

**Workforce Innovation Board of Ramsey County**  
**Executive Committee Meeting Minutes**  
May 27, 2020, 7:30-9:30am  
Meeting held using Zoom Video Conference

**Committee Members Present**

Butch Howard  
Chad Kulas  
Jim McDonough  
Sean Mullan  
Paul Nikstad  
Mary Russell  
Chris Tolbert  
Ramona Wilson

**Members Absent**

**Staff/Guests Present**

Ling Becker, Ramsey County  
Holly Schnetzler, Workforce Solutions

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**Call to Order**

Chair Karin McCabe called the meeting to order at 7:33 am.

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**Approve March Minutes**

**Motion (Howard/McDonough) to approve the March 25 and April 22, 2020 minutes as presented. Motion carried unanimously by roll call vote. Kulas and Tolbert were not present for the vote.**

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**WIB Financial Report**

Schnetzler provided an overview of the financial report. The \$875 expenditure for the OSO training was moved from strategic priorities to training, leaving the strategic priorities available balance at \$40,000.

**Motion (Mullan/Howard) to accept the March/April 2020 financial report as presented. Motion carried unanimously by roll call vote. Kulas and Tolbert were not present for the vote.**

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**WIB Membership**

*Vacancy Report and Membership Dashboard:* The vacancy report was reviewed. Becker has been in contact with someone from Thrivent who is interested in applying for a business seat. Kulas is also actively recruiting, although this is a challenging time to ask businesses to volunteer.

*Membership Appointments/Reappointments:* Becker explained that Howard and Gaarder are not seeking reappointment due to retirement and a job change.

**Motion (Mullan/Kulas) to recommend the reappointment of Jennifer Germain, Larry Gilbertson, Kristin Guild, Hyon Kim, Gaye Adams Massey, Jim McDonough, Paul Nikstad, Sheila Olson, Elisa Rasmussen, and Shannon Watson to the WIB for the 2020-2022 term. Motion carried unanimously by roll call vote. Nikstad and McDonough abstained.**

Kulas explained that three new member applications were received. Two of the applicants do not meet the criteria for the membership category to which they applied. However, they are eligible to serve on a committee. Becker will talk to them about joining the Partnership and Equity Committee. The third applicant, Camila Mercado Michelli from CLUES, is applying to fill the Community-Based Organization (CBO) seat being vacated by Gaarder. Mercado Michelli is currently a member of the Youth Committee. Nikstad confirmed that she attends meetings regularly and is a valuable contributor to the discussions. Recruiting from the Latinx community is also a priority for the WIB.

**Motion (Nikstad/McDonough) to recommend to the Ramsey County Board of Commissioners the appointment of Camila Mercado Michelli to represent Community-Based Organizations on the WIB for the 2020-2022 term. Motion carried unanimously by roll call vote. All members were present and voting.**

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**Partner MOU/Infrastructure Funding Agreement (IFA)**

Becker provided a brief overview of the MOU and IFA process. She reviewed the proposed changes, many of which were recommended by DEED and were included in the state's MOU template. Schnetzler reported that the IFA is still being developed by DEED and will be brought back to the WIB for consideration within six months.

**Motion (Howard/Russell) to recommend approval of the One-Stop Partner Memorandum of Understanding as proposed. Motion carried unanimously by roll call vote. Kulas was not present at the time of the vote.**

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**Letter of Support for Federal WIOA Funding**

Mullan reported that the Policy Committee crafted a letter encouraging Senators Smith and Klobuchar and Rep. McCollum to support legislation that provides additional COVID response funding for WIOA programs. The committee felt a letter with broad support for WIOA funding was a better option than supporting a specific bill. The letter was signed by Becker, McCabe and Mullan and sent to the MN delegation last week. Becker received responses for each legislator's staff expressing appreciation for the WIB's input.

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**WIB Leadership Future Planning**

Kulas announced that Wilson has agreed to be nominated as WIB Chair-elect.

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**Director's Updates**

Becker provided county and statewide unemployment and vulnerable job information by race, gender, age, and education level. Despite the current economic situation, some companies are still hiring. Key goals during COVID are to not allow the disparities gap to widen, promote short term training, emphasize careers rather than jobs, and understand needed remedies through the relief, restart, recover, reimagine phases.

*CARES Act Funding:* Becker shared details on the federal CARES dollars directly allocated to Ramsey County in April. The use of these funds is highly restricted. Of the \$96M the county received, \$15M has been designated for workforce. Becker would like to give most of the funds to CBOs that are already connected to those most in need. Key action areas include employment services (in collaboration with libraries), youth and young adult gap services, focus on impacted populations through CBOs, digital equity, increased tech training opportunities, and community driven innovation (in partnership with the Center for Economic Inclusion). The funding opportunities will be posted on the county website tomorrow. The application process will be simpler than usual, with the application consisting of three main elements: the project is directed toward those impacted by COVID, it doesn't supplant existing programs and it is workforce related.

*Community Tech Equity Needs:* Becker shared data on the tech equity gap. Access to broadband and tech devices are much lower for black Americans and those with disabilities. This will be a key component addressed by CARES funding.

*Youth Unemployment Insurance:* Minnesota law prohibits high school students from getting federal unemployment benefits. There was support for the WIB advocating for the elimination of this exemption. This could be discussed at the Policy and Youth Committee levels or a joint group could be pulled together to draft a letter supporting proposed legislation. Becker will send the bill to the committee.

*Other:* Becker sees a gap around business support and suggested the WIB use some of its strategic funding to bring in facilitators to educate employers around inclusive hiring practices. McCabe wants to make sure people who really need this information are reached. She would also like to see mental health training provided. Connecting with the chambers may be a good way to reach employers. Howard suggested getting hiring agents involved in these trainings as educating this group is critical to eliminating employment disparities.

Becker announced that a new job board is being launched this month. All the local chambers have committed to using it.

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**Other**

No other items were discussed.

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**Adjourn**

The meeting was adjourned at 9:01 am.

**Next meeting:** June 24, 2020, 7:30-8:30 am Workforce Recovery Workshop  
July 22, 2020, 7:30 – 9:00am