

**MINUTES  
JOINT BOARD MEETING  
OCTOBER 6, 2025  
4:00 P.M. – 6:30 P.M.  
ITERRO LIFE SCIENCES  
BALATON, MN**

Members Present: Andy Easley, Beth Van Hove, John Roiger, Lisa Graphenteen, Ron Antony, Anne Johnson, Brad Vaughn, Bruce Bergeson, Carla Goedtke, Dawn Schnell, Hilary DeVlaeminck, Kristen Gloege, Marly Wagner, Mary Shumski, See Moua-Leske, Scott Marquardt, Terry Gaalswyk, Tim Jones, Thomas Andries, David Lieser, Mark Carlson, Don Wachal, Rick Wakefield, Chad Zimmer, Jody Reisch, Wayne Maras

Members Excused: Juanita Lauritsen, Gary Hendrickx, Melissa McGinty-Thompson, Jacque Peters, Vince Robinson, Mimi Schafer, Lori Wynia, Doug Nagel, Joe Drietz, Larry Mahoney, DeRon Brehmer

Staff Present: Carrie Bendix, Tim Jones, Maria Peters, Pam Russell, Amy Khamphanh, Krista Nelson, Jenna Weyer, Sandy Demuth

Ron Antony called the meeting to order at 4:00 p.m.

**Agenda Additions and Approval**

Ron Antony asked if there were any additional items to be added to the agenda. A motion was made by Commissioner Wachal to approve the agenda as presented. Commissioner Maras seconded the motion and passed unanimously.

**Success Story – Alfred Rivera and Sandy Demuth**

Alfred Rivera talked about his journey of returning to school with help from the State Dislocated Worker Program. He expressed his gratitude for Sandy Demuth and the SW MN Private Industry Council for all of the support he received, which included purchasing tools for his class. He said the program helped him and can help a lot of people in similar situations.

**Kelly Asche – Center for Rural Policy and Development**

Kelly Asche from the Center for Rural Policy & Development presented on Minnesota's current economic standing and the growing challenge of labor shortages caused by an aging population, declining birth rates, and stagnant in-migration. He shared data showing that rural areas, including those in Southwest Minnesota, are experiencing decreased labor force participation and population shifts influenced by migration trends, with future growth expected to rely almost entirely on in-migration. Asche outlined that economic development strategies must shift toward resident recruitment and retention, improving quality of life, engaging high school students, and strengthening community welcoming efforts. He also discussed broader demographic and economic trends across rural Minnesota,

such as rising job vacancies, wage and cost-of-living dynamics, housing shortages, and increasing diversity, reinforcing the need for coordinated, long-term strategies to attract and retain workers and families in the region.

### **Joint Powers Board Members – Commissioner Dave Lieser, Chair**

Commissioner Lieser, Chair of the Chief Elected Officials Board (CEOB), explained the purpose and importance of the CEOB. Commissioner Lieser reported that Kirsten Gloege and Mary Shumski have been nominated to be appointed to the Southwest Minnesota Workforce Development Board as the Public Assistance Agency representative and the Wagner-Peyser Job Service representative. Commissioner Andries made a motion to approve the request to appoint Kirsten Gloege as the Public Assistance Agency representative and Mary Shumski as the Wagner-Peyser Job Service representative to the Southwest Minnesota Workforce Development Board. Commissioner Antony seconded the motion and passed unanimously.

### **Southwest Minnesota Workforce Development Board – Carla Goedke**

#### **Looking Back with Gratitude**

Carla Goedke, Chair of the Southwest Minnesota Workforce Development Board, spoke about the importance of the Workforce Development Board and the Southwest Minnesota Private Industry Council and how obtaining stackable credentials lead to sustainable careers. Carla also spoke about the impact of the Youth Committee and anticipates having another intern from Murray County graduate soon.

#### **Elections of Officers and Executive Committee Members – Nominating Committee**

Andy Easley of the Nominating Committee presented nominations for the 2025-2026 Executive Board.

