



Minutes approved
July 25, 2024

**Central Western Maine Workforce Development Board
Quarterly Workforce Board Meeting
April 25, 2024**

Board Members Present: Cathy Witherspoon, Chair; Razell Ward, Secretary; Laurie Glidden, At-Large Member/Youth Chair; Sue LeClair; Josh Henry; Trampas Hutches; Brandi Farrington; Chris Winstead, Treasurer & Chair of Resources; Kate Durkin; Diane Frigon; Billi Mitchell

Board Members Absent: Bruce Tisdale; Grant Provost, Chair of Recruitment; Monique Roy; Jim Trundy; Kendra Wheeler; Adam Wilson; Charlie Woodworth; Sam Hight

Staff Present: Erin Benson, Executive Director; Carrie Parker, Administrative Assistant

Others Present: Sara McLaughlin, Contracted Financial Manager; Tom Fernands, EMDC; Patti Saarinen, EMDC; Joe Pietroski, Kennebec County Commissioner; Susan Cerini, EMDC

1. Welcome and Introductions:

Cathy Witherspoon called the meeting to order at 8:34am. All items needing motions to approve were moved to the forefront of the meeting due to scheduling conflicts with board members.

VOTED: To approve the January 25, 2024, meeting minutes as written.

Motion: Chris Winstead Second: Razell Ward **Vote:** All in Favor

2. USDOL Monitoring Report (Financial Manual Update):

The following concern was brought up in the USDOL monitoring during their December 11-15, 2023, visit:

CWMWDB does not have policies and procedures in place which guarantees a competitive procurement process is regularly conducted for contractors to ensure open and fair competition. Additionally, the period of performance element was not indicated in the independent contractor agreement for accounting services dated December 27, 2021. This was our response that requires the board to approve the suggested updated language for the financial manual:

After reviewing the board's policies and procedures with regards to procurement, methods are in place to guarantee a competitive process for contractors. The current policy works well for contractors who perform a single function that has a definitive beginning and end date, such as that of an auditor. But for contractors who perform a continuous function such as that of our financial manager or service provider, the current policies don't meet the definition of regular competitive procurement. What is lacking is the period of performance by which an end date or number of years is identified by which a competitive process will again be undertaken for continuous operational functions.

WIOA does not prescribe a term of performance for a service provider. However, the WIOA Joint Final Rules does prescribe that a competitive process be done at least once every four years to procure a One Stop Operator. The State does not have a policy regarding the timeline for procurement of service providers. Based on a search of other state policies, current board practices, and the Code of Regulations 200.318-200,327, the following addition will be presented to the full board at the April 25, 2024, meeting for their approval to clearly define a competitive procurement process for ongoing operational functions.

Periods of Performance:

When procurement of goods and/or services does not have a natural performance end date, the following will be included in the request for quotes, Request for Application, or Request for Proposal:

The program period for contracts below \$5,000 will remain in effect for one year. Based on funding availability, the option to extend the contract up to two additional years exists, if performance is deemed acceptable, with the opportunity for re-negotiation at least sixty days before the expiration date of each contract. If the need for these goods or services continues past this three-year period, a competitive process will begin again.

The program period for contracts in excess of \$5,000 and below the Simplified Acquisition Threshold (SAT) of \$250,000 will remain in effect for one year. Based on funding availability, the option to extend the contract up to four additional years exists, if performance is deemed acceptable, with the opportunity for re-negotiation at least sixty days before the expiration date of each contract. If the need for these goods or services continues past this five-year period, a competitive process will begin again.

The program period for contracts in excess of the Simplified Acquisition Threshold (SAT) of \$250,000 will remain in effect for two years. Based on funding availability, the option to extend the contract up to four additional years exists, if performance is deemed acceptable, with the opportunity for re-negotiation at least sixty days before the expiration date of each contract. If the need for these goods or services continues past this six-year period, a competitive process will begin again.

Additionally, all contracts will be reviewed to include the period of performance element (both the beginning and end dates, and CWMWDB will submit updated contracts to the Maine Department of Labor by April 30, 2024.

Brandi asked if the amendment would still allow bringing in the same vendor once the bidding process is complete. She was concerned that this change would tie hands should we want to continue the use of the same vendor previously contracted. Erin explained that continuing with the same vendor is still an option, it would only include an end date for contracted services.

Sue asked if once voted on if the response would then get sent back, Erin explained that the responses were already sent to MDOL and once approved the updated financial manual and contracts would go to MDOL.

Cathy mentioned that this would allow a change to contracted services in the future if alternate services were desired. Sara stated that the contract does state that services can be terminated at any time as Maine is a hire/fire at will state.

VOTED: To approve the financial policy update as stated above under Period of Performance.

