

**WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT BOARD
FINANCE / GOVERNANCE COMMITTEE MEETING**

Friday, November 8, 2020

MINUTES

Members Present:

Kevin Whirley – Chair, Jason Archer, Cenia Bosman, John Frederick, Vanessa Parker-Lewis

Members Absent:

None

Staff Present:

Greg Laposa, Director of Workforce Development, Karen Brown, Derek Collins, Ethan Dixon, Angela Erby, Jon Hild, Tiffany Manning, Marva McJoy, Loris Williams

County Executive Representative:

Andrea Jackson-Jennings, Director of Human Services

Guests Present:

None

Call to Order

The Chair called the meeting to order at 11:03a

Approval of the Minutes

The minutes from the regularly scheduled August 2, 2020 were read silently and approved without changes and/or corrections.

Board Chair's Remarks

- a. *CLEO Summit* – Future of the Job Centers – in response to the pandemic, significant changes have happened in the everyday way we conduct business. Still the focus of the Job Center has to be on providing quality services to the clients. There is also an on-going discussion around the use of WIOA funds for marketing/outreach, etc. Due to the current working conditions, with many staff and clients accessing Job Center programs and services remotely, the State recognizes the need for funds that can be used for the purpose of marketing and/or outreach, so it is being discussed.
- b. *One-Stop Certification* – There was a group of individuals, including Kevin Whirley (WDB Chair), Donna Brake (OWD), Barbara Wheatley (BFL), and others, who conducted visits to all of the JC sites. It was determined that there is a need for assistive technology and the relevant training at all sites to allow clients with a need to access the services of the Job Center. There was much discussion about the cost and who is responsible. At the time, it looks as if the Board will have to use budget dollars to acquire whatever is needed. There is on-going discussion regarding this matter and more information will be shared as it becomes available. We need to ensure staff are included on communication regarding Job Center goals and activities. It was discovered that not all staff are included in those communications as is required. The Job Center partnered

with the Adult Independent Living Center in St. Peters to review the handicapped access. Our current Limited English Proficiency (LEP) provider is not open for business and as such, that was a problem with the certification process. Unfortunately, the certification was not granted at the time.

This has been a very trying, but informative process and the Director of Workforce has a plan and strategies for addressing all of the aforementioned issues.

Director's Report –

- a. *Words from the Director of Human Services* – the director reiterated the comments of the Chair, stating that Workforce Development has had a lot going on, including monitoring, discussion and dialogue with the state and our partners. Transitions within the Department of Human Services and responses to the COVID-19 pandemic, managing the C.A.R.E.S. Act funding and increased responsibilities of all of the DHS divisions. The Director recognized the Workforce Development team for all of the hard work and dedication during these challenging times. The divisions of Human Services are working hard and collaboratively to assist the residents of St. Louis County.
- b. *Words of Appreciation* – the Director of Workforce issued words of appreciation to the Workforce Development Board Chair and the Director of Human Services for their active participation in serving the Job Center and the staff.
- c. *Reiteration of the One-Stop Certification Process* – it was reported that this is the first time that not only were the comprehensive centers (Northwest Crossings and Seven Hills in Florissant), but the affiliate centers had to be assessed as well. New requirements were put in place by the State, so the process was lengthier and involved. In addition, the assistive technology requirements were also more extensive. It was noted that the WFD team worked really hard and collaboratively to get the One-Stop process completed as required.
- d. *Job Center Activities* – the director shared a data presentation to outline the activities of the Job Center, stating that while the Job Center had closed briefly in the spring due to the pandemic, St. Louis County was one of the first Job Centers to reopen. Since June 8, 2020, customers have been receiving services. According to a report by the One-Stop Operator, there was a lot of foot traffic at all of the sites. In September, over 1,200 people visited the comprehensive and affiliate Job Centers; 11 individuals were approved for training; the team assisted 215 (YTD) customers obtain employment with an average wage of \$13.76/hr.; and last month more than 40 customers participated in virtual workshops. There has been significant growth in the use of our social media platforms to interact with customers. It was reported that strategies are being employed to draw more people into the Job Center as it is a critical component in assisting people find employment. Safety measures are consistently taken to provide clean and safe environment for customers and staff; to date, there have been no reported cases of anyone in the Job Center (staff or customers).

A question was asked about comparative numbers of foot traffic in the Job Center now in comparison to pre-pandemic numbers. It was speculated that the current number differed by roughly half.

- e. *First Quarter Highlights* – highlights noted for the first quarter were, 1) the work being done to transition the new WIOA subrecipient (Employment Connection) into the Job

Center. 2) hosting more virtual hiring events, 3) significant time and energy spent on the One-Stop Certification, and 4) a focus on using C.A.R.E.S. Act funding to get customers into training. To date, 55 individuals have been enrolled in a wide array of training programs, using the special grant funds.

- f. *Fourth Quarter Report Card* – it was reported that the State’s report of the St. Louis County region was not very good, with several opportunities for improvement and growth. However, much work has been done to address the concerns raised by the state, including conference calls in which the Board Chair, the Director of Human Resources and the Director of Workforce Development spoke to the Office of Workforce Development senior administrators. It was noted that the Report Card is not a formal monitoring report – it is simply a progress report and should be seen as a coaching opportunity. St. Louis County WDB has taken the report seriously and acted accordingly.

