



BLUE RIDGE REGION

Western Virginia Workforce Development Board Meeting

February 19, 2021 – 9:00 AM

Virtual: <https://zoom.us/j/91587391726?pwd=TGpxME5wb1owUVNtQ2RqNnE3V0dmdz09>

Phone Number: 1-301-715-8592 – Access Code: 915 8739 1726 – Passcode: 263776

Board Members Private Sector	Present	Board Members Public Sector	Present
Teresa Hammond	X	Joseph Brinley	X
Casey Nicely		Chuck Simpson	
David Olsen	X	Karen Michalski	X
Jeremy Adkins	X	Abby Hamilton	X
Debra Lovelace	X	Crystal Hall	X
Michael Gardner		Lea DeCosta	X
Todd Putney	X	Jason Suhr	X
Amanda Rogers	X	Dr. John Rainone	
Emily Smith	X	Dr. Milan Hayward	X
Amanda Forrester		Susan Watkins	X
Kristi Mallory	X	Beth Simms	X
Adrienne Ross	X	Sue Goad	
Richard Mansell		Chris Simmons	X
Ashley Bayne			
Sharon Pandolfini	X		
Stephanie Aliff			

WWDB Staff	Present
Morgan Romeo	X
Leah Gibson	X
Michelle Brennan	X
Danielle Hart	X

Guests	Present
Chris Pope	X
Toni McLawhorn	X

Welcome

In Casey Nicely's absence, Morgan Romeo called the meeting to order at 9:04am.

Review of Electronic Meeting Process

Morgan Romeo reviewed the process in place during this time with those present.

Public Comment

There were no public comments.

Consent Agenda

Morgan Romeo asked the group to review the minutes from the December 18, 2020 meeting.

WVWDB Action: A motion was made by David Olsen to approve the consent agenda as presented. The motion was seconded by Karen Michalski. The motion was carried by a roll call vote as follows:

Board Members <i>Private Sector</i>	Vote	Board Members <i>Public Sector</i>	Vote
Teresa Hammond	Yes	Joseph Brinley	Yes
David Olsen	Yes	Karen Michalski	Yes
Jeremy Adkins	Abstain	Abby Hamilton	Yes
Debra Lovelace	Yes	Crystal Hall	Yes
Todd Putney	Yes	Lea DeCosta	Yes
Amanda Rogers	Yes	Jason Suhr	Yes
Emily Smith	Yes	Dr. Milan Hayward	Yes
Kristi Mallory	Yes	Susan Watkins	Yes
Adrienne Ross	Yes	Beth Simms	Yes
Sharon Pandolfini	Yes	Chris Simmons	Yes

Old Business

Morgan Romeo shared with the group that the Local Plan update was granted an extension from the state. The due date for that update is now March 19th. As a result, the Draft document will go out for public comment and will be voted on for approval at the joint Board & CLEO meeting scheduled for March 19th.

Morgan Romeo directed the attendees to review the Adult & Dislocated Worker Programs Report found in the packet and noted that enrollments for these programs are going well. She also noted the spread of enrollments amongst the localities that we serve. Our local area has had the highest number of Adult enrollments this fiscal year, compared to all local areas in the state of Virginia. Across the state, Dislocated Worker enrollments are low, although unemployment is high many do not meet the definitions for eligibility. Dislocated Worker spending is also low, due to many Dislocated Workers also being enrolled in the Trade Act, which uses their funding as priority to pay for training and other expenses. Morgan noted we would discuss a transfer of funds from Dislocated Worker to Adult later in the meeting. Susan Watkins asked about the impact of meeting or not meeting enrollment goals. Morgan responded that the enrollment goals put in place are local goals only and that the state does not evaluate performance based on this measure. Morgan also shared a customer satisfaction experience, noting that we have received many compliments of our Adult and Dislocated Worker staff since hiring them 7/1/2020.

Director's Report

Morgan Romeo directed the group to review the Report found in the packet. Morgan noted that the process of becoming our fiscal agent has gone smoothly. The CLEO receives regular

updates on how things are going, and the Finance Committee reviews all financial transactions. She noted that Bobby as worked hard to get ADP up and running for payroll and benefits and the system is operating well.

