



NWPA JOB CONNECT BOARD MEETING
Friday, January 12, 2024
8:30 AM – 11:00 AM

ATTENDANCE: Bobbie Jones, Grainne Blanchette, Larry Fannie, Juanice Vega, Brad Tisdale, Andrea MacArthur, Jack Hewitt, Jessica Hansford, TJ Sandell, Archie Graham, Will Price, Kirk Shimshock, Heather Frazier, Jim Decker, Travis Crytzer, Shane Kline, Jill Foys

ABSENT: Karen Thomas, Kathryn Schaaf

BOARD STAFF: Lisa Miller, Lisa Stalnaker, Deb O’Neil, Susan Richmond, Emily Cozzens, Juanet Shefchunas, Carrie Symes, Nancy Wisgirda

VISITORS

Attorney Joseph Keebler, Solicitor
Steve Fisher, DJB Group
Diona Brick, Fiscal Agent
John Spence
Christine Grigsby
Beverly Rapp
Kerrie DeChurch
Diana Guyaux
Elizabeth Wilson
Lance Hummer
Bob Cardamone, Community Action
Anita McCoy, GECAC

Daniel Hornbake, Monitor
Nancy Sabol, St. Benedict’s Education Center
Letty Acosta
Attorney Stephanie Ferra
Brenda Connelly
Ben Wilson
Deb Lutz
Commissioner Robert Snyder
Commissioner Wayne Brosius
Commissioner Tricia Durbin
Erie County Alternate Charlie Bayle
Commissioner Chip Abramovic
Commissioner Eric Henry

WELCOME/ROLL CALL/VISITOR RECOGNITION/PUBLIC COMMENTS

Bobbie Jones called the meeting to order at 8:46 a.m. Roll call was taken. It was noted there was a quorum. Visitors were recognized. It was noted that the meeting was being recorded and a link to the agenda was posted in the chat and also shared on the screen. There was no public comment.

WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT ITEM

Mental Health Discussion For Employers Clarion Psychiatric Hospital, CEO and WDB Member Jessica Hansford.

Due to technical difficulties, the presentation by Jessica Hansford was postponed until the next board meeting.

ACTION ITEM

Jessica Hansford will present her mental health discussion for employers at the next board meeting.

CONSENT AGENDA

The consent agenda portion of the meeting included the following:

Approval of November 9, 2023 Meeting Minutes

Common Measures PY23 Q1

Lisa Miller reported that the data included in the PY23 Q1 report covers July, August and September of this program year. She noted that the report includes data on the actual performance, negotiated goal, and the percent of the goal achieved. The credential attainment for youth is low at 40% of the negotiated level and should not be less than 50%. The board staff has been working closely with Title I toward timely and accurate data entry regarding credentials and measurable skill gains. Increased outreach to dislocated workers and youth should help to improve these performance levels over time. It was noted that this is occurring in other local areas across the state as well.

PY23 Q1 Operator Statement of Work Summary

Carrie Symes reported on the Operator Statement of Work summary. The Operator performance on the Statement of Work items for PY23 indicates that of the 55 items, no items were failed, two items were left as concern due to their significance and all other items were considered passing with two not-applicable. Overall, good performance on the SOW items by the Operator in PY23. Below are items that were of concern during the program year and their final status.

Operator Summary of Scores PY23 SOW:

Regular Communication: Pass: 6 Concern: 1 Fail: 0 (i.e. slight increase in staff turnover)

Vested Partnership: Pass: 10 Concern: 3 Fail: 0 NA: 1 (i.e. reports not yet submitted but not due until the end of the year)

Outcomes, Goals & Measurements: Pass: 3 Concern: 0 Fail: 0

Operator Expectations: Pass: 29 Concern: 4 Fail: 0 (i.e. implementing new processes and procedures, but only noted to keep on our radar; staff training, cross training, and staff development that could have been increased in Quarter 1).

PY23 Q1 Title I Statement of Work Summary

Carrie Symes reported that Title I performance on the Statement of Work (SOW) items for PY23 indicates no items were failed, 12 items remain of concern and 24 were rated as passing. In comparison to the number of items of concern in Quarter 1 of PY22 being at 14, this shows a slight reduction of concerns. NWPA Job Connect Board staff regularly meet with the Title I provider to discuss these areas that need to be improved upon. Below are items that were of concern during Quarter 1. Details were included in the report attached to the meeting agenda.

Summary of Ratings Q4 Title I:

Regular Communication: Passing: 9 Concern: 4 Fail: 0 (i.e. late plans; miscommunication with operator staff; and staff resignations).

