

MINUTES
SOUTHWEST MINNESOTA WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT BOARD
AUGUST 6, 2020
VIA ZOOM MEETING
4:00 P.M.

Members Present: Len Bakken, Andy Easley, Carla Goedtke, Anne Johnson, Robyn Leese, Melissa McGinty-Thompson, Tim Paulson, Brad Vaughn, Diana Anderson, Bruce Bergeson, Tim Jones, See Moua-Leske, Dawn Regnier, Miguel Rivas, Mimi Schafer, Dawn Schnell, Beth Wilms, Reggie Worlds

Members Excused: John Roiger, Terry Gaalswyk, Nathalie Nkasharma

Members Absent: Kirby Kruse, Curtis Rethwisch, Dave Rogers, Jeffrey Varcoe, Eric Austin, Chuck Swanson

Staff Present: Carrie Bendix, Eriann Faris, Luke Greiner, Jessica Miller

Len Bakken, Vice Chair called the meeting to order at 4:00 p.m.

Welcome & Introductions

Len Bakken welcomed all guests, members and staff. He explained the process used for conducting the ZOOM meeting and the process for taking role call for the motions.

Len introduced Bruce Bergeson, Director of the Minnesota River Valley Career and Technical Education Collaborative. Bruce noted that he dedicated his career to K-12 education as a teacher and principal and is now the Career and Technical Education (CTE) Director for the Minnesota River Valley CTE Collaborative. He works with schools, businesses and agency partnership that provides CTE experiences to students and connects them to their careers. Bruce replaces Rhonda Brandt as a Secondary Education Representative.

Agenda Additions

Len Bakken asked if there were any additions to the agenda. Hearing no additional agenda items a motion was made by Brad Vaughn to approve the agenda as presented. The motion was seconded by See Moua-Leske and passed.

Member Updates

Len Bakken reported that the company he works for - Prime Pork is undergoing a name change and branding change to Hylife Foods of Windom.

Bruce Bergeson reported that he, Luke Greiner, Renae Jenniges, Youth Career Pathways Navigator for the Southwest Minnesota Private Industry Council and Nichole Zemple of Minnesota West Community and Technical College would be hosting a workshop on August 19, 2020. The workshop will highlight workforce trends found in students today, tips and tricks for working with students, and opportunities for local employers to engage with local students and schools. Bruce indicated that he sent a flyer about the workshop to all members prior to the meeting.

Southwest Minnesota's Economic Insights – Economic Fall and Rebound – Luke Greiner, DEED Regional Analyst, Central & Southwest Minnesota

Luke Greiner shared information on economic insights and the fall and rebound of the economy. He noted that the employment levels dropped to 2010 levels, but are currently back to 2014 levels. Luke noted that recent data from the state appears to be very optimistic.

Luke also compared current employment statistics back to the 1970's. He noted that the unemployment rate peaked to almost 9.5% in May of 2020, to 8.5% in June of 2020. He also noted that since February employment has dropped by 125,033 jobs. Luke also shared information on unemployment claims in Minnesota; the breakout by industry; the breakout by county of unemployment claims; demographic of applicants; educational attainment of applicants; employment trends; and the impact of broadband.

Regional Workforce Update, Themes & Resources – Jessica Miller, DEED Workforce Strategy Consultant – South Central/Southwest

Jessica Miller shared information she is hearing from employers in response to COVID. Some of the things employers are doing include staggered shifts; increased sanitizing between shifts including fogging techniques; moving to four 10 hour days; switching shifts between working from home and working in the office; and reduced hours. She also reported that almost all employers are requiring masks/face shields; conducting wellness checks at home or onsite; providing safety education; implementation of increased hand washing stations; providing more accommodations to employees including flexible schedules and accommodating daycare issues. Jessica also noted that workloads are drastically different while some employers are downsizing others are hiring.

Jessica noted that the good news is employers are getting creative; thinking outside the box with broadband; changing product lines; developing collaboratives– sharing of employees; accessing on-line training opportunities; investing in their employees to accommodate their needs; and being flexible.

