

**WASHINGTON COUNTY
WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT BOARD MEETING
WebEx Meeting
March 16, 2022**

Members Present

Christine Dressel	Susie Evans	Christopher Eng
Erin Kampa	Jeff Klemmer	Lori Tapani
Tom Yuska	Jordan Fry	Eric Riedel
John Burcaw		

Action Team Members

Stan Karwoski	Lee Okerstrom	Sarah Shanley
Zach Devine	Shane Mueller	Adesewa Adesiji

CareerForce Staff Present

Rick Roy	Karen Ritter	Henok Fanta
Deb Cunningham		

1. Meeting Called to Order by Chair – Christine Dressel

The meeting was called to order by Chair, Christine Dressel. The attendance of Members, Action Team Members, CareerForce staff was recorded. It was determined there was a quorum. A Motion was made to approve the Agenda, it was seconded, and the Motion was approved. A Motion was made to approve the past meeting minutes from May, September and December 2021, it was seconded, and the Motion was approved.

Introduction of New Board Members: Eric Riedel, Dean of Health Sciences, online & continuing education and customized training at Century College. He is in his third year with that role. John Burcaw, director of academic education at FTI (Finishing Trades Institute) Upper Midwest accredited apprenticeship college located in Little Canada.

2. Board Membership Openings

Jeff Klemmer will be stepping down the end of March. Rick thanked Jeff for his years of membership. Jeff has been an asset with many ideas and contributions to the Board and Action Teams.

Business Representatives - There are three openings to represent business. Rick has one person that has expressed interest. She was previously a member of the Dakota Scott Workforce Development Board and has recently moved to Woodbury. There has also been a seat open for a while for a labor representative. If you know of

anyone that may be interested in representing business or labor, please make referrals to Rick.

Current Board Appointed Vice Chair Retired – John Burcaw volunteered for the Vice Chair position. A Motion was made to appoint John Burcaw as Vice Chair, it was seconded and the Motion was approved.

3. Action Team Reports & Decision on Future Meetings

Business Engagement AT: Rick Roy - Emphasis is on the talent pipeline with the help of ARPA funds. Interest in helping support schools implement Future Forward platform. It allows businesses to register and then promote what they have to offer to work with schools. The platform was created in Southeast Minnesota by the Educational Service Cooperative. Not everyone is aware of the platform yet. Those using it, say it's been working very well. There's a fee for schools. We have some resources to help pay if schools are having issues. There is \$5000 through Perkins funds set aside for us that could be used. Going forward this would be an opportunity for the Board to support this.

Main priorities of the Business Engagement Team:

1. Career Pathways Partnership (with ARPA funds)
2. Transportation – focus on transportation for workforce customers
3. Culturally Competent Businesses – identified 2-3 programs to assist and provide assessments on inclusiveness and diversity to businesses. Possibility of working with a career services trainer to develop a simple introductory assessment for businesses to start engaging them.
4. Leadership Development – there's a critical need to fill gaps left by baby boomers retiring. Look at what leadership development programs are available and promote those to businesses.
5. Chamber partnerships – Rick & Chris Eng have been coordinating with chambers to create a monthly business report with a focus on business activities, educational and community engagement. There's a need for additional technical assistance for small businesses across the County.

Chris Eng (CDA) thanked Commissioner Karwoski and the County Board for their support for small businesses in Washington County. A concept, through CDA, was presented at the Board workshop. It would provide enhanced assistance beyond what is already in place to help small businesses struggling to recover from the pandemic and help them overcome challenges from preventing them to grow their business. CDA is looking to create a program that will provide peer-to-peer networking amongst CEO's and business leaders within the County, provide training webinars and additional one-on-one assistance with an advisor depending on the businesses' needs. The CDA also will have a database for small businesses. It will help them know where their customers are coming from and spending habits to help them build a business plan and gather new customers. The plan is to begin the program late May

or early June. This has been possible with the County Board's willingness to use ARPA dollars and the partnership with the Chambers that Chris & Rick have been working with. Commissioner Karwoski said the Board are very supportive of using ARPA dollars and exceeding the \$200,000 investment to help small businesses and thanked Chris for his leadership in developing this program.

Community Engagement AT: Henok Fanta -The team has been discussing ways to leverage resources and information to enhance outcomes for citizens. There's interest in bringing back the Better Together initiative and get other community members involved. Better Together began with a grant but faded over time. It was a partnership between Washington County Libraries, CareerForce and ABE (Adult Basic Education). The team is looking at ways to utilize social media, engage the community, promote our services, and connect businesses with employee candidates. Also looking at non-traditional approaches to connect with the community for the same. Possibly being present in places that are necessary that the community frequents. Since the Better Together program was previously in place the thought is to pick up where that was left off and partnering with the Business Engagement Action Team, to create a welcome packet for first-time businesses coming to Washington County. It would include partners we work with, services we provide and other beneficial information to help businesses get going and show we're available and here to serve them.

The team is also discussing facilitating a resource fair. Inviting community members and community resources to come together for a one-day event.

Education Engagement AT: Karen Ritter - There has been low attendance for the last two meetings. No particular projects being worked on at this time. There's been a lot of good information shared from school districts and what's being implemented of career exploration tools. District 622 is using You Science assessment tool and South Washington County Schools has applied for the Youth Skills grant through the Dept. of Labor and Industry.

Cory Sindt, Susie Evans and Zach Devine wrote a grant under the Cares Act dollars to create a summer credit recovery project for students who need additional credits to graduate. Students would attend their normal morning credit recovery class. The Cares Act funds would allow them to stay for the afternoon. Businesses would be invited in, as well as, Careerforce to assist students with resume and interviewing help as well as introducing them to career exploration. Ideas and participation from members of this Board are especially welcome. Students will gain an elective credit/career exploration credit. Lunch would be provided and they would be bussed home.

CareerForce has received renewals of both pathways grants:
Women's Economic Security Act (WESA) focusing on non-traditional work for women. Washington County has held this grant, with renewals for the last six years.

Pathways to Prosperity (P2P) grant is offering Office Technology partnering with South Washington Co. Schools, with Shane Mueller doing the instruction. Participants successfully completing the class would receive a Microsoft Office Specialist Associate Certification.

Discussion around virtual/in-person meetings. After some discussion, at this point meetings will be in-person with hybrid, if possible. Rick will research possibilities.

4. Board Action/Voting Items – (supporting documents included)

- **Annual Budget – 2022 Workforce Development Budget**
There are multiple funding cycles/programs ending at different times. Gray areas – January – December, Yellow areas – part of the past year coming into this year. Funding has remained fairly steady.
Motion was made to approve, it was seconded, and the Motion was approved.
- **Local Workforce Development Board Budget** – it's required under Federal law – the Board must have an approved annual budget. Rick worked with our CareerForce Accountant to develop the budget and it's updated yearly. The Board reviews it, approves it and then asks Commissioner Karwoski to sign off on it. Motion was made to approve, it was seconded, and the Motion was approved.
- **Youth Plan – WIOA & MYP Plan** – plans for both Federal WIOA and MN Youth are submitted yearly. Motion was made to approve, it was seconded, and the Motion was approved.

5. ARPA Project Update

Cory has been connecting with all the schools receiving lots of positive support. The Future Forward platform will be a major focus working closely with Family Means (Landfall & Cimarron) Teen Centers. A couple of youth have enrolled. Cory is helping them get set up with driver's training as they are interested in training being offered by the Dept. of Transportation in road construction. There will be opportunity for co-enrollment between this project and Youth Programs.

6. Board Member & Guest Comments/Updates – no additional comments or updates

7. Call and Vote for Adjournment

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