

**WASHINGTON COUNTY  
WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT BOARD MEETING  
CareerForce  
Woodbury, MN  
September 18, 2024**

**Members Present**

|                       |                 |               |
|-----------------------|-----------------|---------------|
| John Burcaw           | Christopher Eng | Susan Evans   |
| Doug Loberg           | Erin Kampa      | Jordan Fry    |
| Randy LaFaive         | Monica Brown    | Traci Leffner |
| Gladys Kumenda-Jassam |                 |               |

**Action Team Members**

Sharon Blomgren      Melissa McLean

**Guests**

|                   |                |
|-------------------|----------------|
| Nicole Lindscheid | Mark Myskewitz |
| Murugi Mutiga     | Alex Calero    |

**CareerForce Staff Present**

|              |                |
|--------------|----------------|
| Rick Roy     | Cory Sindt     |
| Tatum Heller | Deb Cunningham |

**1. Meeting Called to Order & Determination of Quorum – John Burcaw, Vice Chair**

A quorum was determined.

- A Motion was made to approve the agenda, it was seconded, (vote taken) and the Motion was approved.
- A Motion was made to approve the March minutes, (June meeting was cancelled) it was seconded, (vote taken) and the Motion was approved.
- Introduction of New Board Members – two new Board members:
  - Gladys Kumenda-Jassam, Presbyterian Homes – St. Andrews Village
  - Shana Weiss, Lakeview Hospital and Partners, (unable to attend today)

We are short a couple members. There are a few interested in becoming members: Marathon Petroleum, International Paper and a Construction Contractor located in Woodbury.

**2. Action Team Discussions:**

- Business Engagement Action Team (*Chris Eng*) We'll be gearing up in our October meeting for the year ahead. Our focus is working with the Chambers. The World Café events we've held to help businesses address their needs and concerns have gone over well. The childcare effort in Cottage Grove is moving

forward. Employees and employers have been surveyed about their needs and what supports would help make this work.

- Community Engagement Action Team (*Cory Sindt*) Working on establishing a document or process for the group to access information of all the community events to attend and/or pass on to their network.
- Education Engagement Action Team (*Susie Evans*) Focus was with the Virtual Reality Project working with Jerry introducing it and getting it out to the schools. We've had great discussions and networking within the group and between colleges and the school districts. We have a great group but we're looking for more of a project and goals we can work on in the coming year.

*Rick Roy* – VR Project & Career Services Staff update: Jerry has moved to another project within the County but agreed to be a connection for VR. Robin Hakari our Career Lab Specialist is retiring November 8. Samantha Olson who is our Forest Lake Career Lab staff is taking her place but will continue to work out of the Forest Lake office. We're in the process of hiring another Career Service Specialist who will be trained to work with the VR Project. Sheng Xiong, Youth Program Employment Counselor, is unable to take on the project as he is also in the military and is scheduled to be deployed for a year. Cory will also be a resource. The goal is to have VR located at all three of our locations available once a month up to a half day for interested customers to try out.

### **3. Possible Federal Legislative Changes (Rick Roy)**

- Governor's Set-Aside – Update Duluth's summer conference - a lobbyist from D.C. for the National Association of Workforce Development Boards gave good updates. Governor's Set-Aside – 15% of the entire State allocation of the federal funds goes to the Governor, it actually goes to the DEED commissioner – looking at bumping it to 25% - every local area would see a 10% cut in their federal funding. There's a push to leave it where it is.
- One-Stop Operator – is a way of having some oversight of our operations. It's made up of a consortium – with Mike Yanda representing DEED, Susie Evans representing education and Erin Kampa representing State Vocational Rehabilitation. An RFP is put out for bids. We've never had anyone apply. Looking at getting ours renewed. DEED's legal team is reviewing it. Role of the one-stop operator is time on the Action Teams. Ensuring quality coordination among all the providers in the system and in the communities.
- Local Area Designations – possibly giving the Governor authority to make changes. Factors that are considered include geographic location, population, and commonality of labor market areas.
- Funding Expenditure Category – They're looking at making a shift, serving customers who are already employed but need upscaling. There are already grants in the State for that through the Minnesota Job Skills Partnership Act. We're trying to help people get employed that aren't employed. This would limit how many we can serve with our federal funding. They're also looking at

expanding eligibility for some of our programs but we need funding to support this.

- One-Stop Center Designations – A library or a school, for example, could be designated as a one-stop comprehensive center. Our Forest Lake Career Lab was moved into the Hardwood Creek Library in Forest Lake.

#### **4. Recognition Awards for Excellence in Workforce and Community Partnerships**

This is the second year of recognizing some of the great work our action teams are doing in our communities.