Jessica reported on resources to help employers that can be found on careerforcemn.com website including the Workforce Optimization Cycle. She noted that the “Hidden Bias in the Workforce Series” would be released shortly. Jessica briefly reported on Coursera – an online training resource. She also mentioned that employers are finding it hard to entice workers back to the workplace when competing with the supplement \$600 a week in enhanced unemployment.

Partner Updates

Reggie Worlds – Job Service

Reggie Worlds reported that staff continue to serve customers virtually by reviewing resumes and providing job search assistance. He noted that there has been an increase in job listings on MN Works. Reggie also reported that staff are working on a virtual presentation to Chamber. He also noted that CareerForce staff are conducting virtual job search classes and invites have been sent out to 10,000+ unemployed Minnesotans to participate in virtual job search classes. Reggie also noted that the State is going through the final stages of the return to work plan and that he continues to work with Carrie on the safety plan. He noted he remains hopeful we will be able to reopen in the near future.

Mimi Schafer – Rehabilitation Services

Mimi Schafer reported staff continue to work from home and provide remote services. She indicated that their Department has been instructed to work remotely whenever possible through the end of the year – maybe longer but they may go into the CareerForce office to work, as needed. No specific date has been set beyond that. She noted that initially many of their customers wanted to put their job search on hold, but now some are ready to return to job search activities.

Committee Reports

Executive Committee – Len Bakken

Len Bakken, Vice Chair reported that the Executive Committee discussed the meeting schedule and a report from the Nominating Committee.

Youth Committee – Eriann Faris/New Committee Chair

Eriann Faris reported that the Youth Committee met and discussed the election of a new Chair, due to the resignation of Rhonda Brandt. She noted that according to WIOA Law, only certain positions on the Workforce Development Board are eligible to be elected Chair of the Youth Committee. Those eligible members include Bruce Bergeson, See Moua-Leske, Anne Johnson and Kirby Kruse. Eriann reported that the committee agreed to table this item until their next meeting in November.

Next Eriann shared that the Perkins Plan was approved with very little changes having to be made. There is a new application that schools will have to complete. The updates in the application collect information regarding high wage, high demand areas to help schools decide what request to make. Eriann noted that the Minnesota West Consortium's Programs of Study, as well as the priorities that were identified through the Comprehensive Local Needs Assessment include: Accounting; Administrative Support, Marketing Management, Animal Systems; Plant Systems; Plant Systems; Network Systems; Programming & Software Development; Construction; Facility & Mobile Maintenance; Production; Teaching and Training; and Hospitality and Tourism. She noted that Luke Greiner developed a tool for teachers to use to focus on these thirteen occupations. The Perkins plan also addresses student organizations and exposing teachers to industry through internships, and encouraging school districts to share resources, such as teachers, courses, software and equipment.

Career Pathways Committee – Dawn Regnier

Dawn Regnier reported that the Career Pathways Committee has been active over the summer. The Community Interpreter and CNA summer sessions have been up and running over the summer and will soon be wrapping up. She noted that the Committee met yesterday and discussed the classes to be held this Fall and focusing on delivering programs in all the areas of our service area including Worthington, Marshall and the Granite Falls/Montevideo areas.

Marketing Committee – Brad Vaughn

Brad Vaughn reported that the Committee's last meeting was on June 4, 2020. The Committee focused on the Social Media campaign – including getting out the updated logo and the Southwest Minnesota Workforce Development Board video. The Committee had hoped to reach out to the local Chambers to provide a presentation on the Southwest Minnesota Careers Facebook Page and the resources available, but due to COVID-19 that has been delayed. The first virtual presentation will be held with the Windom/Mountain Lake Area Chamber on August 19, 2020. Eriann Faris shared the Southwest Minnesota Workforce Development Board video, as well as, some of the Board Member Profiles. The Committee will be meeting in September.

