

ATTENDANCE: Randy Callen, Tyrone Clark, Donald Crenshaw, Jim Decker, Larry Fannie, Jill Foys, Archie Graham, Jack Hewitt, Dr. Aldo Jackson, Bobbie Jones, Laura King, Hope Lineman, Andrea MacArthur, Lynn Rupp, TJ Sandell, Erin Sekerak, Karen Thomas

ABSENT: Brittany Eisenman, Heather Moles, Bradley Tisdale, Elizabeth Wilson

BOARD STAFF: Deb O'Neil, Erin Shaffer, Julie Price, Carrie Symes, Jackie Hamilton

VISITORS

Commissioner Wayne Brosius, Clarion County
Commissioner Eric Henry, Crawford County
County Executive Kathy Dahlkemper, Erie County
Commissioner Robert Snyder, Forest County
Commissioner Chip Abramovic, Venango County
Joe Keebler, Solicitor
Diona Brick, County of Venango
Bridget Wolf, Equus Workforce Solutions
Susan Richmond, PA CareerLink®/Title I
Fadhail Ibraheem, PA CareerLink®/Title I
Nancy Sabol, St. Benedict Education Ctr/EARN

Beverly Rapp, PA L&I BWPO, Rapid Response
Deb Lutz, SVA/SEWN
Georgia Del Freo, GECAC
Lee Ann Sack, Equus
Robert Pisko, PA L&I BWDA
Benjamin Wilson, TPMA
Anita McCoy, GECAC
Amanda Hetrick, Forest Area School District
Mary Bula, Erie Together
Mike Ferritto, Governor's NW Regional Office
Ashley Megat, Office of Senator Toomey

WELCOME/ROLL CALL/VISITOR RECOGNITION/PUBLIC COMMENTS

Tyrone Clark called the meeting to order at 8:32 am. Roll call was taken. It was noted there was a quorum. Visitors introduced themselves. There was no public comment.

CONSENT AGENDA

The consent agenda portion of the meeting included the following:

- a. Approval of July 10, 2021 Meeting Minutes
- b. Approval of Disaster Recovery Policy
- c. Approval of Revised Transitional Jobs Policy
- d. Approval of Revised Risk Assessment Policy
- e. Approval of Equus TANF Corrective Action Response
- f. Approval of Equus Operator Corrective Action Response
- g. Approval of Equus Response to Risk Assessment
- h. Approval of Q1 File Monitoring Report

MOTION

It was **moved** by TJ Sandell and **seconded** by Karen Thomas to approve the Consent Agenda as presented. All were in favor. **Motion passed and carried.**

APPROVAL OF FISCAL REPORT

Diona Brick referred to the attached report. It was noted that the billing for October is in and participant spending was slow but casework spending was on track. Title I is struggling to find staff, but all spending benchmarks have been met for the previous program year. There was some slight overspending, but that was accommodated by the first in first out practice of carry over money from the previous pending year. There were no concerns with the administrative budget. Some funding was granted in the previous program year for a redesign of the PA

CareerLink® Erie County office and that has not taken place. This will need to be completed or a modification requested for the funding to utilize it for other purposes. The COVID NDWG may be deobligated as its purpose was the fund dislocated workers working in the PA CareerLink® offices for greeting, security, and janitorial and the need for these positions have been affected by closures over the past year. The local area is a front runner for Youth Reentry grant participants in the state. Venango County's audit is expected to be completed no later than September 30 with no findings expected, especially for workforce development spending.

TJ Sandell asked if COVID NDWG could be spent on upgrading water fountains to water bottle fillers and Diona Brick noted that as the grant is written, the spending is actually for paying dislocated workers to work in positions at PA CareerLink®. This may be an option for modification. Tyrone Clark asked that the Fiscal Agent consider other options before returning funding. It was noted that the Fiscal Agent and Acting Director would work with Title I and the Operator to determine if the spending could be utilized another way. Diona Brick noted that a deobligation would need to be permitted by the CLEOs.

MOTION

It was **moved** by Jill Foys and **seconded** by Jack Hewitt to approve the Fiscal Report as presented. All were in favor. **Motion passed and carried.**

UPDATES FROM THE CHAIR

REVIEW OF PREVIOUS ACTION ITEMS

- 1. The Fiscal & Monitoring Committee will meet in the next two weeks to discuss risk assessments and monitoring for Equus.** Complete. The committee met and recommended a revision to the Risk Assessment policy, which was voted on in the consent agenda.
- 2. Board staff will send an updated membership list and committee list to the board.** Complete.
- 3. Board staff will coordinate collaboration on a forum to discuss labor participation issues.** This is ongoing.
- 4. Board staff will send out a preview link of the Workforce Needs Assessment.** Complete.

MEMBERSHIP UPDATES

Tyrone Clark noted that Brittany Eisenman has submitted her resignation from the board for consideration by the CLEOs at their meeting later today. This will create a vacancy for a private sector board member from Clarion County. Brittany was not present but was thanked for her contribution and participation.

