

Central Western Maine Workforce Development Board
Operations Committee Minutes
May 10, 2023

Board Members Present: Cathy Witherspoon, Chair; Razell Ward, Secretary; Laurie Glidden, At-Large Member; Chris Winstead, Chair of Resources; Grant Provost, Chair of Recruitment

Not Present: Peter Wright, Treasurer

Others Present: Erin Benson, Executive Director; Sara McGlaughlin, Financial Manager

Call to Order

Chair Cathy Witherspoon called the meeting to order at 8:39 am.

Review and Approve Last Meeting Minutes

VOTED: To approve April 12 meeting minute.

Motion: Laurie Glidden **Second:** Grant Provost

Discussion: No discussion.

Vote: All present in favor

Board Membership Update

Erin offered the ED board spot to Christian Savage, the ED of Skowhegan. He was supposed to respond by early May. He has not responded yet, so Erin will reach out again. If Christian turns down the position, Erin will ask Sabrina Jandreau from the Central Maine Growth Council. That still leaves 4 open positions in the business area to meet the 51%. Peter Wright will be stepping off the board as he has moved to Vermont and Chris Winstead filling his role as treasurer. Bruce Tisdale has not attended a board meeting since January 2022. The bylaws state that if a board member misses 3 consecutive meetings, he/she will be removed. Bruce should be removed, which would leave 5 open spaces for businesses representatives. Kate Durkin from Revision Energy has not responded to emails and has not attended a meeting. Grant said that maybe he could reach out to Vaughn and James to see if someone could take her place until she returns. Chris sent Jason Brochu of Pleasant River Lumber an email on 4/12 asking about board membership. He has not heard back. Chris suggested reaching out to the hospital to see if they would like to fill Peter's seat on the board. Erin has sent two emails to the CEO board asking for nominations, but no one has responded. Finally was able to get all five commissioners on a zoom May 9. Learned that none of them, even long serving members, understand their role. Will be sending them several documents and have set up a training for June 13.

High Risk Update

The MDOL alerted Erin that three error-free drawdowns were submitted, which removed the requirement of sending additional documentation. This removes an enormous amount of work from Sara and EMDC's plate, as well as the plate of the MDOL. Drawdowns that had been anywhere from 200-400 pages in length are now 6-10. Of the five tasks outlined in an official letter from the state to remove CWMWDB from high risk status have been completed:

- 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

This leaves one requirement to complete:

- Board submittal of revised financial policies

Sara and Erin will begin work of editing revisions of the financial manual and submit it by the end of the month. Hopefully by the next board meeting, the board will be removed from high-risk status.

Provider Update

Patti Saarinen said the numbers are looking great in the WIOA formula grants (Adult, DW, and Youth). EMDC is at 80% of the Connecting with Opportunities grant (CWO-Opioid). Still pushing for the rest of the numbers. 75% of CWO participants are still employed in the 4th quarter; 99% have shown earnings gains, a high % have completed credentials. Even though the numbers have not been what we wanted, the outcomes have been good. Playing catch up with the Quest grant. Of the 8 referrals, all have gone through registration. Will co-enroll CWO and Quest as appropriate. Performance measures are looking very good (2nd and 4th quarter employment, median wage earnings, and credential attainment). However, we are monitoring Measurable Skills Gains (MSG). Over the next 60 days, we will see more people coming out of training, which will increase that number. Still looking to hire w WDS positions and an outreach coordinator for Quest. Erin reached out to program coordinators at CMCC and KVCC in human service degree programs to share information about the position and encourage graduates to apply. Laurie said the background would be a good fit in what a WDS does. She has a social work background. EMDC has 7 active employer projects and are working on others. Of the 7, it represents 41 people enrolled in training and receiving support from WIOA funds. Started send construction pre-apprenticeship with Reed & Reed. Extended Industrial Roofing contract for the female participant, who is doing well. Met with Goodwill about a construction project they are considering with youth through SNAP E&T funds. Supporting a work experience CWO participant in a healthcare position. Are working with AGC, Skowhegan CTC and Oxford Hills Adult Ed & Technical school for the construction pre-apprenticeship academies scheduled for this summer. Hoping for 12-20 participants at each site. EMDC will determine eligibility for any interested youth. Hopefully it will lead toward apprenticeship opportunities for many of the students. Grant mentioned he wanted to connect Patti to Sam Boss in AFL-CIO because they are running a pre-apprenticeship program. There is an availability for union apprenticeships. AGC has a small % of union signatory members, but we should also focus on union opportunities. They pushed for a bill to build a port—first floating off-shore wind port in the nation and the AGC testified against it because it would have been under a PLA. Little bit of friction there. The AFL-CIO has not been contacted. Erin said that Patti and she had met with Sam and the pre-apprenticeship he is doing right now is in the Coastal Counties region. He wants to plan one for Lewiston in June. Razell, Patti and Erin will meet with him on May 16 to discuss it.

