

**Workforce Development Board (WDB)**

**Regional Prosperity Initiative (RPI)**

**Virtual Meeting Minutes**

**July 22, 2020**

**10:30 a.m.**

I. **CALL TO ORDER** – 10:30 a.m.

II. **INTRODUCTIONS**

**WDB MEMBERS PRESENT**

Eric Bachmann

Erika Comerford

Jackie Krawczak (Alternate)

Dana McGrew

Diane Rekowski

Jessica Mika

Kathleen Fox

Keri Sheer

Brooke Sprenger

Jessica Mika

Brian Klele

Deborah Larson

Jason Reed

**WDB MEMBERS ABSENT**

John Diamond

Sheryl Coyne

Alan Mabarak

Eileen Tussey

Julie Waldron

Deb Karr

Bill Keen

**STAFF PRESENT**

Tricia Selke, Quality Assurance Specialist

Collin Hoffmeyer, Business Solutions Manager

Ned Heath, Youth Program Manager

Beth Michaels, Youth Career Advisor

Marisue Moreau, Director

**RPI**

Diane Rekowski

Tom Stephenson

Lisa Macomb

Jessie Mitchell

III. **WDB ACTION ITEM: CONSENT AGENDA**

- May 26, 2020 meeting minutes

- LOCAL Nepotism Conflict of Interest Policy
- LOCAL Growth Industries and Demand Occupations Policy
- Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) Four-Year Regional Plan for Program Years (PYs) 2020 through 2023
- Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) Four-Year Local Plan for Program Years (PYs) 2020 through 2023

**Motion to approve the Consent Agenda Items as listed made by Dana McGrew and seconded by Deborah Larson. Voted: All Ayes**

### **HANDOUTS**

#### July Manager's Report

- Marisue went over some key details and explained the layout. She encouraged the board members to read and share. This report has valuable information on how MW! Northeast Consortium continues to aid and reach out to the communities in our region.

#### Nepotism Form

- Tricia Selke will be emailing the form for electronic signatures.

#### COVID 19

- Offices are still closed to person to person with staff working from home. The plan is to follow the lead of UIA and DHHS. There is a transition plan in place that we will continue to share. Other things were discussed during the COVID discussion later in the meeting.

### **IV. SELF- SUFFICIENCY POLICY UPDATE**

**Motion to approve the update to the Self-Sufficiency Policy made by Deb Larson and seconded by Brooke Sprenger. Voted: All Ayes**

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

Diane reminded the boards that this initiative is not currently being funded, but they continue to move forward with other funding options as well as funds that were left in reserve from the previous program year.

Some projects in the works:

- The EDA Cares Act Recovery Assistance grant is being offered to provide a wide variety of financial assistance to communities and regions to help respond and recover from the COVID-19 Pandemic. Sara McCauley is the contact person to collaborate and coordinate these efforts in our region.
- Daycare center in Hubbard Lake
- Community Center in the Village of Lincoln
- Lisa Macomb- shared information regarding MEDC's second round of economic relief grants available through our local economic development organizations such as Otsego Economic Alliance and Target Alpena in Alpena. 30% of grant awards are designated for veteran, women,

and minority owned businesses. Max grant award is \$20,000. Unfortunately those who were awarded under the grant's first round are not eligible for a reward in this second round.

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

No update.

## **VII. BUSINESS SOLUTIONS UPDATE**

Virtual business engagement continues to be the new normal for the business solutions team due to the COVID-19 Pandemic and they are incredibly busy. Some key points that Collin discussed are as follows:

