

Workforce Innovation Board of Ramsey County
Executive Committee Meeting Minutes
March 25, 2020, 7:30-9:30am
Meeting held using Zoom Video Conference

Committee Members Present

Chad Kulas
Karin McCabe
Jim McDonough
Sean Mullan
Paul Nikstad
Mary Russell
Chris Tolbert

Members Absent

Butch Howard-EA
Ramona Wilson-EA

Staff/Guests Present

Ling Becker, Ramsey County
Noel Nix, City of Saint Paul

Call to Order

Chair Karin McCabe called the meeting to order at 7:32 am. She wished everyone well during the COVID-19 crisis.

Approve January Minutes

Motion (Kulas/Nikstad) to approve the January 22, 2020 minutes as presented. Motion carried unanimously by roll call vote. Mullan was not present at the time of the vote.

WIB Membership

Recruitment Update: The vacancy report was reviewed. Kulas mentioned that someone from El Burrito Mercado expressed interest in joining. McCabe reported that JoAnne Whiterabbit, Executive Director of the MN American Indian Chamber of Commerce, invited a WIB representative to speak at a Chamber meeting to see if any members are interested in joining. Workforce Development Area (WDA) directors are talking to DEED about relaxing the membership criteria for local boards to help them diversify. Nix will introduce Kulas to Irma Marquez Trapero at LatinoLEAD and Marcus Owens from the African American Leadership Forum.

Membership Dashboard: No update.

Reappointment Process: There was discussion about formalizing the reappointment process to include an application. All applications will be reviewed by the Membership Committee and the Executive Committee. Kulas suggested each member receive a copy of their past application to make filling out the new application simpler. Becker and Kulas will develop the process and share their recommendation with the Executive Committee either at or before the next meeting.

WIB Financial Report and Amended WIB Budget

Becker explained that the financial report and budget are not available for review at today's meeting. Becker doesn't anticipate any non-routine expenses. There was agreement that, if possible, both documents be sent to the Executive Committee before they go to the full WIB.

COVID-19 Update

The following updates were shared:

Becker (Ramsey County/CareerForce)

- The county stopped all walk-in services briefly to redesign service delivery for staff and residents.
- Most counselors are working remotely 3-4 days per week.
- Limited walk-in services are available at the three downtown locations.
- Paperwork drop boxes have also been installed downtown and at suburban libraries.
- DEED and DHS are granting waivers for several items statewide.

- DHS halted enrollment in the Diversionary Work Program. These families are being enroll into public assistance immediately.
- 150,000 people applied for unemployment since March 8.
- All youth work experiences and training programs have been halted. Work is being done to retool some of the training programs, especially CNA and the EMS Academy.
- CareerForce sites are still open but are shifting to more remote services.
- Re-employment efforts will be a lesser priority until the public health crisis subsides.
- The volume of calls/requests for services is low now but is expected to accelerate rapidly in the coming weeks.
- People should be cautious about taking a lower wage interim job that could result in them drawing unemployment from the lower wage when business needs recalibrate. The best candidates for these jobs are those who were unemployed previously.

Nikstad (Job Corps):

- Job Corps is currently on a four-week spring break and will work aggressively to bring students back as soon as possible.
- They do not have the ability to provide online instruction.

McCabe (Construction)

- There is a push to classify the construction workforce as essential.
- It is anticipated that there will be large numbers of workers on the bench soon.

Russell (HR Consulting Services - Eastside Day Care/Learning Center)

- The day care is still open despite fewer kids. Some who aren't sending their kids are still paying.
- Because they don't qualify for SBA assistance, philanthropy funds may provide help. Kulas mentioned that loan options are being made available to all sectors.

Kulas (East Team/Support to Local Businesses)

- There will be heightened demand for workforce service soon. A long-term, flexible service strategy will be needed.

It was decided that an Unemployment Insurance (UI) refresher/overview will be shared at the April WIB meeting. An area of focus is the racial equity impact of this economic shift. There was agreement that the Executive Committee should meet by phone more frequently for a while. The calls will be approximately 45 minutes and will focus on emerging COVID needs or relevant topics. These should be separate from the regular meetings so that normal business items still get completed.

WIB Leadership Future Planning

Kulas explained that he has not spoken to Wilson about her interest in serving as WIB Chair-elect yet. A job description for the Chair has been developed. If Wilson declines, other options previously discussed will be considered.

Strategic Funding Request Form

A draft of the form was reviewed. Russell noted that a couple of formatting changes are needed. McCabe suggested using titles rather than specific names on the form. She also recommended including language about next steps in the payment process once the requests are approved.

Director's Updates

April WIB Meeting: The draft agenda was reviewed. Becker will retool it to include the UI update. The Partnership & Equity Committee will send out an online survey to capture information they initially planned to talk about at the meeting.

State, Local and Regional Planning: Becker noted that the deadline for the Local Plan may be extended.

GMWC Update: Becker explained that the GMWC is currently on a pause to recalibrate its focus.

McDonough reported on a recent meeting where this recalibration was discussed. Regular meetings may go on pause during the COVID situation.

Youth Committee Report

2020 Vern Vick Award: Nikstad explained that the Youth Committee selected Mary Sue Hanson, Director of the Suburban Ramsey Family Collaborative, as the 2020 award recipient. The recipient typically attends a Youth Committee meeting prior to the award presentation. This will be delayed until in-person meetings resume.

PY2020 Unified Local Youth Plan: Nikstad highlighted a few items on the summary. The budget will be completed when allocation awards are received. Plan adjustments may be needed once more is known about the impacts of COVID. There was discussion about the community services being offered by the contracted providers. **Motion (Kulas/Mullan) to recommend approval of the PY2020 Unified Local Youth Plan as presented. Motion carried unanimously by roll call vote.**

Executive Committee Workplan Dashboard

Becker explained that each committee continues to move forward on its plans. Progress on the Executive Committee's work included:

- There may be a need to move planning for the annual board retreat out.
- The 'WIB meeting format' task should be moved to nearly complete or complete.
- Review of the WIOA performance matrix is being done at the Policy & Oversight Committee and could be redundant.
- McCabe and Becker will talk off-line about items that should be moved forward, any timeline adjustments and eliminating redundant tasks. An update will be shared at the next meeting.

Other

Becker explained that the economic development vision planning process is currently on hold.

McCabe suggested that the full WIB be updated on the additional Executive Committee meetings.

Adjourn

The meeting was adjourned at 9:00 am.

Next meeting: May 27, 2020 in the Glass Room, 90 W. Plato Blvd