



Workforce Alliance (WA) Board of Directors Meeting Minutes
April 24, 2024

1. Welcome and Introductions

The LWDB assembled in person and via Zoom; Chair Jeff Longwell called the meeting to order and asked for self-introductions.

2. Public Comment

No requests for public comment were received.

3. National Association of Workforce Boards (NAWB) Forum

The NAWB Forum took place on March 23 through 26 in Washington, DC. Board member Kathy Jewett serves on the NAWB Board and is on the event's planning committee. Board members Alana McNary, Laura Ritterbush, Cheryl Childers and staff Keith Lawing, George Marko and Denise Houston attended the event and shared key takeaways. The Forum is an opportunity to share best practices and learn from other workforce professionals from around the nation. McNary, Childers and Jewett shared some highlights from the event - building impactful workforce strategies, focusing on state funding versus federal funding, workforce board member training, addressing the national child care crisis, discussing strategies for growing the workforce, upskilling workers to provide better employment opportunities and learning DEI strategies for a more inclusive workforce. Jewett noted that 1,323 members attended this year's Forum and planning efforts have already begun on next year's event. Lawing and Houston attended the SNAP E&T pre-session to share experiences in implementing the program. The use of artificial intelligence (AI) in employment and training was also a topic. Staff have created an informal work group to do more research on available AI tools that can be integrated to better serve job seekers and improve the way staff do their jobs. Also discussed was the current reauthorization of the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) - House Bill 6655, A Stronger Workforce for America Act. The legislation has passed the House and there are concerns regarding a higher mandate on training funds spent; currently the State of Kansas established a goal of 35% of WIOA funding be spent on client services and skills training. The higher mandate would have some unintended consequences and significantly impact overall operations on programs, services and staffing that are outside of training functions - case management, workshops, digital literacy, job fairs, etc. Staff are working with NAWB, Senators Moran and Marshall's offices and other legislators to address these concerns.

Report was received and filed.

4. One-Stop Operator Procurement Update

WIOA regulations require the function of a One Stop Operator (OSO) to be competitively procured. A request for proposals (RFP) was released in January; due to the ending of the previous agreement with Eckerd Connects. The only proposal received was from Goodwill Industries of Kansas (GIK). The WA requested and received sole source approval from the Kansas Department of Commerce (KDC). An OSO taskforce was appointed to review the proposal. It was presented to and approved by the WA Executive Committee and the Chief Elected Officials Board. The proposed term of the agreement would be for July 1, 2024 through June 30, 2028 with an earlier date if possible. GIK and WA have met several times to negotiate a contract and fine tune a scope of services including an overview of activities, key functions and budget, which was provided to the Committee for review.

Tony Naylor (Scott Stiles) moved to approve the Agreement with Goodwill Industries of Kansas for One-Stop Operator Services in Local Area IV. Laura Ritterbush, Goodwill Industries of Kansas abstained from the vote. Motion adopted.

5. Leveraged Funds Strategy Task Force Update

A task force was created to review a strategy to leverage funds and align services to create greater community impact. Annual funding from WIOA continues to decline and generating revenue is critical. Since 2007, over \$60 million has been added to fund operations above the annual WIOA allocations through grants and community partnerships. The task force reviewed current funding sources and identified several funding opportunities (federal, state, local, philanthropic/community, employer partnerships); a number of tactics for the WA Board to support the strategic goal of generating revenue have also been identified. The goal is to develop and implement a Board of Directors led strategy to obtain funding to leverage with WIOA resources and WA operations that target specific sectors (advanced/aviation manufacturing, healthcare, data/IT and skilled trades/construction, etc.) and populations (youth, veterans and military connected individuals and justice involved individuals). Alana McNary, the task force chair, reviewed the core issues for this strategy, which are to demonstrate the WA's value and be recognized as a credible and relevant organization by businesses and the community and also to increase the visibility of WA Board members in order to raise awareness and support for the WA. She posed some challenging questions to board members:

- How many are active on social media and also actively follow the WA on social media?
- How many attended, participated in, or sponsored WA organized projects?
- How many had their organization sponsor or provide financial support for a WA program?
- How many attended a job fair or been part of job fair?
- How many attended community events that the WA hosted or sponsored?
- How many hired employees from WA programs?
- What are different ways that board members and their organizations can partner together to impact WA programs?
- What can board members do that they are not doing?

