

**Workforce Innovation Board of Ramsey County**  
**Executive Committee Meeting Minutes**  
Wednesday, September 27, 2023, 7:30-9:00am  
Meeting held using Zoom Video Conference

**Committee Members Present**

Susan Jambor  
Chad Kulas  
Tony Lusiba  
John McClean  
Rena Moran  
Don Mullin  
Paul Nikstad  
Elisa Rasmussen  
Mary Russell  
Chris Tolbert

**Members Absent**

**Staff/Guests Present**

Ling Becker, Workforce Solutions  
Michelle Belitz, Workforce Solutions  
Mariann Macalus, Workforce Solutions  
Becky Milbrandt, Workforce Solutions

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**Call to Order and Land Acknowledgement**

Chair Rasmussen called the meeting to order at 7:30am. Jambor read the Land Acknowledgement aloud.

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**Approve May Minutes**

**Motion (Jambor/Moran) to approve the May 24, 2023, minutes as presented. Motion carried unanimously by chat vote.**

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**Review WIB Financial Report and Strategic Funds Reports**

Becker shared the July-August 2023 financial reports which reflects very little change from the previous reporting period. Therefore, today's review will be on the strategic priorities. Becker thanked everyone for their support to move projects quickly throughout the year by allowing more funds for strategic priorities. The WIB is close to spending down its budget with a lot going on through the end of the year.

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**Membership**

*WIB & Committee Demographics Dashboards:* Jambor gave a summary of the membership dashboard, noting that definitions for business size were added.

*WIB Membership Recommendation: Bridgeman, Legeros, Rapacz, Traub:* A review of the vacancy report reflected the need to fill one CBO, one One-Stop and two Business (one City and one County) vacancies. Applications have been received from Aalayha Traub (Business), William Bridgeman (CBO), Alex Legeros (CBO) and Donna Rapacz (CBO) were reviewed by the Membership Committee. Becker stated that the Mayor's Office has indicated a preference for appointing Rapacz from Merrick Inc. for the one CBO seat. Becker will reach out to the CBO applicants not selected to ask them to join a committee.

**Motion (Russell/McClean) to recommend to the City of Saint Paul the appointment of Donna Rapacz to the WIB for a term ending July 31, 2024. Motion carried by chat vote.**

**Motion (Kulas/Rasmussen) to recommend to the County Board the appointment of Aalayha Traub to the WIB for a term ending July 31, 2025. Motion carried by chat vote.**

*WIB Committee Appointments: Voshell, Banks, Kulas, Cacioppo:* **Motion (Jambor/Moran) to ratify the WIB Chair's appointment of Carly Voshell and Chad Kulas to the Partnership & Outreach Committee, Jonathan Banks to the Equity and Policy & Oversight Committees and Len Cacioppo to the Tech Committee. Motion carried by chat vote.**

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**Director's Updates**

Becker provided updates on the following:

*CareerForce Relocation Ad Hoc Committee:* Becker provided a recap of the work done to date, including tours of the CareerForce Saint Paul site, Dakota County Service Center, Ramsey County Service Center and the potential CareerForce site at Metro Square. She also recapped the recent meeting with DEED leadership, indicating they are in favor of the direction the WIB is heading. Becker will meet with DEED leadership again in October. She explained that the decision to relocate is made by the WIB with support from the partners and must be data driven, cost effective, timely and accessible to all populations. Becker shared plans to meet with the co-located core partners and other key stakeholders in the coming weeks.

*Committee Updates:* Becker and others provided updates:

***Equity Committee:***

*Inclusive Employer Toolkit:* The new Toolkit aims to help employers provide a more welcoming and inclusive workplace by offering practices to build diversity, equity and inclusion across all areas of the employee lifecycle. The Toolkit will be available online in the next few days.

*Fair Opportunities Efforts:* Ramsey County and several community partners joined together at the Selby JazzFest on September 9 to promote fair opportunities hiring for justice impacted individuals.

*DEI Consultant Services Request for Proposals:* A request for proposal was released for consultant services comprising of three components: facilitation of an Inclusive Workplaces Cohort; facilitating bi-monthly virtual Inclusive Employer Toolkit conversations; and supporting Ramsey County's fair opportunities work by leading a cohort of employers seeking to expand employment opportunities for previously incarcerated individuals.

***Youth Committee***

*Youth Networking Event:* This is an initiative to bring together Youth Works! Partners twice a year to share information, network and show appreciation. The September 14 event was a huge success.

*Vern Vick Award:* Vern Vick is no longer a familiar name in the community. The Youth Committee is considering a new name that is not tied to an individual. They are also reconsidering the award criteria/nomination, timeline (to better align with a youth focused WIB meeting in April), and selection process.

***Tech Committee***

*Direct Appropriations Support:* A new program is being developed to implement the Tech Squads direct appropriations of \$500,000 each year for a technology training pathway program focused on intergenerational community tech work for residents who are 18-24 years old and live in a census tract that has a poverty rate of at least 20%. The grant funds can be used for program administration, training, training stipends, wages and support services. This is a one-time legislative appropriation.