Business Items/Action Items

Consent Agenda Items

Len Bakken reported that the items listed under the consent agenda include: SW MN Workforce Development Board Meeting Minutes – June 4, 2020; the Executive Committee Minutes – June 4, 2020; the Marketing Committee Minutes – June 4, 2020; and the Southwest Minnesota Private Industry Council Report

A motion was Carla Goedtke to approve the Consent Agenda. The motion was seconded by Andy Easley.

Len Bakken, Vice Chair indicated that the motion would be moved to the end of the agenda for a roll call vote.

2020/2021 Meeting Schedule Approval – Bi-Monthly

Len Bakken reported that the proposed meeting schedule for Program Year 2020 is the first Thursday of selected months from 4:00 p.m. to 6:00 p.m. The proposed meeting dates are:

- August 6, 2020
- October 1, 2020
- December 3, 2020
- February 4, 2021
- April 1, 2021
- June 3, 2021
- August 5, 2021

A motion was made by Tim Paulson to approve the 2020/2021 Meeting Schedule as presented. Reggie Worlds seconded the motion.

Len Bakken, Vice Chair indicated that the motion would be moved to the end of the agenda for a roll call vote.

Board Member's Confidentiality and Conflict of Interest Policy Documents

Len Bakken noted that each year Board Members are asked to review the Confidentiality & Conflict of Interest Polices and sign off on the Confidentiality and Conflict of Interest Policies and submit the form to Wanda Hebrank at the PIC Admin Office via fax (507-537-6362), e-mail (whebrank@swmnpic.org), or mail (607 W. Main Street, Marshall, MN 56258).

Len Bakken, Vice Chair indicated that the motion would be moved to the end of the agenda for a roll call vote.

Election of Officers – Nominating Committee – Dawn Regnier, Chair

Dawn Regnier, Chair of the Nominating Committee along with Dawn Schnell and Robyn Leese presented the following slate of candidates:

Len Bakken – Chair;
Carla Goedtke – Vice Chair;
Robyn Leese – Secretary;
Jeff Varcoe – At-Large Representative;
Tim Paulson – At-Large Representative

Vice Chair, Len Bakken called for other nominations for the positions of: Chair; Vice-Chair; Secretary; and two At-Large Representatives.

A motion was made by Diana Anderson to cease nominations and to cast a unanimous ballot for the slate of candidates. See Moua-Leske seconded the motion.

Len Bakken, Vice Chair indicated that the motion would be moved to the end of the agenda for a roll call vote.

US Bank Foundation (Marshall) - Youth Grant - \$21,834

Carrie Bendix reported that the US Bank Foundation invited the PIC to submit a proposal requesting \$25,000 in funding again this year to support the activities of the Youth Career Pathways Navigator Positions. US Bank Foundation granted the PIC \$22,000.

A motion was made by Anne Johnson to accept the \$22,000 from the US Bank Foundation. Melissa McGinty-Thompson seconded the motion.

Len Bakken, Vice Chair indicated that the motion would be moved to the end of the agenda for a roll call vote.

Career Academies Grant from the Southwest Initiative Foundation and Greater Twin Cities United Way - \$100,000 Grant

Carrie Bendix and Eriann Faris reported that the PIC has received \$100,000 for two years from the Southwest Initiative Foundation as part of the Greater Twin Cities United Way Career Academies grant.

The project will provide work-based learning opportunities to students enrolled in Jackson County Central, Windom Area Schools and Worthington Area Schools in partnership with three champion employers, the Southwest Minnesota Private Industry Council (PIC), Greater Twin Cities United Way, Southwest Initiative Foundation and LYFT funds through the SW/WC Service Cooperative. The funds support the activities of a new position with the PIC, the Work and Learn Coordinator. The Coordinator will provide school-to-career intermediary services, serving as a single point of contact for employers and schools, encouraging a sequential, purposeful continuum of Career Awareness, Career Exploration and Career Preparation and Skills Training activities and be available to all students.