Motion: Razell Ward Second: Chris Winstead **Vote:** All in Favor

3. OJT Updated Policy:

Prior to the meeting Erin sent board members a copy of the OJT WIOA policy to review for discussion. She explained that the definition of seasonal employment within the current OJT policy is unclear. According to the US Government seasonal employment is a 6-month employment period. Patti was working with a company that offered employment for a 10-month period to start. This company is willing to do on-the-job training and offer participants 12-month positions and upward mobility in the future. This update would ensure that we are defining seasonal employment per the US Governments definition of 6-month period of employment and allow EMDC to utilize OJTs with the company.

VOTED: To approve the amended OJT policy definition of seasonal employment.

Motion: Chris Winstead Second: Razell Ward **Vote:** All in Favor

4. Approval of Marketing Campaign Agency:

Chris explained that the marketing campaign proposals for Disconnected Youth garnered four responses in total. These proposals were evaluated by the campaign team comprised of Chris Winstead, Angelina Klouthis-Jean, Erin, and Ben Hawkins. Everyone on the team read the proposals and after an initial discussion, decided two proposals should be evaluated by the team. Proposals from Fuseideas and Broadreach were evaluated and discussed among the team. It was decided to select Fuseideas for the campaign. This was brought to the Operations Committee at its April 10th meeting. The Operations Committee approved the selection and now the full board must vote.

Fuseideas is not a Maine-based company, but they do have offices in Portland Maine and staff within the Portland area that will be assigned to assisting with campaign needs. Chris said that their proposal seemed to cover all needs with an appropriate staffing level, which would not add work onto either Erin or Carrie. They also have experience with the targeted demographic of the campaign and put together a very detailed proposal focusing on social media areas frequented by youth. Fuseideas had a very clear budget that was detailed, and project driven. Ben did a deep investigation into the budgets of both Fuseideas and Broadreach. He felt the Fuseideas budget was much clearer and kept within the assigned funding. Broadreach was overbudget and, to meet the \$90,000 threshold, they were giving pro-bono cuts but were also looking at utilizing funding from region businesses/organizations to make up a \$6,500 gap. Erin was not eager to pursue this avenue. This played a part in the decision to move forward with Fuseideas.

VOTED: To approve the Fuse Ideas proposal for the marketing campaign.

Motion: Razell Ward Second: Sue LeClair **Vote:** All in Favor

5. Other/New Business:

Personnel Policy Update- Cathy explained to the board that the current PTO vacation policy begins employees on a tiered vacation system starting with lower PTO time and earning more PTO after certain years of employment are reached. As written, the policy does not give the organization leeway to change the amount of vacation offered to a new hire based on their position or level of experience. Erin requested the Operations Committee review this, as she was hoping to receive more than two weeks' vacation. The Operations Committee discussed this and are bringing their recommendation to the full board. The first part is to change the wording in the personnel policy to give the board discretion to grant an increase. The second is to offer Erin additional vacation time.

VOTED: To approve changing the PTO vacation policy as written by the Operations Committee: *The Board of Directors may grant additional vacation time to an employee based on the individual's level or experience and/or expertise. This action will require a board vote, and the amount will be stated in the employee's offer letter or, in the case of an existing employee, will be documented in the employee's personnel file.*

Employees having less than ten (10) years of completed service may accumulate vacation leave to a total of twenty-four (24) working days. Those employees having more than ten (10) years of service, the last five (5) of which have been continuous, may carry forward vacation time to a total of thirty (30) workdays, up to a maximum of six (6) weeks, while continuing in the employ of the Central Western Maine Workforce Development Board. Employees may accumulate up to 240 hours, and upon separation from employment, an employee will not be paid for more than 240 hours.

Motion: Razell Ward **Second:** Chris Winstead **Vote:** All in Favor

Both Cathy and Billi stated that their companies always considered offering higher levels to an executive rather than giving them the same level as first-time employees. In a competitive market, this is important, whether it is Erin or any executive that will come after her. Billi asked if the vacation time for Erin would be pro-rated to January 1, 2024, at the new 240hrs a year rate. Sara confirmed the pro-rating would be effective starting January 1, 2024. Everyone on the board agreed to offer the 240 hours and pro-rate it from January 1, 2024.

VOTED: To approve offering 240 hours of vacation to Erin Benson and prorating it from January 1.

Motion: Chris Winstead **Second:** Razell Ward **Vote:** All in Favor

6. Stipend Policy:

Erin has been reviewing federal regulations and various workforce board policies around the country for policies regarding stipends. One of the reasons this is important to have is

participation with the Young Mainers Workforce Program, which was initially paid through work experience wage, must be changed to a stipend. Federal policies around work experiences state a wage must be paid when there is a clear relationship between an employer/employee. For income earned due to attendance in an occupational or work ready skills training, a stipend should be used. In addition, EMDC is placing several participants in multiple pre-apprenticeship programs. Income earned needs to again be a stipend rather than a wage. Per WIOA there are three ways payment can be given to youth: 1) through a wage that is associated with an employer/employee relationship, 2) a stipend which can be paid for someone's participation in an activity like a training, job training or apprenticeship, and 3) an incentive, where you are earning money for good behavior like completing a Hi-Set or a work experience.

