



Mississippi Valley Workforce Development Board

Chief Elected Officials (CEOs)

July 22, 2021

Meeting Minutes

The meeting of the Mississippi Valley Workforce Area CEOs was held on July 22nd, 2021 at 2:00 p.m. via Zoom.

CALLED TO ORDER

Willey called the meeting to order at 2:06 p.m.

CEO PRESENT

Present: Jack Willey, Brad Quigley, Nathan Mather, Jim Irwin, Rick Larkin, Chad White, and Brinson Kinzer

Absent: Shane McCampbell

Staff Present: Miranda Swafford, Executive Director and Phyllis Wood, Executive Assistant

QUORUM

There was a quorum present to conduct business.

APPROVAL OF AGENDA

White made a motion to approve the agenda with no additions, seconded by Kinzer, motion carried.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Willey noted a correction to the minutes. Under ARP/Grant writer, the next to the last line of the first paragraph said old courthouse and should say old sheriff's office. With that corrections, Mather made a motion to approve the previous meeting minutes, seconded by White, motion carried.

ADMINISTRATIVE BUDGET

Swafford announced there was carry over dollars of about \$153,000 with total budget of \$473,000. Per Willey she continued through line by line. Board Staff represents the funds to cover the portion of time related to carrying out administrative functions. Fiscal Agent represents the amount approved to pay the fiscal agent for monitoring of financial revenue and expenditures. Professional Fees represents the amount budgeted to cover fees related to filing annual IRS forms and other financial documents. Information Technology is to cover license and subscriptions to facilitate productivity and collaboration, IT support, as well as a hot spot for in person meetings in rural areas. Legal Fees to cover fees associated with review of contracts and legal documents. Dues and subscriptions will cover cost for chamber membership to all the chambers in the MVWA and membership to workforce board professional associations. Equipment cover cost of computer or other office equipment Insurance is for the expense of general liability insurance as well as insurance to cover board members and CEOs. Outreach Expenses to cover booths, lunch and learns. Planning two outreach efforts in each county Meeting expenses to cover the fees for facilities, presenters, supplies for regularly scheduled workforce meetings. Postage and printing represents cost of printing materials for manuals, policies, procedures, brochures, and outreach material. Supplies is the amount budgeted for office supplies. Telephone is to cover the cost of a 1-800 number for the board. Mileage and Travel includes budget for travel to national conferences as well as increased travel of board staff as more meetings return to in person. Conference and Training is budgeted to cover professional development and registration for national conferences.

Motion to approve as presented offered by Quigley and seconded by Kinzer, motion carried.

AMERICAN RELIEF PLAN PROPOSAL

Swafford gave an overview of each part of the proposal for ARP funds. Mobile Unit \$510,800.00 to provide workforce services to rural communities in MVWA. Would fund a vehicle and a staff person as well as contract fund the hiring of a Title I person in Lee County. Quigley asked who oversees the mobile unit and what is being done differently. Swafford said Equus would oversee the mobile unit as an extension of Iowa *WORKS* services. Larkin asked if the Lee County staff would be full-time or just 1 day. Swafford replied fulltime. Quigley stated he would like to see them do something different and ask who oversaw Equus to potentially get some changes. Swafford informed the group that the Operations Committee oversees programming and reminded that Equus can only work with people who meet program criteria, otherwise they are referred to IWD. Kinzer offered that as a member on the Operations Committee he could have programmatic changes added to the agenda. Swafford said she would send to Matthew (Nicol).

Next up was Increasing Mental Health at \$750,000 to contract via RFP a four-year service provider to place one mental health counselor in each of the comprehensive centers. Quigley asked who had brought up this idea because he wanted to know how closely the proposal matched their vision. White expressed concern about double dipping. Bob Bartles explained the service delivery would not be double dipping. Swafford clarified the service would only be available to individuals enrolled in a board monitored program and who did not have health insurance to cover these services. Quigley asked about the prevalence of mental health to which Swafford replying mental health issues among the workforce is very prevalent and the service is becoming more popular in other workforce areas. Willey asked which mental health region the four southern counties were a part of? Bartles and Larkin replied their region is the SEIL region. Willey suggested we talk to the MHDS representatives from each of the MHDS regions that oversee the MVWA. Laurie Elam for Eastern Iowa. Kinzer sent Swafford her contact information. Ryanne Wood for SEIL and Bartles sent her contact information to Swafford. Quigley would like to look at partnering with both entities. Swafford agreed to reach out to both parties.

Incentives for Adult and DW program coming in at a total of \$275,500. Would cover incentives for individuals in Title I programs to complete performance measure tasks. White asked how we would keep the program from becoming just a handout. Swafford explained the incentive is only paid upon completion and the tasks all move an individual down their employment path.

