

**Workforce Development Board (WDB)**

**Regional Prosperity Initiative (RPI)**

**Virtual Meeting Minutes**

**February 24, 2021**

**10:30 a.m.**

**I. CALL TO ORDER – 10:35 am**

**II. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE**

**III. INTRODUCTIONS**

**WDB MEMBERS PRESENT**

Eric Bachmann  
Kathleen Fox  
Brooke Sprenger  
Erica Comerford  
Brian Klele  
Sheryl Coyne

**WDB MEMBERS ABSENT**

Alan Mabarak  
John Diamond  
Lisa Bolen  
Eileen Tussey  
Jessica Mika

Keri Sheer  
Jason Reed  
Diane Rekowski  
Allen Nash  
Julie Waldron

**STAFF PRESENT**

Collin Hoffmeyer, Business Solutions Manager  
Tricia Selke, Quality Assurance Specialist  
Alicia Wallace, Marketing & Communications Manager  
Christina Southwell, Career Navigator  
Marisue Moreau, Director

**RPI MEMBERS PRESENT**

Audra LaCourt  
Sara McCauley  
Marisue Moreau  
Erika Comerford  
Kathleen Fox

Collin Hoffmeyer  
Jessica Lovay  
David Emmel  
Thomas Stephensen  
Richard Wolin

## **GUEST**

Whitney Dettmer

### **IV. WDB ELECTIONS *Quorum was not met, approval of the nominations will be conducted at the next meeting on May 26, 2021.***

- a. Chair- Sheryl Coyne
- b. Vice-Chair- Eileen Tussey
- c. Executive Committee
  - i. Chair- Sheryl Coyne
  - ii. Vice Chair- Eileen Tussey
  - iii. CEAC Chair- Vacant
  - iv. Two additional WDB members from the private sector- Jackie Krawczak and Jessica Mika

### **V. WDB ACTION ITEM: CONSENT AGENDA *Quorum was not met, approval of the consent agenda will be conducted at the next meeting on May 26, 2021.***

- December 7, 2020 meeting minutes
- Local Policy: WIOA Youth Service Delivery
- Local Policy: WIOA Basic Skills Deficient
- Local Policy: WIOA Individual Training Account
- Local Policy: Clean Slate Pilot Program
- Career & Educational Advisory Council (CEAC) Change in Membership

### **VI. REGIONAL PROSPERITY INITIATIVE (RPI) UPDATE**

Sara McCauly, the COVID Response Coordinator for the region, discussed the pandemic and how it is affecting the area. While the cases of COVID-19 are lowering and the state has lessened many of the restrictions, the economic impact is still holding strong. Job losses for Michigan in December were the worst since the onset of the pandemic in April 2020. Michigan finished the year with a decline in payroll employment of nearly 500,000 (487,000), a 10.9% decline since December of 2019. Unfortunately this will not be quickly or easily reversed. Small businesses in the area are being encouraged to apply for the second round of PPP loans/grants and Small Business Survival Grants.

*Virtual Trainings with MIOSHA-* Currently looking for feedback from area leaders as to whether a training on the changing workplace safety requirements could be beneficial.

*Education-* Leaders from across Michigan have been increasingly voicing concern regarding the learning loss experienced by students this year, with economically disadvantaged and students of color most likely to be the most impacted.

*Broadband-* Due to the increasing reliance on the internet for school and work from home activities the region is starting to benefit from accelerated work for broadband expansion. The FCC is in the process of creating a more granular, precise maps to show where it is currently available and where it is not. The goal is to expand service in unserved and underserved areas of rural America.

*Food and Farming-* Held webinar focused on preparing and encouraging local food and farming businesses to pursue PPP funding. While the industry had a good spring and summer the product sales in the fall were down.

## **VII. CAREER & EDUCATIONAL ADVISORY COUNCIL UPDATE**

Collin stated that the council is currently seeking a new chair due to Dana McGrew retiring. He will be sending out an email to the CEAC members requesting nomination for this role.

