

Workforce Innovation Board of Ramsey County

Technology Committee Meeting Minutes

Thursday, September 14, 2023

1:00 – 2:00pm

Via Zoom Video Conference

Present:

Sam Drong
Tony Lusiba
Koami Pedado
Mary Rick
Sabina Saksena

Absent:

Ama Asantewaa
Caroline Karanja

Staff/Guests:

Ling Becker, Workforce Solutions
Mariann Macalus, Workforce Solutions
Rebecca Milbrandt, Workforce Solutions
Rachael Molenaar, Workforce Solutions

Call to Order & Land Acknowledgement

Chair Lusiba called the meeting to order at 1:02pm. Drong read the Land Acknowledgement. Lusiba thanked everyone for serving on the committee.

Approve March Minutes

Motion (Lusiba/Saksena) to approve the March 9, 2023, meeting minutes as presented. Motion carried unanimously by chat vote.

Tech Squad Direct Appropriations

Molenaar provided an update on the new Tech Squads program which will focus on technology training for young people between the ages of 18 and 24 who live in low-income areas. Workforce Solutions (WFS) is currently working with the state to get the contracts formalized for the appropriations. Molenaar summarized the development of the program in hiring a limited duration program specialist to serve approximately 50 participants between January 2025 and June 2025. Participants will receive paid IT helpdesk training and a 16-week Ramsey Tech Squad internship. There was discussion on IT training. Saksena will send information on Microsoft Cisco, Network Management. It was suggested that professional development components might include entrepreneurial leadership performance training. A barrier may exist for former incarcerated people due to not being allowed to use a non-monitored device. The committee might want a professional development program for the upcoming cohort session. WFS is working through the occupational training contracts with local training institutions, community colleges, etc. who might be interested in doing this type of work.

Committee Work Plan/Project Updates

Future of Work Sessions: Becker provided an update on an upcoming professional development opportunity for workforce professionals on emerging industries and future of work. The first session is focused on green construction, green tech, etc., and is scheduled for November 20 at the Arlington Hills Community Center. There was discussion about the sessions, the panelists and assistance from the committee to host. It was suggested there be more focus on an expansive tech industry vs. just AI or cyber. Those who are on the helpdesk need to be able to talk to people to calm them down. Is the value on having a four-year degree or is it the subject matter; i.e., technology vs. sociology? Full Stack has an interest in this series but would like to understand the audience and other areas of focus. Workforce professionals should think about what an individual wants to be doing rather than the training and being passionate about their job.

Tech Talent Report July 2023: Becker shared a summary of the MnTech Tech Talent Report for April and May 2023. There is more of a technologist need for replacement rather than growth. RealTalent could come to talk about the overall data.

Director Updates:

Digital Opportunity Plan: Becker provided an update on the state's proposed Plan which is out for public comment and shared some initial areas of concern. The Plan focuses on border to border and includes very little consideration for the metro area. The link to the Plan draft will be sent with the meeting follow up. Committee members are encouraged to read it and send comments to the state.

Full Stack Coordination and Alignment: Rick provided a summary of Full Stack alignment opportunities between this committee, the county and the Full Stack committee. She shared Full Stack's feedback related to the staff's suggestions as to what was needed now. During discussion on whether the WIB would want to partner with Full Stack on this alignment, it was mentioned that the WIB would be the job seeker resident lens rather than employer focus. There will be additional discussion on this topic at future committee meetings.

Committee Member Updates and Other

No further items discussed.

Adjourn

Upon completion of the agenda, meeting was adjourned at 2:01pm.

Next Meeting: Thursday, November 9, 2023, 1-2pm.