- CARES Act for small businesses is reaching its funding limit by the end of the week.
- Going Pro Talent Fund- the state is still hopeful that it will happen in the fall but is encouraging to hold off on outreach. Our Business Solutions Professionals (BSP) are still preparing an approach in hopes that it will.
- Incumbent Worker Training
- Customized Training
- Going Pro Apprenticeship Grant- started on 7-1-20 to help employers offset costs for bringing on new apprentices. The grant offers \$3000.00 and will last for two years.
- Going Pro Youth Apprenticeship Grant in the scope for the future.
- Virtual Job Fairs have been successful.
- BSP's looking into an outdoor Job Fair in our region practicing all safety measures for COVID-19.
- Currently using Web-ex for employers who want to set up appointments with potential candidates.
- Talent Tours are on hold to see what will happen with COVID-19. BSP's are encouraging employers to develop a virtual "A day in the life of" that can be shared with students or other people interested in the company.
- Several dislocated workers in the retail industry due to COVID-19.
- Business Resource Network (BRN) news- Katie Rousseau, the BRN Success Coach accepted the Youth Career Advisor position with us. Instead of filling this vacant position the BSP's will serve as the gatekeeper to BRN services within our region.
- BSP's continue to stay on top of LMI data.
- Interesting information from Burger King owner- youth is the current backbone to the day to day operation and is concerned what will happen when school begins.
- Addressed question regarding remote testing options for ACT WorkKeys testing- this will be looked into further.
- There is not any news whether the \$600 UIA payments under the CARES Act will continue. People seem to be content staying home and not motivated to return to work because of the additional income. Options need to be in place for what employers need to do in case an employee refuses to return to work.

## **VIII. FRONTLINE STAFF: YOUTH CAREER ADVISOR**

Beth Michaels described a day in the life of a youth career advisor. She compared her duties pre COVID-19 to now. Marisue explained some of the funding challenges for the Youth Program because of the virus. One example is the requirement that 20 percent of the funds need to be allocated to Work Experiences. At this point

it is uncertain where we will be. Ned Heath also gave a brief update of the program in relation to COVID-19. Everything seems to be going smoothly because of the obsession the youth have with their phones. Youth Career Advisors have not had too many issues communicating and staying in touch with the participants.

## **IX. COVID-19**

- Marisue started the discussion by going over some things that have been happening in our offices. She discussed the recent staff survey that asked a range of questions from employee morale to how staff are feeling about the changes due to COVID-19. The results concluded that the morale is lower due to the virus and the changes but not to the everyday operation of the agency.

To help with the morale Janie McNabb presented a Work-Life Balance training to our staff, which was very beneficial and Marisue is encouraging and supporting gatherings outside of the office, following social distancing and mask guidelines.

She stated again that her main mission is to keep her staff safe! As she stated earlier in the meeting the offices are not open for person to person appointment only services yet. It has been decided to follow the lead of UIA and DHHS. A transition plan is in place and will continue to keep the board updated.

- Brian Klele from IBEW stated that the majority of the projects are back to work with daily temperature checks and enforcement of masks 100 percent of the time. Apprenticeship classes have resumed with 6 to 7 meeting in the morning and 6 to 7 meeting in the afternoon. He also informed the board of an outside job fair that he attended. Again, with all safety protocols in effect.
- Deb Larson from MEDC discussed the anxiousness school employees are feeling about coming back to the school buildings to work, especially those who are vulnerable to the virus. Currently looking at different modifications to help ease this feeling. Another concern is sick leave if they do contract the virus. They are worried that it won't be enough to get them through.

Many schools in the area are considered to be in Phase 4 and are preparing for all forms of back to school strategies for the fall. Some of the worries of the school is lack of supplies including personal protection equipment and where the money will come from.

- Dana McGrew added that it will be an interesting fall to say the least. Kids are not the ones susceptible to the virus and are not the problem with the dilemma of going back to the buildings in the fall. The adults are the ones that are at risk and are worried about the transition.
- Jessie Mitchell from MEDC had information and resources on current grant programs and procurement (PPE or otherwise) and COVID related market disruption information. She sent several attachments that will be forwarded to the board.
- Jason Reed spoke about how the union is highlighting their strong benefit package to entice employees to come back to work and encourages other businesses to do the same. He also updated on the interview process for apprenticeships.

## **X. GROUP DISCUSSION**

No group discussion.

**XI. OTHER BUSINESS**

No other business.

**XII. PUBLIC COMMENT**

No public comment

**XIII. ROUND TABLE**

No round table.

**XIV. ADJOURN**

Adjourned at 12:10 pm