



# Bay Area Workforce Development Board

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## MINUTES

### BAY AREA WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT BOARD

Thursday, October 15, 2020

**Present:** Michael Troyer (Chair), Ann Schermetzler, Brian Pelon, Brian Schauf, Bruce Russell, Cheri Galecke, Chuck Dallas, Claudia Krepsky, Dan Keyzers, Dustin Delsman, Ed Kelley, Gerry Schomaker, Jennifer Bscherer, Kim Holmes, Loretta Shellman, Marcia Christiansen, Meridith Jaeger, Mike Ruminski, Paul Carlsen, Penny Helmle, Ron Christensen, Shirley Aviles, Tara Carr, Tim Beno, Wendy Dzurick, Will Robinson

**Absent:** Aaron Augustian, Brad Nye, Cheryl Detrick, Chris Matheny, Deborah Buckley, Guy Meyerhofer, Kris Chosa, Heather Martin, Matt Rentmeester, Mercedes Schuchardt, Myrna Warrington, Robert Pontius, Ron Kadlubowski, Shelly Ghery, Steve Heller, Steve Jenkins

Dr. Troyer called the virtual meeting to order at 1:00 PM on a Zoom meeting. Roll call showed a quorum present. Mr. Russell was introduced as a new board member. He is a retired high school principal who now provides professional business coaching services.

The Minutes of the September 17, 2020 meeting were adopted as presented on a motion by Mr. Beno and a second from Mr. Robinson.

### Executive Director Report

Mr. Golembeski provided some insights looking ahead in 2021. He noted:

1. The NEW North region has accomplished much over the last 20 years to better align educational system at all levels with the skills needed in the regional economy. Academic and Career Planning in the K-12 schools, the development of career pathways in postsecondary training, the collaboration of NEWERA, and the initiatives of NEW Manufacturing Alliance have set a firm foundation on which we can continue to build.
2. Post-COVID, job centers will have to be re-imagined. The main part of our workforce, Gen X and Millennials, will not use them much. Increasingly, the workforce will consist of people with some postsecondary education and this is not a traditional customer base. There will be groups, particularly more mature workers, but also people with barriers to employment, who will need some kind of person to person assistance. But almost everyone has a smartphone and how do we balance limited resources? What value can we add in the world of Indeed and Google Search?

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3. Even with the pandemic, there is a worker shortage in NE Wisconsin. That will intensify post-COVID. This will increase the need to focus services on marginalized groups such as the ALICE population, reentry assistance, job seekers who have experienced trauma, and others.
4. Assisting employers in attracting, hiring and retaining people with the skills they need to be successful is a priority for board strategy and service provision. Bay Area WDB has been successful, as with NEWMA, in playing the role of convener by bringing employers into the conversation to find solutions to their hiring needs. The board has also been an available resource to employers for knowledge and advice.

## **Board Business**

There were no policy updates for consideration.

Members reviewed an updated WIOA budget based on current information. There are several things still in flux for the current program year, including the reconciliation of job center infrastructure costs and several new federal funding opportunities to address the COVID pandemic. Staff will also be restructuring with Mr. Golembeski's retirement on January 1. Motion to approve the amended WIOA budget for PY 2020 was made by Mr. Beno with a second from Mr. Schomaker. Motion was unanimously adopted with Ms. Christiansen abstaining.

The Executive Search Committee recommended hiring Matthew Valiquette as the Bay Area WDB Executive Director effective January 1, 2021. Motion to approve that recommendation was made by Dr. Carlsen with a second from Ms. Carr. Motion was unanimously adopted and will be brought to the Bay Area Local Elected Officials Board for confirmation.

There was agreement at the September WDB meeting to assemble a Strategic Plan Taskforce to review the current document and set priorities for the objectives and action steps that have been identified. Motion to appoint Chuck Dallas, Will Robinson, Brian Schauf, Paul Carlsen, Tara Carr, Cheryl Neuens, Brian Pelon, Matt Valiquette, and Vickie Patterson to that taskforce was made by Ms. Krepsky with a second from Mr. Kelley. Motion was unanimously adopted. Staff will convene a meeting soon.

The WIOA Local Plan, previously approved by the board, has been revised to address requests for clarification from the DWD review team. An updated copy of the Local Plan is available on the Bay Area WDB website.