Board members discussed some answers to these questions and how they can be more engaged. Some discussion points and suggestions included:

- Board members being ambassadors and encouraging other businesses to use WA programs and services and promote the WA
- Having their organization and employees share WA news, success stories and testimonials on social media to the public and to legislators
- Requesting support as a partnership of multiple employers and community organizations rather than just staff making the request
- Making more of an effort to reach outlying counties

WA board members must see WIOA and the WA as an important community resource for their own organization, utilize WA services (job posting, pre-screening, job fairs, skills training resources), engage in conversations with, the federal, state and local elected leaders on the impact of WA programs, partner with the WA on grants and projects, provide financial support for WA and engage with the business community and community partners in promoting WA programs and services.

Chair Longwell suggested that the task force adopt the task force report and roll it into the current strategic goals. Jewett suggested that board member responsibilities need to be documented for board members and included in a job description. It was requested that McNary's list of questions be distributed to board members to use as reminder of the ways they can engage.

No action was taken on this item.

6. Regional and State Labor Market Information

Amanda Duncan presented employment data and trends that impact the regional economy. The data for the presentation for 2020 through 2024 was taken from the Kansas Labor Information Center and KansasWorks and includes unemployment rates, labor participation rates, job openings and population trends. The data shows that there is a disruption in the labor market. The number of people looking

for work is decreasing and there is a need to determine how to capture those that do not fall within the data and how to assist them. The largest loss in labor force in the state of Kansas is in Local Area IV region and the unemployment rate in the area is higher than the state. The reasons for this need to be determined in order to be addressed. Another issue is people that are working, but fall below the poverty level and need assistance to empower them to obtain a better paying job. Staff will continue to do research in this area and update the Committee as needed. The presentation will be posted to the WA website along with the other meeting materials.

Report was received and filed.

7. Community Impact Project Updates - Home Base Wichita and Youth Employment Project

Home Base Wichita, currently funded with American Rescue Plan funds from the City of Wichita assists military-connected individuals with employment opportunities. The program works to retain military members and their spouses in South Central Kansas after retirement and recruit individuals that are leaving the service from military installations outside of Wichita. Funds for on-the-job training are available for those that qualify. An update was provided on program outcomes including job placements, events hosted and participants served. The Youth Employment Project (YEP) staff have been busy with job fairs, interview days, the USD 259 career fair and looking for employers to provide jobs and work experiences for young people. While there are more employers participating this year, staff are ramping up efforts to greatly increase the number of employers who participate next year as there are far more young people interested in working than businesses to place them. A report of outcomes for this year to date including participation, events, and career camps was provided.

Report was received and filed.

8. Consent Agenda

Approval of meeting minutes from January 24, 2024, Program Year 2023 (PY23) budget update, SNAP E&T project update, reports for Fair Chance, Registered Apprenticeship and Communications projects, adoption of actions taken by the WA Executive Committee since January 24, 2024, on-the-job training (OJT) contracts for Global Aviation Tech and Milling Precision Tool Corp and WA Operations/One-Stop Operator Report were provided to board members for review and or approval.

Kathy Jewett (Dr. Kim Krull) moved to approve the recommendations as presented in the consent agenda. Motion adopted.

9. Additional Topics/Announcements

Dr. Krull, President of Butler Community College, has announced that she is retiring.

10. Meeting was adjourned at 11:20.

Present LWDB Members

- Rod Blackburn via Zoom
- Cheryl Childers
- Marcus Curran
- Michele Gifford
- Robyn Heinz
- Eric Hunt via Zoom
- Jessica Iastas
- Kathy Jewett
- Russell Kennedy
- Dr. Kim Krull
- Jeff Longwell
- Alana McNary via Zoom
- B.J. Moore
- Alex Munoz via Zoom
- Erica Ramos
- Laura Ritterbush
- John Rolfe
- Sally Stang via Zoom
- Scott Stiles
- Dr. Sheree Utash via Zoom

Guests & Staff

- Amanda Duncan
- Denise Houston
- Keith Lawing
- Shirley Lindhorst
- Mary Mann
- George Marko
- Kim Uttinger
- Justin Albert, Spirit AeroSystems via Zoom
- Peter Bodyk, KS Dept. of Children & Families
- Commissioner Jim Howell, CEOB via Zoom