



## Bay Area Workforce Development Board

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### MINUTES

#### BAY AREA WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT BOARD

Thursday, September 17, 2020

**Present:** Michael Troyer (Chair), Brad Nye, Brian Schauf, Cheryl Detrick, Cheri Galecke, Chris Matheny, Chuck Dallas, Claudia Krepsky, Dan Keyzers, Deborah Buckley, Dustin Delsman, Ed Kelley, Gerry Schomaker, Guy Meyerhofer, Kris Chosa, Loretta Shellman, Matt Rentmeester, Mercedes Schuchardt, Meridith Jaeger, Mike Ruminski, Paul Carlsen, Penny Helmle, Ron Christensen, Ron Kadlubowski, Shirley Aviles, Steve Heller, Steve Jenkins, Tara Carr, Tim Beno, Wendy Dzurick, Will Robinson

**Absent:** Aaron Augustian, Ann Schermetzler, Brian Pelon, Bruce Russell, Heather Martin, Jennifer Bscherer, Kim Holmes, Marcia Christiansen, Myrna Warrington, Robert Pontius, Shelly Ghere

Dr. Troyer called the virtual meeting to order at 1:00 PM. Roll call showed a quorum present. New members Gerry Schomaker from Laborers Local 300 and Steve Jenkins from Door County Economic Development Corporation were introduced. New member Bruce Russell was unable to attend. Mr. Russell is a retired high school principal who owns FocalPoint Business Coaching in Oconto Falls.

Minutes of the February 20, 2020 Bay Area WDB meeting were adopted as submitted on a motion by Mr. Meyerhofer and a second from Mr. Rentmeester. Members also reviewed the Minutes of the Executive Committee meeting on May 28, 2020 at which the Executive Committee 1) elected new board officers, 2) approved corporate and program budgets for PY 2020, 3) authorized extension of existing subrecipient agreements (formerly called “contracts”) for PY 2020 with the exception of terminating the LETC agreement for the Menasha job center effective August 31, 2020, 4) approved the PY 2019 Memorandum of Understanding with job center partners, and 5) approved the PY 2020-2023 WIOA Local Plan for submission to DWD. Motion to endorse the actions of the Executive Committee and approve the Minutes of the meeting as submitted was made by Mr. Dallas with a second from Mr. Beno. Motion was unanimously adopted.

Mr. Golembeski provided a report on current workforce issues. He admitted that many of his predictions were wrong. He had anticipated that the end of the federal unemployment subsidy at the end of July would result in an increase in both permanent business closings and in the number of workers permanently separated from previous employment. Neither has happened. With job centers closed for the foreseeable future, it is hard to gauge some of the effects, but Wisconsin’s unemployment rate has steadily declined from its height in April of close to 14% to 8.4% in July. [Note: It has further declined to 6.2% in August.] The initial “Drive Through Job

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Fair” in Green Bay on July 15 had over 400 people come to the Riverside Ballroom to pick up packets with information from area employers. During the peak of unemployment connected to the coronavirus in April, women and workers with only high school educations were affected in greatest numbers. However, as of September 16, 2020, there were 10,244 job orders on Job Center of Wisconsin for the NE section of the state. He also noted that despite the effects of the pandemic, the underlying demographics of our workforce have not changed. In fact, the pandemic may have accelerated the Baby Boomer exit from the workforce. He noted evidence that traditional job center services are not valued by Millennials and Gen X who make up the bulk of the current workforce. Many challenges remain to match worker skills with employer needs.

Members reviewed updates to several board policies. The Training Policy was updated because the Eligible Training Provider List (ETPL), which was formerly locally driven, is now centralized for the state with DWD. Motion to approve the updated policy made by Mr. Ruminski with a second from Ms. Krepsky. Motion was unanimously adopted.

The Bay Area WDB Procurement Policy was also updated to include appropriate language from the new federal Uniform Guidance standards. It also allows for a third year subrecipient agreement extension at the board’s discretion. In addition, Staff had developed a Reasonable Accommodation Policy to specify the board’s responsibility to provide adaptations to the work environment that an employee might require providing it did not cause “undue hardship.” Motion to approve both policies was made by Mr. Kelley with a second from Ms. Detrick. Motion was unanimously adopted.

Staff did not have an updated budget report. Final service agreements were still being developed for October 1 with subrecipient agencies and these would stay in line with the budget approvals made by the Executive Committee on May 28, 2020. Mr. Golembeski noted that DOL had just announced a \$5 million grant for DWD that will come down to the workforce boards, but details were not yet known. Congress continues to consider new stimulus bills as well. Staff will put the WIOA program services in place as effectively as possible given what is known.

Mr. Dallas reported that the seven-member Executive Search Committee, which included five board members and two representatives from the counties, had interviewed four people and recommended that Matt Valiquette be named to succeed Mr. Golembeski as Executive Director of Bay Area WDB when he retires at the end of the calendar year. A formal approval of the recommendation will be on the October board agenda, but there was consensus to approve the recommendation.

Mr. Valiquette informed the board that he had submitted the PY 2020 Job Center Memorandum of Understanding and Resource Sharing Agreement to DWD for review. Those documents will be brought to Bay Area WDB for formal approval in October. He also stated his intention to conduct One-Stop-Operator (OSO) procurement for PY 2021. [Note: DWD had originally insisted Bay Area WDB procure OSO for PY 2020 in the PY 2019 monitoring report, but recently admitted their error in making that Finding.]