Vested Partnership: Passing: 13 Concern: 5 Fail: 0 (i.e. monitoring findings, as well as employer outreach and recruitment).

Outcomes, Goals & Measurements: Passing: 4 Concern: 3 Fail: 0 (i.e. lack of timely follow-up and thorough case notes).

Revised EO Policy

Susan Richmond reported that she and Carrie Symes updated the local board's EO policy to include language released in USDOL's Training and Employment Guidance Letter 05-23 that addresses discrimination based on actual or perceived religion, shared ancestry, or ethnic characteristics in the workplace. This language was included in the local board's EO Policy to ensure compliance with Federal equal opportunity guidance.

Bobbie Jones asked if any member wanted to sever any items from the consent agenda for further discussion. No agenda items were requested to be severed from the consent agenda. Larry Fannie wanted to know if there are timetables for the ongoing meetings regarding concerns with Title I and if the Equus Regional Director was

involved. Lisa Miller responded that we have regularly occurring meetings with Title I that include the Regional Director, as well as their Interim Project Director. All items of concern are reviewed in those meetings. Jill Foys stated that she also wanted to make sure that these meetings were taking place to ensure forward progress, since these have been persistent issues. Larry Fannie suggested that a timeline for improvement is implemented to prevent these concerns from becoming corrective actions. Jill Foys agreed.

MOTION

It was moved by Jill Foys and seconded by Jim Decker to approve the consent agenda as a whole. All were in favor. Motion passed and carried.

REVIEW OF PREVIOUS ACTION ITEMS

There were no previous action items to discuss.

UPDATES FROM THE CHAIR

Bobbie Jones welcomed Shane Kline as a new board member. Shane introduced himself as the Plant Manager for Wabtec Corporation, a company that deals with rail mining and marine technologies. He noted that the Erie location is Wabtec's largest locomotive site. Shane has overseen the Erie site for over 13 years. Bobbie noted that Shane will be representing the manufacturing business sector for Erie County.

Lisa Miller reported on the reappointment plan for the board. Reappointments for Bobbie Jones and Jill Foys are complete. Juanice Vega and Heather Frazier are in progress. We will be seeking to fill a seat for Karen Thomas, as her term expires on June 30 and she has declined reappointment due to her busy schedule. Archie Graham plans to retire and his replacement's appointment is in process.

APPROVAL OF FISCAL REPORT

Fiscal Report: Diona Brick referred to the November 2023 fiscal report that was included in the meeting packet.

- WIOA Formula Dollars:
 - Adult and Dislocated Worker expenditures were reviewed. The total Title I Adult and DW allocation for 23-24 is \$2,053,046. Through November, we expended \$767,204 of this amount or 53%. It is important to remember our 30% training requirement for the current year. We are at 21% excluding additional sources and 16% including additional resources. She noted that we would expect to be at approximately 42% at this point but there is a good amount of ITAs and OJTs and the timing of those have increased the expenditures. She also noted that at the beginning of the third quarter (January/February), we can accept requests for additional funding from Title I, if necessary.
 - Youth expenditures were reviewed. It is important to monitor the youth percentages to ensure compliance with the spending requirements. The total Youth budget for 23-24 is \$1,357,517. Through November, we have expended \$244,302 or 23% of the allocation. Key benchmarks include a requirement to spend at least 75% of the allocation on Out of School Youth and at least 20% must be spent on work experience for youth. We are currently at 100% and 17% respectively. She noted that we are meeting monthly with Title I to review the Youth program expenditures; work experience is on track.
- Administrative Expenses - (Includes all Program Oversight and Fiscal Agent Costs)
 - Overall, the administrative budget is 32%, which is slightly under budget. We would expect that to be at 42% at this point. Details are included in the report attached to the meeting agenda. All monies are used on the FIFO or first in first out basis so that no funding will be forfeited.

- EARN Program Expenses – On track, we are at 42% of the budget through November.
- Infrastructure Funding Agreements (IFAs) – Each of our IFAs are on track with no concerns and have finished at budget as follows:
 - Erie County comprehensive site = 40% of budget
 - Oil Region comprehensive site = 38% of budget
 - Mobile Delivery of Service = 37% of budget
- TANF Youth – The total budget for 23-24 is \$702,671. To date, we have spent 34% of the allocation. Contracts have been awarded and subcontractors are expending funds.
- Grant Updates:
 - Rapid Response (RR): All Rapid Response monies have been spent and all proper closeouts completed.
 - Other Grant Updates: We have NOOs currently for the following:
 - BEP (Business Education Partnership) - \$150,000 - This is a new allocation with an end date of 12/31/2023. We expect to spend most of the \$150K allocation. To date, \$89,605 has been spent. We have also been awarded another \$150,000 and this has been contracted to providers.
 - Statewide Activities - \$28,000 Website Updates – the website contract will carry into 23-24. All other funding has been closed out to stay in compliance with state regulations. In addition, we received \$32,619.76 for PA CareerLink® updates and security. To date, through November, \$5,512.99 has been spent. Cameras have been installed.
 - Apprenticeship Expansion-Total award is \$183,333. To date, \$8,062 has been spent.

