

**Workforce Development Board (WDB)**

**Regional Prosperity Initiative (RPI)**

**Virtual Meeting Minutes**

**May 26, 2021**

**10:30 a.m.**

**I. CALL TO ORDER – 10:30 am**

**II. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE**

**III. INTRODUCTIONS**

**WDB MEMBERS PRESENT**

Brooke Sprenger  
Erika Comerford  
Brian Klele  
Sheryl Coyne  
Keri Sheer  
Eileen Tussey  
Ashley Troumbly  
Jackie Krawczak  
Jeff Hutchison  
Linda Damer  
Susan Sanderson

**WDB MEMBERS ABSENT**

Lisa Bolen  
Jason Reed  
Diane Rekowski  
Julie Waldron  
Bruce Milligan  
Eric Bachmann  
Kathleen Fox

**STAFF PRESENT**

Ashley Udell, Business & Youth Solutions Manager  
Angie Asam, Special Initiatives Manager  
Tricia Selke, Quality Assurance Specialist  
Jason Secord, Expungement Navigator  
Marisue Moreau, Director

**RPI MEMBERS PRESENT**

Sara McCauley  
Marisue Moreau  
Erika Comerford  
Jessica Lovay

Lisa MaComb  
Dan Beltz  
Donna LaCourt  
Erich Podjaske

**GUEST**

Whitney Dettmer

**IV. WDB ELECTIONS**

*a. Election of Chair*

The current Chair is Sheryl Coyne

Are there any Nominations for Chair?

**Erika Comerford nominated *Sheryl Coyne* with support from Brooke Sprenger.**

Are there any other Nominations for Chair?

*No*

Are there any other Nominations for Chair?

*No*

Chair nominations are now closed.

**Motion to approve Sheryl Coyne as Chair was made by Erika Comerford and supported by Eileen Tussey. All voting Aye. Motion carried.**

*b. Election of Vice-Chair*

The current chair is Eileen Tussey

Are there any nominations for Vice-Chair?

**Brooke Sprenger nominated *Eileen Tussey* with support from Keri Sheer.**

Are there any other nominations for Vice-Chair?

*No*

Are there any other nominations for Vice-Chair?

*No*

Vice-Chair nominations are now closed.

**Motion to approve Eileen Tussey as Vice-Chair was made by Sheryl Coyne and supported by Brian Klele. All voting Aye. Motion carried.**

*c. Election of two additional WDB Members from the private sector for the Executive Committee*

The current positions are held by Jessica Mika and Jackie Krawczak

Are there any nominations for the Executive Committee?

**Erika Comerford nominated Jackie Krawczak and Brooke Sprenger with support from Eileen Tussey.**

Are there any other nominations for the Executive Committee?

*No*

Are there any other nominations for the Executive Committee?

*No*

**Motion to approve Jackie Krawczak and Brooke Sprenger to the Executive Committee was made by Eileen Tussey and supported by Sheryl Coyne. All voting Aye. Motion carried.**

**Executive Committee** consists of *Sheryl Coyne, Eileen Tussey, Jackie Krawczak, and Brooke Sprenger.*

#### **V. WDB ACTION ITEM: CONSENT AGENDA**

- December 7, 2020 meeting minutes
- February 24, 2021 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
- One-Stop Operator Contract Award for Program Year 2021

**Motion to approve the Consent Agenda items as listed made by Brooke Sprenger and seconded by Linda Damer. Voted: All Ayes**

#### **VI. DIRECTOR'S REPORT**

- Changes have occurred with staff. We have recently combined the Youth Manager and the Business Solutions Manager into one role and hired an internal applicant Ashley Udell. This was decided as the result of letting the Youth Manager go and the Business Solutions Manager, Collin Hoffmeyer, turning in his resignation. The other change is the addition of a Special Initiatives Manager which we also hired an internal applicant Angie Asam. Her role is to manage new programs, grants, and funding that are not part of the Michigan Works! NC normal funding programs.
- We have a tentative date of June 14 to open the offices to walk-in customers due to the fact of Governor Whitmer easing COVID restrictions. Some of the staff are nervous about this transition. We do have safety guidelines in place and foresee updating these often due to everything changing so rapidly.
- The 2021 Michigan Works! Annual Conference will take place Monday, Sept. 13 to Wednesday, Sept. 15 from 9 a.m. to 2 p.m. each day. She offered to pay for either one day or all three to any board member that would like to participant. This event will take place virtually due to COVID 19.
- Currently meeting with Senators and Representatives discussing priorities and updating them on our current status.

