



**Central Western Maine Workforce Development Board**  
**Quarterly Workforce Board Meeting**  
**April 27, 2023**

**Board Members Present:** Cathy Witherspoon, Chair; Razell Ward, Secretary; Laurie Glidden, At-Large Member; Grant Provost, Chair of Recruitment; Sue LeClair; Kendra Wheeler; Diane Frigon; Monique Roy; Brandi Farrington; Adam Wilson.

**Board Members Absent:** Trampas Hutches; Bruce Tisdale; Josh Henry; Chris Winstead; Peter Wright, Treasurer; Jim Trundy, Steve Jorgensen

**Staff Present:** Erin Benson, Executive Director

**Others Present:** Sara McLaughlin, Contracted Financial Manager; Tracy Cooley, EMDC; Tom Fernands, EMDC; Patti Saarinen, EMDC; Joe Pietroski, Kennebec County Commissioner; David Duguay, Oxford County Commissioner; Kelly Flagg, ED, AGC of Maine; Deborah Fasciana, ED, Timber HP Go Lab

**1. Welcome and Introductions:**

Cathy Witherspoon called the meeting to order. The in-person option for the meeting was cancelled due to the weather, so all those in attendance joined via zoom. All those present introduced themselves.

**2. Approve Meeting Minutes:**

**VOTED:** To approve the January 26, 2023 meeting minutes as written.

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

**3. Youth pre-apprenticeship construction trades:**

Executive Director of AGC of Maine Kelly Flagg discussed the Maine Apprenticeship Program grant via the Maine Construction Academy's pilot program in seven Maine schools for some qualifying Juniors, but mostly open to Seniors and Pandemic graduates. The six week summer programs will center on 12-20 participants from various coverage areas that have not identified next steps after graduation and provide them with construction experience and training for apprenticeships and possible employment opportunities. Each participant is given tools and PPE gear and will earn NCCER core badges, OSHA 10 certification and First Aid and CPR certification along with single person mentoring. On-site visits with different businesses are included with the opportunity to interview at the end of the program. The participants will be provided with a \$200.00 a week stipend during the program and will keep their tool kits and PPE gear equal to \$500.00. The program will launch on May 23, 2023 and will open one program a week throughout the summer.

**4. DOT grants to Boyne Resorts & Timber HP:**

Deborah Fasciana, ED of Timber HP gave an overview into the wood fiber insulation material being produced by Timber HP and the company's strategic plans moving forward to employ 95% of their employees from the area of Madison and surrounding communities. Deborah shared information regarding the MDOT grant they received to begin a carbon neutral transportation program providing on-site transportation hubs for electric vehicles that provide charging stations to employees and the public, as well as a van pool for employees. The van will offer employee transportation to Skowhegan, Waterville, Augusta, Belfast, Madison and Bangor which will directly impact employment within those areas. They are also looking into E-Bike purchases that will be available for public rental.

Cathy Witherspoon shared the plans that Boyne Resorts developed with the \$387,000.00 MDOL grant they received. The funding allowed them to purchase four shuttles, one of which is an EV shuttle. The company is hiring a Vice President of Sustainability to assist in meeting their goal to be carbon neutral by the end of 2030. The shuttles provide services for Rumford, Bethel, West Bethel and Dixfield for all employees and staff. They are also able to work directly with the Hope Association partnering to provide transportation for team members. There is one on-site shuttle for the lift department employees, staff and others to utilize on-site only. There is more information on their carbon neutral plan on their website under the Forever Project title.

**5. Service Provider Report-EMDC:**

Patti Saarinen presented the EMDC report stating that overall numbers had increased reaching 96.6% of the adult enrollment goal and 94+% of the youth goal, with a small but expected downward trend in dislocated workers. Due to the systemic labor shortage, dislocated workers are directly hired for employment and do not need WIOA services. Enrollment has reached 64% of goal and they need only 11 more enrollments for the year. They have seen an increase in interest with layoffs from both Pixel and Mardens. The Measurable Skills Gain and Follow-up improved, and they are dedicating 1 day a quarter to focus on these areas. EMDC continues to work on partnership programs and has begun working with the Adult Education in Mechanic Falls and Poland as well as Farmington to provide online classes with in-person training to youth that focuses on retail and customer service skills. The training program for CMA and CNA certification currently has 27 participants working with employees for direct hire positions. Their business specialist contacted 11 businesses this quarter, seven of them new. Dave Duguay mentioned that most counties were in dire need of dispatchers, correction officers and deputies. Not sure what could be done but anything would be helpful.

**6. Annual Board Business:**

Erin shared the names of three new board members: Brandi Farrington, Adam Wilson and Monique Roy. Bios on the new candidates were sent to each member by Erin before the meeting. Laurie and Cathy welcomed them. Board treasurer, Peter Wright, had to step down as he has moved to Vermont to take on another position. Board members need to live in Maine.

Christopher Winstead offered to fill the role. He has past experience as treasurer with other non-profits.

