

**WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT BOARD
MEETING MINUTES**

Wednesday, November 18, 2020

BOARD MEMBER PRESENT

<u>Business Majority:</u>	Kevin Whirley–Chair, Caroline Battles, John Frederick, Jeffrey Mazur, Lee Metcalf, Gwen Mizell, Reginald Scott
<u>Required Representative:</u>	Mary Abbey, Jason Archer, Mary Grott, Lydia Mitchell, Hart Nelson
<u>Labor & Workforce Reps:</u>	Cenia Bosman, John Bowman, Julie Gassner, Carolyn Seward,
<u>Optional Members:</u>	John Gaal, Don Willey

BOARD MEMBERS ABSENT

<u>Business Majority:</u>	Elliott Henry, Vanessa Parker-Lewis
<u>Required Representatives:</u>	Donny Carroll
<u>Labor & Workforce Reps:</u>	Michael McMillan
<u>Optional Members:</u>	

ST. LOUIS COUNTY EXECUTIVE REPRESENTATIVE

Andrea Jackson-Jennings, Director of Human Services

ST. LOUIS COUNTY STAFF MEMBERS

Karen Brown, Joanna Brueggemann, Derek Collins, Ethan Dixon, Jon Hild, Stephanie Hill, Greg Laposa, Tiffany Manning, Marva McJoy, Loris Williams, Michele Williams

GUESTS PRESENT

Blake Hamilton, Chelsea Hand-Sheridan, Kevin Jones, Deborah Stovall, Tria Watson, Barbara Wheatley,

- I. CALL TO ORDER** - Kevin Whirley-Chair called the meeting to order at 7:32a.
- II. ROLL CALL** – Roll call was conducted at 7:34a. There was a quorum present
- III. REVIEW OF BOARD MINUTES** – the minutes were read silently. A motion was made and seconded to approve the August 26, 2020, minutes as written with no changes, corrections or revisions. The minutes were approved.
- IV. CHAIRMAN’S REPORT**
 - A. CLEO Summit – The CLEO summit provides a great platform for sharing ideas across the state. The focus for this year’s event was on the Job Centers of the Future and what is needed to adequately serve clients going forward and in light of COVID-19. The need for St. Louis County Workforce Development Board to garner marketing dollars became apparent from the discussions.

It is essential that the STLCO Board employ the most effective methods possible to connect with customers. There are free social media platforms available, but there is also a need for radio, television, and print media to be used. This is where there is a significant need for funding.

- B. One-Stop Certification – this takes place every two years. It must be done for the two comprehensive centers and the affiliate sites as well. There is an urgent need to address items that came up that must be addressed to comply with the requirements of the certification: Assistive Technology for the disabled and training for the equipment. The staff is working with an agency to assist in assessing and fulfilling the needs of the Job Centers as it relates to assistive technology. Additional time was given to the International Institute to meet the requirements since it has been largely closed during the pandemic.

V. DEPARTMENT OF HUMAN SERVICES DIRECTOR REMARKS

The DHS Director, on her behalf and on behalf of County Executive, Dr. Sam Page, wanted to thank all of the Board members and staff for their participation, hard work and dedication to all of the constituents of St. Louis County. It has been a trying year for all and the hard work of the Board and the staff has not gone without notice and is appreciated.

VI. DIRECTOR WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT REPORTS

- A. A special report was given by Board member, Hart Nelson on the State of the St. Louis Workforce. According to his report, in light of the effects of COVID-19, in 2020, the State of the Workforce Committee compared year-to-year data to examine the effects of the virus. One observation was the larger-than-normal number of business phone numbers that were disconnected. There is always a percentage of disconnected numbers to expect, but this year saw a considerable change. Of the functioning business contacted, 22% had closed at some point, with approximately 27% having laid off employees. Surprisingly, 20% had continued to hire. Optimistically, 51% of employers stated they were or would be adding job in the near future; with a notable amount of those reporting that they would be adding significant jobs. This indicates that a large percentage of the business community think that this has been the worst of the effects of the pandemic, but an optimistic outlook is on the horizon with a return to the pre-pandemic, robust economy. Unfortunately, approximately 25% of employers reported being less willing to hire justice involved individuals, which is about equal to 2015 levels – a significant decline from 2019 numbers which was approximately 4% of employers. Another aspect of the COVID-related working conditions is the number of employers who are not sold on the remote work environment. 38% of the companies surveyed, reported that they did not have anyone working remotely. As the majority (approx. 80%) of businesses surveyed were small to mid-sized companies, that might account for that statistic. However, 48% did report that they do not have job categories that could be converted to a work remote situation; in conjunction with a number of other work-remote challenges.
- B. The Director gave further details to his memo to the Board (included in the Board package). A few remarks regarding previous months activities.
 - A. C.A.R.E.S. Act enrollments – almost 60 individuals received training over the last few months due to the C.A.R.E.S. Act funds that were made available to St. Louis County.
 - B. One-Stop Certification – still working to achieve certification at all five job centers – particularly when it comes to assistive technology.
 - C. Adult – Limited English Proficiency program. Members of the Board who would like to participate in a meeting for the Board to discuss the RFP evaluation process must submit a signed P309 Non-Disclosure and Conflict of Interest form. Additional information will be sent regarding the meeting details to who submit their form.