Morgan noted that there will be a staffing change this month, as Brad Stephens will be leaving the Board to work as the Executive Director of REACH. As a result, Danielle Hart, currently the Business Services Assistant, will be taking on more of a leadership role.

Morgan noted that Board staff are always looking for ways to further our mission and partner in the communities. New funding opportunities are a way for us to leverage to fill gaps in the system. An update on grant opportunities is in her report.

Morgan provided the group an update on an On-the-Job (OJT) training request recently discussed with a business owner in our region. The Foundry is a business that was created through The Gauntlet competition and was created as an educational consulting firm to provide professional development for educational staff. The business became a provider of Virtual Academy learning, partnering with the United Way and Roanoke City & County schools. The Board did a contract with them, for a position for these virtual academies a few months ago. Upon initial approval of the OJT, Board staff discussed with the owner that we would only approve 1 OJT contract until we could see that the positions were full-time, permanent positions, considering the Virtual Academies were created out of necessity generated by COVID-19. In Mid-December, the business requested a second OJT contract, before the initial contract was completed. The business owner contacted the state directly, reaching out to them noting that he felt we were denying a service meant to support businesses. Morgan noted that both Casey Nicely (Board Chair) and Martha Hooker (CLEO Chair) had been involved in the conversations about this situation with the state throughout. The state responded back to us after about 3 weeks, noting that our OJT policy could use some clarifying language, which we are going to add & take to the Executive Committee for review. Morgan reached out to the business owner, after hearing from the state, inquiring if he was still interested in another OJT, and the business owner responded that he was now interested in hosting a Work Experience. Abby Hamilton noted that the Virtual Academies and the providers of that service have been notified, from the beginning, that this service could be short-term, subject to the schedule of the schools, and that there is no guaranteed funding for that service beyond this school year. Karen Michalski asked if the Board had a grievance procedure for this type of situation. Morgan responded that we do have a such a policy, which she referenced in communications with the state, yet the business owner considered his contact to the state not to be a formal grievance or complaint. Susan Watkins asked if OJT participants were hired on by the employer, Morgan responded that OJT contracts are for employees hired on by participating employers. Abby Hamilton also noted that many of the providers of Virtual Academies had existing programs and funding that provided a similar service, but that The Foundry did not before the COVID-19 funding. Karen Michalski expressed concern that the state received such a complaint from a business owner and failed to follow the formal complaint & grievance policy, allowing the Board at the local level to review the situation before having state involvement. Many in attendance agreed, including Joe Brinley, Jason Suhr and Abby Hamilton. The group agreed that the state did not follow proper protocol. Todd Putney noted that we should express this discontent with lack of procedure verbally with the state staff. Teresa Hammond asked if the state had given local Board staff any deadline or required follow up actions, Morgan noted they did not formally

do so. Morgan offered that she & Casey Nicely could respond to the state after the Executive Committee, informing them of the updates to the OJT policy at the local level and note their displeasure. Dave Olsen noted we should document all steps in this process, Morgan noted that she is doing so. Morgan also confirmed she will update the group, if any response from the state at that time, at the next Board meeting.

Committee Reports

Finance Committee

Karen Michalski presented the Finance Committee report. She noted that the group reviewed every financial transaction, as agreed upon when the Board became its' own fiscal agent. They did a complete review of the General Ledger. There were no items of concern or question, but the committee did make some recommendations to the Board staff to make things clearer. The committee also reviewed the FY21 Budget vs. Actual report. The reported noted that the CTE grant and Pathways to the American Dream grant already ended, so their funding expenditure is showing a higher percentage than others. The Committee also asked for notes to be added to the reports moving forward, for clarity.

