

**Western Virginia Workforce Development Board
Program Oversight Committee**

May 27, 2021, at 9:00am

Zoom Meeting:

<https://zoom.us/j/98332429895?pwd=eWZVc2h3eTdJa3ZWeWpYeGY3OUVOZz09>

Members	Present
Karen Michalski	X
Joe Brinley	X
Dr. Milan Hayward	X
Abby Hamilton, Chair	X
Amanda Rogers	X
Emily Smith	X

WWWDB Staff	Present
Morgan Romeo	X
Leah Gibson	X
Michelle Brennan	X

Guests	Present
Toni McLawhorn	X

Call to Order

Abby Hamilton called the meeting to order at 9:03am.

Review of Electronic Meeting Process

Leah Gibson reviewed the electronic meeting process with those in attendance.

Public Comment

There was no public comment.

Meeting Minutes Approval – January 28, 2021

Abby Hamilton asked the group to review the minutes presented.

Program Oversight Committee Action: A motion was made by Karen Michalski to approve the minutes as presented. Joe Brinley seconded the motion. The motion was carried by a roll call vote:

Members	Vote
Karen Michalski	Yes
Joe Brinley	Yes
Abby Hamilton, Chair	Yes
Amanda Rogers	Yes
Emily Smith	Yes

New Committee Members

Abby Hamilton introduced herself to the new committee members and asked them each to introduce themselves to the group. The members were thanked for their dedication and service on this committee.

Old Business

Leah Gibson shared that the Economic Equity Initiative, United Way OnRamp, and Wagner-Peyser grant funding were all ending as of June 30, 2021. The Economic Equity grant was through the Virginia Community College and is being closed out. Board staff have partnered with TAP to reapply for the United Way OnRamp project and hope to hear soon about whether that second application has been approved. Wagner-Peyser funding had been subcontracted to the Board from the Virginia Employment Commission during high unemployment claims and will revert to being operated by the VEC. Leah also shared that the Roanoke Center is seeing walk-in customers, as we are able, continuing with social distancing and cleaning. Customers can also still utilize the online scheduler to schedule appointments with staff at the Center for various needs. The VEC now has their own appointment scheduler link to schedule appointments with staff to discuss unemployment benefits. Leah updated the group on the Local Plan, that it had been approved by the state office, based on the work we did with the consultant and the Plan finalized with the input from Board members and stakeholders. The group discussed the current situation of our community and ensuring that the Committee works to evaluate funding being utilized effectively to meet our community needs and evaluating processes and services in a post-COVID world to ensure we are serving all our customers appropriately.

WIOA Title I Program Operations

Michelle Brennan presented the Title I Programs Report to the group. She noted that Board staff had taken over the Youth program operations in March 2021, when The WorkPlace terminated their contract. She expressed gratitude to Danielle Hart, who had taken on the responsibilities of Business Services, and is working diligently to find work experience hosts for our program participants. Michelle noted that we are doing very well with enrollments for the year, coming in with the most Adult enrollments of all local areas in the state. Michelle also shared a couple success stories of participants that had been served through the program this year, and how they have obtained employment and are self-sufficient. Michelle did note that we are expecting a layoff of about 400 employees from HSN closing in Roanoke, and we are hoping to help those employees to get back to work quickly. Based on projections right now, we are expecting a 30% increase in our program funds for PY2021. With that information, staff are looking at ways to serve more participants and serve them more effectively. To do that, we have added a second Youth program staff member and are expecting to hire another Adult/Dislocated Worker staff person soon. We are also reviewing our marketing and outreach techniques to ensure we have the right people and the right tools in place.

New Business

Morgan Romeo updated the group on new funding projects the staff are working on. In November, Board staff applied for the INSPIRE grant and have been awarded this funding, which will fund half of a Career Coach in Covington for 3 years to assist in the development of the recovery ecosystem and connecting those recovering from substance abuse with the workforce system. The Board also partnered with the Roanoke Redevelopment and Housing Authority on a Jobs Plus grant, that has been awarded, that will fund half of a Career Coach in Roanoke to focus on serving individuals residing in subsidized housing to help them reach their workforce goals & ultimately become self-sufficient. The Board also applied for National Dislocated Worker Grant funding through the state, that will allow us to partner with Carilion and the Health Department to hire 9 Community Health Workers to help with the vaccine efforts locally. Finally, the Board staff partnered with Goodwill to apply for the Roanoke City Youth Work Experience program, receiving funding to serve youth in Roanoke City to obtain internships during the summer, which goes hand in hand with our Title I Youth services.

Morgan also shared that the Board staff have been working to purchase and implement additional technology services for our customers. Board staff have received free license access through partnering with the state for LinkedIn Learning trainings. This online service provides certification preparation, professional development and soft skill training and is available to anyone who would like to utilize this service. Board staff also

purchased licenses to Metrix Learning to utilize for our Youth program participants. We will use this platform as the academic component of Youth Work Experiences and as an industry and career exposure tool, to allow our Youth to explore different careers. Finally, Board staff released a request for proposals and have contracted with TransfrVR to obtain a virtual reality headset lab for our customers to do hands on activities, career exploration, and potentially earn credentials.

Other Business

Leah reminded the group of the upcoming CareerQuest events on September 28 – 29 and October 19 – 20 at the Salem Civic Center. This event will host about 8,000 middle school students to have career exploration through hands on activities with employers from our region. Leah reminded the group to sign up to either have their business attend and/or to volunteer at the event.

Upcoming Meetings

The next Board meeting will be June 17, 2021, at 9am via Zoom. Leah noted that she will be sending out emails following this meeting to schedule recurring dates and times for this Committee.

Adjournment

Abby Hamilton adjourned the meeting at 10:12am.