

**BUSINESS SOLUTIONS COMMITTEE MEETING**  
NWPA Job Connect, 920 Water St, Ste 32B, Meadville, PA 16335  
Monday, January 27, 2020  
1:33 pm

**ATTENDANCE**

Dr. Lisa Miller ☎  
Gary Shaw ☎  
Jody Dixon ☎  
Steven Davis ☎  
County Executive Dahlkemper ☎  
Larry Fannie ☎

**STAFF**

Janet Anderson  
Deb O'Neil  
Julie Price  
Carrie Symes  
Erin Shaffer  
Jackie Hamilton

**GUESTS**

Benjamin Wilson ☎  
Carm Camillo ☎  
Fadhail Ibraheem ☎

**WELCOME/ROLL CALL**

Ms. Anderson called the meeting to order at 1:33 pm Ms. Caryl Unseld was the committee's chair, but she is no longer on the board and committee membership will be changing soon. Roll call was conducted. It was noted that there was a quorum.

**APPROVAL OF MEETING SUMMARY – SEPTEMBER 23, 2019**

The meeting summary dated September 23, 2019 was presented for approval.

**MOTION**

It was **moved** by Dr. Miller and **seconded** by Ms. Dixon to approve the Business Solutions Committee meeting summary dated September 23, 2019 as presented. All were in favor. **Motion passed and carried.**

**REVIEW OF PREVIOUS ACTION ITEMS**

None.

**EMPLOYER ENGAGEMENT**

**APPRENTICESHIPS**

Ms. Anderson stated that staff didn't apply for any new apprenticeship funds this year since they are still working on the pre-apprenticeship grant from last year. There was a local study conducted on apprenticeships, and staff plans to use that information to get the grant off of the ground.

**GRANTS UPDATE = INCLUDING SLIP, ECONOMIC TRANSITION, YOUTH REENTRY, TIW, BEP, WORC, OTHERS**

Ms. Anderson shared that the staff applied for SLIP grant funding for 40 interns this summer. This round of funding will require a 35% employer match and an increase in WIOA-eligible participants. However, the participants will not be tracked in CWDS so they will not count as part of the in-school youth count. Staff plans to work with Teacher in the Workplace and Business Education Partnership partners to identify potential students to share with interested employers.

The local Economic Transition grant, which in total represents about \$900k, has been supporting those laid off from mostly retail, leisure, logistics, and hospitality industries. The grant was monitored by USDOL during the first full week of January.

NWPA Job Connect applied for about \$800k with West Central Job Partnership for a youth reentry demonstration project. The award will be split between the two areas, leaving the Northwest with \$400k. Ms. Anderson noted that the plan was to work with the justice system to identify youth and use tools to help get them on the right track. There has been a lot of local support from judges, attorneys, probation, and wardens. ResCare will be hiring additional staff to support this 2-year program; new staff will receive specific training for working with the reentry population.

The Teacher in the Workplace grants support teachers going into businesses and bringing the experiences into the classroom. IU5 and IU6 both have projects supported by this grant. Due to the substitute teacher shortage, board staff is working a modification to the grant that will extend some opportunities into the summer.

Board staff received notification that the local area will receive funding for the latest round of Business Education Partnership applications. This will support several programs in the six-county area that take students into the workplace. Specifically, one of the efforts this grant supports is a Career Street equivalent for the rural counties.

Finally, Northwest has been awarded a WORC grant with West Central to support primarily the healthcare and manufacturing industries. TPMA has been hired by West Central to administer the grant.

## **INDUSTRY PARTNERSHIP UPDATE**

### **ADVANCED MANUFACTURING**

Ms. Anderson shared that the current Advanced Manufacturing Industry Partnership meets next at the end of February. The employers meet in the morning and the support partners meet in the afternoon. The action team has a platform they want to launch for business communication. The group opted to submit a grant application for implementation, and though the County of Venango must be the fiscal agent, board staff suggested that the Industrial Resource Center serve as the applicant. Under this configuration, NWPA Job Connect will continue to participate as a partner.

### **BUILDING AND CONSTRUCTION**

Ms. Anderson stated that she hoped to convene this busy group soon.

### **TRANSPORTATION – CDL DRIVERS**

Ms. Anderson noted that she met with Mr. Gary Shaw, County Executive Dahlkemper, Dr. Aldo Jackson, Ms. Julie Slomski (Governor's NW Regional Office), and others about CDL licensing and its impact on local employers and pending changes to the licensure. Ms. Slomski is working to report answers to the questions that were brought forth from the meeting, but it was revealed that the funding the group was seeking information on was not available.

## **OTHER BUSINESS**

### **DEPTH OF LABOR POOL**

Ms. Anderson referred the agenda attachment. She hopes to expand the labor pool chart to include subgroups of not-seeking-employment, such as incarcerated, and address workforce under 18 years of age in the pipeline. It was noted that a narrative might help to explain some of the data. For

example, Forest County appears with the highest average wage, but there are many state jobs in the county and about a third of the population resides at State Correctional Institute Forest. Mr. Fannie noted that he wanted to engage CWIA's Ed Legge on the incarcerated data, noting that state institutions sometimes count their population in a different way. Ms. Anderson noted that at least county institutions are counted locally. She also noted that CWIA was the source of the data in the chart and she has been working with them on some of the data.

