

**WASHINGTON COUNTY
WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT BOARD MEETING
CareerForce
Woodbury, MN
June 21, 2023**

Members Present

Christine Dressel	Christopher Eng	Erin Kampa
Susie Evans	Jordan Fry	Lydia Moua
Jaime Staska	Doug Loberg	Stan Karwoski

Action Team Members Present

Sharon Blomberg

CareerForce Staff Present

Rick Roy	Cory Sindt	Deb Cunningham
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Guests

Julie Strommen, Andersen Corp.
Molly Bonnett, Forest Lake High School

1. Meeting Called to Order & Determination of Quorum – Christine Dressel

It was determined there was a quorum.

- A Motion was made to approve the March minutes, it was seconded, and the Motion was approved.
- A Motion was made to approve the agenda, it was seconded, and the Motion was approved.

2. Action Team 2023 Workforce Development Partner Awards

- Education Engagement Action Team – awarded Forest Lake High School in recognition of their career pathways activities. Molly Bonett – received the award. They started programming with career launch. It's been a team effort with district & high school leadership, and added team member, Mike Miron who is the career tech and work-based learning coordinator. Their focus is on creating career exposure and experience opportunities for all students. They've partnered with some great businesses and have had a lot of community support.
- Business Engagement Action Team – awarded Renewal by Andersen – Julie Strommen and Lydia Moua (Board Member) received the award. Renewal and CareerForce have partnered for the Pathways to Prosperity Program and Lydia is working with us on strategies to address transportation issues. Julie was previously on the Board and is now on the State Board for Disabilities. Andersen has launched several onsite English classes at their facilities across the country. They work with the deaf and hard of hearing with the partnership of those support groups. Julie acknowledged these efforts were possible due to the partnership

built with Susie Evan's team at South Washington School District 833 and other relationships and support groups.

- Community Engagement Action Team – awarded to Family Means – Jamie Staska (Board Member) received the award. Family Means has been a great partner not only across Workforce Development but many services with other County Departments through community events. Jamie acknowledged appreciation to CareerForce Youth Program for the opportunity to have young people work in their youth development areas with most of them living within that community. Two CareerForce Youth/Young Adult Program participants working at Cimarron Child & Teen Centers now have Family Means positions supervising those areas.

3. Board Needs/Requirements/Requests

- Chris Dressel is retiring and will retire as the Board Chair which leaves that position open. Chris will stay on the Board through the end of the year representing business. The Chair must be from the business sector. It doesn't involve many tasks. Robert's Rules of Order are used. Rick provides an agenda. Agenda and minutes of meetings are given for review and approval. The Chair is also a member of the Oversight Action Team. Chris stated it was a great experience being on the Board and as the Chair. She thanked the group for all the important work they do. The efforts do have an impact for people and communities.
- There are three open seats for business representatives, with three businesses interested.
 - Van Meter, Inc. – Commercial Lighting & Automation – Cottage Grove
 - Market & Johnson, Inc. – construction company, Stillwater
 - Lakeview Hospital – Stillwater
- Proposed allowance of proxy members and voting rights. Van Meter is inquiring if they are allowed to have two staff join so schedules allow for one to attend at all times. Rick reached out to other WDA Boards inquiring if they have a proxy policy. SE Minnesota does and allows those members to have voting rights. Rick submitted a draft to the County Administration Dept. using SE Minnesota's proxy policy as a draft & will give an update once he hears back.

4. Action Team Updates

- Combined Education & Business Engagement Action Team
 - Career Pathway Exploration through Virtual Reality – Meetings were held June 15 discussing the VR project. Virtual meeting with CareerLab VR in the morning and an in-person demonstration in the afternoon with Wisconsin based Transfr. **Document attached** with details for both companies. We would include an add-on piece listing businesses within the County for those occupations with details regarding schooling/training and wages. Jerry would be overseeing the project through ARPA funds and MYP youth funds. 20% of MYP funds can be used for outreach to schools. Sheng Xiong,

Youth Employment Program Counselor, will also be involved going out to the schools.

The VR project can be a whole Washington County initiative bringing it to Middle and High Schools, ABE classrooms, Area Learning Centers, Communities such as Landfall and Cimarron, housing projects and possibly Corrections.

Rick & Jerry recommend going with CareerLab VR, based on Q & A sessions, long-term financial cost is more manageable and better suited for outreach to schools. Transfr could be considered later. CareerLab VR sent their contract and it's being reviewed.

- Community Engagement Action Team
 - Summary of Community Engagement Activities – Cory Sindt – There have been a lot of change in attendees. Those that attend are very positive and engaging. We're optimistic we'll get going on things this fall & working on recruitment of members. There have been many community activities with good turnouts. Robin Hakari in our CareerForce does a lot of networking and always has a full monthly calendar of events.

5. Board Members and Guest Updates

Erin Kampa, Voc. Rehab Services – the legislative session just ended and 1.8 billion was approved going to various programs. Voc. Rehab received what they asked for and a little more which will go to help support mental health initiatives. We've received 70 more applications than last year, and our successful outcomes are back to pre-CoVid rates. We would love to partner with community engagements to get our name & services out there more.

Chris Eng, CDA – CD just approved a 5-year plan. One piece of that is partnering with Workforce Development. Businesses are asking for help finding talent. We want to help our current Washington County businesses find the talent they need to grow and expand. Another key piece is to help potential businesses looking to move to or relocate to Washington County find the talent they need to succeed and grow. Thank you to Chris Dressel for all her work and commitment to the Board.

Susie Evans, South Washington Schools – Through the Adult Ed Program launching a program – Pathways to Employment in the U.S. Adult Ed sees over 600 students a year. Some are incarcerated, some are overcoming language barriers, and many are highly skilled in their home country. They are eager to find employment. There will be a teacher dedicated to connecting students with businesses to interview. Anyone who takes the class is guaranteed an interview somewhere, job-shadow experience, have a resume, and understand what the job entails so the instructor can prepare the student.

Sharon Blomgren – St. Paul College – received \$150,000 training dollars to serve youth 17–21-year-olds, classes such as - phlebotomy, nursing assistance and summer camps. There will be approximately 150 youth on campus next week for summer camps –

learning about solar, drones, coding, manufacturing, engineering, cosmetology and scrubs camp will be in July.

Stan Karwoski – County Commissioner – Thank you to Chris Dressel on behalf of the Board for her years of service & as Chair on the Board. The County Board appreciates everyone's work on the Board.

The Legislature has appropriated more money with several million going to Washington County which will mean securing better workforce, senior housing, more money for transit and micro transit – getting people to their employment.

Cory Sindt – CareerForce Employment Services Supervisor – with the emergency allotments ending in July for the SNAP program, customers receiving SNAP benefits will be required to work with CareerForce Employment Counselors to receive additional months. There will be an influx of approximately 200-250 customers coming in the next few months. Exemptions from working with employment counselors would be a person older than 49, having a child in the home, or someone with medical barriers.

Julie Strommen – Andersen Windows – we've had a lot of deaf individuals joining our workforce. With the national shortage of interpreters, we've been leveraging a lot of technology to work with our supervisors and these individuals. We've installed new communication technologies, hiring accessibility coaches and sign language interpreters, and actively recruiting deaf job candidates for the first time.

6. Call and Vote for Adjournment – Chris Dressel

A Motion was made to adjourn the meeting, it was seconded, and the Motion was approved.