- D. Economic Recovery Team – supported the St. Louis County’s Economic Rescue team in developing recommendations that will strengthen the County’s workforce efforts to support economic recovery.
- E. Expansion of Work-Based Learning opportunities – currently implementing the Incumbent Worker program as well continuing to develop work-site agreements for On-the-Job Training and Apprenticeship/Pre-Apprenticeship programs.
- F. Received the Quarterly Report Card – this is not a formal report, but rather an informal report to bring to the Board’s attention. Main areas of focus are:
 - o Adhering to 60/40 expenditures. A brief explanation was given of the requirement. Historically, St. Louis County has not strictly held to the expenditure policy.
 - o The local policies/practices of more efficiently enrolling individuals in programs. Staff will be meeting with OWD to discuss the practices that may be at issue with the State’s expectations
 - o There is now a sanctioning component to the State’s monitoring and reporting. To-date, STLCO has been very successful at avoiding any sanctions, by closely monitoring practices and processes, and communicating effectively with OWD, meeting all performance measures, and the level of efficacy among the staff.
- G. A look ahead – WDB Vision and Strategies – this should be a concept that is revisited throughout the coming year. This includes seeking more Board engagement and input by re-engaging the Standing Committees and implementing other Ad-Hoc committees as needed to meet the ever-changing needs of the local workforce. Possible committees could be a COVID-19/Economic Recovery Committee and a Sustainability Committee – looking at how the Board remains viable and continues to operate in a sustainable manner – including seeking additional funding sources. It was brought to the Board’s attention that now is a critical time to look critically and strategically at how the Board moves in light of the developing landscape of the workforce, fundamental shifts happening at the state and federal levels regarding focus and funding and how the STLCO WDB might engage in the conversations happening.

VII. FSIS REPORTS –

- A. Grant Status Report – a report was given that apprised the Board of the current grant status for all currently active grants. The Board was reminded of the “First In, First Out” practice of expending the previous year’s funds before current year funds are used. As such, it was reported that PY19 WIOA Adult, Youth and Dislocated Worker formula funds had been 97.56%, 98.74% and 32.91% expended, respectively. This money has to be fully expended by June 30, 2020. To date, 0% of PY20 WIOA Formula Funds had been expended in any category. According to the report, the status of other grants is as follows: Digital Apprenticeship USA – 100% expended; PY19 EO Officer – 100% expended; C.A.R.E.S. Act funding – 56.57% expended; MO Strong – 0% expended; COVID-19 Humanitarian grant – 0% expended; PY20 EO Officer – 0% expended; DSS SkillUp FNS grant – 100% expended; DSS SkillUP TANF grant – 90.77% expended; STL YouthBuild – 20.20% expended; and DSS TANF Jobs League – 35.19% expended.
- B. WIOA Transfer of Funds – A recommendation was made that \$580,000 funds from PY19 WIOA Dislocated Worker funds be transferred to the PY19 WIOA Adult category. This transfer would allow for more effective and efficient use of the funds. The transfer would result in total amounts allocated to each category as \$2,290,471 in adult funds and \$781,788 in Dislocated Worker. A motion was called for the authorize the transfer of funds in the amount of \$580,000 from Dislocated Workers to Adult. There was a discussion of how the transferred funds in either category would be used and the need to adequately support Dislocated Workers

during the current economic conditions. It was explained that as the transfer would be PY19 funds only, due to expire June 30, 2021, and PY20 funds are available for use as well, the Board could feel assured that the transfer would have no negative effect on the ability to provide all needed services to the Dislocated Worker customers. Transferring the funds to the adult category would provide needed funding for the Adult-Limited English Proficiency Program, as well as some other staffing needs. Board members stated that they would like to be involved in assisting with the effective use of the funds. The motion was made, seconded and approved by a roll call vote of: 14–yeas, 0–nays, 2–Abstentions.