Financial Update

Tabled report until June 14, 2023. Finances are looking good. No concerns with money.

Open Discussion/New Business

Staffing—one person has applied for the administrative assistant position, and another expressed interest. It has been posted and hopefully we will have someone hired within a month.

July Board meeting—Erin suggested an in-person meeting with an option to zoom in. Hopefully we will be able to announce our removal from high-risk status and it would be nice to celebrate with an in-person meeting, maybe even invite Kim Moore from MDOL. Cathy felt it was good to get together face to face every so often, she is in favor. Laurie is in favor as well. Chris agreed saying that some people have never been in the same room together in this capacity. Laurie offered to have it at Maine Housing. Chris suggested that might be the better option, as the MEP board room has been known to have virtual difficulties. Laurie booked the MHA space and the meeting will be moved to a 9 am start time to accommodate travel.

\$500,000 grant—sent the board the proposal for the \$500,000 grant. Erin received an email from the MDOL suggesting lowering the marketing campaign from \$200,000 to \$100,000 and increasing the Support Services not covered by WIOA from \$200,000 to \$300,000. Erin responded that she didn't know what \$100,000 would buy in today's market for a campaign. Met with a marketing firm suggested by John from Hannel Brothers, to discuss possibilities with no promises. The company, AnaniaBailey <https://ananiabailey.com/>, did a campaign for Worthington Scholarship geared toward youth. The goal was to get 700 scholarship applications from across the state and they received 730—for a cost of \$37,000. Proves that we can accomplish something meaningful for \$100,000. Will alert MDOL to let them know we are comfortable with making the change.

Other info—attended a 3-hour session called Bridges Out of Poverty. Excellent program that helps people understand the mindset that formulates when people live in chronic poverty. It is important to understand this to better serve our participants. Erin would like to develop a day-long workshop for front line staff of all the agencies identified in the MOU and as being part of the workforce system to better understand how we work together. The day would start with this Bridges Out of Poverty session. Going through a policy review. The board approved policies in April 2022 without sending them through MDOL. Some of them are using incorrect citations, and need to be reviewed and corrected. Need to develop a new policy for a stipend to help pay for people in a learning situation, rather than a work situation. Met with seven women from KVCAP and talked about ways to partner to help some of their clients. They use a whole family coaching approach and could include WIOA to help their clients. We also discussed transportation. I met with their transportation director the following week to see about the possibilities of using their vans to transport people to work. Will continue discussions when specific needs are on the table. Referring back to the Bridges Out of Poverty conversation, Chris and Laurie mentioned the work of Donna Beagle who also does workshops on poverty. In relation to a front-line staff workshop, Chris mentioned a group of navigators that already meets and perhaps we could combine meetings. They meet monthly, alternating between state-wide and regional meetings. He offered to get Erin in touch with the person who is in charge of the regional meetings.

Adjourn

Chair Cathy Witherspoon called for a motion to adjourn. Chris Winstead motioned to adjourn; Laurie Glidden seconded the motion. All in favor. Cathy adjourned the meeting at 10:21 am.

Next meeting: Wednesday, June 14, 2023, at 8:30 am.

Meetings attended by ED

4/13/2023 Joined with Laurie Glidden and visited all four Clubhouses associated with Kennebec Behavioral Health.

4/18/2023 met with director of Black Owned Businesses to discuss OJT and Work Experiences as well as board membership. Also met with ITN (Independent Transportation Network) of America to talk about partnering on a MDOT grant.

4/19/2023 One Stop Partner meeting.

4/20/2023 attended a Clean Energy presentation from the Governor's office at EMCC.

4/24/2023 met with Goodwill Northern New England and Patti Saarinen to discuss a pilot program with youth funded in part with SNAP E & T.

4/26/2023 attended monthly Strengthen LA meeting.

4/28/2023 met with KVCAP at Educare in Waterville to discuss WIOA and how it can help their clients enrolled in whole family coaching.

5/2/2023 attended MidMaine Chamber orientation session. Met two other businesses (CMP and Animal Shelter) and shared information about OJTs and Work Experiences.

5/8/2023 met with director of Hardy Girls, an organization that works with young girls, talked about the youth program in coordination with EMDC Youth Director.

5/9/2023 attended Bridges Out of Poverty program.