DISCUSSION ITEMS

WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT DISCUSSION: LABOR PARTICIPATION

Resources and notes were linked for the discussion, which was ongoing and will be addressed at the upcoming forum. It was noted that the population decline and sometimes negative perception of the area continues to be exacerbated by COVID and it was determined that a group should be convened to discuss what can be done to address these issues at a local level. It was noted that efforts have begun in small pockets but no unified effort has been created. It was noted that some universities are beginning to embed industry recognized credentials along degree progressions, so that if a student drops out they are still marketable locally. A local young professionals group called FLEX has a significant membership of people under 40 who have chosen to live in NWPA. There is an effort to collect volunteer ambassadors for the area to communicate how to live, work, and play here. There is a Pathway to Careers effort and an expansion of Career Street to all six counties. It was noted that parents continue to encourage their children to relocate so an education effort targeting that demographic may have an impact. A Youth Summit to discuss these issues was brought up. Overall, it was noted that many efforts are happening in

small packets, but there is no large scale coordination. This could be the desired outcome of the forum. The coordinated efforts should be virtual and cover employers across all six counties, and ensured to be inclusive of the trades as well as disconnected, disengaged, and disadvantaged people, and those with disabilities. A budget will be discussed with the Fiscal Agent and further coordination will be conducted with the ad hoc committee.

OTHER BUSINESS

BOARD STAFF REPORT HIGHLIGHTS

It was noted that Title I is reporting a slight uptick in clients interested in OJTs and ITAs. There is an increase in job seekers as well. The state reinstated the waiting week and job search requirement for UC benefits. Deb O'Neil referred to the board report linked to the agenda for other highlights on grants, the Eligible Training Provider List, and the One Stop Operator.

WORKFORCE NEEDS ASSESSMENT UPDATE

It was noted that Jackie Hamilton has been assisting with the effort to finalize the Workforce Assessment tools and roll them out to the public. Tyrone Clark noted that the hope is to get a business to help take the lead on this roll out.

DIRECTOR POSITION UPDATE

Commissioner Abramovic thanked Deb O'Neil for stepping into the Interim Director role and for the rest of the board staff for keeping up the work of the board. An update on the search for a new Executive Director was shared. Interviews will be conducted in the coming weeks by a team of CLEOs and some Executive Committee members. JL Nick and Beth Pellegrino have been the consulting team on the entire process and have been doing good work to help find a leader who will be a part of the system for the long term while maintaining a regional perspective. Debra O'Neil retires at the end of October and there is hope that a new Executive Director will have some time to collaborate with her before her departure.

MEETING TECHNOLOGY

It was noted that there was a discussion in 2020 on how to determine when to meet in person again while considering technology and safety. As COVID numbers continue to increase, the board will continue to meet virtually. Jackie Hamilton noted that the previous solution for hybrid meetings is no longer operational, and noted increased expectations of virtual participants that have been borne out of working remotely may require a new solution going forward for hybrid participation. Tyrone Clark noted that as the board continues to meet virtually with less face time, it is important to ensure pictures and biographies for each board member are posted on the website.

****ACTION****

- **Board members with missing pictures or biographies on the website will send them to board staff.**

OTHER

It was noted that Erin Shaffer's last day will be September 17. She has accepted an outside opportunity. Tyrone Clark voiced the board's best wishes for Erin, who thanked the board for the opportunity to serve.

Jill Foys noted that it is Debra O’Neil’s last board meeting and recalled her many contributions to workforce in Northwest Pennsylvania, noting her steadfast professionalism. Debra thanked the board and noted that good work will continue.

Larry Fannie gave a few updates from the PA Department of Labor & Industry, noting efforts in outreach and trade petition follow ups, a digital literacy initiative, the progress of the new UC system implementation, and the work of the apprenticeship office. He thanked all partners for continuing to collaborate through all of these initiatives.

Mike Ferritto introduced himself and thanked County Executive Dahlkemper for inviting him to the meeting. Mike was energized by the conversation had by the board today and echoed the sentiments discussed, then noted that asking questions about what is working and replicating that throughout the region is a great way forward. He looks forward to seeing what good work the board does to address these issues.

REVIEW OF ACTION ITEMS

- 1. Board members with missing pictures or biographies on the website will send them to board staff.**

ADJOURNMENT

MOTION

It was moved by Jill Foys and seconded by Hope Lineman to adjourn the meeting. All were in favor. Motion passed and carried.

The meeting adjourned at 10:15 am.

| Meeting Advertised in The Meadville Tribune on June 25, 2021 | | |
|--------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------|
| Minutes Submitted | Jacqueline Hamilton | November 12, 2021 |
| Minutes Approved | NWPA Job Connect Board | November 12, 2021 |
| Minutes Posted | https://www.nwpajobconnect.org/wdb/board-meeting-archive | November 23, 2021 |