looking into this. Rick will meet with staff that manage the daily operations of transportation and will share concerns of our community business partners. ARPA funds may possibly be used to support transportation needs helping individuals acquire or keep a job.

Cultural Competency for Business –DEED created the I-WE (Inclusive Workforce Employer) Program. Staff looked at several assessment tools and pulled together what would be most effective for employers to understand where their short comings are as well as strengths and ways to improve cultural inclusiveness. Rick will be meeting with DEED staff to learn more and also be meeting with the Center for Economic Inclusion learning about their program called Racial Equity Index. This program charges a fee for businesses to use. Rick will report on both at the January Business Engagement Action Team meeting.

Chris & Rick meet frequently with Chamber presidents to get an understanding of what to focus on. The Chambers are interested in inviting Tim O’Neill to speak to their group on labor market trends and needs. Tim is the Labor Market Information Specialist with DEED for the East Metro.

Situational Business Advocacy – support businesses as issues come up (unemployment questions, fraudulent claims, etc.). Rick can connect businesses at the State level for issues they may encounter.

MNWorks.net is being redone. They’re making some updates. There’s interest in connecting to Careerforce.MN.

BEAT Member’s Updates

Shane Mueller – the South Washington District Program Center is setting up a coffee shop in what used to be the Senior Center and will provide internships and customer service skills.

Chris Dressel - gave an update on their food buying program to support local businesses and show appreciation to staff.

Jordan Fry – Finishing Trades Institute - Their PSCO January class is full. It’s great to see students showing interest in the finishing trades.

Erin Kampa – Vocational Rehab – with the shortage of labor, they have a number of job openings.

Chris Eng – Washington County CDA has been collaborating with all six Chambers that represent the County. A survey went out to members in October. The overall result was concern and challenge of attraction and retention of talent. There’s a need to connect

employers across the county so they can brainstorm and share ideas, how to get the word out when they have jobs available and how to retain those employees.

Community Engagement Action Team

Henok Fanta – A few members didn't return so there were some new members. Time was spent looking over priorities previously established and if those still make sense going forward. Priorities will be discussed again at the next meeting. There wasn't much return on the MOU partners survey, considering to resend. Discussion to create a digital resource guide to include community partners as a one-stop-shop for customers for services.

Education Engagement Team

Karen Ritter – Melissa Jorgensen (Tartan HS #622) shared the assessment tool schools are using called YouScience. It's an assessment tool for student talent and aptitude discovery. It reduces gender and cultural biases. Tartan has had great success with it. It identifies interests and skills and is used as a guide for course work they're offering to help develop some talent pipelines for employers. Tartan has started offering CNA & entry-level health services courses.

Julie Strommen - Stillwater School District #834 staff member Bob Manning is interested in Renewal by Andersen going into classrooms to talk about what day-to-day work in manufacturing looks like. Child Labor laws prevent students from going onsite. Julie talked about possibly an incubator model within facilities for students to be in a controlled environment without exposing students to OSHA prohibited functions of manufacturing.

Julie and Angela will be hosting a small event with some from the youth pathways program to identify how to start pipelining some talent with youth and school districts moving into post-graduation. Andersen has success with the Youth Skills Grant Program connecting their North Branch facility and North Branch High School. Things slowed down with CoVid but they have made a lot of progress between their legal and risk management teams to identify how they can safely have minors spending a portion of their school day working within the North Branch facility. North Branch was the best option to try since it differs significantly from their assembly plants. It would be multiple rotations through the plant to observe different functions. It's a good opportunity as an enterprise to get these approvals through the State. This could be a model to take to the Bayport facility connecting with Stillwater HS.

Angela Shak - talked to the team about the website www.futureforward.org. A resource tool used across the State connecting teachers, businesses/employers. Companies post their interest in speaking to schools, offering tours or work-based learning opportunities. Looking to build a consistent and sustainable model across the State for those connections.

Oversight Action Team

Rick Roy - Two goals of the team:

- For committee chairs to come together, share ideas and what their team is working on, to avoid overlap/duplication and identify what they can work on together.
- Address administrative requirements of the Board.

At this time there are two outstanding items. There has to be an infrastructure funding agreement along with an MOU. The MOU is the obligation we have to work together with our partners, share resources and have a better referral system to assist all participants. Still waiting on the One-Stop-Operator Agreement to be approved that was submitted in September. There are two questions to be cleared up that are specific to how job service operates. We have no say on how job service operates so it'll be an issue on the one-stop-operator partners, ABE with South Washington County School District, Vocational Rehab, and Job Service.

ARPA Update: Received \$400,000 in ARPA funds. There are mainly two elements to spending the funds. \$200,000 to help pay direct services for customers. The only criteria for eligibility, individual/family income must be less than 60% of the regional median income. This may help some people that are ineligible for our programs. The other element is to strengthen career pathway efforts in Washington County.

Cory Sindt has been hired for the Career Pathways Project. He comes from Henok's unit as an Employment Counselor. He's been heavily involved with P2P and brings experience working with post-secondary education, ABE and employers. He will be starting to meet with education partners in January and learning about the current existing career pathways system in Washington County. An advisory group made up of community members, education and a chamber representative has been formed to oversee & guide this project.

Board & Action Team Meetings

Meetings will continue to be virtual until further notice. The full Board will meet once a quarter and the Action Teams will meet twice a quarter. Meetings are held the third Wednesday of the month 8:30 – 10:00 a.m. Oversight Action Team follows the other Action Team meetings 10:00 – 11:00 a.m.

Board Member Updates:

Sharon Blomgren - St. Paul College, Century and Anoka Tech were the first to step for Governor Walz' mandate to train 1000 National Guard members in Healthcare. There were 400 Guard members trained in six days, 12 hours a day. The Governor has allocated funds for the next round to target 1000 youth 18-22 in CNA roles.

Lee Okerstrom – Planning a Veterans' Career Fair in spring/early summer. A Career Fair was held in November at Earl Brown Center in Brooklyn Center. Approximately 100 employers, 350 employees attended. This was the first in-person event. Staff are working from home meeting with clients virtually but can meet in person if needed. in their Bayport and Cottage Grove locations.

4. Without a quorum no motion was needed to adjourn.