A motion was made by Tim Paulson to accept the \$100,000 from the Southwest Initiative Foundation as part of the Greater Twin Cities United Way Career Academics grant. Bruce Bergeson seconded the motion.

Len Bakken, Vice Chair indicated that the motion would be moved to the end of the agenda for a roll call vote.

LYFT Funding – SW/WC Service Cooperative - \$50,000 Grant

Eriann Faris reported that the PIC has also received \$50,000 for two years in LYFT funds from the SW/WC Service Cooperative to support the activities of the new position and the Youth Career Navigators with the PIC, as previously discussed.

A motion was made by Dawn Schnell to accept the \$50,000 in LYFT funds. Reggie Worlds seconded the motion.

Len Bakken, Vice Chair indicated that the motion would be moved to the end of the agenda for a roll call vote.

National Disability Grant Opportunity

Carrie Bendix reported that Citibank has committed \$1,000,000 to be responsive to needs identified within the disability community because of COVID-19. These funds were dispersed through the National Disability Institute to select organizations serving people with disabilities across the country through an invite-only grant application. The PIC was invited, applied and received \$25,000.

A motion was made by Brad Vaughn to accept \$25,000 in National Disability Grant funds. Tim Paulson seconded the motion.

Len Bakken, Vice Chair indicated that the motion would be moved to the end of the agenda for a roll call vote.

SNAP Employment & Training 100% Fund Additional Allocation

Carrie Bendix reported that the PIC received an additional allocation of \$21,122 from DHS to provide SNAP E&T services out of the 100% Fund. She noted we were out of SNAP E&T funds, so this is a needed resource.

A motion was made Anne Johnson to accept \$21,122 from DHS in SNAP E&T funds. Bruce Bergeson seconded the motion.

Len Bakken, Vice Chair indicated that the motion would be moved to the end of the agenda for a roll call vote.

SNAP E&T Monitoring Report

Carrie Bendix reviewed the highlights of the SNAP E&T Monitoring Report. She reported that the State was pleased with the services being provided and that no corrective actions were found. The report did include a recommendation on aligning activities on Workforce One. Carrie reported that a training is being planned for staff to address this recommendation.

A motion was made by Carla Goedtke to accept the SNAP E&T Monitoring Report. Tim Paulson seconded the motion.

Len Bakken, Vice Chair indicated that the motion would be moved to the end of the agenda for a roll call vote.

Roll Call Vote

Election of Officers

Carrie Bendix conducted a roll call vote for the following Officers.

Len Bakken – Chair; Carla Goedtke – Vice Chair; Robyn Leese – Secretary;
Jeff Varcoe – At-Large Representative; Tim Paulson – At-Large Representative

Andy Easley, Len Bakken, Carla Goedtke, Anne Johnson, Robyn Leese, Melissa McGinty-Thompson, Tim Paulson, Brad Vaughn, Diana Anderson, Bruce Bergeson, Tim Jones, See Moua-Leske, Dawn Regnier, Miguel Rivas, Dawn Schnell, Beth Wilms and Reggie Worlds cast a unanimous ballot for the officers nominated - all joining via ZOOM.

As one of the duties of the newly elected Chair, Len Bakken indicated that he would be appointing Dawn Schnell to serve on the Executive Committee.

Other Agenda Action Items Including:

Carrie Bendix conducted a roll call vote for the following Action Items:

- the Consent Agenda items
- the 2020/2021 Meeting Schedule to be the first Thursday of selected months from 4:00 to 6:00 p.m.
- the Confidentiality and Conflict of Interest Policy for Board Members
- to accept the \$22,000 from the US Bank Foundation to support the work of the Regional Work and Learn Coordinator/Navigator Position

- to accept the \$100,000 over two years from the Southwest Initiative Foundation as part of the Greater Twin Cities United Way Career Academies Grant
- to accept the \$50,000 for two years from LYFT funding through the SW/WC Service Cooperative
- to accept the \$25,000 from the National Disability Institute for to serve people with disabilities struggling due to COVID-19.
- to accept the \$21,122 in additional SNAP E&T funds
- to accept the SNAP E&T Monitoring report

