

Workforce Innovation Board of Ramsey County

Equity Committee Meeting Minutes

Monday, March 17, 2025

3:00 – 4:00pm

Zoom Video Conference

Present:

Mohamed Alfash
Michelle Belitz
Yolanda McIntosh
Lauren Reynolds
Mary Russell
Tanya Velishek
Tracy Wilson

Absent:

Jonathan Banks-EA
Becky Degendorfer-EA
Karen Gerdin
Bryan Kuzel

Staff/Guests:

Mariann Macalus, Workforce Solutions
Rebecca Milbrandt, Workforce Solutions
Catrice O’Neal, Workforce Solutions

Call to Order & Land Acknowledgement

McIntosh called the meeting to order at 3:03pm. McIntosh read the land acknowledgement aloud.

Approve January Minutes

Motion (Russell/McIntosh) to approve the January 27, 2025, minutes as presented. Motion carried unanimously by chat vote.

Committee Chair

Milbrandt shared that Reynolds is stepping down as committee chair because she has changed jobs and is no longer working in the private sector. Reynolds plans to continue being a committee member but no longer is able to serve as a full member of the WIB representing a business. The committee will need a new chair who is a business member. The chair will also serve on the Executive Committee. Those interested in learning more about this role can contact Milbrandt. Once a candidate is identified, it will be brought back to this committee for a vote.

Committee Work Plan/Project Updates

2025 Inclusive Workplaces Cohort: Milbrandt shared the timeline for the fourth cohort. This experience is open to all Ramsey County employers, with priority given to businesses with 10-250 employees. Due to there being only a few applicants, the application deadline has been extended. It was agreed that participating organizations could send more than two individuals if requested. There was also agreed that the minimum number of organizations should be ten. Milbrandt and O’Neal will continue do some outreach, particularly to organizations the county already has relationships with.

DEI Executive Order: O’Neal shared the federal DEIA Executive Order stating the order halts DEI/DEIA activities under federally funded programs. The Department of Labor canceled related guidance after the order was blocked in the courts, but an Appeals Court lifted the injunction, allowing enforcement of the order. The county’s response is to continue serving all residents. County leadership will continue to monitor this issue.

Staff Updates

CareerForce Relocation: Milbrandt provided an update on the opening of the new CareerForce location in Metro Square. There was an open house for partners earlier this month. A grand opening for the WIB, county leaders and the community will be held when the new expanded Ramsey County Service Center opens.

Skills Based Hiring Accelerator: These half-day workshops are offered monthly around the metro area to help organizations jump start their skills-based practices. The skills based approach is a nationally recognized delivery model and is a Society for Human Resource Management (SHRM) certified activity.

Upcoming Events: Milbrandt shared the following and asked that committee members promote the upcoming WIB-supported events and initiatives:

- Green Ramsey Expo & Career Fair: March 19 at Minnehaha Rec Center 10am-1pm.
- Level Up Young Adult Career Resource Fair: April 24 at YMCA – Saint Paul Eastside 9am-1:30pm.
- Youth Job and Resource Fair: May 3 at Maplewood Mall 10am-noon.
- Tech Month: Planning is underway to host 1-2 events and share other local events on a landing page on the county website.

Other

Reynolds expressed gratitude for the support she received as committee chair and affirmed her intention to stay engaged moving forward.

Adjourn

Upon completion of the agenda, the meeting was adjourned at 3:55pm.

Next Meeting: Monday, May 19, 2025, 3-4pm via Zoom