### **STATE PLAN UPDATE**

Ms. Anderson noted that comments for the state plan were submitted last Monday. A few local partners responded with their comments as well.

### **WORKFORCE ASSESSMENT UPDATE**

Ms. Anderson hoped that the information gathered from the Workforce Needs Assessment will be available for usage in the Local Plan.

### **EARN/WORK READY UPDATE**

Ms. Anderson noted that EARN guidelines were still being defined and outlined but they are expected to be implemented July 1. Local staff attended a "day in the life" event last week, which covered how clients maneuver through the system, get benefits, and attain employment.

### **MA (MEDICAL ASSISTANCE) CLIENTS**

Ms. Anderson shared that local boards were recently notified that individuals receiving medical assistance will be given an action plan, including a letter about PA CareerLink® services. Ms. Anderson added that this plan will be in place to help get able-bodied individuals to work by directing them to PA CareerLink®.

### **INDUSTRY RECOGNIZED CREDENTIALS**

Ms. Anderson noted that industry-recognized credentials have been brought to the forefront through the Perkins V efforts. Several different entities all have different definitions and examples of industry-recognized credentials. Ms. Anderson hopes that over the next several months, local areas will be hearing more from the state on a concerted effort to identify these credentials. Career and Technical Centers have noted that the state's definition of industry-recognized credentials have been changing, even if the credential was accepted in the past.

Mr. Fannie noted that he serves on a committee about the matter at a federal level. The committee is working on resources for all states to keep information consistent.

### **RAPID RESPONSE – LAYOFFS UPDATE**

Ms. Anderson noted that at least seven companies have conducted layoffs since the last board meeting. This includes Erie Coke, Wabtec, Allegheny Wood Products, AC Moore, iHeart Radio, Medicine Shoppe, and Honeywell. Ms. Anderson noted that Erie Coke is not Trade-designated at this time, so they are working with Title I.

### **EVALUATION OF MOBILE SERVICE DELIVERY**

Ms. Anderson shared that as directed by the state, JFF will be conducting an evaluation of mobile services. Based on initial materials, it appears to be an empathetic evaluation. The consultant will interview 15-20 individuals about mobile service delivery. Due to unexpected changes in the consultant's schedule, the January evaluation date has been pushed back and likely rescheduled for April or May. The CLEOs agreed to a state evaluation of mobile some time ago.

**RESCARE UPDATE: ON-SITE SERVICE TO EMPLOYERS/HIRING EVENTS PLAN/UPDATE**

Ms. Ibraheem reported that in 2019, over 1000 jobseekers and 300 employers were supported by job fairs. There will be an Erie County Job Fair on April 28 at Gannon University and an Oil Region Job fair on April 9 at Cranberry Mall. The Business Solutions Team continues to work with the youth team to conduct hiring events, mock interviews, and internship/apprenticeship opportunities. Mr. Fannie noted that all partners are working together to make a true PA CareerLink Business Solutions Team. Mr. Camillo added that the local team is conducting great outreach. Additionally, they are working to implement virtual career fairs especially geared toward WIOA barrier groups and youth. The fairs are mobile friendly and also meant to attract underemployed who can't leave work for a career fair. The concept also helps those with transportation barriers. Mr. Wilson noted that he is working with Title I and other partners to leverage the benefit of the virtual job fair software. He is also working with partners to digitize and commit to using a kiosk system, which would help get clients to partners who can help them in less time.

**OTHER**

Ms. Anderson shared that the City of Erie has established a Training Assistance Program (TAP) grant, which is a fund for startup and established businesses with awards up to \$5k to train two individuals at \$2,500 each. The opportunity appears to be much like PA CareerLink®'s employability and occupational skills offerings. Mr. Wilson and Mr. Tyrone Clark are attempting to connect with the City to talk about leveraging resources.

Mr. Fannie shared that partners have been holding informational meetings with employers, paid for by a grant through Labor and Industry. These meetings are about shared work opportunities, which would involve workers volunteering to work fewer hours and get unemployment for those partial weeks.

Ms. Anderson noted that Perkins V plan comments are due February 3. The plan was developed after Ms. O'Neil and Ms. Anderson participated in many local meetings to help inform CTCs of what the local workforce development boards can help them with, including labor market information.

**NEXT MEETING: TBD**

Ms. Anderson reminded the committee that with the board moving board meetings to the opposite months, committee meetings will also move to their off months. Board staff will reach out with new committee dates and board members will be asked to choose according to their availability and interest. The next cycle of committee meetings will be in April.

**REPORT FOR THE EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE**

None.

**REVIEW OF ACTION ITEMS**

None.

**ADJOURNMENT**

**MOTION**

It was **moved** by Mr. Fannie and **seconded** by County Executive Dahlkemper to adjourn the meeting. All were in favor. **Motion passed and carried.**

The meeting was adjourned at 2:18 pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Jackie Hamilton  
Senior Administrative Assistant  
NWPA Job Connect