

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

Members Present

Laurie Levine	Christopher Eng	Susan Evans
Doug Loberg	Erin Kampa	Mike Yanda
Jaime Staska	Monica Brown	Nicole Lindscheid
Nina Meyer	Holly Jackson	Stan Karwoski

Action Team Members

Tom Colosimo

Guests

Opey Peñaloga	Antonio Franklin Jr.	Michael McCormick
Heather Ferguson	Michael Mullaney	

CareerForce Staff Present

Rick Roy	Tatum Heller	Deb Cunningham
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1. Meeting Called to Order & Determination of Quorum – Laurie Levine, Chair

A quorum was determined.

- Introduction of Board members & guests

Guests:

Michael McCormick – Sergeant Cottage Grove Police Dept.

Heather Ferguson – South Washington Schools, Community Ed, Adult Programs & Business Coordinator

Michael Mullaney – Director of Human Resources for South Washington Schools

Antonio Franklin, Jr. – Development Director of Basic Needs

Opey Peñaloga – Executive Director of Basic Needs

- 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 September minutes, it was seconded, (vote taken) and the Motion was approved.

2. Board Voting Item – Incentive Policy for Youth Participants (Rick Roy)

- Incentive policy for federal and state youth programs to provide incentives for youth and young adult participants who reach goals while in the program for example, attaining their GED, goals pertaining to semester school grades and for obtaining and retaining employment through the program.

A Motion was made to approve the Incentive Policy for Youth Participants; it was seconded, (vote taken) and the Motion was approved.

3. Basic Needs, Inc. Presentation on Services Provided in the County

Basic Needs provides free access to those in need, through referral services, food market, thrift shop and community services. They are a volunteer and staff supported mission focused organization. Information and upcoming events are posted on their Basic Needs website: [Basic Needs Inc.](#)

Power Point presentation was distributed to Board Members

Laurie Levine mentioned the Cottage Grove Chamber of Commerce website also has a Community Calendar with posted area events. Chamber members are welcome to share upcoming events on the calendar. Among other members the Chamber consists of 23 non-profit organizations.

4. Epimonia Presentation on Transportation Services Provided in the Metro

The presenter was unable to attend today.

5. Action Team Discussions

- Considering On-Line Meetings to Increase Participation – after discussion, consensus is to hold Action Team meetings via hybrid for now to accommodate members availability, hoping to increase attendance. Woodbury Service Center only has the upper conference room set up for hybrid. The Business Engagement Action Team & the Oversight Team will utilize that.

Education and Community Teams have been meeting together. Possible locations that were mentioned are Cottage Grove Chamber of Commerce Board Room, Cottage Grove City Hall, South Washington County Schools Community Education Building.

- Business Engagement Action Team (Chris Eng) – Rick & Chris meet with area chambers every two weeks discussing what's going on in the County, business opportunities, chamber events and workforce development. World Café Roundtable events were created coming out of the pandemic to educate and assist businesses with resources. Three events are set to be held in 2025.

The Team sees a need to have a better connection between schools, businesses, chambers and workforce development. They will be working on inviting career pathway program coordinators, school superintendents, businesses and chambers together in early 2025 to start a conversation about what each is doing. There are a lot of variations of programs out there. It would be beneficial to connect and collaborate so we can align and all partner to help students be aware of opportunities.

Going forward, we'll be discussing transportation again as the Gold Line is now complete. Buses are currently doing practice routes. Service is set to begin in March. We'll be talking about how we can engage businesses along the Gold Line and what opportunities will be available. A circulator service starting in 2025 run by Metro Transit will be making stops within a several-mile area in Woodbury. It will be connected with the Gold Line.

Barbara Bursack gave a presentation to the Business Engagement Action Team in November on the anticipated changes and opportunities for the expansion of the Gold Line. Barbara will present at the March full board meeting to share updates with the Gold Line opening in March. We should invite her to table at a World Café event.

- Community Engagement Action Team (Mike Yanda) – The Community and Education Teams had a combined meeting in November. There is a great deal of crossover between the two teams. A couple of the members present are employers. There was a lot of great sharing of resources, ideas and how to connect and collaborate. Going forward, the teams may continue to meet together.
- Education Engagement Action Team (Susie Evans) – Agreed there has been a lot of good conversations, networking and sharing of resources.

6. Board Members and Guest Updates

Laurie Levine – Laurie & her daughter went through the Cottage Grove Citizens Academy in October. The city stopped offering it during CoVid and just recently brought it back. It was great personally and professionally. Through the classes, we met a lot of people and learned about numerous resources available and things to share with the businesses and non-profits I work with in my role with the Chamber. In 2025 we're partnering with all three cities (Cottage Grove, Newport and St. Paul Park) to begin a Chamber Cities Academy. Monthly meetings will be held to get to know each area, what happens at the fire and police stations, city halls, and what businesses need to know. There'll be some training on business-related topics.

Commissioner Stan Karwoski – being on the Workforce Development Board, I am a member of the Minnesota Association of Workforce Development Boards. Twice a year a joint meeting is held with the Governor's Workforce Development Board. During the breakout session, discussion was around the need to have a simpler method to Career Pathways and make it simpler & clearer language to take to the legislature.

Susie Evans – Is on a legislative team for Adult Ed. We're building our platform around workforce. We would like to be able to provide education and training free to employers to help get people into jobs quicker. We'll be at the Capitol asking for 10 million to be added to the base for Adult Education to train people

to get them ready for the workforce, help getting a GED and help with basic digital literacy skills.

Holly Jackson – Our company has ramped up our focus on the Trades. We want to get into high schools to help students understand the trades, what types of jobs there are, and the education required to get those jobs, and the difference of what the income could be versus a four-year degree. We're currently partnering with Humboldt High School, doing a lot of different things but we are interested in having a presence in South Washington Schools, particularly with Park High School. East Ridge High School has said they're not interested in anything related to vocational degrees.

Jaime Staska – If there are businesses that would be interested in inviting around 10 secondary students to do a tour of their business, please reach out to me. We had started doing some tours like this previous to CoVid but haven't had many opportunities to start this up again. Many students say they have no interest in post-secondary but after a tour it ignites a spark of interest. We want to give youth a wide scope of what's out there.

Laurie Levine – This is exactly what businesses have been expressing to the Chamber, bring youth in for possibly a half day and tour their business. The Chamber can be that connection and help make that introduction.

7. Call and Vote for Adjournment

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