Diona Brick noted the fiscal compliance report from the state covering PY22 is included in the meeting agenda. Our local area has met all spending requirements, including 80% funding expenditure rate, 20% on work experience, and not to exceed 20% expenditure rate for incumbent working training. Also included in the meeting agenda is the state’s reconciliation letter approving our property inventory, bonding insurance, and audit plan.

MOTION

It was moved by Larry Fannie and seconded by TJ Sandell to approve the Fiscal Report as presented. All were in favor. There were no abstentions. Motion passed and carried.

UPDATE ON THE SUNSHINE ACT

Attorney Joseph Keebler reported that the state has changed the parameters around which meeting agendas may be amended during a meeting. The Sunshine Act now only offers three exceptions to the general prohibition to act on matters not previously listed in the meeting agenda that include (1) emergency business; (2) de minimis business arising in the last 24 hours; and (3) de minimis business raised by a resident/taxpayer during a meeting. Attorney Keebler expressed concerns that compliance with this will be challenging for some governing bodies and expressed the need for diligence regarding business to be addressed at meetings.

PY24 STATEMENT OF WORK COMMITTEE

Lisa Miller reported that it’s time to populate the Statement of Work portion of the contracts to be executed for July 1, 2024. The Statement of Work Committee, which works with the Title I and Operator contracts, both of which have been renewed to with Equus, will need to convene to develop the new statement of work. The current committee members are Andrea MacArthur and Juanice Vega. We had one board member come off this

committee, so we are looking for more members. Anyone wishing to be on the committee can let Lisa Miller know.

RECOMMEND A PY24 SOW FOR THE OPERATOR CONTRACT

Lisa Miller noted that with the need to develop the statement of work for the new program year operator contract, she is asking for the board to authorize the Statement of Work Committee to develop a recommendation for the new PY24 statement of work for the operator contract.

MOTION

It was moved by Jill Foys and seconded by Kirk Shimshock to approve authorizing the Statement of Work Committee to develop and recommend a new PY24 statement of work for the Operator Contract. All were in favor. There were no abstentions. Motion passed and carried.

RECOMMEND A PY24 SOW FOR THE TITLE I CONTRACT

Similar to the operator contract, Lisa Miller requested that the board authorize the Statement of Work Committee to develop and recommend a new statement of work for the PY24 Title I contract.

MOTION

It was moved by Jill Foys and seconded by Larry Fannie to approve authorizing the Statement of Work Committee to develop and recommend a new PY24 statement of work for the Title I Contract. All were in favor. There were no abstentions. Motion passed and carried.

ACTION ITEM

Lisa Miller will add timetables for the ongoing and persistent issues regarding Title I into the PY24 statement of work.

RISK ASSESSMENT DISCUSSION: EQUUS STAFFING CHANGES

Lisa Miller reported that there have been significant staffing changes at Equus in the upper management level. These include the departure of the Operations Manager, Service Delivery Manager, Adult Dislocated Worker Manager, three talent development specialist positions, and the Project Director. We are watching this closely as an area of concern. Jill Foys requested that the board be updated regularly on this situation, as this will be a major impact on the operation of the organization and could lead to a negative impact on the programs. Larry Fannie asked that accountability timetables be implemented for follow-up on this situation. Lisa Miller stated that we can do that.

ACTION ITEM

Lisa Miller will implement accountability timetables to the statement of work regarding the staffing concerns and will update the board on this issue on a regular basis.

OTHER BUSINESS

Board Staff Report Highlights

Lisa Miller introduced Emily Cozzens as the new Information/Communications Specialist. Emily stated that she is looking forward to working with the board in the design of the new website.

Lisa Miller reported that there is a proposal on the House floor to reauthorize WIOA. The most impactful changes will potentially take away some control at the state and local levels. There may also be a decrease in allocations to the local level, as the proposal holds an increased percentage at the state level for implementation by the Governor. Also being proposed is a required minimum of 50% of WIOA funds to go toward training. We are not aware at this point if the 50% minimum to training includes staffing. There is an increased emphasis on youth, skills assessment, and having people get credit for prior skills.

