

Central Western Maine Workforce Development Board  
**Operations Committee Minutes**  
February 8, 2022

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**Board Members Present:** Cathy Witherspoon, Chair; Peter Wright, Treasurer; Razell Ward, Secretary; Laurie Glidden, At-Large Member; Grant Provost, Chair of Recruitment  
**Not Present:** Chris Winstead, Chair of Resources  
**Others Present:** Erin Benson, Executive Director; Patti Saarinen, EMDC Deputy Director for Workforce Services

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#### **Call to Order**

Chair Cathy Witherspoon called the meeting to order at 8:37am.

#### **Review and Approve Last Meeting Minutes**

**VOTED:** To approve January 11 meeting minutes.

**Motion:** Peter Wright                      Second: Laurie Glidden

**Discussion:** Erin forgot to update the attendance, but will make corrections based on the video.

**Vote:** All in Favor

#### **Board Membership**

In order to have a full board, there need to be four more business representatives, 1 workforce representative, and one required partner for economic and community development. Grant reached out to Mastercraft in Skowhegan and Erin followed up with an email. The business manager, Erin Davis, said she was busy with taxes but would get back to her. At this point, she has not responded, but Erin Benson will send another email and try to set up an in person meeting. Erin is setting up a meeting with the HR person at Central Maine Motors in conjunction with Linda Gosselin from the Maine Apprenticeship Program. Both Linda and Laurie Glidden attended a chamber meeting where the HR person expressed concern about hiring enough employees. The meeting will focus on strategies to help with hiring and board membership. Peter is reaching out to Janet Kotke from ND Paper and someone from Androscoggin Bank. Chris is reaching out to someone from Paris Farmers Union and Amy Landry from AVCOG for suggestions on potential business board members. Chris is also in conversations with Amy and Brian Doyle from the City of Lewiston to fill the required economic and community development partner. Erin has a meeting with former board member, Kim Lindlof, on February 23 who also filled this ECD role. In the last Ops meeting, Laurie Glidden suggested approaching Kennebec Behavioral Health to fill the last position within workforce. Erin met with Tom McAdam and Brandi Farrington on February 1. They talked for an hour about membership on the CWMWDB, KBH's employment club houses, ways to partner and ways to refer/co-enroll. They will speak to the club house directors and get back to Erin about board membership. Still need to find a Vice Chair, Youth Committee Chair, and a Chief CEO.

#### **High Risk Update**

Erin shared the official letter from the state outlining specifically what needs to be done in order to remove the board from high-risk status:

- Board submittal of revised financial policies

- Board submittal of revised personnel policies
- Documentation of Board staff training on grants management (i.e.: SMART training)
- Board submittal of updated position description of Executive Director role
- Submittal of error free drawdown requests

The first four are either done or will be done by the end of February. The last needs further clarification. Erin shared her letter of response and, with the Ops Committee’s approval, will send the letter to Kimberley Moore at MDOL this afternoon. Erin also said she would share both letters with the full board and the CEOs.

**Provider Update**

Enrollments:

WIOA Title	Planned for Year	Actual
Adult	143	133
Dis. Wkr.	86	29
Youth (In school)	32	17
Youth (Out of School)	96	67
CWO	158	123

We are continuing to do well with our Adult and Youth enrollments.

We are beginning to see a slight uptick in dislocation and expect those numbers to increase although not sharply; we participate in the state Rapid Response sessions whenever a business closes in our area. This past week we assisted with 40 workers laid off from Abbot; all were new Mainers and the majority had significant language barriers; we will work closely with adult education to assist. Most dislocated workers continue to find other suitable employment with a minimal need for workforce services.

There are no longer staff dedicated solely to the CWO grant. We are continuing to reach out to referral partners that were developed the past two years. Staff are aware that we need to meet these numbers. We are in the process of hiring an Outreach Coordinator as part of the QUEST grant who can help with continuing to spread the word.

We are seeing an increase in our referrals and attendance at our Informational Sessions. This past week we had 15 new referrals and they came from each of our 5 counties; 5 of these referrals were youth. We had 5 new registrations and 2 of those were youth.

QUEST Grant:

Contracts are almost ready for the QUEST grant. We are in the process of hiring a Project Manager to cover the 9 counties; 2 Outreach Coordinators – 1 in each region; and, 4 Workforce Development Specialists – 2 in each region.

We connected with Jen Brown at Lewiston Ad Ed. Jen worked with us as a WDS and is now doing a HiSet program with the Androscoggin County Jail. She will be a good referral source for the QUEST grant as she understands WIOA programs. Also connected with Office of Maine Refugee Services – GEAR (Growing Employment Access for Refugees), Gateway Community Services, and Maine Immigrant & Refugee Services.

