

Workforce Innovation Board of Ramsey County
Policy & Oversight Committee Meeting Minutes
Thursday, May 14, 2020
2:00-3:00 pm

Present:

Lisa Guetzkow
Sean Mullan
Sheila Olson
Shannon Watson

Absent:

Ryan Hauschild
James McClean-EA
Greg Mellas-EA

Staff/Guests:

Ling Becker, Ramsey County
Karyn Berg, Ramsey County

Call to Order

Chair Sean Mullan called the meeting to order at 2:04 pm.

Approve January 9 and May 7 Minutes

Motion (Watson/Olson) to approve the January 9 and May 7, 2020 Policy Committee meeting minutes as presented. Motion carried.

Support Letter Follow up

The draft of a letter expressing support for federal funding of WIOA programs during the COVID response was reviewed. Becker explained that another WIOA funding bill has been introduced. The guidance from Watson and McClean at the last meeting to keep the WIB's support letter focused on the need rather than supporting a specific bill was very appreciated.

Motion (Watson/Olson) to recommend approval of the letter of support as presented and request that the Chair, Policy Committee Chair and Executive Director sign on behalf of the WIB. Motion carried.

DEED Waivers

A list of recommended state and federal waivers that would make it easier to operate programs during the pandemic was compiled with input from across the state. Becker will send the complete waiver list to the committee. She will also send out stories from the media and information about youth who have been impacted by the policy making high school students ineligible for unemployment insurance benefits.

Federal Performance Measures

Becker explained that the Department of Labor (DOL) and DEED negotiate the WIOA performance measures every two years. The committee reviewed a letter submitted by the MN Association of Workforce Boards (MAWB) to DOL asking for these negotiations to be postponed and that local areas be held harmless on meeting the current WIOA performance measures for PY2019/2020 and PY2020/2021.

One-Stop Partner MOU

Becker explained that a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) among the local workforce system partners and the accompanying Infrastructure Funding Agreement (IFA) are done every three years. These are usually done at the same time as the Local Plan. The Local Plan deadline was extended due to COVID but the MOU is set to expire in June, so it is being moved forward. Becker noted that electronic signatures are being allowed this time which will simplify the signing process. A key change to the MOU is the process for adding new partners without needing signatures from all partners.

Motion (Watson/Mullan) to recommend approval of the Memorandum of Understanding as presented. Motion carried. Olson and Guetzkow abstained from discussion and voting.

WIOA Adult and Dislocated Worker Dashboards

A summary of WIOA Adult and Dislocated Worker programs was provided. It was noted that the numbers in the report don't reflect the surge due to COVID layoffs or the Gerdau employees who will be laid off due to the upcoming mill closure. Becker and Guetzkow have not seen any information about a Rapid Response project for Gerdau. Mullan will provide Berg with contact information for Gerdau's HR manager so program information can be shared with the employees. Becker noted that REA sessions have not been happening during COVID. Marketing on the website will have to be ramped up to inform the community about the DW program. Now is a great time for people who are receiving the extra UI benefit to upskill; however, the needs assessment is still required. The state is looking at platforms that can benefit everyone wanting training. Federal DW allocations for 2020 increased by 1%. State allocations are expected to be released in late June. A look at the UI/DW race summary shows that many people of color are not eligible for these programs because eligibility is based on past work quarters and earnings. Lack of access to long term job opportunities and the fact that people of color are more likely to hold the jobs that get eliminated are some of the reasons for this disparity. COVID waivers may shift this somewhat. Becker wants to market these programs more heavily to increase awareness.

Committee Dashboard Review

The committee dashboard was reviewed. Changes to the committee's plan included:

- *Clone other bills from other states and review and update WIB legislative policy statement* - wait
- *Meet with key policy makers at the state level* – move to Q1 2021
- *Develop WIB communication plan for WIB policy statement and train full WIB* – the policy statement will be reviewed at the next meeting to see if anything has changed due to COVID.
- *Create WIB information materials for area political candidates* – this is even more critical now that the legislature will have to deal with a huge deficit and reduced revenues. Watson can provide a list of all the candidates in Ramsey County. A review of the candidate information will be done at the next meeting.

After some discussion, the committee decided that bill tracking will not be added to the list.

Other

Mullan asked if there is a plan to reopen with Career Labs. Becker reported that DEED is working on their plan for the Saint Paul location. County locations will not be reopened in the near future, but other community friendly locations are being considered. Mullan suggested this be discussed more at the next Executive Committee meeting,

Adjourn

Upon completion of the agenda, the meeting was adjourned at 3:09 pm.

Next meeting: July 9, 2020, 3:00-4:30 pm.