WVWDB Action: A motion was made by the Finance Committee to approve the report as presented. The motion was seconded by David Olsen. The motion was carried by a roll call vote as follows:

Board Members <i>Private Sector</i>	Vote	Board Members <i>Public Sector</i>	Vote
Teresa Hammond	Yes	Joseph Brinley	Yes
David Olsen	Yes	Karen Michalski	Yes
Jeremy Adkins	Yes	Abby Hamilton	Yes
Debra Lovelace	Yes	Crystal Hall	Yes
Todd Putney	Yes	Lea DeCosta	Yes
Amanda Rogers	Yes	Jason Suhr	Yes
Emily Smith	Yes	Dr. Milan Hayward	Yes
Kristi Mallory	Yes	Susan Watkins	Yes
Adrienne Ross	Yes	Beth Simms	Yes
Sharon Pandolfini	Yes	Chris Simmons	Yes

Karen reported that the Committee also reviewed the FY21 Budget Modification – Transfer Approval. As referenced earlier, Dislocated Worker spending is lower than expected halfway through the year. Board staff are also planning to co-enroll Youth participants into the Adult program, to provide additional services not available through the Youth program. Adult enrollments are high & expected to continue to be so. As a result, the recommendation is to transfer \$75,000 from Dislocated Worker to Adult. Karen confirmed that the Finance Committee will keep an eye on expenditures and bring any additional transfers or changes to this information back to the Board.

WVWDB Action: A motion was made by the Finance Committee to approve the Budget Modification as presented. The motion was seconded by Todd Putney. The motion was carried by a roll call vote as follows:

Board Members Private Sector	Vote	Board Members Public Sector	Vote
Teresa Hammond	Yes	Joseph Brinley	Yes
David Olsen	Yes	Karen Michalski	Yes
Jeremy Adkins	Yes	Abby Hamilton	Yes
Debra Lovelace	Yes	Crystal Hall	Yes
Todd Putney	Yes	Lea DeCosta	Yes
Amanda Rogers	Yes	Jason Suhr	Yes
Emily Smith	Yes	Dr. Milan Hayward	Yes
Kristi Mallory	Yes	Susan Watkins	Yes
Adrienne Ross	Yes	Beth Simms	Yes
Sharon Pandolfini	Yes	Chris Simmons	Yes

Program Oversight Committee

Crystal Hall provided an update on the Committee’s last meeting. The group reviewed the program performance reports, seeing enrollments for all programs on track. Crystal noted that Board staff have had multiple conversations with The WorkPlace corporate staff regarding Youth program performance, services, and budget. As of right now, it appears we will have to give back Youth funds, due to lack of expenditures. Crystal also noted that as of the meeting, Wagner-Peyser funds are expected to go back to the VEC as of 4/1/2021. The Roanoke Center was re-opened 2/1/2021 with caution, following all CDC and VDH guidance. The Resource Room at the Roanoke Center had been outfitted with new plexi-glass and cubicles with Roanoke City CARES Act money to make this possible. Crystal also shared that Board staff had worked closely with VCCS and VEC staff to make updates to ensure compliance with our Limited English Proficiency (LEP) policy attached.

WVWDB Action: A motion was made by the Program Oversight Committee to approve the updated LEP policy as presented. The motion was seconded by David Olsen. The motion was carried by a roll call vote as follows:

Board Members Private Sector	Vote	Board Members Public Sector	Vote
Teresa Hammond	Yes	Joseph Brinley	Yes
David Olsen	Yes	Karen Michalski	Yes
Jeremy Adkins	Yes	Abby Hamilton	Yes
Debra Lovelace	Yes	Crystal Hall	Yes
Todd Putney	Yes	Lea DeCosta	Yes
Amanda Rogers	Yes	Jason Suhr	Yes
Emily Smith	Yes	Dr. Milan Hayward	Yes
Kristi Mallory	Yes	Susan Watkins	Yes
Adrienne Ross	Yes	Beth Simms	Abstain
Sharon Pandolfini	Yes	Chris Simmons	Yes

Executive Committee

Morgan Romeo noted that this committee had not met since the last Board meeting.