- Business Engagement Action Team - Jerry's Foods – Mark Myskewitz accepted on behalf of Don Johnson. Jerry's Foods has been doing a great job of hiring people with multiple abilities. Giving them an opportunity to succeed.
- Education Engagement Action Team – Melissa McLean – While working in Dist. 622, Melissa has partnered with many businesses and organizations helping students with opportunities and their career goals. Most recently partnering with Sharon Blomgren at St. Paul College & Healthpartners, placing 12 graduating seniors in training. All 12 successfully completed the course and earned a certificate in Sterile Processing all at no cost to the student.
- Community Engagement Action Team - Murugi Mutiga – Murugi began employment with Washington County for a special project position supported by ARPA funds, supervising a team of four. The mission was to bring County services into communities. Several successful community events were held in partnership with CareerForce and other County Department staff. Murugi has since been hired permanently.

#### **5. Board Members and Guest Updates**

*Susie Evans* – Adult Education is currently located at Valley Creek Mall while R.H. Stafford library is being renovated. There are 65 adults in the morning class learning English and 45 adults attending in the evening. Offering free CNA classes for basic vocabulary and connecting with Sharin Blomgren and Monica Brown for students to continue with that path.

Seeing an influx of families from Haiti.

Partnered with Imagine Corp. in Shakopee with a pilot program, teaching English in the workplace to retain their employees and level them up.

Still working with Dakota County Jail.

Holding classes at Andersen Corp – communications and digital literacy

Would like to show a commercial at the next meeting that Andersen put together showing what businesses and adult education can do together, and then share with the area chambers.

Joined the Board for Basic Needs in St. Paul Park. The Board is fairly new. They're doing some rebranding and looking for corporate and business

partnerships and looking for people to support local events. They have a Thrift Store that supports their food pantry. Staff from Van Meter and Andersen are also on the Board.

*Sharon Blomgren* – Drew Hamilton will be taking Sharon's place on the Education Action Team.

The AFL-CIO through the Minnesota Jobs & Training Partnership is seeking students for a project offering clinical assistant, culinary, phlebotomy and trade classes through a Learn, Work, Earn Grant.

*Melissa McLean* – St. Paul Chamber is a part 2 recipient for the DEED Drive for Five. Our job is to find part 1 recipients who are training and upscaling people and connect them with employers.

Two events coming up – October 15, hosting 3<sup>rd</sup> annual Career Connect Day geared to high school students. New this year is a teacher resource area. The other place is Ask Me Anything for students to have a conversation with someone about their career.

Spring event will be focused on 18–24-year-olds. It will be a job fair but also available resources and community supports for housing, food, and training. There will be help for participants to make a LinkedIn profile and information on how to use AI for employment services. We are seeking people to be part of an advisory committee.

*Nicole Lindscheid* – We have a free 1-800 number for IT support, targeting veterans, senior living facilities and those that have a need for free IT help. We are also hosting an event September 23, attendees can learn about AI and how to use with Microsoft Outlook and Teams.

*Randy LaFaive* – tentatively awarded a PFAS project at a water treatment plant in Woodbury for the next 3 years will be seeking employees for the over 2,000 man power hours needed for the project.

Working with Faculty & students in LaCrosse and Glenwood City in Wisconsin – Build My Future – masons taught & helped students how to build a wall.

Recently did a presentation at Dunwoody, what the construction world looks like and are happy to present the same if there is a need in any of the school districts.

*Monica Brown* – looking to rejuvenate & revitalize the ECAD and solar programs.

*Doug Loberg* – partnered with Dakota County students go to school at our training center. Once students graduate from HVAC, we'll put them to work.

*John Burcaw* – We are a private provider of career tech education to metro area schools, charter and ALC's. We have a licensed CT teacher who has a background in special education. We charge a nominal tuition fee back to the home high school to cover some of the costs. It's two cohorts, a 15-week course 3 hours/day. Students receive 6 elective credits to apply to their home high school giving them an introduction into the trades. We emphasize on soft skills, independent living, personal development and financial literacy. We partner with some CareerForce agencies around the State who help with supports for apparel and transportation costs. Out of the last 5 semesters we've had 100% retention rate. We're designing a model to franchise to take into schools in the rural community consisting of a 3-person team of teachers and support personnel.

We received 2.5 million ear-marked to put registered pre-apprenticeship programs in the Department of Corrections and to support returning persons with an expanded care team for recovery and incarceration for a pathway to prevent and/or reduce opioid consumption and recidivism.

*Jordan Fry* – We're working with high schools helping students who want to go into the trades. Currently have a list of 500 students interested. We placed two 18-year-olds at Flint Hills Refinery from a high school group that were interested in being industrial painters. We check on the monthly and they are doing really well. It's important we support employers that are doing business the right way, paying prevailing wage, project labor agreements, paying their taxes and classifying their workers as employee

## **6. Call and Vote for Adjournment**

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