Erin put together a stipend policy for youth and sent it to Kim Moore at BES to review before bringing it to the board. She is also creating an adult stipend policy, which is more complex. There is no mention of stipends for adults within any current regulations. After consulting with the Federal Project Officer (FPO) in Boston via the MDOL, she was directed toward a part of the law that outlines a Needs Related Payment (NRP) that could be used to pay an adult or dislocated worker a stipend for attending a training. Erin feels that this is an important policy, especially for adults, to offer them financial support to pay bills while engaging training options that would help them find jobs/careers with family-sustaining wages. Razell asked for confirmation that this would cover both youth and adults to provide more incentive for them to join programs.

The AGC has a program starting on May 12th, and these policies need to be approved and in place at that time. Erin will send both the youth and adult policies to the board once they have been approved by MDOL. She will need to have a vote via email in order to have them in place for the pre-apprenticeship May 12.

7. Introduction of New Board Member-Billi Mitchell:

New board member Billi Mitchell was introduced to the group, after all members introduced themselves. Billi has had a long and impressive military career working in communications and security. Billi is currently working at Irving Woodlands LLC and Irving Forest Productions Inc. as the Human Resource Business Partner responsible for all operational aspects of talent acquisition and human resource needs.

8. Service Provider Report-EMDC:

Enrollments:

They have 94 adults enrolled out of the planned 109 which puts them at 86.2% of plan. Enrollment numbers include both new and carry-in customers. 68 youth enrolled out of the planned 105 which puts them at 64.7 % of the plan. Since they adjusted the Dislocated Worker numbers, they have enrolled 47 of the planned 43 putting them at 109.3% of plan.

Things we have been doing for Outreach:

The three community-based organizations, Maine Immigrant and Refugee Services (MEIRS) in Androscoggin County, Western Maine Community Action (WMCA) covering Franklin and Oxford Counties, and the Maine Re-entry Network (MERN) covering Kennebec and Somerset Counties, are sending referrals. They have had the best success with MEIRS. They are continuing to run reports out of Maine Job Link and sending text messages to registered job seekers in all 5

counties. They meet with staff weekly to review referrals and enrollments. Staff continue to report that many of the referrals do not respond to contact efforts; a minimum of 3 attempts are made for each referral. Several staff attended an in-person meeting hosted by the Penobscot Job Corps in Bangor, the purpose was to get to know each other again and reestablish partnerships. Staff presented at the Financial Aid 101 seminar conducted by FAME. The audience was school counselors and education partners looking to connect their students with resources that cover costs for higher education.

Staff presented at the quarterly Community of Practice for Peer Navigators meeting. The idea was to help Peer Navigators learn about the Workforce System and how it can be a resource for their clients and the long-term sustainability planning around our shared work. Staff attended the Maine Youth Transition Collaboration hosted by the Foster Care program. The focus was for organizations that work with youth 16+ to have an opportunity to network and learn about resources that serve youth. Staff attended a Community Dinner at the Skowhegan High School to speak with community members and business leaders about the [Aspire initiative](#) at MSAD 54. This initiative is district-wide with a focus to advance aspirations for students of all ages as they consider and plan for their futures. Staff were invited to present to Augusta Vocational Rehabilitation staff regarding WIOA services, how to make referrals, and how to support mutual customers.

Funding:

EMDC continues to spend PY22 money for all formula programs except In School Youth and are making every effort to appropriately spend the funds, but low enrollment numbers and braiding resources with the Competitive Skills Scholarship Program, FedCap and HOPE has affected spending. Extending some of the youth work experiences and doing some Adult transitional jobs are two ways to spend some of these funds, they recently adjusted how some staff time is charged. The Associated General Contractors construction program in Kennebec County starts in May and they are hoping to do some enrollments and spending for that project.

As Erin mentioned in the board report, "One thing that did negatively affect youth expenditures using PY22 funds was a state request on January 30 to cease spending money on In School Youth (ISY) due to the 50/50 youth waiver not carrying over to PY22. Even though the CWMWDB region was aligned with the 75% OSY and 25% ISY funding split, the CWM region had to stop spending PY22 funds on ISY to help with the overall state percentages. We could still enroll and work with youth, but any costs associated with that work needs to be charged to PY23 funds."

General Information:

Currently there are 22 people enrolled in pre-apprenticeship/apprenticeship programs since the beginning of this program year; the majority have been in the healthcare career pathway program with Lewiston Adult Education, the AFL-CIO construction pre-apprenticeship, and the Reed & Reed construction pre-apprenticeship. Also enrolled are 2 people in On-the-Job-Training: 1 at Reed & Reed and 1 at Tree Street Youth.