New Business

WIOA Title I Youth Program Discussion

Morgan Romeo shared that she had sent a formal letter to The WorkPlace last week, per the Board's previous request. The letter detailed the Board's concerns with The WorkPlace performance and delivery of the Youth program thus far. Board staff also have had many conversations with state staff about the Youth program expenditures and the potential to give back Youth funds, and the letter outlined areas that need improvement moving forward to prevent this. The WorkPlace provided a written response on Wednesday of this week. Immediately before the response letter was received via email, the President of The WorkPlace requested a call with Morgan and verbally stated that The WorkPlace was ready to terminate the contracts. Because this was a verbal statement, and not included in the written communication via the letter, Morgan has reached out to the Board's attorney to discuss the situation. The WorkPlace also informed Board staff yesterday at 4pm, that today is the last day of the single Youth staff person locally. Morgan noted that per law, the local Board is responsible for procurement of WIOA Title I Youth services. As a result, and after conversations with state staff, Board staff would like to discuss that the Board provide WIOA Title I Youth services through 9/30/2021, under emergency procurement guidelines, understanding if we issued an RFP for these services today it would still take months to get through procurement and have staff on-site & trained, resulting in any chance we must expend Youth funds on participants being eliminated. We would like to propose that an RFP be issued in July, to have a contract in place & staff operational by October 1st. The process would look different from what we did with the Adult & Dislocated Worker programs, due to the language in the federal code, only requiring communication with the state of what our plan is, rather than requesting a waiver. We have reviewed the Roanoke City Procurement Manual that we follow, to ensure compliance. As of today, this appears to be our best option, to ensure the WIOA Title I Youth program services are being provided, as needed, to our local region and current Youth program participants. Todd Putney asked how many staff The WorkPlace had for the Youth program. Morgan confirmed there was only 1 staff person, although their proposal included 2 full time staff. David Olsen asked who, of the local Board staff, would provide these services. Morgan responded that we have Mark Holman, already doing the Youth enrollment piece, so we can continue that, and that Board staff had already reviewed the required Youth services and we have a plan in place with existing staff. Morgan also noted that emergency provision of the program services would allow us to hire another staff person, if needed. Todd Putney noted that Board staff had done an excellent job with the Adult and Dislocated Worker programs thus far and wondered if we could do the same with the Youth program long term. Morgan noted that we would have to follow procurement and release an RFP, but we could discuss it again at that time. Susan Watkins asked who at the state level that Board staff had been communicating with to ensure compliance, Morgan responded that communications have been with Robert Henry, the State Youth Programs Coordinator. David Olsen asked how quickly we could get a response from The WorkPlace in writing that they want to terminate the contract. Morgan responded that she has reached out to the Board attorney and expects to hear from her this weekend with that guidance. David Olsen noted that action must happen quickly, but also considering that there is still an active contract. Morgan noted that, per guidance from the state, that it is the Board's responsibility to ensure provision of services, and since the contractor has no staff doing so, it is our job to do so.

WWWDB Action: A motion was made by the Karen Michalski to adhere to guidance from the Board’s attorney to move forward with ending The WorkPlace’s contracts to provide WIOA Title I Youth program elements and, under emergency procurement, have Board staff operate the WIOA Title I Youth program through 9/30/2021. The motion was seconded by Crystal Hall. The motion was carried by a roll call vote as follows:

Board Members <i>Private Sector</i>	Vote	Board Members <i>Public Sector</i>	Vote
Teresa Hammond	Yes	Joseph Brinley	Yes
David Olsen	Yes	Karen Michalski	Yes
Jeremy Adkins	Yes	Abby Hamilton	Yes
Debra Lovelace	Yes	Crystal Hall	Yes
Todd Putney	Yes	Lea DeCosta	Yes
Amanda Rogers	Yes	Jason Suhr	Yes
Emily Smith	Yes	Dr. Milan Hayward	Yes
Kristi Mallory	Yes	Susan Watkins	Yes
Adrienne Ross	Yes	Beth Simms	Yes
Sharon Pandolfini	Yes	Chris Simmons	Yes

Other Business

There was no other business presented.

Adjournment

The next meeting will be March 19, 2021 via Zoom, as a joint meeting with the CLEO. The meeting adjourned at 10:19am.