

Workforce Innovation Board of Ramsey County
Executive Committee Meeting Minutes
Wednesday, March 26, 2025, 7:30-9:00am
Meeting held using Zoom Video Conference

Present

Chad Kulas
Tony Lusiba
Yolanda McIntosh
Kelly Miller
Don Mullin
John Perlich
Mary Russell
Aalayha Traub

Absent

Elisa Rasmussen-EA
Trish Stevens-EA

Staff/Guests

Kristi Cobbs, Workforce Solutions
Mariann Macalus, Workforce Solutions
Becky Milbrandt, Workforce Solutions
M. Kathleen Murphy, Commissioner Office

Call to Order and Land Acknowledgement

In the absence of the chair, McIntosh called the meeting to order at 7:32am. She read the land acknowledgement aloud.

Approve January Minutes

Motion (Kulas/Lusiba) to approve the January 22, 2025, minutes as presented. Motion carried unanimously by chat vote.

WIB Financial and Strategic Funds Reports

Milbrandt reviewed the January-February financial reports noting this is the first financial report of the year. Revenues are straightforward with one month of the grant administration for the WIOA and MFIP allotment. It is larger than a typical month due to some carryover from 2024. The expenses are also routine. The strategic priorities report is also straightforward given the first month with no prior expenses. These reports will be brought to the WIB in April for approval.

Membership

WIB & Committee Demographics Dashboards: Milbrandt gave a summary of the updated WIB demographics noting that Commissioner Miller joined the WIB which is reflected in all the measures presented. There are a couple committee changes resulting from a job change for former WIB member Reynolds who is no longer eligible to serve on the WIB but wants to remain on the Equity Committee. Sarah Northrop from the Center for Energy and Environment requested to join the Construction-Green Jobs Committee, replacing Chris Duffrin. There was discussion about outreach to fill the business seat on the WIB that Reynolds vacated. In addition, Carly Voshell had a job change so is no longer able to fill the Adult Basic Education (ABE) seat. Rachel Stiglitz, who is part of the North Metro ABE consortium, has submitted her application.

WIB Application: Stiglitz: Milbrandt provided some background on Stiglitz who submitted her application to replace Voshell.

Motion (Russell/Kulas) to recommend to the Ramsey County Board of Commissioners the appointment of Rachel Stiglitz to the WIB for a term ending July 31, 2025. Motion carried unanimously by chat vote.

Ratification of Committee Appointments: Stiglitz, Severson, Northrup: Milbrandt gave an overview of those requesting appointment to various committees.

Motion (Perlich/Miller) to ratify the WIB Chair's appointments of Rachel Stiglitz to the Construction-Green Job Committee, Jenni Severson to the Youth Committee, and Sarah Northrup to the Construction-Green Jobs Committee. Motion carried unanimously by chat vote.

Committee Updates

Youth Committee: Traub provided an update on the Youth Workforce Champion Awards nominations for the Legacy and Rising Star Awards. The recipients, Stephany Aguirre Lopez for the Rising Star Award, and Donnell Bratton for the Legacy Award, were selected and will be recognized at the April WIB meeting at GAP School and at the spring Youth Works! Networking event. There will also be a press release and a news item about the awards. An update on the PY 2025 Local Youth Plan was provided on how Workforce Solutions will deliver comprehensive youth employment and training services over the next 12 months. Highlights included:

- expansion of Power Within Us and the Driver's License Academy
- Get SET transitions from monthly virtual sessions to now a pre-recorded on-demand resource
- unique service delivery models of you vendor organizations
- expanded role of Outreach of Schools Program Specialist
- elimination of the requirement for WIOA Youth Negotiated Levels of Performance and establishes youth budget approvals as a separate process per DEED guidance.

The plan will be brought to the full WIB for final approval and then to the Ramsey County Board for approval before it is submitted to the State in April.

Partnership & Outreach Committee: Milbrandt provided an update on the work this committee has been doing which focuses recently around getting ready to release the WIB and Workforce Solutions Joint 2024 Annual Report. Highlights include added narratives and visualizations on Career Services and the Dislocated Worker program dashboard, a different color scheme and incorporating more illustrations to increase visual appeal. The report is being reviewed by internal staff and will then be brought to the WIB in April before being launched out to the community.

Construction-Green Jobs Committee: Mullin provided a recap on Construct Tomorrow event held on February 17 at the Minnesota State Fairgrounds. McIntosh provided a recap on Expand the Toolbox held March 4 focusing on the impact of generational differences in the construction industry and leveraging each generation's strengths for the future workforce. \She acknowledged a number of folks on the team for all their great work. Milbrandt provided a recap on the Green Expo & Career Fair held March 19.

Policy & Oversight Committee: Milbrandt shared the highlights of the legislative funding requests for Tech Squads, Minnesota Youth Program and Driver's License program expansion. Commissioner Miller shared that the meeting with Representative Xiong went well in willingness to support the extension of the Tech Squads funding.

Tech Committee: Lusiba stated that May is Tech Month and shared the ideas for WIB-led events for 2025 which include an employer site tour for people in tech training programs and a panel discussion on how to launch a career in tech in the current industry client. Tech Squads and Bridgemakers will invited to participate on the panel.

Equity Committee: Milbrandt shared that work continues with the team from ADR Consulting to launch the 2025 Inclusive Workplaces Cohort. It is believed that the current socio-political climate impacted the number of applicants. Changes made to the program this year include an April start to allow more opportunity to recruit and the addition of a capstone project. Targeted outreach to some additional employers is underway.

Staff Updates

Workforce Solutions Leadership: Milbrandt shared that Holly Pratt will be joining Workforce Solutions as the Deputy Director starting on March 31. This is a new role for the department. Pratt will be engaging with some of the WIB's work.

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.

Upcoming Events:

- Level Up Young Adult Career Resource Fair: April 24 at St. Paul Eastside YMCA, 9am-1:30pm.
- Youth Job & Resource Fair: May 3 at Maplewood Mall, 10am-noon.

April WIB Meeting: Milbrandt provided an update on the plans for the April WIB meeting which includes a tour of the GAP School Construction Program project house, followed by the business meeting, and then the Youth Committee Showcase, the Youth Workforce Champion Awards and ending with refreshments provided by Job Corps' Culinary Arts students.

ARPA Project Showcase: Power Within Us & LEAP

Cobbs provided an update on the ARPA workforce investments and the amazing work that Gill and others are doing with Power Within Us (PWU). PWU helps support young adults ages 16-24 who are currently on probation in Ramsey County connect to paid job training and education programs. This opportunity is a part of the Ramsey County Investment and Support Efforts program, funded through the American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA). Those who eligible and participate earn \$75 and an additional \$50 for enrolling in the program of their choice. In-person resource sessions are held every second Tuesday of the month at various locations from 4-5:30pm. The goal of this program is for young people to be connected to services in the community that are better able to meet their needs long-term; e.g. on-going employment and resource support and living wage employment. There are several community partner impacts resulting in 52% of young people who attend a session get connected to a resource program which is great engagement. McIntosh, Cobbs and Gill will connect to share this program with the Boys and Girls Club.

Other

Milbrandt shared the changes on committee appointments by the city county members. Councilmember Johnson, who has been on the WIB for about a year, is transitioning off the WIB and will be replaced by Council Vice President Kim, will be appointed in April.

Adjourn

The meeting was adjourned at 8:56am.

The next Executive Committee meeting is Wednesday, May 28, 2025, 7:30-9am.