Projects:

Enrolling people in projects, which are "group" trainings with direct employment opportunities upon completion, continues to be a valuable activity. This program year they have done 14 projects enrolling 65 people: 35 in adult, 7 Dislocated Workers, 5 Youth and 18 QUEST.

Success Stories:

Adult Sue was a single parent with a child who had a disability. She received SNAP benefits, housing assistance and SSI. She was enrolled in the Gray/New Gloucester Adult Ed certified medical assistant program at St. Mary's. After successfully completing the program, Sue thought she had employment, but the hospital took a downturn and had a hiring freeze. She diligently applied for jobs for many weeks, but lack of experience made it difficult to land a position. The WIOA program assisted her with tuition, tools and uniforms, transportation, and extended childcare. Sue's persistence finally paid off and she was offered a job at Central Maine Healthcare in their OBGYN department as a medical assistant for 40 hours a week.

Dislocated Worker: Richard was a veteran who had been laid off in August of 2023 where he had been making \$31.50/hour. He was married and his wife received SSI. Richard had extensive experience as a maintenance supervisor but no actual credential. Richard completed the 180-hour oil heat technician training at MEMA and was hired full-time by Central Maine Health in the maintenance department at their Bridgton Hospital facility. He is making \$30 an hour with benefits including medical, dental, vision and PTO. The WIOA program will continue to assist with mileage reimbursement until he starts getting a regular paycheck.

Youth: Faiza was a 24-year-old, low-income female who received SNAP benefits and lived with her cousin. She did not have a license or vehicle and depended on others for transportation. She had only held one job, as a retail sales associate for 3 years, back in her home country of Somalia. She completed high school in Somalia but was basic skills deficient so enrolled in classes at Lewiston Adult Education to improve her English and Math skills. Faiza had recently obtained her US work authorization. She came to EMDC for assistance with the Healthcare Pathways program at Lewiston Adult Education. We covered her tuition and assisted her with a resume, clothing, and driving lessons. Faiza successfully completed both the PSS and C N A training. She also began work as a PSS at Woodland's making \$23/hour while she waits for her C N A to be listed on the registry. Faiza also received her driver's permit.

9. Finance Update-Sara McLaughlin:

Sara gave an update regarding current administrative financials with the budget through March 2024. The Opioid grant ended on December 31st and was spent 100%. PY 22 is being watched closely as it ends June 30 and EMDC still has \$325,000 left to spend before it expires. Erin has been monitoring this and how much they have been requesting from the drawdowns. She feels that dislocated worker funds will be spent, but has concerns around both adult and youth spending. Taking the information she had she asked EMDC leadership to look at what they are asking for in drawdowns and what will ultimately be left behind and develop strategies to spend down the money and serve more people.

Sara pointed out that EMDC has tapped into PY23 WIOA for ISY, as they were required by the state to cease spending PY22 on ISY. The remainder of PY22 Youth funds must be spent on OSY as explained above in the service provider report. The board has spent 100% of the PY22 funds and is currently working on spending from the PY23 funds.

The Career grant ends in September 2024 and the remaining funds for CWMWDB will be spent on close out funds, She feels that EMDC will not have any problems spending the rest of the funds within this grant prior to the expiration in September.

Sara feels that the QUEST grant will start picking up in spending despite the slow start since the Opioid funds have been depleted. Erin reminded everyone that despite the start date for QUEST being October 2022, the contract was not signed until late February 2023. Sara stated that the expiration date of September 30th is not a concern at this time as there may be an extension for spending.

Reviewing the administrative expenses, 42% of the budget has been spent so far. Due to the ARPA and QUEST contracts doubling the budget the numbers are skewed this year. Removing that anomaly, the budget is just under budget where it should be. There are no concerns showing despite the overture in travel costs. Budgeting will be starting soon with for the PY24 WIOA funds. Sara and Erin will meet between May and June to work through the new budget and get it to the Board for approval before the new fiscal year starts.

Cathy asked if an acronym list could be created and sent out to everyone for a better understanding of the topics being spoken about. Carrie and Erin will work at updating the list and getting it out to everyone.

10. Youth Committee-Laurie Glidden:

WIOA does not require there to be a Youth committee, but Erin felt that it was important to have one and for members to work directly with organizations that work with or focus on youth. Laurie was asked to chair the committee, the committee includes EMDC's Karyssa Murchison and Lisa Hartnett, Roy Goodale from Tree Street Youth, Shannon Saxby from the Cutler Institute, that is contracted to work with foster youth from the Office of Child and Family Services, Bonita Tompkins from The Center for Entrepreneurial Studies, and Vic Esposito from JMG. The first meeting was held in January and has met monthly through March to set goals for the committee.

Laurie wanted to ensure that the committee would meet to focus on action items rather than gathering to listen to information. The April meeting did not have many people present. In light of the goal to be an action-oriented committee, it was decided that the next meeting would be in connection with the marketing campaign's focus group work—to help with recruitment for the groups and development of questions.