He is excited about the collaboration of the education and business communities. In house, the Youth Career Advisors and the Business Solutions Professionals are teaming up to provide services to both sectors. Also, incorporated a round table/council goals portion to the agenda to allow time to share information and ideas and brainstorm as a group.

The Northeast Michigan MiSTEM Regional Director, Laura Percival, updated the council on valuable information on the Marshall Plan, the MiSTEM program projects, and mini-grants that are currently available.

## **VIII. MiCAREERQUEST UPDATE**

Alicia stated that after discussing the possibility of having the MiCareerQuest 2021 as virtual event or postpone until fall, due to the COVID-19 restrictions, it was decided to wait and have the event in May of 2022. A mass email will be sent out to all who are involved to explain the decision and inform of the plan for the 2022 event. To help fill the void of the postponement there are several things that are in the works including Talent Tours, Job Fairs, information workshops, and more.

Alicia also explained Classroom and On-the- Job Training funds that are currently available. She is utilizing all marketing means to inform the public of these funds. The response has been good but there are a lot of funds left to utilize.

## **IX. BUSINESS SOLUTIONS UPDATE**

- Collin informed the board that the information session that was held online to help employers apply for the Going Pro Talent fund was deemed a great success. Seventeen of the employers were awarded with the funds and the training got underway on February 1. It has been decided, due to the success, to continue with the online information session in the future, with one on one appointments available if need be.
- The question of how to compete with Unemployment Benefits has been on the minds of small businesses in the area lately. In response to the question, there are future plans of hosting information work groups to help support and give ideas on how to overcome the challenges.
- The Career Pathways Project is an initiative that they are partnering with Region 7b on to work with the employers and education providers to better illustrate what a career pathway looks like in Region 3. The goal is to customize a unique tool that will map out the exact path a student needs to take to accomplish a certificate/degree in a certain industry.
- On-the-Job Training- This is a hands-on method of teaching the skills, knowledge, and competencies needed for employees to perform a specific job in the workplace. The contracts are usually for three to four months and we offer up to 50% reimbursement of wages. There is currently funding available.
- Incumbent Worker Training- This is training for a group of workers to help increase skill sets and invert layoffs. There is funding available.

- MI Tri-Share Child Care Program- The cost of child care is shared by an employer, the employee and the State of Michigan, with coordination being provided regionally by a facilitator hub. This is a great idea but in our area the biggest issue is the lack of providers. A child care work group is in the process to help with ideas to overcome this issue.
- Indoor and Outdoor Job Fairs are being planned for April and May.
- Business Resource Network services continue to be offered by the local Business Solutions Professional.

**X. FRONTLINE STAFF – CAREER NAVIGATOR**

Chris Southwell, a Career Navigator at the Grayling office, explained a day in the life of a Career Navigator.

**XI. COVID-19**

This topic was discussed in certain parts of the prior agenda items. No further comment was made.

**XII. GROUP DISCUSSION**

- Marisue let the board know that the Michigan Works Association board changed to a 32 person board, which consists of the 16 directors from the agencies and 16 nominees. The reason for the change is to have better representation of the state and all of the districts. Erika Comerford of Carmeuse & Stone was nominated to represent our area. The first meeting is tomorrow and is being held virtually.
- Marisue also discussed with the board the process of putting into law that an unemployed individual is only eligible to receive benefits if the individual has registered to work at their local Michigan Work! Office within six weeks of becoming unemployed. Currently working with key legislators to get it passed.
- Thomas Stephensen- Informed the board that Presque Isle Electric and Gas Co-op has been awarded approximately 11 million dollars through the Federal Communications Commission’s Rural Digital Opportunity fund Phase I auction, to deploy high-speed broadband service to its members and communities. The plans are still in the early stages of development but is hoped to be completed in four to five years.

**XIII. OTHER BUSINESS**

No other business.

**XIV. PUBLIC COMMENT**

No public comment.

**XV. ROUND TABLE**

No round table.

**XVI. ADJOURN- 11:50 a.m.**

*Next WDB/RPI meeting:*

*May 26, 2021 @ 10:30 a.m.*

*Location-TBD*