Employer Projects:

Cert. Med. Asst. with Gray/New Gloucester Ad Ed and St. Mary’s. This started on 1/25/23. There are 10 people enrolled; 2 youth and 8 adults. All are enrolled with EMDC.

Cert. Nurse Aide with Skowhegan Ad Ed and Mt. Joseph in Waterville. This started on 2/7/23. There are 7 in the class; 5 are enrolled with EMDC; 4 adults and 1 youth

Cert. Nurse Aide with Spruce Mt. Ad Ed and Franklin Memorial Hospital. This will start 2/22/23. There are 7 in the class; 7 are enrolled with EMDC – 5 adults and 2 youth

Construction with Lewiston Ad Ed and Hahnel Bros, St. Laurent & Sons, HE Callahan, Northeast Paintings & Coatings. This will start 2-21-23. We are completing the recruitment process and have 8 referrals; 2 are youth.

Cert. Med. Asst. with Spruce Mt Ad Ed and Franklin Memorial Hospital. We are in the recruitment process and this will begin in March, 2023.

### **Financial Update**

Sara was unable to join the meeting as she was away for personnel business. Very little has changed since her report at the January 26 full board meeting. The contract between the MDOL and CWMWI regarding the QUEST grant has been executed. This will bring in \$130,535.84 to the admin budget.

### **Open Discussion/New Business**

Ben Hawkins has been updating the website but has also created templates for CWMWDB business cards, letterhead, and thank you notes.

Erin is working to finish the QUEST contract between CWMWI and EMDC. She met with Ginny from MDOL to go over concerns with all resolved but two. As soon as she has the answers, she will execute the contract with EMDC. She and Patti met with Gateway Community's workforce navigator to discuss the grant and ways to partner and refer.

Erin would like to contract with Rebecca Bryant to do monitoring on behalf of the board. Previously, Rebecca was an assistant at the Northeastern Workforce Development Board and did the monitoring of EMDC files on a quarterly basis. The board is responsible for this oversight. CWMWDB hired David Wurm from Workforce Solutions to do the monitoring for PY19 and PY20, as it had not been done and needed to be done before June 30, 2022 as part of the provisional certification. Erin has first-hand knowledge of Rebecca's work and feels she would be a huge asset. She will need to do 20 files for PY21 and then 5 per program per quarter for PY22. There is no set number or percentage of files required by USDOL or MDOL for monitoring purposes, only what is reasonable. Rebecca has asked for \$45 per hour. We must keep under the \$5,000 mark or it would need to be an RFP process. This would cover 111 hours. Erin proposes to write a contract for no more than 100 hours. Erin asked for a vote of approval.

**VOTED:** To approve the hiring of Rebecca Bryant through a contractual basis to do monitoring of PY21 and PY22 files at \$45 per hour for no more than 100 hours.

**Motion:** Razell Ward                      **Second:** Laurie Glidden

**Discussion:** None

**Vote:** All in Favor

Erin will post an ad for an assistant in the coming weeks at 20 hours per week. Doesn't really know the scope of work and starting at 20 hours per week will give time to understand the job and the amount of work that needs to be done. Plans to post it as a remote position. It is in the budget.

The waiver request to transfer \$150,000 from the Dislocated Worker grant to the Adult grant was approved by MDOL and EMDC was notified. This ensures that money is being spent on the most needy populations.

Erin reminded the committee of the Maine State Workforce Board's REACH summit planned for February 28 in-person at UMA (sold out) or online. She sent the link to the conference several weeks ago.

Erin updated the committee on an idea to make a presentation at the annual Maine Counseling Association (MECA) conference at the Samoset in early April. She has asked EMDC, the Maine Apprenticeship Program, and three board members who work with apprenticeship to participate in a panel. The MECA conference attracts many school counselors from around the state who work with high school students on steps after high school. The presentation will focus on pathways other than postsecondary.

Erin is working on a master calendar, as Chris had requested, and to change the board's address in Google. In order to do the latter, you must access the Business Profile. Erin is searching for ID/password to accomplish this.

Erin will attend a training on board monitoring with Ginny Carroll on Friday, February 10. Chris Winstead, Sara McLaughlin, Ashley Bubar (EMDC), and Erin will attend SMART training next week—a ETA training to learn how to manage federal grants. This is part of the requirement to get off of high-risk status.

### **Adjourn**

Chair Cathy Witherspoon called for a motion to adjourn. Laurie Glidden motioned to adjourn; Razell Ward seconded. All in favor. Cathy adjourned the meeting at 9:28 am.

Next meeting: Wednesday, March 8, 2023, at 8:30am.