Laurie and Erin recently attended the NAWB conference, and Laurie focused her sessions on youth, being the chair for the youth committee. She was able to speak with some of the presenters on the most successful strategies that they have used to connect with youth in their regions. She said that one of the best responses was that someone connects with the parents of the youth in their area using social media.

She attended a session with an organization that uses Virtual Reality and has found it very successful and feels that looking more into using CDS funds for a VR project would be something

to consider. She said the biggest take away is working with the funding that we have and working with partnering organizations to be successful and pool available resources.

11. Executive Director's Report:

The WIOA state plan was sent to the feds in March. Erin sent a copy of the summary to all board members. The state regarding has not mentioned any feedback or acceptance of the plan, as of yet. This plan focuses on how the state will spend WIOA funding across the required partners: Adult, Dislocated Worker, and Youth Programs authorized under Title I-B of WIOA (EMDC with CWMWDB oversight); Wagner-Peyser Labor Exchange and Employment Services (Career Centers); Trade Adjustment Assistance under the Trade Act of 1974; Jobs for Veterans State Grant (Chapter 41 of Title 38 U.S.C.) all three administered by Bureau of Employment Services; Adult Education and Family Literacy Act programs, administered by the Dept. of Education; and Rehabilitation programs authorized under Title I of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973: Division of Vocational Rehabilitation (DVR) and Division of the Blind and Visually Impaired (DBVI).

Representatives from all these areas participated in several months of development, MDOL doing the heavy lifting. It is a 300-page document that is intertwined with elements from the Governor's updated version of the Maine Economic Development Strategy 2020-2029. And it will inform our local 4-year plan, which we must submit by June 30, 2025. At the July quarterly meeting, which will hopefully be in person, Erin will break down the current plan, any guidance from the feds on the development of the plan, and the board's role in creating the plan. The plan looks at what is happening in our region—what are the major industry sectors, what is the growth potential, who is our population, and how can we best utilize resources to support a thriving economy that will be good for business and good for the people and communities who live and work in the region. While it may sound aspirational, the board can create a plan that makes a difference. Erin has been attending workshops and sessions regarding LMI and data. At the NAWB conference in March, she attended every data session available. She's attended data sessions through Workforce GPS, a site supported by the Education & Training Administration that oversees WIOA. She wants to make sure the board creates a data-informed plan. And there is a difference between gathering data, and then analyzing it for action. For instance, what does it mean when the CWM region has a higher percentage of disconnected youth, people 16-19 who are not in school and not working. That's why some of the ARPA funding is being invested in a marketing campaign. What does it mean when Somerset County is 10% below the national average of labor participation rate in 25-54 year olds, but Androscoggin is not. What do we do? Erin is expecting the board to take an active role in the creation of the plan sharing what they know of the economic factors in their areas. Erin will also be investigating a company called Lightcast that provides LMI data and analytics to hundreds of boards around the country. Galan Williamson from NWDB and Erin will be meeting with a Lightcast representative in early July. CCWI has been using their services for 13 years. EMDC does have access to JobsEQ, and Tom Fernands provides the board with county specific and region-wide economic overviews every six months. CCWI does not have this, so maybe the board doesn't need services from Lightcast. But in this planning phase, she wants to make sure we have access to the best, most accurate information that can inform the four-year plan.

Speaking of data, the LMI Institute (LMII) and Projections Managing Partnership (PMP) through a grant from the Employment and Training Administration (ETA) is coordinating an LMI Data User Insights Academy focused on improving state workforce and LMI use and communication. The Academy is a collaborative learning environment in which state-based teams of data producers (state LMI agencies) and data users will come together to identify opportunities to build closer relationships as well as work on addressing a specific challenge related to the use and communication of LMI data. Erin will be attending an information session this afternoon. She forwarded the email to the LMI state director, Mark McInerney, and Kim Moore, the director of the Bureau of Employment Services and informed Commissioner Fortman.