- Carla Goedke, Chair
- Andy Easley, Vice Chair
- Vince Robinson, Secretary
- Brad Vaughn, Member at Large
- Melissa McGinty-Thompson, Member at Large

#### **Chair Appointed Members for the new year: See Moua-Leske and Hilary DeVlaeminck**

Terry Gaalswyk made a motion to close nominations. The motion was seconded by Scott Marquardt and passed unanimously.

### **Southwest Minnesota Private Industry Council Annual Report**

**Youth Programs** – Youth Program Manager Maria Peters shared a success story featuring Derek Dahlberg, who completed 320 hours as a utility worker through the Work Experience Program and

highlighted the skills and insights he gained during his placement. She also reported that Youth Employment Specialists and Career Connectors have engaged with more than 5,000 students, served 30 school districts and partnered with 230 businesses across southwest Minnesota. Additionally, Maria noted that the Summer Internship Program placed 15 students in Nobles County, 8 students in Murray County, and 4 students in Swift County, allowing them to earn money while gaining valuable work experience in their field of study during summer break.

Adult and Career Pathways Programs – Tim Jones reported that the Dislocated Worker Program achieved an 87% success rate in the last year, serving 111 people with an average wage of \$29.76 per hour. Tim highlighted that the Incumbent Worker Training Program had 55 participants, which is more than in the past 40 years. Tim also shared that the SW MN Private Industry Council received a Best Promising Practice award from the Minnesota Association of Workforce Boards in August for the 10-credit electrician program developed last winter in partnership with Adult Basic Education, Minnesota West, and the Lower Sioux Community. Tim concluded that participants have trained in a variety of career fields over the past year, with most finding employment within the 14-county service area.

Public Assistance Programs – Amy Khamphanh, Public Assistance Program Manager since February 2025 following the retirement of Mary Mulder, recognized the work done by Mary during her 40 years of service. Amy reported on the Diversionary Work Program and MFIP, which requires participants to work with a counselor to secure employment, enroll in training, or participate in GED/ESL coursework. The Public Assistance team also provides the employment services component for Minnesota's SNAP program, which is voluntary and based on county referrals. Amy also highlighted the Refugee Program, which is the first employment services provider for refugees. Due to changes under the new federal administration and fewer new refugee arrivals, the program has shifted from serving primarily new arrivals to supporting refugees who have lived in the U.S. for up to five years, helping them access improved training and career opportunities. The program has so far served a total of 44 participants.

Success Story – Veronica Nuno shared her story and the support she received from Amy Khamphanh and the Southwest Minnesota Private Industry Council during a difficult period in her life. With their guidance, she secured full-time employment as a paraprofessional and later pursued her dream of working in real estate. Through the Paid Work Experience Program, she joined a real estate office and earned a permanent position. Veronica has since secured her own apartment and is no longer on Public Assistance.

Fueling Our Futures – Carrie Bendix, Executive Director of the Southwest Minnesota Private Industry Council, reflected on the organization's commitment to building an innovative community through partnership, highlighting a strong fiscal year with total revenues reaching \$4.5 million due largely to the state's historic investment in workforce development. She outlined three core priorities driving their work: supporting high school students, building a skilled workforce, and serving employers. Carrie pointed out that 38% of Southwest Minnesota high school graduates attend college outside the state, reinforcing the need to promote local opportunities. She concluded by reaffirming that while many things evolve, one thing never changes: the shared commitment to the people and communities of Southwest Minnesota.

**Closing Remarks and Adjournment**

Ron Antony took a moment to explain the three different Boards under the Southwest Minnesota Private Industry Council including the Chief Elected Officials Board, the Southwest Minnesota Workforce Development Board, and the Southwest Minnesota Private Industry Council Board of Directors. Ron ended with recognizing former staff members who were present at the meeting as well as retiring board member John Roiger.

Hearing no other business, the meeting adjourned.

Approved by:



Vince Robinson, Secretary

Approved by:



Carrie Bendix, Recording Secretary