- Next meeting will be in person.

## **VII. RPI UPDATE**

Doug Baum was absent.

## **VIII. AMERICAN RESCUE PLAN UPDATE**

Sarah started off with informing the board that some of the information in the Northeast Michigan Economic Recovery Report is already outdated due to things changing at warp speed. She will include all updates in the next report. Some of the key things she touched on are:

- With vaccinations now widely available the COVID-19 restrictions are beginning to lessen. As of May 17<sup>th</sup>, 56.5% of Michiganders 16 years and older have received their first dose of the vaccine with our counties headed in the same direction. This increased resilience against the virus is important because it will be the leading indicator for when businesses and other activities may resume pre-pandemic operations. Governor Whitmer's "Vacc to Normal" plan announced this month calls for a gradual re-opening as vaccination benchmarks are achieved. On May 15 the Gatherings and Face Mask Order states that vaccinated Michiganders could stop masking and social distancing in most cases.
- The state and the nation continue to demonstrate incremental gains in the labor market while Northeast Michigan continues to underperform with unemployment rates ranging from 6% to 13.1%. This is generally consistent with the region's situation regardless of the impact of the pandemic.
- Area businesses continue to report significant staffing challenges. The hospitality industry is considering or already making the decision to have a limited schedule due to the lack of workers. The speculation is that workers are staying out of the workforce due to the lack of enforcement of the work search requirements and the additional \$300 per week in unemployment benefits provided by the federal government. However, the state has announced that the work search requirements may be reinstated by the end of the month if not sooner.
- Broadband is still a top priority in the region. Private providers have been awarded funds through competitive grants and may get an additional boost from the distribution of ARPA funds. The Connect Michigan team will spend the coming months connecting directly with local Michigan Township Association chapters and local governments to help further broadband availability and quality.

## **IX. CAREER & EDUCATIONAL ADVISORY COUNCIL (CEAC) UPDATE**

Ashley Udell, the new CEAC Lead, informed the board that a new Chair was nominated and approved at the CEAC meeting this morning. Joyce McCoy, the Director of Career & Technical Education for the Alpena Public School accepted the position but was not able to join this meeting today due to prior obligations.

The main topics of discussion at the meeting were the Perkins Grant, Marshall Plan, and collaboration efforts for youth in our area to inform them of educational and development opportunities within the region.

- Joyce reported that approximately \$194,000 was awarded to Region 4 from the Perkins Grant. This amount is allocated by the student count in the region and that is why it is so low. We are the fourth lowest allocation. This money can be used for professional development of teachers, paraprofessionals, student certifications, and some equipment and supplies. Daniel Beltz reported for Region 6 stating that their allocation is directed towards paraprofessional and equipment.
- Joyce also spoke about the Marshall Plan in which \$2 million was received. At this point there has not been anything purchased and there is \$50,000 set aside for field trips. Due to COVID 19 it has been difficult to use the money and are in the process of trying to get an extension.
- Erika from Carmeuse would like to collaborate on programs and different opportunities for Youth. MW will be the repository for contacts and information. Will start reaching out to board members to start compiling information.