**VOTED:** To approve Chris Winstead as the board treasurer:

**Motion:** Kendra Wheeler      **Second:** Grant Provost      **Vote:** All in Favor

Erin shared her screen to show the list of committees and focus groups. The board is in need of a vice chair who needs to be from among the business representatives. The Recruitment Committee needs two members. The Youth Committee needs a chair and at least two other members. The Resource Committee needs two members. Erin will send a list of needed members and a description of the work. Still need four business representatives for the board. Monique offered to be on a committee.

Cathy shared that the Operations Committee reviewed the retirement contribution. The board is supposed to review yearly, but it was not done for the PY22 year. Currently the Personnel policy states the board will contribute a flat rate of \$275 per month. It is referred to as a matching rate but it is not. The Operations Committee is suggesting a matching rate of up to 6% of the full time employee's salary. So, if the employee chooses to contribute 4% of their wages, the board will match it with 4%. If the employee chooses to contribute 6%, the board will match it with 6%, but 6% will be the cap. Erin pointed out that in the by-laws, it states the board will review every year, and maybe that is not necessary. Cathy said that in her company, it was not reviewed yearly but there is a caveat that if the business has a disastrous year, it can be adjusted. She thought this should be considered in the future.

**VOTED:** To change the current flat rate retirement contribution of \$275 per month to an up to 6% matching contribution.

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

## 7. Finance Update:

Sara McLaughlin reviewed the budget through March, mentioning 3 discretionary contracts that are providing significant additional funds to the typical formula funds received from USDOL yearly. While keeping an eye on the current budget, Sara stated she also likes to look ahead, and thinks we will likely carry in around \$300,00 to next year's budget. With the additional formula funding that comes in July 1, the board will likely be in the \$400-500,000 range next fiscal year. By the end of March, we should be about 75% through the budget, and currently we are at 52%. We are behind on spending mostly in the salary/fringe benefit line as Erin came on three months after the fiscal year began. Also, an administrative assistant has not been hired yet. There are some areas that are over budget, mostly due to doing two audits in one year. We were behind on the last audit, so we were playing catch up.

**VOTED:** To approve financial update:

**Motion:** Kendra Wheeler      **Second:** Razell Ward      **Vote:** All in Favor

**8. Executive Director's Report:**

Erin stated that of the five items outlined in the letter from Kim Moore regarding the tasks needed to remove the board from high-risk status, all but one have been completed. At this time, the Financial Manual is the last item needed and this has been sent to Sara to review before moving forward with it.

One Stop Partner meetings have resumed as of April 19, 2023, and will meet quarterly the third Wednesday of January, April, July, and October.

A \$500,000.00 ARPA grant set aside for the CWMWDB will add \$100,000.00 to the \$54,000 set aside through the Quest grant to contract with community-based organizations for referral pipelines to WIOA programs. The goal is contract with one CBO in each of the five counties being served in our region. \$100,000.00 will be designated for a marketing campaign to assist with recruitment for youth. The remaining \$300,000 will focus support services that are not covered by WIOA funding to help participants be successful with recruitment and retention in the job market.

Erin attended the National Association of Workforce Board conference in March. Lots of great information but a bit overwhelming. Is working with the NAWB membership coordinator to find a mentor in a comparable area that can provide advice and support. Also determining other ways NAWB can support our work.

Erin facilitated a panel at the Maine Counseling Association's (MECA) annual conference that draws high school guidance/school counselors from around the state and Licensed Clinical Professional Counselors. The panel was titled, "If Not College, Then What?" The topic was alternative pathways to employment. Panelists included board member Grant Provost from Iron Workers Local 7; Kelly Flagg, ED from the Associated General Contractors of Maine; Joan Dolan, Director of the Maine Apprenticeship Program, and Lisa Hartnett from EMDC. While the session was modestly attended, the audience was engaged and several spoke to presenters afterward. There are opportunities to develop additional workshops for the annual event.

Erin has invited Mark McInerney to speak to the board in July. Mark is the director of the Center for Workforce Research Information. He does several presentations regarding the demographics, employment picture, and industry outlook for the state. He will share information about the region.

Erin and Laurie Glidden visited all four Kennebec Behavioral Health's Club Houses. These are employment focused facilities for people with mental health disorders.

Laurie Glidden and Sara McLaughlin have agreed to serve on the hiring committee to hire a Part-Time Administrative Assistant.

**9. Other/New Business:**

Erin stated that she would send out a list of acronyms to the group for future meetings and better understanding when discussions are being had. Joe stated the need for a commissioner meeting to take place as soon as possible that can review the expectations and roles of each member. The need for an in-person meeting that will include a celebration of all the work being done and those that make these programs a success was discussed and will be planned for the board meeting in July.

**10. Adjourn Meeting:**

**VOTED:** To adjourn meeting.

**Motion:** Grant Provost

**Second:** Razell Ward

**Vote:** All in Favor

Next Board Meeting Date: Thursday July 27, 2023, from 9:00am-11:00am at Maine Housing Authority, 26 Edison Drive, Augusta, ME (In-person with zoom option).