Small Business and Childcare Assistance to support re-vitalization, premium pau, and landlord assistance. Eligible types of businesses would include small business, non-profit, corporations, partnerships, LLCs, and sole proprietors. The childcare assistance would be available to employers who provide employees childcare subsidies to cover a portion of childcare or to help a business establish a childcare site for their employees. White asked if the program could be expanded to existing childcare facilities? Swafford said she could add that to the proposal. Quigley express agreement with the idea. Bartles asked how big can a small business be? Swafford said the common theme she is seeing is equal to or less than 100 employees. The board could restrict that further if they desired. Kinzer feels the board should stick with the commonly defined limit so we are in alignment. Swafford asked if the board was fine with the range to be \$3,000-\$25,000 grant amounts, so there needs to be a range. Quigley asked if we would partner with our early childhoods in our areas to oversee this childcare portion? Willey felt they should be made aware of it. Quigley would like to see us partner with them. Willey said they would make sure the information is shared. Swafford allocated funds to outreach to ensure people were made aware of the programs. Swafford asked again about the range to which Willey and Quigley felt the range was appropriate. Kinzer asked why \$3,000 minimum. Swafford explained that because of the administration of grant processing and the monitoring involved smaller grants could be too costly to administer. Kinzer understood the logic and Willey offered their county did a similar grant program and had \$5,000 as the minimum.

Upskilled Iowa Workforce is very similar to incumbent worker program. Businesses who needed to train current employees in order to bring in new technology or new machinery could apply for grants to help cover the cost of training. The upskilled employees would potentially open entry level positions to higher new staff.

Willey stated the budget would be \$300,000 per year for three years. Quigley asked Kinzer if the Upskill program would be something to talk to the union trades about with regard to training? Kinzer deferred an answer to an apprentice coordinator and suggested the group meet with all apprentice coordinators. Willey agreed stating there is a need for plumbers, electricians, all tradesmen. Mather stated he would not want this upskilling to result in the reduction of workforce and suggested we would check-in with recipients at six months. Swafford stated a clause could be added to the proposal stating the result could not be staff reduction.

Senior Grant to assist low-income seniors over the age of 65 with general home improvement and living expenses. Quigley said the program sounded a lot like community action which Willey agreed.

ARP Grant Coordinator Consult to oversee the grant programs in the proposal and to look for additional external funding resources for COVID-19 recovery for a three-year period.

Rural Transportation Solutions would be to create a committee to collect the information to put together an RFP to contact for a deep dive assessment of the current services, inventory, demographics and planned projects. The assessment would be come a tool for the committee to determine best workforce-based solutions. Willey said our first step should be to talk with our regional transit service providers to see what they are doing now. Quigley agreed. Willey not against the proposal but need to have those conversations first, and felt setting up those conversations would be easy. Wood offered those conversation should take place and the idea of the committee is to have those conversations to shape what the RFP for the assessment would look like as those service providers should absolutely be a part of the conversation. Larkin clarified Lee County does have a bus service out of Burlington that people can call but thought the service was more geared toward the elderly. Quigley would like whatever we do to have an individual moving to independent mobility. He would like short term solutions rather than creating a system that makes people dependent. Kinzer agrees to be collaborative is ideal, but we have limited time to get those conversations in before the proposal submission is unlikely. This is a working document, but we should submit all the proposal as is and the proposal can be tweaked if we are awarded funding. Willey confirms no time for conversations just wanted to express the need to know what is being offered. Wood concurred that whether we get the funding or not Willey is correct about having those conversation. Swafford said if awarded the State will want more detail, plus we can modify this proposal to include working with existing services. Willey said we should add the additional wording to articulate we would work with current transportation providers.

Recruitment and Retention Program has not been received from Nicol yet.

Nick Hockenberry presented about a program that focuses on training for the tech jobs of the future as software design, not coding. There was a pilot paid internship this summer for student teams to partner with actual industries in our area. Hockenberry would like to see if our proposal would have room to include to help fund and expand the program. Willey offered he did a tour with the groups and the work they are tackling was amazing. The student groups explained what they did and what they achieved. Swafford felt that a connection could be made to proposal. Hockenberry said he would share their previous request and Swafford said she would share the format in which his information should be submitted to align with our proposal. Kinzer asked for more detail regarding the project tasks. Hockenberry and Willey provided detail about the projects and companies. An accessibility app to overlap google maps to find the accessible entrances to business. Worked on a mental health application to enhance its functionality to smart watches. A commercial roofer had communication issues with getting information to worksites and the students were tackling it. Would get a list of the projects out. Kinzer supports the project and doesn't want his questions to hold any thing back.

Bob Bartles shared ideas regarding three projects which he declared a conflict of interest with Hope Haven with a couple of the projects. He had a rural transportation solution were supported employment vendors could be reimbursed for the unreimbursed cost of providing the transportation service. Specialized Mental Health services, looking to get some support for funding staff to provide the specialized services. Local Chamber has an idea to have high school students teach other high school students looking for employment to be student led training and preparation of their peers. Willey and Kinzer expressed support for the program. Irwin said they were looking at doing a similar program as the Chamber project with the Jackson and Clinton.

Irwin asked if any other boards were submitting. Swafford thought South Central would but didn't feel the other board areas were far enough along in structural/operational development to apply. Irwin motions to approve the proposal with all the projects discussed today included. Quigley seconds. The motion carries unanimously.

OTHER BUSINESS

Kinzer shares that he asked Swafford to present to his board and they did a phenomenal job with sharing information about what the board is and who we are, where we came from, and where we are headed. He thanked Swafford and Wood for the presentation and let the other CEOs know if they were considering something similar for their boards they should.

Irwin spoke with Michelle McNeary about IWD about changes and learned that UI beneficiaries do not have to turn in their required work search contacts and thinks that needs to change.

PUBLIC COMMENT

There were no public comments.

ADJOURN

Willey adjourned the meeting at 3:48 p.m.