ARPA grant—The first part of the \$500,000 (\$200,000 for the Community-based Organization contracts for outreach and referrals and the Marketing Campaign for Disconnected Youth) is well underway. Erin meets with each of the CBOs (MRN-Maine Re-entry Network; WMCA Western Maine Action Agency; MEIRS Maine Immigration & Refugee Services) once a month to go over their outreach and referrals. Prior to this small outreach contract, EMDC had not received referrals from MEIRS. From January through March, EMDC received 19. A small committee reviewed the four proposals submitted for the marketing campaign geared toward disconnected youth (16-19 years old, not in school or work). Two were worthy of further evaluation. The committee evaluated the two (Broadreach & Fuseideas) and selected Fuseideas as the preferred bidder. The committee presented their recommendation to the Operations Committee, which is recommending it to the full board. In light of the board's vote to select Fuseideas, ED will begin work on a contract. MDOL has accepted the proposal for the additional \$300,000. CWMWDB will hire Fit First, a company that developed an assessment based on psychological research, predictive analytics, machine learning and their proprietary algorithm. The goal is to assess a person's behavioral characteristics that are more reliable predictors of success in an occupation. The assessment tool is tied to the occupations outlined in ONET. A job seeker can take a 15-minute assessment and see how their traits match the traits that are most relevant to a specific occupation. The tool will be used in a pilot to target 5 high schools in Oxford County in partnership with the Northern Forest Center, who has a Northern Regional Border Commission (NRBC) grant to establish Extended Learning Opportunities (ELO) in the same five of Oxford County high schools. The rest will be used to partner with a Somerset/Franklin County group and GoMaine to solve transportation issues by renting 7-passenger mini vans that could transport 4-6 workers to a place or places of employment. Each van would cost \$1300 per month, a cost that would include insurance and maintenance. Nine vans could be rented for 18 months for a total cost of \$210,600.

IFA and MOU—the Infrastructure Funding Agreement. The WIOA legislation identifies 16 required partners who must establish at least one Comprehensive One Stop in the region, where all programs are present either in person or through information and the ability to connect through a referral process. The partners negotiate a funding agreement whereby all contribute to overall costs. CWMWDB's comprehensive site is the Lewiston Career Center, and of the 16 partners only 13 reside within the CWM region. An IFA, which usually lasts for three years, was developed rapidly with great support from the state as there was no board staff, to be signed by June 30, 2022. However, it was only signed for one year, which means it expired on June 30, 2023. Thinking the document had a three-year shelf, Erin was surprised to discover in September of 2023 that it was out of date. She worked with MDOL and the Attorney General's Office on a solution. All partners agreed to extend the IFA until June 30, 2024, and the Memorandum of Understanding, which outlines what all partners do in the workforce

ecosystem, until June 30, 2025. All partner emails agreeing to the extension were finally received in March, so the board is in compliance. Erin has a meeting in May with all partners to renegotiate the IFA.

Letters of Support:

ACG Maine has applied for a grant to continue their construction academies and I wrote them a letter of support.

The Maine Department of Transportation is seeking funding from the feds for transportation infrastructure. This could support some major improvements for the Western Maine Transportation Services, an agency that serves Androscoggin, Oxford, and Franklin counties' transportation needs. WMTS buses and vans are open to the public, with services in Lewiston-Auburn, Brunswick, Rumford, Farmington-Wilton, Norway-South Paris-Oxford, Sugarloaf, Sunday River, and points in between.

Main Street Skowhegan is sending in their application for Phase 2 of the Recompete grant. They asked if I would write a community commitment letter, which I did, and they asked me to join the Coalition's Leadership Team, which I agreed to and sent the required resume and bio.

Employer summit is May 14 at the Cross Insurance Center in Bangor. Registration can be found here: <https://www.maineemployersummit.com/>

Kendra Wheeler is stepping down from her board membership due to conflicting career duties. ED thanked her for her service. Chris Waite, an owner of a company that supports the infrastructure around broadband will be joining the board in July.

12. Adjourn Meeting:

VOTED: To adjourn the meeting at 10:08am.

Next Board Meeting Date: Thursday July 25, 2024, in-person (location TDA), 9:00am-11:00am

ED Outreach 1/26/2024 through 4/25/2024

1/26/2024 Met with Valerie McNamara, a JMG representative in the Skowhegan school system to discuss how JMG and WIOA can work together to help youth find employment experiences.

1/29/2024 Met with Lisa Rice, a former ED in workforce, who now is providing technical assistance through the ETA's Next Level Now Collaborative.

1/29/2024 Laurie Glidden and I met with the Maine Youth Advisory Board, an organization of youth activists, to talk about the WIOA Youth program.

1/31/2024 Met with Heather Kerner and BRS folks to discuss apprenticeships for people with disabilities and how WIOA 1B might partner.

2/5-7/2024 Tour through Oxford, Franklin, Somerset counties

Monday, February 5

- OpBox in Woolwich—Ben Davis, owner. Ben built tiny house for The Center for Entrepreneurial Studies, a youth partner in Farmington. Talked about OJTs and work experiences. Toured business.
- Financial Navigator Discussion with Community Credit Union (Jennifer Hogan and Betsy Sibley) in Lewiston and Cathy Witherspoon about expanding CCU's Financial Navigator program to more businesses in other CWM counties.

