Central Western Maine Workforce Development Board   
**Operations Committee Minutes**  
February 9, 2022

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**Board Members Present**: Kelly Aho, Acting Chair; Grant Provost, Vice Chair; Razell Ward, Secretary; Laurie Glidden, At-Large Member; Robert Sezak, non-voting Community Member  
**Not Present:** Nick Paquet, Resources and Recruitment Chair  
**Others Present**: Blaine Flanders, Interim Executive Director; Sara McLaughlin, Contracted Accountant; Tom Fernands, EMDC; Susan Cerini, EMDC; Samantha Giasson, EMDC; Alex Lakeman, EMDC; Erin Benson, EMDC; Patti Saarinen, EMDC

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Chair Kelly Aho called the meeting to order at 8:30am.

1. **Approve Last Meeting Minutes**   
   **VOTED:** *To approve the January 12, 2022, meeting minutes as written.*   
   Motion: Laurie Glidden Second: Razell Ward Vote: All in Favor
2. **Staffing Needs**   
   Ms. Flanders presented a staff pay rate estimate which was based on hourly pay averages in the region. I am looking to hire in the next couple of months and would like to have someone hired before July. Mr. Sezak thought the pay rate comparatives did not include anything about benefits. Ms. McLaughlin stated that this is just a range of pay, and does not include benefits provided, however, as outlined in the finance manual, all staff would be eligible for benefits. Ms. Ward suggested a slightly higher hourly rate, to expand the quality of candidates who apply. Ms. Flanders stated that at this time, we need to review what the CWMWI can afford to hire, while budgeting to WIOA long term, and not budgeting to discretionary grants that will end in the next 6-9 months. Ms. Aho recommended a slightly higher pay rate also. She also suggested adding two sections to the job description/ad: 1) ability to work remotely, and 2) ability to attend in-person meetings as needed. Ms. Ward agreed with these changes to the description.
3. **Discuss Committees & Focus Groups**  
   Ms. Flanders showed her screen, of the 2022 CWMWI Standing & Ad Hoc Committee DRAFT list. She reviewed the current interest of board members for committees. We received over half of the board members' responses. She requested Ms. Aho appoint a chair to each committee and focus group. After that, Ms. Flanders suggested creating a draft list for each group and getting a by-in from each board member. Ms. Aho asked for committee input and recommendations if there is anyone that stands out to be a committee/focus group chair. No recommendations from the Operations Committee for chairs.
4. **Review CWMWI Bylaws**  
   Ms. Flanders shared her screen of the CWMWI bylaws, showing track changes of recommended updates based on federal law and regulations. She reviewed her recommended updates noted on the shared document. Ms. Aho stated that the vice-chair role as a business member has existed previously in the by-laws but does not exist in the current by-laws. Ms. Ward suggested stating ‘preference given to business member of the Workforce Board’ for the vice-chair role. Ms. Flanders’ recommendation to add this into the by-laws would support the addition of a regular progression in responsibilities from the vice-chair to the chair role. Ms. Flanders reviewed the remaining recommended updates in the shared CWMWI by-laws. Ms. Aho stated she would send her recommended updates to Ms. Flanders to add to the draft copy. Ms. Aho stated that the original copy of these by-laws does not include the recommendations from Ms. Kilroy last year, but those recommendations will be reviewed and considered to add to this draft.
5. **Financial Update**  
   Ms. McLaughlin shared her screen with the Budget to Actual as of December 31, 2021. She reviewed the spending numbers for each contract, and the percentage spent thus far on admin and program spending. Ms. Aho asked about admin spending 100% of funds, versus a lower percentage of program spending. Ms. McLaughlin emphasized that with all contracts the board has currently, we can spend 10% of the contract, and 90% is spent by the service provider. With that said, WIOA contracts can be 100% spent by the board before spent by the service provider. However, for discretionary grants (COVID, CAREER, Opioid), there needs to be an even proportion between admin and program spending. At the end of the contract, if the board spends 100% and the service provider spends 95%, the CEOs will be on the hook for returning that 5% overage of admin spending back to the state. Ms. McLaughlin also explained that there is a bell graph for each type. Admin spending forms a U shape on a graph, whereas the program spending forms an upside-down U shape. Ms. McLaughlin and Ms. Flanders have been working on securing the check-payment/AP system with MineralTree, and working with the state to ensure drawdowns are accurate and clarify questions from the state. Ms. Aho thanked Ms. McLaughlin for coming back to the CWMWI.
6. **Service Provider Survey Presentation**  
   Ms. Giasson and Mr. Lakeman from EMDC shared their screen to show the surveys PowerPoint presentation. They are looking for support and by-in from the Operations Committee to move forward with this project and collect any feedback. Ms. Aho suggested adding a referral section at the bottom of the surveys, for participants and employers. No other feedback from the committee for EMDC.
7. **Open Discussion/Any New Business**  
   Ms. Flanders discussed the opportunity for an apprenticeship grant for the CWMWI to apply to and outlined the pros and cons of being awarded this contract. She gave space to other comments from committee members. Ms. Glidden said it is a great opportunity, but with all the changes happening with the CWMWI, it seems like this is not the right time to apply. Ms. Ward asked if EMDC is applying for this opportunity. Ms. Benson said they are reviewing this grant, but there are no definite answers currently. Ms. Aho handed the meeting to the vice-chair and left the meeting. Ms. Ward stated that Lewiston Adult Education is looking at the apprenticeship grant proposal and is looking for partner and community support to use this grant funding to support existing apprenticeship programs. Further discussion ensued on apprenticeship, and a final decision was made by the committee to not apply for the apprenticeship grant opportunity at this time.  
     
   The State Workforce Board (SWB) is looking for representatives on three new committees from the local area boards. Ms. Flanders asked for any interest from committee members to serve on these SWB committees, or if anyone had an idea for recommendation from the board. Mr. Provost shared that he is a member of the SWB. Ms. Glidden volunteered to sit on the Worker Employment, Education and Training Committee as a representative for the local area. No further suggestions from the committee. Ms. Flanders will send around the draft committee descriptions to the operations committee for further discussion.

Vice Chair Grant Provost adjourned the meeting at 9:57am.

*Next meeting: Wednesday, March 9, 2022 at 8:30am.*