Andy Easley, Len Bakken, Carla Goedtke, Anne Johnson, Robyn Leese, Melissa McGinty-Thompson, Tim Paulson, Brad Vaughn, Diana Anderson, Bruce Bergeson, Tim Jones, See Moua-Leske, Dawn Regnier, Miguel Rivas, Dawn Schnell, Beth Wilms and Reggie Worlds unanimously passed the other action items - all joining via ZOOM.

Informational Items

Resignation of John Roiger

Carrie Bendix reported that John Roiger is making some changes in his life and has decided to resign from the Southwest Minnesota Workforce Development Board, and has requested no gifts or special recognition. She reported that John has served on the board for over 30 years. Carrie suggested that members who wanted to could send him a thank you note for his service and leadership on the Board. John has been very instrumental in moving through all the changes and will be greatly missed. She noted that John indicated he resigned from two other boards, but will continue to serve on the Southwest Minnesota Private Industry Council Board of Directors.

Resignation of Dawn Regnier

Carrie Bendix reported that Dawn Regnier would also be resigning from the Southwest Minnesota Workforce Development Board. Dawn has been very active with the Career Pathways programing with the PIC and ABE. Carrie indicated that she has been an amazing leader, partner and friend and that she will be greatly missed. In appreciation, Carrie presented Dawn with a “Word Cloud” with words from staff, partners, and Board Members that describe Dawn.

Director Updates

Workforce Development Board Vacancies

Carrie Bendix reported that she will be working on filling the two vacancies on the board including an Education Representative and a Lac qui Parle County Private Sector Representative.

Reopening CareerForce Locations

Carrie Bendix reported that staff are still providing virtual services and collaborating with DEED on safe reopening plan.

Coursera

Carrie Bendix reported that the Coursera initiative is a new opportunity the Governor's Workforce Development Board has been working on to provide any Minnesotan with free access to over 4,000 courses on the mobile-friendly Coursera platform. The learners will also receive a Certificate for completing the course. The deadline to activate an account to learn for free is December 31, 2020 and the training initiative will end on March 31, 2021. To sign up go to: www.CareerForceMN.com/Coursera Carrie reported that as of August 4, 2020, over 12,000 Minnesotans have requested access and about half have enrolled in one or more courses with 700 having completed one or more courses. Top courses included Excel, IT Support, Programing, Project Management, Digital Marketing and HR.

Dislocated Worker Zoom Training Sessions

Tim Jones reported that staff are holding virtual overview classes on the Dislocated Worker Programs. He indicated that people who have been laid off and are receiving unemployment benefits might be eligible for customized employment and training services through the Dislocated Worker program to help prepare them for their next job. He indicated this could include funding for post-secondary schooling for in-demand careers like nursing, IT and mechanics/machine maintenance programs, or funding for short-term training certificates such as CNA, welding, commercial driver's license. Tim also indicated that services are available to help people find the right work for them as quickly as possible. Job search assistance, resume-writing help, interview prep, networking advice and other services are available.

Tim reported that in addition to the 10,000+ invites sent out statewide, staff have sent Press Releases to the local newspapers. He indicated that the first overview was held today with four individuals participating, but he is hoping as the word gets out and the \$600 enhanced unemployment ends more people we be signing up. People interested can register online at www.careerforcemn.com.

Important Dates

Executive Committee – October 1, 2020 – 3:00 p.m.

Workforce Development Board Meeting – October 1, 2020 – 4:00–6:00 p.m.

Adjourn

The next meeting will be held on October 1, 2020 from 4:00 – 6:00 p.m. Hearing no other business, the meeting adjourned at 5:52 p.m.

Approved by:

Approved by:

Robyn Leese, Secretary

Wanda Hebrank, Recording Secretary