

WORKFORCE CENTERS

of South Central Kansas

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Local Workforce Development Board (LWDB)

Executive Committee Meeting Minutes

March 10, 2021 – 11:30 AM

1. **Welcome and Introductions**

The LWDB Executive Committee assembled via ZOOM. Chair Gabe Schlickau welcomed Committee members and called the meeting to order.

2. **One-Stop Operations Task Force and Certification of the Wichita Workforce Center**

A task force was appointed and given the assignments to review bids from the Request for Proposals (RFP) for a One-Stop Operator and to conduct a certification review for the Wichita workforce Center. These assignments have been completed and the task force has prepared recommendations for the Executive Committee. Task force members included Rod Blackburn, Tony Naylor, Kerri Falletti, Commissioner Jim Howell, Melissa Musgrave, George Marko, and Erica Ramos.

The Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) regulations require the function of One Stop Operations to be competitively procured. The current provider for one stop services is Eckerd Connects and the contract with them expires June 30, 2021. The WA released an RFP and received three proposals including one from Eckerd Connects. All proposals were received and reviewed by the One Stop Operations task force. The evaluation consisted of many different criteria and a table summarizing the points awarded by the task force and the budgets of the proposals were provided to the Committee for review. The task force is recommending the selection of Eckerd Connects and staff asked the Committee to approve entering into a contract with Eckerd and allowing staff to enter into some final negotiations with Eckerd and then present to the Chief Elected Official Board (CEOB) at the end of the month for final approval. Some of the task force members present provided comments to the Committee.

Rod Blackburn (Melissa Musgrave) moved to approve entering into a contract for One Stop Operator services to the Chief Elected Officials Board (CEOB) and approve staff to conduct final negotiations with Eckerd Connects. Motion adopted.

Task force members also had the responsibility to certify the Workforce Center, which is required by WIOA and State policy. An assessment tool was developed that is consistent with State policy to conduct an analysis to determine the qualifications to meet certification standards, which include workforce center effectiveness, customer satisfaction, accessibility and continuous improvement. The Certification Review Form used by the task force was provided to the Committee for review. The One-Stop Operations task force met and went through the Certification Review Form with Workforce Center leadership staff. The task force recommended that the Wichita Workforce Center be approved for certification.

Tony Naylor (Melissa Musgrave) moved to approve the Certification of the Wichita Workforce Center. Motion adopted.

3. **WIOA Dislocated Worker Supportive Services and Wichita Emergency Rental Assistance Program (WERAP)**

The WIOA Dislocated Worker program offers a variety of supportive services for participants that enable participants to remain in training and be successful. The supportive services available are fuel assistance, bus passes, car repair, childcare assistance, employment related expenses, housing assistance (rent or mortgage), utilities assistance (natural gas, electric, and water) and medical assistance. Each supportive service has criteria the participant must meet in order to receive the service. Additionally, there are limits on the amount and frequency of the services. In order to receive a supportive service, the participant must explain why the service is needed for them to participate or

continue in training or employment activities. Utilization of supportive services has fluctuated widely over the years. This often corresponds to the demographics of participants and the programs they are enrolled in. Starting in December 2019, the majority of participants were enrolled in the Dislocated Worker program and up until this time the regular and expanded unemployment insurance benefits were assisting dislocated workers and no increase in supportive services occurred. The expiration of the expanded unemployment benefits in July 2020 and delayed implementation of new benefits led to an increase in supportive services in August and September 2020 and a large spike in October 2020. The expiration of benefits in December 2020 and delayed implementation of new benefits led to a surge of supportive services in February 2021. The supportive services provided from July 2020 to February 2021 were almost exclusively for housing and utilities assistance for dislocated workers. Without consistent access to unemployment insurance assistance, these participants were months behind on housing and utilities and in danger of eviction or disconnection of utilities. The supportive services provided assisted in allowing these participants to continue in training by supporting housing and utility stability.

The WA entered into an agreement with the City of Wichita to support the Wichita Emergency Rental Assistance Program (WERAP) that assists Wichita residents struggling to cover rent and utility payments due to the COVID-19 pandemic. These resources will be leveraged into WIOA operations and help address the growing need for supportive services. WERAP can assist Wichita residents struggling to cover rent and utility payments due to the COVID-19 pandemic; individuals could qualify for up to 12 months of emergency assistance depending on need and fund availability. The Wichita Workforce Center will provide access to computers and in-person or virtual appointments to assist individuals compile the documentation required to submit the application. To qualify individuals must meet specific criteria and have a COVID-19 related economic impact such as loss of job, reduced hours, reduced tips, or increased childcare or medical expenses. Individuals who live outside of the city limits of Wichita can apply through a program with the State of Kansas.

Tony Naylor (Jeff Longwell) moved to approve the partnership with the City of Wichita. Motion adopted.

