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

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**Board Members Present**: Grant Provost, Vice Chair; Razell Ward, Secretary; Laurie Glidden, At-Large Member; Chris Winstead, Workforce & Required Member; Robert Sezak, non-voting Community Member  
**Not Present:** Nick Paquet, Resources and Recruitment Chair  
**Others Present**: Erin Benson, Executive Director; Sara McLaughlin, Accountant

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Vice Chair Grant Provost called the meeting to order at 8:30am.

**Approve Last Meeting Minutes**   
No minutes were taken, so no vote was taken.

**Board membership**   
Grant is working with Matt at AFL-CIO to find a replacement for Nick Paquet, who is too busy to attend. Grant is considering a navigator hired through ARPA funds. He thinks she would be a good fit, but not sure if she meets the requirements of the WIOA guidance. Either way, he will find a replacement for Nick. He has also talked with Revision Energy and is seeking a potential board member from that company. Erin talked with Cathy Witherspoon about the chair role. While she is not interested in the chair role, she may consider a vice chair position. She did say she was unclear about the role of a board member. Erin mentioned a video on the National Association of Workforce Boards. She will plan some education around this topic for the January full board meeting. Grant said a hand-out would be helpful. Robert sent an email to two people at Sappi and will reach out to Huhtamaki. There is a person in management who lives in Benton that could be a possibility. Erin reviewed WIOA guidance for board make up: 51% business, 20% workforce; 5 required partners; and “other”. If you add members in the “other” category, it affects the percentages. The By-laws state that the board have a minimum of 20 and a maximum of 25. Larger membership requires more business participation and requires attendance for quorums. A 21-member board would be 11 business, 4 workforce, 5 required partners and 1 other. Current make-up: 8 business, 3 workforce, 4 required partners, and 3 others. Erin suggested an EMDC workforce employee fulfill the 4th workforce slot. Chris had suggested that the person from AVCOG fill the 5th required partner. Having 3 members in the other category necessitates adding more in business and workforce to maintain required percentages. Laurie did not feel comfortable asking Jim Trundy to step aside as he has devoted a lifetime to workforce and has historical perspective. Bruce Noddin has not attended meetings and can always come as a guest. Based on discussion, the ideal board composition would keep two in the “other” category (Laurie & Jim); 5 required; 4 workforce; and 12 business people. Chris is talking with potential board members, including Amy Landry from AVCOG. Laurie suggested Bigelow Brewing in Skowhegan. Grant mentioned Wits End on Madison Avenue in Skowhegan. There is also federal money for River Run Park development. Robert said he would reach out to Sam Hight who owns the building that Wits End occupies and is manager of Hight Ford. Chris suggested creating a planning cycle so board membership only turns over 1/3 per year. It could include waiving term limits in the bylaws for a certain period of time.

**Physical location**

On a tip from Sara, Erin reached out to Maine Manufacturing Extension Partnership (Maine MEP) to ask about office space. CWMWDB has used its conference space for board meetings in the past. Erin visited the space on October 10. They showed her three areas: one too large, one that was a suite in the back for two people, and a single office in a shared space. She received information about square footage and costs, but they also have an opportunity to sell the building, so a decision can’t be made until that is settled. The location is 87 Winthrop Street, a block from the CWMWDB’s former location. Once Erin receives information about the status of building ownership, plans can move forward.

**Financial Report**

Sara did not have a financial report, and did not prioritize it. There is such little activity going on. She will put a report together and send it out soon. It will show the board is well behind budget because most of the costs in the budget are geared toward end of the fiscal year, and there is only a month’s worth of staff (Erin) on board. It is just a formality, but she will do it as it is required in the financial manual.

**High Risk Status Update**

Erin and Sara developed an independent contract for Joanna Russell, former ED for the NWDB. Joanna has begun to review and make updates/changes to the Financial & Personnel Policy & Procedure Manual. Joanna met with Sara and Erin for clarification on current procedures. The three will meet again next week to develop a draft. There has been discovery about certain stand-alone policies, particularly a procurement policy and a sub recipient policy, that are also mentioned in the manual and sometimes have conflicting information. Neither Sara or Erin know why there is duplucation but Erin will find out from the MDOL. The work experience policy was included in the contract with EMDC—MDOL confirmed that it did not have to be a stand-alone policy. In the April board meeting, the board approved updated versions of the following policies: Individual Training Account, Support Services, Youth Incentives, On-the-Job Training, and Customized Training. The changes were never vetted through the MDOL. All policies were sent to Ginny Carroll for review.

**New Business**

Erin requested to create an Independent Contract with Ben Hawkins, the former communications coordinator for EMDC, to update the website and help with marketing materials if needed. He will charge $25 per hour.

**VOTED:** *To move forward with hiring Ben Hawkins through an Independent Contract at $25 an hour to update the website*.

Motion: Laurie Glidden Second: Robert Sezak

Discussion: No discussion.

Motion: Laurie Glidden Second: Robert Sezak Vote: All in Favor

Erin received a request from EMDC to include the purchase of a cell phone under technology in the Support Services policy. Many youth do not have access to a phone and cannot keep in contact with their workforce development specialist. A phone does not need internet access if the participant is around wifi. The phones can be purchased outright, no ongoing plans, for $50 - $100. Cards can be purchased for minutes. Grant asked if the person obtained employment, would the phone be returned. The answer was no. The Board nor Provider do not do this with computers, clothing, or any other support service. Razell was concerned about participants who became disengaged and came back only to get more minutes. Erin assured her that expectations were laid out in the Employment/Training plan and if the participant was not meeting expectations, the provider was not obligated to provide any service. Erin was going to include text in the support services policy and when Ginny was done approving all policies, she would send it back to the Operations Committee for another look before full board approval was sought in January.

Vice Chair Grant Provost adjourned the meeting at 9:56 am.

*Next meeting: Wednesday, January 11, 2023, at 8:30am.*