

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

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, Accountant; Patti Saarinen, EMDC

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

1. Approve Last Meeting Minutes

VOTED: *To approve the February 9, 2022, meeting minutes as written.*

Motion: Laurie Glidden

Second: Razell Ward

Vote: All in Favor

2. Service Provider Report

Ms. Saarinen explained the push for enrollments and spending on WIOA dislocated workers, WIOA youth, COVID-19 NDWG, and Connecting with Opportunities (Opioid NDWG).

Youth: EMDC meets weekly with staff to focus on youth, specifically on work experiences, addressing the gaps in performance. The goal is to enroll 40 youth in work experiences for PY20, which would spend about \$168,000. There are many sites and employers that would like to host youth for this initiative, but the difficulty is finding youth that are eligible: they must have at least one barrier to employment. EMDC is meeting with youth groups across the state, with a focus on rural high schools for specified training. Ms. Glidden asked if EMDC is working with youth homeless service providers in Bangor. Ms. Saarinen clarified if she was focused on Bangor, and she stated she can follow-up on this after speaking with Erin who is the lead in the Northeast local area. Ms. Glidden stated that many youth from Lewiston and Augusta congregate at the Bangor homeless shelters, because there aren't enough shelter services here in this region. Ms. Ward asked a clarifying question on 'money spent on youth', whether the money must be spent by June 30 or obligated by June 30. Ms. Saarinen said the state would like to see the funds spent by June 30, without any layover. She emphasized that no youth will be turned away, even if they come in later in the program year. Ms. Glidden suggested reaching out to New Beginnings and the Rumford Group Home in the local area. Ms. Saarinen stated these are existing relationships.

Dislocated Workers: Ms. Saarinen explained that the dislocated worker enrollment numbers are lower, which is partially good because more employers are looking for workers, and workers are going directly into employment and are not on unemployment for a long period of time (utilizing EMDC services). EMDC is working with the Bureau of Employment Services (BES) for additional referrals from the RESEA program, and EMDC will conduct outreach out of that 800+ list of individuals.

Connecting with Opportunities: Two new peer connectors were hired – one for Somerset (Hinckley CareerCenter) and one for Androscoggin (Lewiston CareerCenter). 67 additional enrollments are needed for this grant by December 31, 2022; approximately 7 or 8 enrollments per month from March to December. EMDC is partnering with many organizations who work with individuals directly impacted by the crisis and substance use disorder (SUD) recovery programs.

COVID-19: EMDC is going to meet the original contracted goal of 100 enrollments in the next few weeks. 10 enrollments left in this contract.

Ms. Aho offered additional resources for EMDC outreach. A dislocated worker is someone that is eligible for or has exhausted unemployment compensation, and there are other nuances that qualify individuals, too. Ms. Saarinen offered one-on-one meetings with board members who have additional questions on terminology and qualifications. Ms. Aho asked about Maine DHHS ASPIRE through MDOL. Ms. Saarinen added this program is now contracted with FedCap. SNAP has training dollars associated with this funding and is programmed by Goodwill of Northern New England.

3. Spending and Performance Plan

PY20 WIOA ends 6/30/22; COVID-19 NDWG ends 6/30/22; and Connecting with Opportunities (Opioid NDWG) ends 12/31/22.

Ms. Flanders has met with MDOL and EMDC to discuss the total funds that must be spent, outside of business as usual, in order to 100% spend down WIOA and NDWG funds by the contract end dates. It is critical that NDWG funds are spent in proportion for both program and board spending. Ms. Flanders shared her screen, showing 'total authorized funds', 'balance per FR-10', 'admin available', and '% remaining'. Ms. Flanders and EMDC have calculated the estimated remaining funds for each grant, if EMDC continued business as usual, without any additional efforts or initiatives.

Approximately (rounded to the nearest \$1,000) \$193,000 WIOA Youth, \$26,000 WIOA Adult, and \$34,000 WIOA Dislocated Worker program funds will remain unused after the PY20 WIOA contract ends 6/30/22 if EMDC continues business as usual (estimated on previous values from 7/1/21 to 3/1/22).

EMDC initiatives to spend estimated PY20 WIOA remaining funds: 1) spend \$168,000 WIOA Youth funds by enrolling 40 youth in work experiences and reach out to existing partners for youth referrals monthly, 2) build multiple On-The-Job Training (OJT) opportunities for WIOA Adult (several in progress currently), 3) hire additional peer workers for the Opioid NDWG to increase grant outreach, 4) develop stronger relationships with SUD-focused organizations in order to obtain additional referrals to this opportunity, and 5) increase overall spending for each participant through long-term training, higher wage training, and/or additional support services (within board policy limits).

