



Mississippi Valley Workforce Development Board

Quarterly Board Meeting Minutes February 26, 2024

The meeting of the Mississippi Valley Workforce Development Board (MVWDB) was held on Monday, February 26, at 1:00 p.m. in-person at *IowaWORKS* Center in Burlington with a Zoom conferencing option.

CALL TO ORDER

Duke called the meeting to order at 1:00 p.m.

ATTENDEES

Board Members Present: Dennis Duke, Kirby Phillips, Joyce Stimpson, Lori Bassow, Heather Halbrook, Ryan Drew, Cory Bergfeld, Jacob Nye, Rick Ernst, Martha Bell, Regina Matheson, Carol Reynolds, Mandy Parchert, Caitlin Bliesener, Kimberly Jaber

Board Members Absent: Cynthia Whalen (excused), Andy Sokolovich (excused)

CEO Present: Jim Irwin, Don Schwenker, Danny Chick, Shane McCampbell

Staff: Miranda Swafford, Executive Director, Tyler Lanz, Strategic Partnership Specialist, Mandy Tripp, Compliance Officer, Louise Butherus, Communications Assistant

Service Provider Staff: Cherisa Price-Wells, Regional Project Director, Tabytha Siegfried, Quality Assurance, Taylor Longstreth, Operations Supervisor, Shannon Weaver, Project Director

Guest: Sandy Mead, Metrix Learning, Andy Huls, EQUUS National Manager, Stephanie Torrance, Goodwill of the Heartland, Tim Snyder, *IowaWORKS* Operations Supervisor, Suzanne Foran

QUORUM

A quorum was established for the board to conduct business.

Introduction of New Member

Rick Ernst introduced himself as the new Operations Manager for the Davenport *IowaWORKS* office and the new Iowa Workforce Development member for the board.

CONSENT AGENDA

The consent agenda included approval of the agenda, Newsletter, previous meeting minutes, Cynthia Whalen and Andy Sokolovich's excused absences, and the financial report summary. Nye made a motion to approve the consent agenda, seconded by Flogel, and the motion carried.

METRIX DEMO

Swafford commented that she has been reviewing various technological platforms and introduced Mead, who provided a demo of the Metrix Learning platform. Mead shared information on the platform and discussed its potential uses for teaching targeted skills through its various courses. Mead also added that Metrix learning is a platform with courses for every level and can also be utilized by participants as well as workforce staff. Mead ended her presentation reviewing the different proposal options. Duke inquired if Metrix cross trained or

cross reference with ISNET World which facilitates safety training for construction. Mead advised that they do have safety training available but is not certain if it cross references specifically with ISNET World. Mead discussed the licensing and access costs as well as the certificate of completion process. Swafford requested a copy of the PowerPoint.

EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE REPORT

Duke advised on the approvals of the Memorandums of Understanding H, I and J as well as the expected levels of performance for PY24 and PY25 for the local plan for Adult/DW and Youth programs. Duke also noted the Q2 KPI report for the One Stop Operator was approved. Duke also highlighted discussions around changing the travel policy to reflect a per diem for meals, introduction of the new Communications Assistant, Louise Butherus, as well as the resignation of Matthew Nicol.

FINANCE COMMITTEE REPORT

Drew was unavailable to summarize the approvals of the reports. Swafford commented that the only business listed in the finance report were the paid invoices.

YOUTH COMMITTEE REPORT

Nye summarized the report, advising that the Governor had applied for a 50/50 waiver to allow for even distribution between In School and Out of School Youth rather than the current ratio of 75/25. Nye also commented that there are mixed opinions about the waiver in the committee, but it would open up additional options. Nye stated that the approval to 'opt in' was made should the waiver pass. Nye mentioned the Engage by Cell demo which was viewed as part of Youth Committees outreach strategy. Nye also noted the customer satisfaction rate of 96.11 in January Youth programs.

