

Central Western Maine Workforce Development Board
Workforce Board Quarterly Meeting Minutes
April 28, 2022
Via Zoom Video Technology

Board Members Present: Kelly Aho, Acting Chair/Treasurer; Grant Provost, Vice Chair; Razell Ward, Secretary; Laurie Glidden, At-Large Member; Andrea Patstone; Sue LeClair; Kendra Wheeler; Cathy Witherspoon; Diane Frigon; Kim Lindlof; Jim Trundy; Steve Jorgensen; Chris Winstead

Board Members Absent: Peter Wright; Nick Paquet; Trampas Hutches; Bruce Tisdale; Harvey Smith; Josh Henry; Bruce Noddin.

Staff Present: Blaine Flanders, Interim Executive Director

Others Present: Sara McLaughlin, Contractor; Erin Benson, EMDC; Tom Fernands, EMDC; Patti Saarinen, EMDC

1. Call to Order & Welcome

Chair Kelly Aho opened the meeting at 9:00am.

2. Introductions & Updates

Sue LeClair, BES doing a great deal of outreach in underserved areas, mostly rural, through ARPA funding. Focused on both job seekers and employers, working in conjunction with partners also doing outreach, helping to establish referral pipelines. Looking for suggestions from those present about where BES might do outreach. Razell Ward, the adult ed state director is leaving, currently in the hiring process. HUB is working hard with community college regarding free tuition. State push for high set completers so they can access this free tuition. Winding up construction program that will be completed in May. Grant Provost—just started legislative session and are pushing LD1969 renewable energy project will require a prevailing wage if it has at least \$50,000 in state aid, which most projects do. Leads to more good paying jobs. Jim Trundy, WMCA continues state-wide consortium for affordable health care. Submitted a few proposals to MaineHousing to create affordable housing and shelter space in Franklin County. Continue with WIC, and expanded whole families counseling. Andrea Patstone—speaking for healthcare, carrying exorbitant number of vacant positions; across Maine Health 2600 open positions, a 10% vacancy rate. Just graduating a class of MA's partner with adult ed in Oxford County. Diane Frigon—BRS gearing up for summer programs including college prep. LIFE course for 13-14 year old blind and visually impaired learning career exploration. Steve Jorgensen—lots of vacancies, do not need to be qualified as we will train them. MA class just finishing up and a C.N.A. class where students are paid to learn but can't fill it. Have had to bring in international nurses and assistants to fill the need. Need for travelers diminishing but still use them. Cathy Witherspoon—big hiring time for summer. Not fully staffed for the winter, only at 88% Hardest around food and beverage and housekeeping. Going international route with H2Bs J1 international students coming. To retain gave merit increases in the fall and again in January. And loyalty bonus. Restarting apprentice cooks. Also used Christian group to fill temporary roles. Chris Winstead—Maine Jobs and Recovery Plan keeping him. MCCS awarded over \$35 million over two years to offer free training programs across the state in

39 areas in seven industry sectors, such as tech, culinary. Also money from the Harold Alfond grant to help employers upskill their workforce. Kendra Wheeler—also struggling to fill positions. Getting creative, tried to recruit her waitress. Bangor Savings offers tuition support for employees, great benefit. Nick Paquet—echoes the same problem, tight labor market. Uses the apprenticeship program, 90 – 100 in program and looking to take another 30 on. All kinds of money is out there, construction is booming. Great time to be an electrician. Competition is stiff to get employees. Patti Saarinen—EMDC is working with healthcare organizations to help fill roles—St. Mary’s with MA class, helped with Steven’s and would like to work with Andrea. Can help. Kelly Aho—not as connected to the Maine community in new job. Pulled some numbers. Bonny Staffing had 583 open positions in Maine; 223 are brand new.

3. Board Chair Update:

Blaine tendered her letter of resignation. Very sorry to see her leave. Grateful for all her work. Many challenges but Blaine has done an excellent job organizing, but feels that this is just not the role for her. Blaine thanked the board for the opportunity and said she was proud of the work that was done and feel the board is in a good place. Has a few recommendations for upon her exit. Find a new ED that knows policy. Many people thanked Blaine for stepping into the role and the work that was done.

Need to create a new strategic plan. It is a few years past due. Kelly has been working with the MDOL. A few interviews for a potential administrative assistant, and must start advertising for an executive director. Point on desired outcomes, need board to step up. Everyone is a professional and very busy, and this is a volunteer board. If there is any skill set or time you could offer, let us know. We need engagement. Chair is not a long term role for me. Who else can step up? I enjoy this role, but it is time for someone else to step up. Kendra asked what duties fall under the chair and could those duties be delegated. Kelly was never given a list of duties but learned over the past few months. Explained what she knew. Can look for more information. Blaine feels that day to day function of the chair is working with staff to ensure the work is going in the right direction. Could be a phone call or email, maybe once a week or a few times a month. We prepare agendas and materials for the meetings. Sometimes attends meetings with state, nothing regular. Chair must be from the business sector.