4. Workforce Alliance Administrative Offices Leased Space Request for Proposals

Currently, the WA has a lease at 300 W. Douglas, Suite 850 in the RH Garvey Building for its administrative functions. The WA released a request for proposals (RFP) for leased space last fall. Two proposals were received including one from the current landlord. A task force was formed and reviewed the proposals and evaluated the costs for both locations and it was determined that the cost for the current location was much less than the other proposed space. Staff are recommending entering into a lease with the current landlord and also looking into the possibility of negotiating a modification to the space by erecting a wall around the existing computer server equipment. The new lease could be modified or cancelled at any time. The pandemic has caused many staff to work in a virtual environment and there may be a possibility of some staff continuing to work remotely resulting in less space being needed in the future. Staff will continue to look at opportunities to decrease costs and may consult with the Committee on this topic in the future.

Jeff Longwell (Kathy Jewett) moved to authorize the President/CEO to enter into a lease for space at 300 W. Douglas. Motion adopted.

5. 2021 Jobs FORE Youth Golf Tournament

The Jobs FORE Youth Golf Tournament is held every year to raise additional funds to help support the WA Youth Employment Project (YEP). The 9th annual Jobs FORE Youth Golf Tournament is scheduled for Thursday, September 30, 2021 at Hidden Lakes Golf Course in Derby. Meritrust Credit Union has agreed to be the tournament sponsor for the third straight year. The tournament is usually

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held in the spring, but due to continued pandemic concerns and to assist with program planning the task force decided to schedule this tournament for the fall and possibly for future years as well. It is hoped that having the tournament in the fall will allow for some of the youth that participate in the summer program to participate in the tournament and provide staff with more information about the amount of funding that they will have available to spend the following year. A list of sponsors and teams from last year were provided to the Committee. Committee members were encouraged to be a sponsor and increase awareness about the tournament. Staff will be reaching out to previous and prospective sponsors soon to begin the fundraising process.

Report was received and filed.

6. Workforce Alliance (WA) 2020-2022 Strategic Plan Implementation Update

Updates on the implementation of the 2020-2022 WA strategic goals will be a standing agenda item for this Committee in order to provide for continuous accountability and provide an opportunity for staff to report to the Committee on the progress made on implementing the strategic goals. Staff will keep the Committee updated on key accomplishments, milestones met and reports on activities as they occur. To help implement a couple of the strategic goals, a Youth Employment Committee and Outreach and Communications task force was formed. The two groups have met twice since the beginning of the year and the task force is on track to provide some recommendations to the Executive Committee and the LWDB at those meetings in April.

Take appropriate action.

7. Consent Agenda and Committee Reports

Approval of Meeting Minutes for February 10, 2021, Program Year 2020 (PY20) budget update, One-Stop Operator Report, On-the-Job Training Contracts (OJT) for Asher Enterprises and Superior Holding, Regional Economic Impact Report and Workforce Center Operations were presented to the Committee for review and approval.

The center began providing limited in-person services this week. Those services include bringing back Tech Time on Tuesdays and Thursdays from noon to 4:00 pm for customers to use computers, fax machines, phones, internet and interact with the business services lab staff to work on applications. Staff that will be working from the center have been divided into two groups and are rotating working from home and at the center on a weekly basis. The center is doing weekly COVID testing staff through the WSU lab to maintain a healthy work environment. One-on-one appointments for services are currently limited and available on an as needed basis; customers can still be assisted virtually. Workkeys testing is now available for those employers that request it and is being administered in small groups. The center continues to receive a large volume of phone calls with many of those being unemployment inquiries. Employers have a large number of jobs available.

The new partnership between Cowley College and the Workforce Alliance (WA) to provide workforce center services in Cowley County has begun. Greg Butler and Jennie Heersche with Cowley College introduced themselves to the Committee. Greg has been hired as the workforce and career center specialist that provides job seeker services and Jennie is the director of Workforce and Community Education that works with business and industry to provide outreach on workforce center services. Greg is being trained by workforce center staff and services will be provided at a newly renovated space at Cowley College in lower level of Galle-Johnson Hall in Arkansas City.

Staff are working with Sedgwick County to have workforce center staff classified as Phase 2 eligible for the COVID vaccine. Commissioner Howell reported that things are changing quickly and vaccine supply continues to increase and expects that in a few weeks workforce center staff will become eligible and have the opportunity to be vaccinated.

Amy Williams (Tony Naylor) moved to approve the Consent Agenda as presented. Motion adopted.

8. **Other Discussion/Announcements**

There was no further business or announcements.

9. **Adjournment**

The meeting was adjourned at 12:34 PM.

Attendees:

LWDB Executive Committee Members

Rod Blackburn
Commissioner Jim Howell
Kathy Jewett
Pat Jonas
Jeff Longwell
Melissa Musgrave
Tony Naylor
Gabe Schlickau
Amy Williams

Staff/Guests

Amanda Duncan
Keith Lawing
Shirley Lindhorst
George Marko
Chad Pettera
Tisha Cannizzo Eckerd Connects
Greg Butler, Cowley County
Matt Fields, Eckerd Connects
Jennie Heersche, Cowley College
Debbie Luper, Office of
Congressman Ron Estes