Tuesday, February 6

- Lights Out Gallery in Norway—Daniel Sipe, co-founder. Talked about youth work experiences and gave him information about Senior Community Service Employment Program (SCSEP).
- Met with Kari Taylor from Western Maine Addiction Recovery Initiative (WMARI) to discuss how the Quest grant could help WMARI participants.
- Met with Amy Scott of The Northern Forest Center (NFC) and Mia Purcell from Community Concepts, Inc. (CCI). NFC received a Northern Border Regional Commission WORC grant to hire directors and develop programming in five Oxford County high schools around Extended Learning Opportunities (ELO). Talked about how we could support the youth through WIOA funding, as their grant only covers salary for the directors.
- Strengthen Lewiston/Auburn (SLA) marketing committee
- Met with George O'Keefe, the Economic Development director of Rumford to discuss challenges and opportunities in his region.

Wednesday, February 7

- Met with Doug Cyr at Irving Woodland in Dixfield to discuss their employment needs and how we might be of service, and to ask to provide a director for the board.
- Visited the Wilton Career Center
- Met with Jordan McMullen at Foster CTE in Farmington. Had met her a year ago when she was new to her position. Talked about our youth programs, their apprenticeship grant and how we could work together.
- Met with Maygan Dunlap, the new director of the Skowhegan Regional Chamber of Commerce. We discussed ways that WIOA can help businesses and job seekers.
- Gave a presentation to the Somerset County Commissioners regarding the board and the required partnership with Chief Elected Officials.
- Touched base with Christian Savage, the director of Somerset Economic Development. He wrote the board into a grant from the DECD, and we are moving toward ideas to incorporate that funding into our youth marketing campaign.

2/9/2024 Met with MEIRS staff to discuss ways WIOA might support internships.

2/14/2024 Met with staff of Maine Youth Action Network to discuss ways to partner on supporting youth in work experiences.

2/15/2024 Attended KCVOG CEDS Implementation Committee Meeting.

2/16/2024 Met with Chris Waite, owner of a company that supports broadband infrastructure to discuss career pathways in the industry.

2/21/2024 Convened a meeting with EMDC's youth director and directors of two Upward Bound programs to discuss ways to support their summer participants.

2/22/2024 Convened a meeting with EMDC's youth director and the director of the Center for Entrepreneurial Studies in Farmington to discuss ways to support CES youth in summer work experiences.

2/22/2024 Convened a meeting with EMDC's youth director, the director of the Northern Forest Center (NFC) in Bethel, and the Center's financial partner, CCI. NFC received a WORC grant from the Northern Regional Border Commission to serve 5 high schools in Oxford County with Extended Learning Opportunities (ELO). The grant covers the cost of funding ELO directors at each high school for three years. The goal was to see how WIOA might support funding for student needs.

2/26/2024 Attended the quarterly meeting of Transforming Maine's Future Forest Workforce: Seamless Pathways (FOR/ME), whose goal is to partner with industry people to understand the recruitment needs of the future and work with an agency developing career pathways.

2/28/2024 Attended the monthly meeting of the Manufacturing Association of Maine's (MAME) Employee Growth Services Committee whose focus is to understand the recruitment needs of Maine's manufacturers and how to attract people to careers in manufacturing. large.

2/28/2024 Attended the Strengthen LA (Lewiston/Auburn) monthly meeting.

2/29/2024 Met with GoMaine and MDOL to discuss transportation options for grant.

3/5/2024 Presented to the Office of Child & Family Services Youth Transition Specialists at their monthly meeting in Augusta. These specialists work with youth transitioning out of foster care. Children who have spent at least one day in foster care are automatically eligible for our youth programs.

3/5/2024 Met with team from Western Maine Community Action (WMCA), one of the recipients of our community-based Organization grants, to discuss referrals and strategies moving forward.

3/6/2024 Met with Drew Rondeau from Maine Re-Entry Network (MERN), one of the recipients of our community-based Organization grants, to discuss referrals and strategies moving forward.

3/6/2024 Attended an information session at KVCC for potential candidates for one of their short-term training sessions. Offered information on how WIOA can support them.

3/7/2024 Met with team from Maine Immigration and Refugee Services (MEIRS), one of the recipients of our community-based Organization grants, to discuss referrals and strategies moving forward.

3/8/2024 Attended the Maine State Workforce Board meeting. Listened to a presentation by Kathryn Ferrence, Director of Workforce Development at the Maine Tourism Association. Asked for her business card so we could discuss possible partnership.

3/8/2024 Met with Bill Dowling, executive director for Olympic Workforce Development Council in Washington State. I was connected with him through the Next Level Now Technical Assistance team as a possible mentor.

3/14/2024 Attended the Mid-Maine Chamber Business Breakfast of the use of AI and what it means to the future of work.

3/14/2024 Convened & hosted a Skowhegan Youth Work Opportunities meeting to bring together people who worked with youth, could employ youth, and could pay for youth employment. It included people from Main Street Skowhegan, Somerset Career & Technical Center, JMG, Maine Youth Action Network, EMDC, and Somerset Economic Development.

3/15/2024 Met individually with Kathryn Ferrence, Director of Workforce Development at the Maine Tourism Association. We talked about her internships with youth and how we might support them through a work experience. I connected her with Marianne from EMDC to discuss potential for supporting work experiences or OJT's with tourism-related businesses.