*Full Stack Alignment:* Through Full Stack Saint Paul, the committee has the opportunity to leverage the tech workforce ecosystem, advance opportunities for more diverse tech talent and identify needs to promote tech equity. Becker explained that there is support for better coordination between the WIB and Full Stack. Areas to focus on include training and connecting an agile tech workforce, launching tech-powered startups and entrepreneurs, activating and highlighting innovation space, and building an inclusive tech culture.

***Construction-Green Jobs Committee***

*Build Your Own Future:* This campaign intends to grow the construction-green jobs industry. Work is being done on a webpage on Ramsey County Means Business to share all the pathways and training opportunities through unions, CBOs and community colleges. Added to the webpage will be a calendar of construction-related events in the community. Becker is exploring hosting a screening event for the 3M Skilled documentary in partnership with 3M. Another possible offering is an Introduction to Construction Career Pathways 101 that John O'Phelan could facilitate.

***Partnership and Outreach***

*Tour of CAPRW:* The committee met in person at Community Action Partnership and toured their facility.

*EDA + Recompete Grant:* The WIB is in the process of applying for this grant. It focuses on areas of persistent economic distress and support. The geographic areas in Saint Paul that are eligible include parts of Frogtown and Dayton's Bluff. The focus is to develop a plan to build strategies to increase family-sustaining employment for residents ages 25-54 in these specified geography through the Recompete Plan. The first step is to develop a plan. If the plan is selected, there could be the potential for receiving \$20M.

Minneapolis has some eligible areas but may not apply. McClean stated he will help with a letter of support and other needs for supporting this effort.

### ***Policy and Oversight***

***WIOA Dashboards:*** This committee provides oversight to WIOA Adult and Dislocated Worker program outcomes through dashboard and discussion. The county now has an Open Data Portal (ODP) that houses performance metrics for a variety of program areas. The dashboards will transition to the ODP by the end of the year.

### **ARPA Updates:**

- A Youth Works! Career Pathway Portal is being established which will help young adults explore local career options and get the tools and guidance they need to reach a brighter future. The portal will include local and national videos from people sharing their career stories and ongoing links to existing programs that are foundational for youth.
- Goodwill Easter Seals is providing a six-month Advanced Manufacturing Program to prepare young adults for high-demand careers in manufacturing. Participants spend 12 hours a week at Saint Paul College to engage in hands-on learning and then are matched with a local manufacturer to apply the skills learned in the classroom.
- Young Adult Career Academy in partnership with Ain Dah Yung Center (ADY) provides holistic workforce support from ADY program staff and Project Restore MN to learn about government careers. The six young adults are rotating throughout Ramsey County Parks & Rec, Public Works, Emergency Communications and with the County Commissioners. Two of the participants have gotten full-time jobs with the county and city.
- WFS is helping 166 young adults get their driver's license through the Driver's License Academy. At least 30 have finished the program. New permit proctor sites will be launched later this month in Ramsey County along with a virtual reality simulator. This is the one program that should continue as it supports a variety of industries in all the other workforce programs.
- Construct Tomorrow is a program that brings the construction and building trades to high school students through an experiential learning process. The career-focused event is scheduled for December 6 at the Saint Paul RiverCentre, exclusively for schools located in Ramsey County. Students will have the opportunity to try tools of the trades hands-on; talk to diverse tradespeople from multiple construction industries; learn about wages and benefits; and discuss registered apprenticeship with industry professionals.
- Youth Works! Pillars is a new philosophy around WFS' Youth employment services, trying to help the whole youth ecosystem which includes supervisory training and employer engagement; networking & resource sharing; driver's license academy; opportunity youth innovation; preparation for future work. Becker is hoping the WIB can support these pillars.

### **Funding Opportunities**

***Making Grant Connections Efforts:*** A meeting with the city of Minneapolis and other agencies later this month to discuss how to better coordinate locally when applying for various grants.

**Workforce Development Summit & Local Plan:** No update. It will get discussed at the WIB meeting.

**October WIB Meeting:** No update.

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### **Program Snapshot: MFIP Strategic Partnerships**

Belitz gave a presentation about our Partners for Equity through the Minnesota Family Investment Program, along with 2022 statistics of how many families served and the DHS Self-Support Index. There is a disproportionate representation of American Indian and African American families in the county. The index measures over three years who is off cash assistance or working 130+ hours. The partners for this program are Network for the Development of Children of African Decent (NdCAD), CLUES and the American Indian Family Center. The goals are to invest in community solutions, learn from one another for systems change, improve family outcomes for generations and cultural identity and wellness as a foundation.

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**Other**

Rasmussen and Lusiba thanked the Ramsey County team for all the work everyone is doing.

Becker stated that she is going to bring back the action plans for each committee in the next round of meetings. The WIB will be asked to help more in all that is being done in 2024.

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**Adjourn**

The meeting was adjourned at 8:58am.

The next Executive Committee meeting is Wednesday, November 15, 2023.