Mr. Golembeski explained to the members that he had recently responded to DWD once again regarding the unresolved PY 2019 monitoring Findings. He indicated his confidence that remaining issues could be resolved soon.

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Dr. Troyer reviewed the Bay Area WDB Strategic Plan that has been in the works since last fall. The Plan articulates seven strategic objectives and several action steps for each one. Mr. Golembeski commented that the Plan reminds him of the NEW Economic Opportunity Study that the board co-financed in 2004 that resulted in several overall objectives and 98 action steps for the region. Over the ensuing years, NEW North was formed and successfully implemented many of the action steps. Mr. Dallas suggested that the board appoint an *ad hoc* Strategic Plan Committee to prioritize and develop implementation plans. He suggested that county officials, staff, and service provider agency representatives be included along with board members on the committee. There was consensus to move ahead with this and Mr. Golembeski will begin recruiting members soon.

Mr. Valiquette provided a graph and a chart to illustrate the current WIOA program delivery system in Bay Area. He noted that a succession of double-digit WIOA budget cuts have been a challenge to providing these vital services in a large geographical area. He also complimented our service providers on the quality of the work they are doing. Another chart showed service levels across the WIOA partner programs.

Several board members provided insights into workforce issues in their sectors of the economy. Mr. Rentmeester, from Bellin college of Nursing, indicated that the initial impact of COVID-19 on the healthcare industry was devastating and resulted in furloughs and lost revenue. At this time, nurses and nursing assistants are in high demand and Bellin College graduates are finding positions quickly. Retirements of skilled healthcare professionals continue to be a present challenge and future concern.

Cheryl Detrick, Executive Director of NEWCAP, spoke about the real challenge of providing rental assistance to vulnerable families in NE Wisconsin. Through a statewide CARES Act grant, NEWCAP is spending \$30,000 per day on rental assistance to keep people from becoming homeless. This grant ends at the end of October however. Many receiving services have never required assistance before and are confused and struggling. Unemployment due to the pandemic continues. Families are struggling with children now being schooled at home. Another serious challenge is the lack of broadband Internet connection in the northern and rural areas. This prevents people from accessing many needed services.

Cheri Galecke, Human Resources Director at DeLeers Construction, spoke about her important industry sector. There is a serious need for skilled workers such as finish carpenters. The demand for entry level workers has slowed, but the retirement of very experienced Baby Boomers is hurting the industry. There are several large construction projects in the area and residential work is picking up with more people working from home. The new preference for virtual work is also increasing the demand for residential renovations in northern and rural areas.

Dustin Delsman, Business Agent for Plumbers and Steamfitters Local 400, indicated that members of his trade association continue to be in high demand. His union has about 2,000 members and there are currently about 250 workers from outside the area working on some of the large projects in NEW North. The retirement of experienced members is a concern as well and even though Local 400 has experienced an uptick in new recruits in recent months, it is difficult to replace that level of knowledge and experience. Despite the need, union training continues to be rigorous and Youth Apprenticeship is a major source of recruitment and training.

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Shirley Aviles, UMOS Manager of Farmworker programs, spoke about the toll the pandemic is taking on so many people, especially the most vulnerable workers such as the migrant community. Children are particularly affected. Mental health issues, suicide, and domestic violence are increasing. Worker shortages have resulted in lost crops in the state, and many farmers are struggling with all the challenges they are currently facing. Ms. Detrick added that NEWCAP has five counselors in Brown County with Project Recovery to deal with these same mental health and family issues.

Claudia Krepsky, Senior Recruiter at Kohler Co., shared her craziness with the group as well. She now has responsibility for the hospitality side of the business as well as the manufacturing side. Despite having recently moved some production out of the state, production is increasing in Wisconsin and the Kohler Saukville facility is adding a second shift. Hospitality has 140 openings at this time. Electromechanical engineers are in great demand and the need for welders is starting to increase. Applications for employment are hard to come by and Kohler is using social media aggressively to reach out to people. Sheboygan County overall has a strong job market and needs workers of all skill levels.

Ron Kadlubowski, Fincantieri Program Manager, spoke about booming times at the three Fincantieri companies. Production of the LCS vessels continues through 2024 as will production of a similar ship for Saudi Arabia. Fincantieri has also been awarded the contract for almost \$6 billion to build the new frigate destroyer for the US Navy in future years. This will require at least \$200 million in facility upgrades in Marinette to accommodate the larger ship. There have been challenges with COVID at the facilities and in the supply chain, but work continues on the LCS. Hiring is robust in all areas: HVAC, welding, painting, electrical, engineering and management. The company will take on hard working, entry level recruits and provide training to them.

Mike Ruminski, Recruiting Operations Manager at Paper Transport, provided an update for the transportation industry. Tonnage had been down for several months but is now increasing. Drivers are needed and short term training is available to allow new recruits to gain good jobs quickly.

In summary, despite the challenges of the pandemic, the employment picture in NE Wisconsin remains very positive with well-paying jobs available. The underlying demographics with the Baby Boomer retirement and out-migration from Wisconsin continue to challenge companies in finding the talent needed to sustain and grow our companies.

The meeting adjourned at 2:50 PM.

**Bay Area Workforce Development Board will meet next on Thursday, October 15 at 1 PM in a virtual format.**

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