The MOU and RSA have been submitted to DWD for review and no further information is available at this time.

Mr. Golembeski continues to work with DWD on the remaining monitoring issues from PY 2019.

Dr. Troyer had no update on the board's strategic planning initiative.

Ms. Franz provided an update on the activities of NEW Manufacturing Alliance. NEWMA activities continue despite the pandemic. The annual Manufacturing First Expo and Conference will be a virtual event this year, as will other annual NEWMA events such as Internship Draft

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Day. Taskforces continue to convene, and the Industry 4.0 taskforce is particularly active in working with area companies to adopt new and emerging technologies.

### **One-Stop Operator**

Mr. Valiquette provided a presentation on the role and responsibilities of the One-Stop Operator (OSO) under WIOA. He began by making note of the roles assigned to the local workforce board in the DOL publication, “A Call to Action for Workforce Development Boards” (April 2019) which describes the workforce boards roles as 1) Strategist, 2) Manager, 3) Convener, and 4) Optimizer and challenges the board to lead continuous improvement of the One-Stop System. The One-Stop Operator is a key player in that effort. In the past, Bay Area has authorized the management teams in the comprehensive job centers to serve as OSO through a competitive procurement process. Bay Area will reprocur OSO services in PY 2021, so this is a good time to examine the OSO role and responsibility. There are different models in the state and DWD has indicated a preference for one OSO for the entire WDA. In some cases, the workforce board serves as the OSO. A working group of partners are building on the previous work of the Strategic Leadership Committee to envision the future of job centers and job center leadership. One real challenge is to balance the increasing bureaucratic focus on regulatory compliance with creating a truly effective workforce development service delivery system in the 11-counties.

### **What’s Going on Out There?**

Marcia Christiansen, Executive Director of Forward Service Corporation, a Bay Area WDB service provider and the administrator of the W-2 and FoodShare Employment and Training (FSET) programs, shared recent experiences. FSC has seen program caseloads remain relatively stable despite the pandemic. She agreed with Mr. Golembeski’s observation that a labor shortage continues to be a challenge in NE Wisconsin. Many job seekers are taking advantage of opportunities in manufacturing, delivery, and food service, particularly at entry level positions. However, job seekers are increasingly challenged by the restrictions of the pandemic and the fact that schools remain closed and children are home for virtual school. The pandemic affect on public transportation and childcare availability has also been challenging for many people. Since more people are also working from home, access to technology and sufficient broadband is also a true challenge for many workers. In some cases, program services can include the purchase of Internet hot spots, but rural areas struggle.

Ann Schermetzler, General Manager-Services, at Acuity in Sheboygan offered insights into the current state of the insurance industry. The insurance sector has been stable throughout the pandemic. Acuity had previously supplied employees with laptops, so the transition to working from home went smoothly, although the loss of personal support and interaction, particularly for call center staff, has been challenging. The pandemic has brought the need for a new range of customer services skills with new health and coverage questions as well as a lack of customer access to their independent agents, many of whom have struggled to adjust. Acuity continues to hire in a number of areas. Virtual working, has also opened up new opportunities to recruit talent who live in other areas of the country.

Will Robinson, Business Development Manager at Forsite Benefits, spoke about the increasing value of an employer’s benefit package in employee retention. With the pandemic, health benefits are of particular interest to employees, and this is an opportunity to educate, engage, and empower employees to better understand health and insurance coverage. New virtual benefit tools are being developed for this purpose. The stress of living during the pandemic has also increased the need for physical, mental, and emotional wellbeing, and new tools are being developed for Employee Assistance Programs (EAP) to address those needs.

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Dr. Paul Carlsen, President of Lakeshore Technical College, also provided an update. College enrollment is down about 7% and LTC has 3,300 enrolled students. About 65% of the instruction is provide in-person in whole or in part with social distancing and other safety precautions. Many students are struggling with the demands of home schooling their children, so LTC is expanding onsite childcare services to include capacity for older children, ages 7-12, while a parent is in class. LTC provides emergency grants for students as well. They are still learning about how to adjust to the new reality and monitoring student success metrics. LTC has also put a high priority on diversity and inclusion throughout the organization.

The meeting adjourned at 2:50 PM.

**Bay Area Workforce Development Board will meet next on Thursday, November 19, 2020 at 1 PM in a virtual format.**

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