3/19/2024 Met with Main Street Skowhegan and Central Maine Growth Council to discuss their plan for phase 2 of their Recompete grant.

3/20/2024 Met with Maine Connectivity Authority and Central Maine Community College to discuss their broadband certificate program.

3/21/2024 Attended the Youth Leadership Advisory Team (YLAT)'s Learning Exchange meeting in Waterville. YLAT hosts two learning exchanges each year to bring together people who work with youth to learn about trends and partnering to better serve youth.

3/22/2024 Met with Patti Saarinen from EMDC and MEIRS team to discuss their questions around potential support for some interns. Explained that participants had to qualify and be looking for work or training that leads to work.

3/23-26/2024 Board member Laurie Glidden and I attended the National Association of Workforce Boards annual conference in DC.

3/27/2024 Attended the KVCC Career & Transfer Fair. Helped at EMDC's table. Spoke to several businesses about work experiences, OJTs and their recruitment/retention issues. Spoke with Barbara Richard from SKILLS, Shawn Michaud from Seacoast Securities, Brian Jonah KVCC's welding instructor, someone from The Good Crust, staff from Reddington Fairview, Kathryn Ferrence from Maine Tourism Association. Followed up with all of them.

3/27/2024 Attended monthly Strengthen LA meeting.

4/2/2024 Met with Karen Henderson formerly on the workforce development team at CCI and now working with a training organization called Cengage. We discussed potential uses for her product and the need to get it on the ETPL. She asked if I would be willing to speak to the Rotary Club in Farmington and I said of course. She is looking at a date in July.

4/3/2024 Attended a meeting with AGC, EMDC, and ACAP to discuss the particulars of enrolling youth into the construction academies to prepare for a seamless experience this summer.

4/4/2024 Met with team from Western Maine Community Action (WMCA), one of the recipients of our community-based Organization grants, to discuss referrals and strategies moving forward.

4/8/2024 Facilitated panel of union representatives during a session at the Maine Counseling Association's annual conference. This yearly conference is attended by many high schools and guidance counselors. Panelists talked about the pathway to good union careers through apprenticeship. Thanks to Grant Provost for securing the panelists. Small but engaged crowd.

4/10/2024 Attended a FAME session regarding their Claim Your Future program, a fun way to engage youth in financial literacy. I am working to host them in a One Stop Partner meeting as this may be a free tool that others could use for both youth and adults.

4/10/2024 Attended the Business After Hours program at the Mid-Maine Humane Society in Waterville. Connected with their volunteer coordinator about youth work experiences at the facility.

4/11/2024 Attended the LA Chamber business breakfast regarding businesses focused on energy/climate issues. Was held at Burnt Ends in Auburn. The owner gave a quick synopsis of their business and the road to creating the business. He spoke passionately about mentoring youth through his business. I spoke to him afterwards about youth work experiences.

4/17/2024 Hosted quarterly One Stop Partner meeting. Lots of great stories of people partnering with each other to serve mutual clients.

4/18/2024 Attended Lewiston Adult Ed (LAE)'s graduation for their Healthcare Pathways program. Fourteen new Mainers from five countries celebrated earning their Certified Nursing Assistant licenses. LAE's pre-apprenticeship healthcare pathways curriculum embeds English language learning alongside healthcare occupational skills. The program begins with students earning their bloodborne pathogens certification, which allows them to gain employment in a healthcare facility's environmental services department. Those who have an interest can continue for their Personal Support Specialist certification, and then the Certified Nursing Assistant license, the latter of which requires passing a state exam. Laura Fortman, Commissioner of the Maine Department of Labor, was on hand to speak and congratulate the graduates, and Lewiston Mayor Carl Sheline was also in attendance and even helped pin one of the graduates.

4/18/2024 Attended Maine Youth Transition Council's Advisory Board meeting. This is an organization that focuses on foster youth. They had done some listening sessions with youth to get their opinions on several topics including mental health and workforce.

4/19/2024 Met with Drew Rondeau from Maine Re-Entry Network (MERN), one of the recipients of our community-based Organization grants, to discuss referrals and strategies moving forward.

4/22/2024 Met with team from Maine Immigration & Refugee Services (MEIRS), one of the recipients of our community-based Organization grants, to discuss referrals and strategies moving forward.

4/22/2024 Met with Laura Rodas, the Director of Education for the Maine Department of Corrections. I connected with her regarding our development of a partnership with Jason Wang, co-founder of Freeworld, a company dedicated to serving America's biggest underdogs and most overlooked talent pools; people with criminal histories. We are discussing a CDL-A program that could be delivered in Maine's long-term correctional facilities. Since the CWM region has no long-term facilities, I met with Laura to discuss how we could serve the jails. We talked about doing a pilot project in Somerset County jail. She will talk with Commissioner Liberty.