OPERATIONS COMMITTEE REPORT

Phillips summarized the approvals for the ITA Policy Modification from \$5500 to \$6000 to cover increased tuition cost, Local Plan Section 2 and the Adjusted Deliverables due to delayed funding, as well as the Social Media Policy modification. Phillips commented that there were quite a few hiring events hosted over November, December and January that were attended by 348 job seekers. Phillips highlighted the most notable was Hire Talent Tuesday in Ft. Madison and saw 98 job seekers and 26 employers despite poor weather conditions. Phillips noted AJC traffic in Burlington in November was 653, Dec 1141 and January 1162. For Davenport, Phillips noted the center served 1547 in November, 2244 in December and 2469 in January. Phillips also commented that the influx of customers is due to the time of year when temporary lay-offs typically occur. Ernst commented that the Davenport center has been looking into influx as well and stated that 24,430 claims have been worked since October and last fiscal year at total of 51,277 claims were made. Ernst further noted the center is already at the halfway point to last year's numbers and it is only the beginning of the year.

BUSINESS COMMITTEE REPORT

Parchert presented the report, noting approval updates on the Rapid Response policy so that it aligns more closely with federal and state policies and also noted the approval update for Local Plan Section 3, questions 1-4. Parchert highlighted the Retrain and Retain grant applications and noted there is a little bit of a lull and asked for continued support to push the applications through

as there is about \$20,000 left. Parchert also noted her excitement about SkillBridge partnership as being 3rd party provider for IWD and mentioned a presentation Tracie Timmerman given about SkillBridge to the Advanced Manufacturing Sector board. Lanz noted that she has been working with two different companies to establish eligibility for the Retrain and Retain grant and Swafford commented that she believes if the two applications are approved we will have used all of our income for the grant.

DISABILITY ACCESS COMMITTEE REPORT

Tripp presented the report, discussed the approval of the Local Plan and is recommended for full board approval. Tripp also noted the Leap into Inclusion event happening at the Davenport AJC and mentioned the event is similar to the one held in October with the Windmill Module. Tripp also noted the ADA Assessments have been completed for both centers.

***LOCAL PLAN**

Tripp discussed the Local Plan and noted that it is a 4-year plan required by WIOA legislation that states each Local Workforce Development Board is required to develop and submit to the State, in partnership with the CEO's, a comprehensive plan on the current and projected needs of the local area's one-stop delivery system. Tripp also noted that the Local Plan must support the achievement of Iowa's vision, goals and strategies as outlined in the State Plan. Tripp noted the different sections of the Local Plan and advised section 1 of the Local Plan has to do with Infrastructure and Section 2 being about Strategic Planning Elements and noted that Section 2 was the data section. Tripp noted section 3 is about System Coordination and how the plan all works together. The link to the Local Plan was included and distributed to the board. Public comment period is February 28th thru March 26th with a Public Listening Session being held March 4th at 5pm. Swafford noted that the Local Plan is different than the Strategic Plan in that the Local Plan is something we have to do by the Federal guidelines. Phillips made a motion to approve the plan and Nye seconded, motion carried.

STRATEGIC PLAN

Swafford discussed the Strategic Plan and mentioned that the discussion entails different parts. Swafford stated one of the State partners commented that the Governor says the Future Ready Iowa goal is achieved. Since our Vision Statement references Future Ready Iowa Swafford suggested the board look at the statement to see if we want to reword it. Swafford offered a few options to reword the statement but also noted it could stay the same. Bergfeld noted his recommendation for keeping as-is, Irwin and Bassow agreed. Swafford proceeded to discuss the 3-year Strategic Plan goal and explained the goals are the outcome of Stakeholder interviews held last Fall as well as the information gathered from the Annual Board Training session. Tripp advised on goal 1 being Fiscal Sustainability and Growth. Lanz discussed goal 2 being Job Quality and elevating job quality standards in the Mississippi Valley. Bassow inquired the goal was part of Good Job and Lanz confirmed the goal is in line with the Job Quality Academy and the Department of Labor's Good Job principles. Swafford discussed goal 3 Board Strategy and summarized the action plan is optimize board impact on the workforce by optimizing its role and fostering active engagement to meet the needs of our communities. Lanz discussed goal 4 Business Services and advised the goal is to enhance partnership and collaboration among the Business Service Teams and to streamline outreach to reduce Employer fatigue for the businesses in our area. Swafford presented Goal 5 System Integration and mentioned this goal