- C. DSS SkillUp Funds (FNS & TANF) and Jobs League (TANF) – the Board received SFY21 funding from DSS for the SkillUp program in the amounts of \$10,000 FNS funds and \$60,000 TANF funds. \$349,823 was granted to the Board for SFY21 Jobs League Program. A motion was called for to accept and allocate the funds as presented in each category. The motion was made, seconded and approved by a separate roll call vote of: FNS funds: 14–yeas, 0–nays, 2–Abstentions; TANF funds: 14–yeas, 0–nays, 2–Abstentions; Jobs League funds: 14–yeas, 0–nays, 2–Abstentions.

VIII. WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT REPORTS

A. Contract Update –

- LEP Contract Extension – the PY19/FY20 Contract for the LEP program was extended through December 31, 2020 to ensure continuity of service until such time as the RFP is concluded and a LEP Service Provider is identified.
- YouthBuild Contract – the program was completed. There was a meeting held with the state to clarify the contract performance dates. The contract was amended and moving forward
- All WIOA Contracts are signed and in place
- Currently working on the SkillUp and Jobs League contracts.

- B. Compliance Unit Report – First Quarter Monitoring Report (a detailed written report was provided in the meeting materials packet) – The report explained, in detail, the status of the St. Louis County performance outcomes for the first quarter and the PY20 negotiated performance rates for the STLCO region. As reported, the region is performing well at the time, particularly in the area of Median Earnings, with Adult, Dislocated Worker and Wagner-Peyser performing well above the negotiated rate. Only Adult Skills Gain, Dislocated Worker Employment Q2, Credentials, and Skills Gain, and Youth Skills Gain were performing at any level of concern. It was also reported, that while those areas may look concerning, there was no cause for alarm because Quarter 1 is a premature indicator for some performance measures, particularly Skills Gain, and are in line to improve significantly in Quarter 2 as more clients complete training and their completion gains are added to the calculation.

- C. Business Services Group Report – the BSG unit has been working on several programs that assist clients and employers. Programs include the medical assistant program with Washington University Medical School. To-date, that program has graduated and employed more that 70 individuals, with a cohort of 8 ready to start in the coming week, and additional cohorts being lined up for early 2021. In addition, the Incumbent Worker Training program is getting underway with Washington University ready to start, and Bethesda and Regis joining the program in the 2nd Quarter. A new partnership and pre-apprenticeship program has started with Cyber-Up, a cyber security firm. This new program will train participants in entry-level cyber security jobs. The program currently has 16 individuals enrolled and began training in October. The BSG group has continued to host virtual job/hiring fairs throughout the pandemic and work with employers to meet their employment needs.

- D. One-Stop Operator Report (a detailed written report was provided in the meeting materials packet) – an oral report was given of the highlights of the quarter. As reported, Employment Connection, the new Out-of-School Youth program services provider, is scheduled to move into the Northwest Crossings Job Center in the coming weeks. The In-School Youth staff and the Out-of-Youth staff are working together with local school districts to host virtual informational outreach and recruiting events. The International Institute, while working remotely, has successfully assist in the resettlement of 26 refugee family, placed more than 12 individuals in jobs, and fostered an on-going relationship with the Faultless Linen Company. They are also currently working in partnership with Washington University Medical Center and BJC to fill their open janitorial positions and supply tech positions, respectively. According to the report, the MWA program is adhering to the re-instated work requirement for the SNAP program, and as such, is reaching out to eligible recipients to come into the center, so the traffic in that area has increased. The One-Stop Operator also reported about new partnerships that are being developed to increase business relationships and foster strong partnerships. Foot traffic numbers continue to be strong as customers sign-in to the Kiosks and come in to the Job Centers. The numbers for this quarter, in comparison to the same time last year, are up significantly.
- E. Success Stories – success stories for all program areas were given as part of the detailed One-Stop Operator report. According to the report, individuals continue to receive life-changing assistance through the efforts of the Job Center team and partnerships.

IX. OLD BUSINESS – No old business left to discuss that wasn't covered in other areas of the meeting

X. NEW BUSINESS –

- a. 2021 WDB Meeting Calendar – the 2021 calendar was presented for approval. Motion was made and seconded to accept the meeting calendar as presented. A verbal vote was taken and approved by unanimous consent.
- b. Board Membership Status – the Board currently has three openings and need to be replaced. The Board recently lost Mark Bethell, Ron Tierney, resigned and Melissa Miller, resigned her position. The Board will be working with the County Executive's office to fill those open positions. Board members were encouraged to submit names for possible consideration.

XI. ADJOURNMENT – Holiday well wishes were given to all. The meeting was adjourned at 9:04a.

THE NEXT MEETING:
Wednesday, May 26, 2021 @ 7:30a
Virtual Meeting

Minutes prepared by Loris M. Williams