The director explained an issue that was reported regarding the 60/40 funding allocations. The State now requires each region using WIOA funds to be budgeted to allocate 60% toward administrative costs and 40% of funds for direct services. It was reported that this is a difficult task that is being experienced by all of the regions throughout the state. St. Louis County has been working diligently to bring the budgets in alignment with the requirement.

On the report card it was noted that the St. Louis County Region does have strong performance outcomes – which were shown as a positive on the Report Card.

In discussion, the Board members wanted to know if any of the issues raised were as a result of the COVID environment and are there any action steps and a timeline to address these issues? Are the steps for improvement on-going or are they from report card to report card. At this time, many steps to address and/or correct concerns and the state has responded favorably. It was recommended that when presenting this information to the larger board, that it be done in a way that demonstrates the improved status.

FSIS Report:

- A. The current rate of expenditure for the PY19/FY20 funds is as follows: Youth, expended at 97.56% for \$1,770,455.62; Adult funds, expended at 98.74% as \$1,688,966.36, and: Dislocated Worker funds have been 32.91% expended at \$448,185.63, with a balance of \$913,602.37. It is anticipated that both Youth and Adult funds will be fully expended by the end of November. Due to the expenditure rule of “First In – First Out” there have been no PY20 expenditures to date. It is expected the PY19 Dislocated funds will be used through a transfer of funds that will allow for the full utilization of those funds for Adult programs. The budgets
- B. C.A.R.E.S. Act funds – As of October 31, 2020, \$126,657.00 has been expended. It was explained that the CARES Acts funds had a \$6,000 cap per individual. As a result, if an individual’s training exceeded that amount, it was supplemented using WIOA formula funds.
- C. COVID-19 Humanitarian Grant – No activity on these funds as of yet. It is anticipated that those funds will begin to be utilized in the coming months.
- D. Registered Apprenticeship program – the amount was reduced from \$220,000 to \$60,000 of which 100% of those funds have been expended.

- E. YouthBuild – there were some problems with the program. The current expenditures are at \$22,215.26. There are invoices that are holding for YouthBuild. When issues with the invoices are resolved, the expenditures will increase.
- F. EO Funds – PY19 funds have been fully expended. PY20 funds will begin to be expended now.
- G. Transfer of funds – there is a request to transfer \$580,000 from Dislocated Workers funds to the Adult line. These funds will be used for training, support services and staffing needs. These funds will also be used to extend the existing LEP program.
- H. DSS SkillUp and Jobs League – regarding these two programs and subsequent funding, there is a need for clarity so this information will be presented to the full Board once more information and clarity has been obtained.

Workforce Development Reports:

I. *Contract Status Update:*

- a. PY19 Adult – Limited English Proficiency (LEP) contract was extended through December 31, 2020 to avoid an interruption of services.
- b. The YouthBuild contract was amended to accommodate changes from the state to revise the program performance period of November 1, 2019 – December 31, 2020. This will allow the program a better opportunity to meet all performance goals.
- c. SFY21 DSS Jobs League contract has been received and will be processed through the contract signature process. The SFY21 DSS SkillUp contract has not yet been received, but once received will also be processed.

II. *The RFP for the Adult – Limited English Proficiency* – submissions are due from bidders today. Any Board member who has not returned their signed P309 Non-Disclosure form will not be allowed to participate in the evaluation and recommendation portion of the RFP process.

III. *Compliance* – completed the quarterly data element validation reporting and entered it into the MIS. Negotiated performance rates were covered with the committee. It was reported that this will be the first year the Measurable Skills Gains are monitored. Quarter 1 performance outcomes were shared with the committee. While the region is on target in most areas, there is still room for improvement in all areas, but it is anticipated that subsequent quarters of performance should show significant increase.

IV. *Business Services* – even during these difficult economic times and conditions, the Business Services Group (BSG) continues to reach out to employers to assist in fulfilling their employment needs. They have continued to host virtual job fairs/hiring events and roll out the apprenticeship programs during this time. There has been sincere work done to strengthen the partnership with Washington University, Accenture Family Services, who will be bringing 1000 new jobs to the St. Louis region, and other employers in the region. In addition, the BSG has initiated the metropolitan regions first Incumbent Worker Training Program (IWT). This program is designed to encourage internal upward mobility, mitigate layoffs, and increase talent recruitment and retention. The IWT is a value-added feature of the BSG and is rapidly growing in interest and participation among area employers.

V. *Customer Feedback* – Job Center survey data was shared with the committee. 21 customers completed the survey for the week prior. 15/21 of the customer reported that they were repeat customers. As indicated by the survey results, most customers indicated they were satisfied with the Job Center experience; no negative experiences reported. The age demographics information indicated that customers ages 25 – 34 and 35 – 54 make up the largest groups utilizing Job Center services. There was an equal split between male and female customers. In answer to the question about learned of or were referred to the Job Center, the vast majority of customers sited Family and Friends as the primary referral source.

New Business:

- A. Reviewing the 2021 Workforce Development Board Meeting Calendar – the calendar of meetings for 2021 was presented to the Committee. There were no questions or oppositions to any of the dates and/or time presented. The calendar will be presented to the full Board for a vote at the next meeting.
- B. Full Board Meeting Agenda Development – the agenda for the full Board meeting was developed using the Finance and Governance Agenda as a outline.

Old Business:

- Standing Committee reactivation – Tabled

Adjournment:

Meeting was adjourned at 1:00p