would be driven mainly by the One Stop Operator for developing common priorities across the partners and accountability across performance measures as well as focusing on integration and customer service training. Goal 6 Outreach was presented by Lanz. Lanz commented that the Outreach goal is to increase access to rural communities, especially those without an American Job Center, by diversifying our communications, but also by humanizing our outreach strategy by featuring success stories and connecting to the people in the different communities. Goal 7 Youth Services was presented by Swafford who advised the strategy is to reach the youth through different channels by communicating on their preferred platforms, develop a parent engagement strategy as well as program to connect with younger youth as well as continuing to utilize VR and other innovative technologies. Swafford also shared a report she developed to help committees track their progress. Reynolds expressed concerns about goals 4 and 6 and some of the related action plans. Reynolds commented that goal 6 was incongruent with goal 4 and suggested using softer language in goal 4 by the addition of “voluntary” in the language used. Swafford responded that the language could be changed to “voluntary” as that is what it is. Swafford also noted that it is not intended to have any negative reflection on any business. Bassow asked if there was a timeline for approval due to the enormity of the information. Swafford commented it would be preferred to have by July 1. Bassow asked to table the approval and Swafford requested that the board review the Strategic Plan documents and send through any suggestions in advance so that she could make the necessary updates. Bassow made a motion to table the approval, seconded by Reynolds. Motion carried.

ADULT/DW RFP COMMITTEE RECOMMENDATION

Phillips discussed the RFP committee convened on February 23rd and evaluated and scored the proposals. The RFP committee met and scored the proposals and Phillips commented that given the competitive nature of the scores the committee intends to facilitate question and answer sessions with bidders. Phillips also noted that a virtual board meeting will be made at a later date to discuss and approve the committee’s recommendation. Nye motioned to table the approval and Bassow seconded, motion carried. .

YOUTH RFP COMMITTEE RECOMMENDATION

Nye presented the Youth RFP Committee recommendations and advised that they received 4 proposals from Manpower, EQUUS, Career Team and Eckerd. Nye advised the committee team that met to score the proposals and detailed the pros and cons from each of the proposals received. Nye read through the final scores with EQUUS at 130.5, Eckerd-128.5, Career Team-125.75 and Manpower-89. Nye stated that based on the evaluation of the proposals received their recommendation is to award the Youth contract to EQUUS. Nye further stated that the committee expressed the need to ensure the 14 Youth element strategies are implemented as outlined and carried out as intended. Nye made a motion to approve and Bassow seconded, motion carried.

ONE STOP OPERATOR RFP COMMITTEES RECOMMENDATION

Bassow presented the One Stop Operator RFP Committees recommendation and advised that they received two proposals one from Eckerd which scored 116.67 and one from Equus scoring 119.5 Bassow advised the committee team that met to score the proposals and detailed the pros and cons from each of the proposals. Bassow commented that they would love to see Eckerd continue to propose but they need more experience. McCambell wanted clarification on the lack

of experience comment Bassow made towards Eckerd to which Bassow elaborated on details of the reasoning including the sited number of programs being served was significantly lower than Equus. McCambell further noted his concern of having all our eggs in one basket and he felt that inexperience alone was not justification of a lower consideration to which Bassow replied that Equus had 34 different entities that they had done One Stop Operator for. Bergfeld made a motion to approve seconded by Phillips, motion carried.