4. Review and Approve Last Meeting’s Minutes

VOTED: *To approve the January 27, 2022 meeting minutes as written, to include that Christoher Winstead was present.*

Motion: Razell Ward Second: Christopher Winstead Vote: All in Favor

5. Discussion Items- 45 min

a. Central Western Maine Workforce Initiatives Bylaws

Blaine reviewed changes. Kelly said these changes bring clarity.

Motion to Approve: Andrea Patstone Second: ?? Vote: All in Favor

b. Individual Training Accounts Policy

c. Supportive Services Policy

d. On-the-Job Training Policy

e. Customized Training Policy

f. Youth Incentives Policy

Motion to approve all five: Jim Trundy Second: Kim Lindlof Vote: All in Favor

g. Performance & Spending Update – 15 min

Adult 123% of third quarter goal, also have already met the program year goal and will easily spend the money. much easier to recruit and enroll. DW numbers are low, jobs are plentiful so DW people easily find other jobs without our help. Worked with RESEA and pulling potential participants from MJL for email campaign. Youth is a struggle. We continue to look for innovative ways to reach out and put them in work experiences. Many barriers—transportation, COVID 19, among others. This is an emergent problem and the state is coming together to tackle the problem in a systemic way. This is a problem across the country.

h. Finance Update – 10 min

Youth spending is behind, only at 45% and must be spent by June 30. Will this affect youth allocations for funding in the future. More money through the Maine Children’s Cabinet and the Maine Apprenticeship Program. If changes are made to allocations it will likely be when WIOA is reauthorized in 2022. We can spend admin funding even if the provider does not spend its funding. This is only for the formula programs (Adult, DW, Youth). Must monitor the NDWG grants to mirror the spending of the provider. Opioid contract expires in December and we are at 75% of that funding. COVID contract comes to an end June 30, only 51% of that funding and the CAREER contract has barely started. That is big picture. For this board, for this fiscal year (July 1, 2021 to June 30, 2022) put together a budget for \$352,664. Through the end of March only at 53% of money spent at 75% of the way through the year. Not at risk of losing, but will carry over. For the fiscal audit, because we spend more than \$750,000 in federal funds in a year, we are required to have a single audit done by an outside auditing agency. The policy states we will send out an RFP for those services every five years. Have been in a contract with Chester Kearney in Presque Isle for the past five years, and we have not encountered any problems, services are more than satisfactory. However, we need to send out an RFP for the upcoming audit. The fiscal year ended June 30, 2021, and ordinarily the due date would be March 31 of this year. The OMB has given a six month extension due to COVID. We have until September 30. One of two directions. Release the RFP very quickly to select a firm or Sara’s suggestion is to have the board vote to override our own policy this year and go with current auditor in light of executive director absence for a time and high risk status.

Motion to contact current auditor for another year of service and out out the RFP in 2023: Chris Winstead Second: Jim Trundy Vote: All in Favor

i. High Risk Letter & PY18 PY19 Monitoring Update – 10 min

High risk letter response tracker, received a response from MDOL, been pared down to 9 things from 47 pages to get off of the high-risk status. Copies of high-risk letter, response to letter and all documents associated with the high-risk letter are in Microsoft Teams.

- Copies of corrected versions of subrecipient award agreements sent to the state—have done most of this.
- Update financial policy manual—task for the financial focus group.
- Create local area youth work experience policy—task for youth focus group.

- Update personnel policy—certain requirements outlined in the response letter—task for the personnel focus group.
- Review and approve grievance policy—approved at the last board meeting.
- Document board staff training—already done this. Just needs to be signed off on. We need to create a document.
- Develop an onboarding manual—very close to getting this finalized. I need operations committee input at this point.
- Review board website—more information in the letter and needs to be completed by the operations committee.

None of these related to finance issues stated in the original high-risk letter.

Monitoring report for PY 18 & 19. Two more things that need to be finalized. Local Board document does not contain EEO statement. It does now but we need to create an internal review process prior to them going on the website. The operations committee will work on this.

Youth barrier as defined by local board:

A low-income individual who requires additional assistance to enter or complete an educational program or to secure or hold employment per local area definition

j. Continued Board Education - 10 min (tabled)

k. Other/New Business

a. Access to Microsoft Teams for board documents

b. Committee & Focus Group Appointments

Confirmed youth committee, Kendra Wheeler

Confirmed chair of resource committee, Chris Winstead

Confirmed chair of finance committee, Peter Wright

Confirmed chair of personnel committee, Razell Ward

Chair of Recruitment committee, not confirmed

Chair of Policy committee, not confirmed

l. Adjourn Meeting

m. Next Board Meeting Date: June 23, 2022, 8:30 am – 10:30 am