

**Workforce Innovation Board of Ramsey County**  
**Executive Committee Meeting Minutes**  
July 22, 2020, 7:30-9:30am  
Meeting held using Zoom Video Conference

**Committee Members Present**

Butch Howard  
Chad Kulas  
Karin McCabe  
Jim McDonough  
Paul Nikstad  
Mary Russell  
Chris Tolbert  
Ramona Wilson

**Members Absent**

Sean Mullan-EA

**Staff/Guests Present**

Ling Becker, Ramsey County

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**Call to Order**

Chair Karin McCabe called the meeting to order at 7:32 am.

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**Approve May and June Minutes**

**Motion (Nikstad/McDonough) to approve the May 27 and June 24, 2020 minutes as presented.**

**Motion carried unanimously by roll call.** Kulas and Tolbert were not present at the time of the vote.

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**WIB Financial Report**

Upon review of the report, it was noted that the fee for Ellie Krug's August training will come out of Strategic Priorities, but the invoice has not been received yet.

**Motion (Howard/Russell) to accept the May/June financial report as presented. Motion carried unanimously via roll call.** Kulas and Tolbert were not present at the time of the vote.

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**Ramsey County Competitiveness & Inclusion Plan – Special WIB Meeting**

Becker explained that the WIB will serve as the Ramsey County Community and Economic Development Department's workforce workgroup. At the September 10 special WIB meeting, the Center for Economic Inclusion and other consultant partners will work with the WIB on a competitive and inclusion plan. Becker suggested this could be considered the WIB's retreat for 2020 and then continue work on this plan in 2021.

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**Director's Updates**

Becker shared employment statistics provided by Tim O'Neil from DEED. After significant drops in February-April, most industry sectors grew from April-June. Most impacted populations are the young, the less educated and communities of color. Becker will send out an updated slide deck with a breakdown of the impact by race, including data for non-Hispanic whites to show the disparity more clearly. Although it would be helpful to de-aggregate the data further, that information isn't collected and doing so is quite controversial. A new partnership with RealTime Talent will provide a series of reports on labor force trends and the workforce impacts of COVID-19 on different communities in the county. The reports will provide real time information on available jobs that are less COVID vulnerable by community. This will help guide the WIB and Workforce Solutions' (WFS) efforts and will provide opportunities to convene meetings with community to share the data.

*CARES Act Funding:* WFS released six Requests for Informal Quotes in May resulting in 124 proposals from community organizations that work with those most impacted. The proposals were wide ranging but workforce was central to each one. Becker anticipates releasing \$10-11M over the next four months. The list of contracts will be shared soon. Seven Career Labs will open on August 3 in partnership with

Ramsey County and Saint Paul Public Libraries. The Labs will provide socially distanced, reservation-only job search and technology support. When fully launched, there will be 250 reservation slots per day. CARES funding is also being used to provide TechPaks through a partnership with Tech Dump and Literacy Minnesota. The TechPaks include a refurbished laptop, hot spot and access to tech support and a digital navigator. A weighted lottery will be used to distribute the first round of Paks. Becker stressed the need for companies to donate laptops. Becker feels a regional collaborative is needed to make a larger dent in digital equity.

*CareerForce Saint Paul:* The CareerForce Saint Paul site, operated by DEED, has not reopened for walk-in service. No opening date has been set yet.

*Ramsey County Job Connect:* Becker provided a quick tour of the new job board. Job seekers can search for jobs by transit options. The content will be built up over time. An advisory board of the partners will be formed to continue making improvements. There is also a workforce training dashboard with information about short term training opportunities. The county is creating a Job Seeker Connections Newsletter. Subscribers will get information about trainings and events twice per month.

*August WIB Meeting:* Becker explained that the business meeting will be very brief so the rest of the meeting can be dedicated to the equity training. McCabe, Wilson and Russell agreed to host breakout rooms. All WIB committee members have been invited. Becker will also invite the County Board.

*WIOA Funding Updates:* Becker assisted the state in writing a national Dislocated Worker Emergency Grant. The proposal was funded but the amount the county will receive is unknown at this time.

*Region 4 Plan and Virtual Services Group:* The regional group will work together on a regional plan. They are still trying to determine other ways to collaborate. A virtual service workgroup was formed to coordinate virtual event planning across the metro area, including virtual career exploration and job fairs.

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## WIB Membership

*Committee Appointments:* **Motion (McDonough/Russell) to ratify the appointments of McCabe, Alfash and Hunter to the Partnership & Equity Committee. Motion carried unanimously by roll call.** McCabe abstained from discussion and voting.

*Recruitment – DOL Compliance:* The WIB has until December 2020 to get its business membership in compliance. The WIB's desire to recruit diverse candidates makes this more challenging. There aren't many BIPOC leaders who meet the WIOA requirements, and many of those who do suffer from board fatigue. McCabe and Wilson suggested approaching businesses and other organizations about elevating potential leaders to give them board experience. Becker noted that deviating from WIOA requirements would necessitate a waiver or legislative change. McDonough suggested discussing WIB members' role in recruiting at a board retreat. He also suggested approaching Nexus Community Partners about preparing a cohort from diverse businesses that meet the requirements. It was decided that the Membership Committee will look at the law and come up with some suggestions to bring back to the Executive Committee and potentially to the federal delegation. Long and short-term recruitment strategies should be developed.

*Vacancy Report and Membership Dashboard:* No discussion.

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## Assessment of Business Needs

Kulas shared information about the needs of several businesses impacted by the fire in the Midway Shopping Center. Many sustained damage and all have had their leases terminated. Donations are being collected to help with these needs and the Department of Commerce is assisting with insurance policy review. Marketing materials are being created by DEED to assist the workers impacted by civil unrest.

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## Executive Committee Work Plan Dashboard & Committee Work Plans

The current dashboard was reviewed. Discussion on some of the open items included:

- The length of terms and renewals need more discussion.
- The September special WIB meeting will be an opportunity to collect meaningful inputs that feed into a new strategic plan. The process should lead to a longer meeting/discussion/retreat. Becker

will create a grid that lays out plans for the steps and inputs that would lead into a strategic plan in 2021.

- Program snapshots are being done during the Workforce Recovery meetings.

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**Other**

No other items were discussed.

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**Adjourn**

The meeting was adjourned at 8:59 am.

**Next meeting:** August 26, 2020, 7:30-8:30 am Workforce Recovery Workshop