



BLUE RIDGE REGION

**Western Virginia Workforce Development Board**

***Executive Committee Meeting***

May 28, 2020 – 2:00 PM – 3:30 PM

<https://vccs.zoom.us/j/96126842820?pwd=aGE1bjRxVW9tOUl5Nzdzdjg3eVovdz09>

Event Number: 961 2684 2820

Event Password: 764783

<b>Members</b>	<b>Present</b>
Phil Peters, Chair	X
Dave Olsen, Vice-Chair	X
Casey Nicely, Treasurer	X
Michael Gardner	X
Crystal Hall	X

<b>WWWDB Staff</b>	<b>Present</b>
Morgan Romeo	X
Leah Gibson	X
Brad Stephens	X

**Welcome**

Phil Peters welcomed everyone to the meeting and thanked everyone for accommodating meeting via Zoom due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

**Review of Electronic Meeting Process**

Morgan Romeo reviewed the process for an electronic meeting of a public body during the COVID-19 crisis. A screen was shared with all Executive Committee members outlining the parameters of having an electronic meeting as approved by the Commonwealth of Virginia’s Attorney General’s office. Morgan noted that only items related to the COVID-19 pandemic and the continuation of operations during the pandemic could be discussed. Morgan also noted that if any votes were taken, they must be roll call votes and recorded as such in the minutes.

**Public Comment**

Phil Peters asked the staff if anyone had signed up for public comment prior to the meeting with the electronic registration. Brad Stephens reported that no one had registered. There were no guests on the call and no public comment was provided.

**COVID-19 Operations Discussion**

**Virtual Operations Review**

Morgan Romeo provided an update on how the staff of the WWWDB and the Title I Service Provider were operating in the new COVID-19 environment. All WWWDB staff and Title I Service Provider staff continue to work from home, but staff from the Virginia Employment Commission are working from the Virginia Career Works – Roanoke Center and the Virginia Career Works –

Covington Center to process claims and answer telephone calls and emails. Most services provided through the WVVDB and the Title I Service Provider had been moved to a virtual platform and staff reported that all eligibility determination and services continued to be accessible. Morgan noted that the electronic eligibility had really been working for the Title I Youth program and that Mark Holman on the WVVDB staff had great success working with Youth and verifying their eligibility and service needs via Zoom and Facetime.

Phil Peters asked how the performance goals of the Title I Service Provider, Ross IES, were being met. Morgan reported that there were not many eligibilities coming through and that the staff hoped they were continuing to update their files and the electronic case management system.

#### Virginia Career Works Center Reopening Plan

Morgan Romeo reported that the Governor's Office, specifically Dr. Megan Healy, Chief Workforce Development Advisor, had taken a great interest in the reopening of the Virginia Career Works Centers. This had led to uniform guidance being created on reopening tasks as well as funding from the CARES Act stimulus funding. Morgan reported that while the Local Workforce Development Boards had submitted budget requests to the Chief Workforce Development Advisor several week ago, there had been no movement on the release of funds to date. Morgan reported that she felt more comfortable pushing the reopening date back until funds were received and the WVVDB staff felt that the front-line staff and customers would be safe. This would include procuring personal protective equipment to provide to staff and customers. Currently, the Virginia Employment Commission is assisting the Local Workforce Development Boards in procuring PPE for staff but was not able to procure for customers. The Executive Committee concurred that the WVVDB should not open the Centers until all funding was received that was requested and all concerns have been addressed.

### **PY2020 Operational Items**

#### FY2021 Budget Preliminary Discussion

Morgan Romeo reported that the staff had received the annual allocation for PY2020 and unfortunately, the region had taken the largest cut in the state, at 18%. The staff were bracing for 10% but did not expect this large of a cut. Morgan reported that this may affect the number of Career Coaches that are able to be hired on through the Title I Adult and Dislocated Worker program, should the waiver be approved. The Executive Committee discussed the allocation method for providing funding to each Local Workforce Development Area and how much funding was kept back for overhead and administration at the state level. The Executive Committee concurred that staff should work with the other Executive Directors from the Local Workforce Development Boards to address the amount of funding that is held back for operations at the Virginia Community College level.

#### Title I Adult and Dislocated Worker Waiver Update

Morgan Romeo reported that the Title I Adult and Dislocated Worker Waiver Application had still not been approved, but that she received confirmation that staff at the Virginia Community College System had recommended approval to the Governor's office the night before the meeting. Morgan said that she anticipated a quick turnaround time due to the recommendation and that she would keep the Executive Committee, Board, and CLEO updated.

### Virtual Job Fair Expenditure

Morgan Romeo reported that with the COVID-19 pandemic, virtual services were needed for job seekers as well as businesses. Brad Stephens on staff had researched virtual platforms for hiring events and found a start-up company out of Florida, recommended by the Executive Director for the Alexandria/Arlington Workforce Council. The funding would be able to be provided out of the marketing budget currently set aside for the WVVWDB. The Executive Committee concurred that this expenditure was needed.

### New WVVWDB Staff Office Location & Furniture

Morgan Romeo updated that the WVVWDB staff had secured a new office space at Pheasant Ridge Office Park and would begin moving in next month. The leased space does not officially begin until July 1<sup>st</sup>, but the park was letting the WVVWDB move in furniture and do set-up prior to that date. Morgan reported that she had also found funding that was set aside in the budget that would allow them to purchase furniture and desks for the new office. The Executive Committee concurred that this expenditure was needed. Phil Peters asked how the fiscal agent discussion was progressing with the City of Roanoke. Morgan reported that the discussions were going well and the City of Roanoke was very willing to assist but needed to work out logistics once their budget was approved on June 15<sup>th</sup>.

### Wagner-Peyser Funding Allocation

Morgan Romeo reported that the Virginia Employment Commission had approached the Local Workforce Development Boards to assist them in providing Wagner Peyser services during the pandemic while their agency focuses on delivering Unemployment Insurance assistance. Morgan said that the region was slated to receive a little over \$260,000 for six months. This would allow the region to keep their operations at the level they were last year regardless of the funding decrease. Morgan noted that a Memorandum of Understanding was being drafted and would come to the Executive Committee for approval at the next meeting.

### Other Business

Phil Peters stated that he wanted to thank the WVVWDB staff for all of their hard work over the last few months to keep operations going and continue to move forward on the waiver application, a new fiscal agent, and a new location for the WVVWDB offices.

### Upcoming Meetings

- Finance Committee Meeting – June 3, 2020 @ 2:00 PM (Zoom)
- Executive Committee Meeting – June 10, 2020 @ 8:30 AM (Zoom)
- CLEO Consortium Meeting – June 10, 2020 @ 2:30 PM (Zoom)
- WVVWDB Meeting – June 19, 2020 @ 9:00 AM (?)

### Adjournment

Seeing no other business, Phil Peters adjourned the meeting at 3:37 PM.