TRAVEL POLICY MODIFICATION/INDIVIDUAL TRAINING ACCT POLICY MODIFICATION

Due to time constraints Swafford inquired on moving the Travel Policy modification as well as the Individual Training Acct policy modification to the Executive Committee so to move forward with the Board Updates. Nye made a motion to table, Bergfeld seconded, motion to table carried.

BOARD STAFF REPORT

Swafford provided general updates, including an update on the Memorandum of Understanding and Infrastructure Funding Agreement noting it has been temporarily revised and will be in front of the full board during the May meeting for approval. Swafford also noted the Workforce Communities of Action announced the 4 winners of the \$10,000 seed money and the board was not selected. Swafford commented that the Family and Worker Fund felt our impact wasn't large enough to help meet their goal of 75mil being in good jobs by 2027, but they did pass our funding request over to other funders that they work with.

Swafford noted that the PY24 State Funding Allocation has been given to the state from the federal government further noting that we have received a 10% decrease in Youth and Adult program and an increase of 30% in the DW program. Swafford further noted that Tripp went to a meeting with ITC who was applying for a grant through department of energy and was told they needed to strengthen their community needs section. ITC convened with IWD, Grow Clinton, Eastern Iowa Community College and noted they have \$187,000 to apply for in a VOE grant to support local program. Swafford commented that she discussed Accelerate Iowa with ITC and their plan is to hire a work-based learning coordinator for Clinton High School and Swafford sent a brief summary to ITC on how Accelerate Iowa could support that position if we were to get some funding. Swafford noted that ITC responded that they will include \$50,000 in their Department of Energy grant for the Accelerate Iowa program to serve Clinton.

COMPLIANCE OFFICER UPDATES

Tripp discussed the Iowa *WORKS* mobile unit visiting Des Moines first to make certain to work out any potential technical issues. Tripp also noted that Rapid Response will always have priority but Mississippi Valley will have 2nd priority for use. Swafford updated the timeline of the Iowa *WORKS* mobile unit noting that it was originally scheduled for July delivery, however the governor does want it to come to Mississippi Valley first. Swafford further noted the mobile unit will be at the Capitol on February 29th for its unveiling and a couple of events the first week in March and then it will be coming to Mississippi Valley for several weeks after that. Swafford remarked that we will have meetings to discuss placement for that time period.

Tripp commented that she has completed and submitted the One Stop Operator report to Equus and she is waiting for their responses.

Our State Monitoring is in Burlington March 19th and 20th. Tripp also noted that MVWDB was selected to present 2 presentations at NAWB, a presentation on Virtual Reality, that is utilized in the Youth Program and a Disability presentation utilizing data collected on the employer events and the board training we did on hiring people with disabilities.

STRATEGIC PARTNERSHIP SPECIALIST UPDATES

Lanz presented the Strategic Partnership Specialist updates and noted the Phalanx outreach project which is helping to film a video spotlight of two of our successful workplace learning placements out in Maquoketa. Lanz also discussed the Job Quality Academy update noting 117 job seekers and 29 employers have completed the survey. Lanz noted the Refugee Education event is scheduled for April 18th in Davenport to discuss how to engage the refugee and immigrant workforce in Davenport. Lanz spoke about Competency Models and commented incorporating them into the K-12 curriculum starting with the health care industry in West Burlington schools. Lanz discussed meeting with the Early Childhood Workforce Connector, a liaison for companies that do registered apprenticeships for childcare workers.

UPCOMING ACTIVITIES

Swafford discussed upcoming events including a statewide Sector Partnership training on April 4th-5th held by Iowa Workforce Development in Waterloo. Swafford mentioned for the board to be on the lookout for surveys to start planning our June board training as well as sending out polls to learn preferences for meeting frequency and times. Lastly Swafford highlighted the Leap into Inclusion event happening on February 29th at the Davenport center.

OTHER BUSINESS

There was no other business.

PUBLIC COMMENT

There were no public comments.

***ADJOURNMENT**

Nye made a motion to adjourn the meeting, seconded by Flogel, and the motion carried. Duke adjourned the meeting at 2:48 p.m.