Ms. Glidden asked about losing funds and shifting funds between WIOA types. Remaining WIOA funds will go back to the state, and they will have an additional year to spend the funds. Discretionary funds that are not spent by the end of the contract could impact the

amount of discretionary funding the CWMWDB could receive in the future.

4. Financial Update

Ms. McLaughlin reviewed the CWMWDB Budget to Actual as of February 26, 2022. EMDC has spent 57% and CWMWDB has spent 100% of PY20 WIOA funds. EMDC has 43% of funds to spend by 6/30/22, as mentioned earlier in this meeting. PY21 WIOA – EMDC has not spent yet, and the CWMWDB has spent 27% thus far. Opioid NDWG – EMDC has spent 72% and CWMWDB has spent 77%. The third installment of Opioid NDWG funds will come to us soon, and those funds will also need to be spent by 12/31/22. \$150,000 of the CWMWDB Opioid NDWG funds were lent to the Northeastern WDB and will not be paid back to the CWMWDB. COVID-19 NDWG – EMDC has spent 48% and CWMWDB has spent 51%. Again, the Opioid, COVID-19, and CAREER NDWGs need to be spent down in proportion, admin funds and program funds, to avoid unnecessary charges needed to be paid back to the state.

Staff Budget Review: To hire an Administrative Assistant, Ms. Flanders and Ms. McLaughlin met to discuss the budget for additional staff. Ms. McLaughlin shared her screen, showing two options for a new hire:

- Scenario 1) 40 hrs/wk with \$17/hr wage (wage from previous estimates) and full benefits

- Scenario 2) 20 hrs/wk with \$17/hr wage (wage from previous estimates) and no benefits

Total estimate expenses up for consideration = Scenario 1: \$248,625 for two staff; or Scenario 2: \$210,275 for two staff

Ms. Ward and Ms. Glidden were concerned that finding a part-time person may be impossible and it might be difficult to keep them on with no benefits. Both scenarios are over our 10% estimated formula budget. This estimated budget would secure an additional staff member until June 2023. Mr. Sezak suggested a higher wage, to \$19-\$20 /hour if we are not including benefits. Ms. McLaughlin added that for the budget, we must assume new hires would take all benefits presented to them.

VOTED: *To move forward with Scenario 1 (full time person with benefits) as presented by Sara McLaughlin's budget estimates.*

Motion: Laurie Glidden Second: Robert Sezak

Discussion: What would be the maximum rate, if \$17/hr is the minimum rate? Pay rate range for Scenario 1 could include up to \$20/hr.

Amendment: To move forward with Scenario 1 (full time person with benefits) as presented by Sara McLaughlin's budget estimates, to include a wage range of \$17-20/hour.

Motion: Laurie Glidden Second: Razell Ward Vote: All in Favor

5. Discuss CWMWI Bylaws

Ms. Flanders asked for committee comments to the draft CWMWI Bylaws she sent last week. She included comments and additions from Ms. Aho in this draft edition. Ms. Aho asked about updating the meeting notice sections, to ensure we no longer need to publish meetings in the newspaper. Ms. Flanders stated that verbiage was eliminated in section 5.1 of the draft bylaws.

VOTED: *To approve the Central Western Maine Workforce Initiatives ByLaws draft dated February 9, 2022, and to pass it on to the CEO Board for review and approval.*

Motion: Razell Ward

Second: Robert Sezak

Vote: All in Favor

6. Open Discussion/Any New Business

Nick Paquet has not been in contact with the board for three months. Additional outreach will be made to make contact with him by Mr. Provost and Ms. Flanders. Ms. Flanders will copy Ms. Aho on correspondence.

Board member Harvey Smith has resigned from the CWMWDB. Mr. Smith retired from working, and wanted to officially retire from this board position, too. The CEO Board is now working on finding a replacement for this business position.

Operations Committee will extend their meetings by 30 minutes, starting in April 2022.

Ms. Aho suggested honoring the past board chair at the next board meeting. Unanimous decision to recognize the past board chair, Craig Nelson, for his 10+ years of service to the CWMWDB. Mr. Nelson's office is still filing the CWMWDB annual reports for free as a favor. Ms. Flanders will purchase a plaque and invite Mr. Nelson to the next board meeting to receive his award and thank him for his service.

Ms. Ward asked Ms. Aho for an update on lawyer correspondence. Ms. Aho said there was no resolution to this correspondence. The lawyers have not made outreach for several months.

Chair Kelly Aho adjourned the meeting at 9:48am.

Next meeting: Wednesday, April 13, 2022, at 8:30am.