Skill Up is moving towards an automatic registration process, which will improve the functionality of the program that will allow for more independence for individuals using the program.

An award was given to a one of our local participants in the Apprenticeship Building America grant.

There is a notice of proposed rulemaking from the US Dept of Labor to modernize Registered Apprenticeship regulations. More information on this is forthcoming.

There are Apprenticeship Ambassador Network Training summits coming soon: Erie February 15th, Tri County Feb 21, Venango, Warren, Forest, Clarion Feb 22, Mercer, Lawrence Feb 28, Crawford Feb 29.

Department of Labor and Industry updates include PA CareerLink® Days across the state, starting the first 2 weeks in September. UC connect is ongoing. There is still no movement on Trade funding. Infrastructure funds for broadband are going out to support a 5-year plan. Digital intake is being phased in across the state, and there is a state focus on improving business services across all local areas.

Grant updates

Lisa Miller reported on the following updates:

- We continue to spend down the statewide activities funds for the website.
- BEP IV has closed out and the new one will begin soon.
- The Apprenticeship Building America grant continues to work with NTMA and Early Childhood connections so we can help support these two entities and the related occupations.
- The Opioid Disaster grant application was submitted; we are still awaiting notice of this award.
- The Allegheny College Community-based project grant discussions are ongoing.
- The Community Reinvestment Act Cohort has begun mapping out financial efficacy materials for PA CareerLink® and job seekers.
- 2023 Veterans Employment Program Grant through PA Labor and Industry hopes to decrease veteran unemployment rates by providing opportunities for certificates and trainings in marketable job skills, connecting Veterans to employers, and providing financial assistance for employment related expenses.

We have been very active in providing letters of support for various organizations.

Lisa Miller stated that it's time for all board members to submit their Statement of Financial Interests for 2023. Nancy Wisgirda sent out emails requesting these, and Lisa Miller asked that board members are diligent in returning these to us, as they are a critical monitoring requirement.

STATE PLAN GOALS

Susan Richmond reported that the Pennsylvania WIOA Combined Plan is now available for public comment. The public comment period closes Tuesday January 16th at 5 PM. The state has identified the following six broad goals in the plan which will eventually be updated in our new four-year plan:

Apprenticeship and Career Technical Education—the current goal was Career Pathways and Apprenticeship; adding the Career Technical Education focuses on the Pre-Apprenticeship programs.

Sector Strategies and Employee Engagement—engage employers and industry clusters through innovative strategies to improve the connection and responsiveness of workforce programs and services to labor market demand, including recruiting, training, and retaining talent.

Youth: Increase opportunities for all youth to experience work-based learning through summer employment, pre-apprenticeship, Registered Apprenticeship, internships, job shadowing, mentoring, and other experiences in the workplace, including developing employability skills.

Continuous Improvement of the PA CareerLink® System—Identify and enact system changes and improvements that enhance the collaboration and partnership between agencies and partners in the workforce development system.

The following new goals were added to the state’s combined WIOA plan:

Barrier Remediation—Develop strategies to ensure the workforce development system is equipped to support individuals with barriers to employment in finding and maintaining self and family-sustaining employment.

Addressing Workforce Shortages in Critical Industries—Prioritizing investment in industries that are critical to the economic prosperity of the Commonwealth.

The respective board committees will work toward supporting these six broad goals in updating our new four-year plan.

OTHER ITEMS AS NEEDED

Bobbie Jones stated that we will hear Jessica Hansford’s presentation at the next meeting.

EXECUTIVE SESSION

No Executive Session was needed.

REVIEW OF NEW ACTION ITEMS

- **Lisa Miller will add timetables for the ongoing and persistent issues regarding Title I into the PY24 statement of work.**
- **Lisa Miller will implement accountability timetables to the statement of work regarding the staffing concerns and will update the board on this issue on a regular basis.**

ADJOURNMENT

MOTION

It was moved by Jill Foys and seconded by Larry Fannie to adjourn the meeting. All were in favor. There were no abstentions. Motion passed and carried.

The meeting adjourned at 9:35 am. The next meeting is Friday, March 8, 2024.

Meeting Advertised in The Derrick		
Minutes Submitted	Nancy Wisgirda	1/12/24
Minutes Approved	NWPA Job Connect Board	
Minutes Posted	https://www.nwpajobconnect.org/wdb/board-meeting-archive	