## **X. YOUTH UPDATE**

- Ashley started off by letting the board know that a 5<sup>th</sup> Youth Career Adviser was hired to help adequately cover the region of Atlanta, Hillman, Mio, and Fairview.
- Youth team has been working diligently with students as the school year comes to a close. Resume building, work search, and helping seniors decide what will come next after graduation are a few of the things they are focusing on.
- Youth Staff and Business Service Professionals (BSP) have partnered up to discuss apprenticeships with schools and businesses. Due to it being the end of the school year it has been difficult to get things going. COVID protocols and closures have also made it difficult to promote. Kathleen Fox, from Kirtland Community College held a virtual event in hopes to gain student's interest.
- Summer Young Professionals Grant is a summer program being offered in Alpena to help youth with employment skills and work experience.
- Planning has started for the Manufacturing Day scheduled for October.
- Continuing to seek opportunities to collaborate more with the Business Services Professionals.

## **XI. BUSINESS SOLUTIONS UPDATE**

- Currently working closely with the Youth Career Advisors and have potentially set up seven new worksites.
- Pop-Up Job Fair- we have developed an innovative idea to allow us to continue having job fairs while helping the participants stay safe from the COVID-19 pandemic. This is a drop off only job fair. The participant will drop off their resume and inform the Michigan Works! staff which employer they would like it submitted to. The staff will take it from there and make sure the employer receives it. This was not as successful as we had hoped due to the fact of not getting a lot resumes, but on a good note we did have a quite a few businesses sign up.

- MiCareer Pathway Manufacturing Sector kick off with Region 7B- the latest survey gave more insight into the job vacancies that businesses are predicting for the future. We have presented this project and the results of the survey to multiple businesses in the area.
- Employers are still feeling the competition with UIA and have some employees that have refused to return to work. It seems that most of the industries are struggling. Information work groups have been formed to allow employers a place to discuss their challenges and possible solutions to overcome them.
- On-the-job training funds are still available and the BSP's continue to work with companies in the region to help fill their talent gaps with this type of training.
- MiCareerQuest is scheduled for May of 2022 and is a great way to expose young individuals to different business sectors.
- The Business Resource Network- services are still being offered by the local BSP's and have had some interest.
- Going PRO Apprenticeship- two companies have shown interest.

## **XII. SPECIAL INITIATIVES UPDATE**

Angie Asam informed the board that she is the manager on several new and exciting programs.

- We are getting ready to kick off our Clean Slate Pilot program, which will help residents of our area get some criminal offenses off their record in an effort to find suitable employment. We have hired an expungement Navigator, Jason Secord who will be speaking to you in a bit. We are in the process of contracting with an attorney to provide legal services to our customers.
- After two long years of work we, along with Michigan Works! Region 7B and Networks Northwest have received grant funding to fight the opioid crisis. We are working on rolling that project out later this year. We will be hiring life coaches to help anyone affected by the opioid crisis as they recover, train and return to the workforce. We will be partnering with service organizations, businesses, healthcare and existing support/treatment programs on this project.
- MiReach is another exciting grant opportunity as it is designed to support healthcare programs focused on direct patient care. The grant will be coordinated with other Michigan Works! in our region and is an employer led collaborative by the Michigan Center for Rural Health. Over the next four years the grant will support the addition of more than 430 new healthcare workers for rural communities throughout Michigan. By identifying targeted healthcare occupations based on employer demand and feedback the grant will help design training responses and implement workforce solutions for rural communities.
- We recently applied for funding to develop new short term trainings and scholarships through MiLeap. As the lead on this Michigan Works! Northeast Consortium is partnering with local community colleges to create short term trainings for in demand careers to feed the talent pipeline.

**XIII. FRONTLINE STAFF – EXPUNGEMENT NAVIGATOR**

Jason Secord described a day in the life of an Expungement Navigator.

**XIV. GROUP DISCUSSION**

No group discussion

**XV. OTHER BUSINESS**

No other business.

**XVI. PUBLIC COMMENT**

No public comment.

**XVII. ROUND TABLE**

No round table.

**XVIII. ADJOURN- 11:31 a.m.**

**A motion to adjourn was made by Eileen Tussey and supported by Erika Comerford. Voted: All Ayes.**

*Next WDB/RPI meeting: July 28, 2021. Location: TBD*