



**Executive Committee and Chief Elected Officials
Meeting Minutes**

**The Workforce Connection Board,
Workforce Board for Boone, Winnebago, and Stephenson Counties**

Meeting: May 5, 2020
Time: 8:00 am
Location: Zoom Video Conference

CEO Members Present (4): William Hadley; Thomas McNamara; Frank Haney;

CEO Members Absent (0): Karl Johnson;

Executive Committee Members Present (8): Ben Bernsten; Scott Bloomquist; Karen Brown; Michelle Cassaro; Pamela Fettes; Bob Guiri; Vanessa Hughes; Amy Ott; Frank Rotello; Craig Steege;

Exec. Comm, Members Absent (1): None

Staff Present: Dr. Lisa Bly-Jones; Chris Connors; Cathy Cornelius; Mike Johnson; Robert Jones; Amanda Sink; Dan White;

Board Members & Partner Staff Present: Courtney Geiger; Mary Ann Kolls; Jeff Zeal

Guests: Karen Kryder (FHN)

1. **Executive Committee Call to Order:** Board Chair Frank Rotello presided and called the Executive Committee to order at 8:02 am.

CEO Call to Order: Mayor McNamara called the CEO meeting to order at 8:03 am.

2. **Executive Committee Roll Call:** A roll call was taken and a quorum was present.

CEO Roll Call: A roll call was taken and a quorum was present.

3. **Approval of February 4, 2020 Meeting Minutes – Action Item:**

- **TWC Executive Committee**
Motion: Cassaro Second: Ott Approved
- **Chief Elected Officials**
Motion: Winnebago Second: Stephenson Approved

4. **Employer and Participant Spotlight**

Karen Kryder with FHN, an award winning regional healthcare system with locations in Stephenson County, northern Illinois and southern Wisconsin spoke to the group about their experience with the Incumbent Worker Program. During the pandemic they experienced an increase in Emergency Room activity and used Incumbent Worker Training funds to train 6 staff members to work in the Emergency Room. FHN is experience financial hardship because many of their clinic locations are closed at this time. They appreciate the support of The Workforce Connection during this time.

Courtney Geiger highlighted an individual, Ray, who was helped remotely by the Career Center staff via telephone and Zoom to create a resume, cover letter and talk through job applications. He successfully completed a job application and obtained an interview. He again called Career Center staff and asked for help practicing for the job interview. He secured the job and again called Career Center staff to assist him with completing his new hire paperwork. The staff walked him through the completion of the paperwork so Ray was prepared on his first day at his new job. Ray continues to contact the staff to let them know how it's going and to ask for direction in how to handle situations with his supervisor. The staff was able to help Ray by being creative with the tools to serve him remotely.

5. **Providing Essential Services in a Pandemic:**

Dr. Lisa Bly-Jones gave the committee and CEOs an update on how we continue to serve both career seekers and employers. The bulk of the questions were related to unemployment during the first month. What was key was our ability to quickly move to working remotely. Using different platforms such as Zoom and MS Teams and using DocuSign to get signatures to enroll individuals and continue working with employers.

Conversation on plans to reopen the American Job Center has started. This conversation includes the continued use of technology as we move forward. We have learned that many services can be provided via technology, making access to services easier for many. We will continue to think through the reopening process and what the center will look like in the future.

The podcast, Workforce Wisdom, has started with Amanda Sink producing and editing and Dr. Lisa Bly-Jones conducting the interviews with Workforce professionals across the country.

We received a grant for the Apprenticeship Navigator and a contractual position will begin July 1, 2020.

Work Experiences and On-the-Job training placements continue. Individuals advocating for themselves in the workplace on the use of PPE has been integrated into the Career Seeker Workshop. We want them to understand how to strike a balance with working and safety.

Jeff Zeal, IDES Rockford, Office Manager, remarked how for the past 7 weeks his office has 27 employees working from 5am to 5pm Monday through Friday plus 5 hours on Saturday to process unemployment claims. The IDES staff are unable to work from home and come into the office daily. Statistics reported by the governor were that last year there were 580,000 claims processed for the whole year and in the last 6 weeks there were 800,000 claims made. This is a record number of claims. For the first time ever, Independent Contractors and sole proprietors will be able to file effective May 11, 2020. There are a lot of questions associated with starting this new process. The turnaround time for those who were able to file online see the normal turnaround time, however there are many factors that come in to play and delay the process. 300 people have been added to assist with the hotline and help with the volume of calls.

6. **One Stop Operator Report:**

Mary Ann Kolls, Program Director, reported that career seekers and employers are being served via technology. An online application has been created for customers to enroll in programs. An e-voucher system was also developed for enrolled services. This system allows for the processing of payments for training providers, training-related tools and other expenses related to training. The Career Center team has created online workshops and webinars. An employer webinar on reopening business was very successful with people from 24 businesses in attendance. They have also held several online hiring events. A virtual

career readiness class has been created for the Youth Program. A workshop on Adult Ed. programs was held in partnership with RVC Adult Ed. There are videos on the website for Resume Writing, Interviewing, Job Tips and Communication in the Workplace. Attendance has been better in the virtual workshops than we've had in person in the past.

Rapid Response Virtual Workshops take place via Zoom for those employers who file a Warn Notice for layoffs. We work with the company's HR team and then set up a workshop that includes DCEO, IDES and Title I services for their employees. Information is provided on resources from each of the 3 entities.

Dr. Lisa Bly-Jones added that Workforce Development plays a critical role and especially during this time of high unemployment. All partners have quickly adapted to continue providing services at this critical time.

7. **Telecommuting Policy (Action Item):**

Given the advances in the use of technology and the need to provide adequate social distancing for staff and customers, the addition of a Telecommuting policy will be added to the existing Human Resources Personnel and Payroll policy.

A motion to approve the addition of Telecommuting policy to the Human Resources Personnel and Payroll policy as presented for full Board approval.

Motion: Fettes **Second:** Brown **Approved**

The Committee advised to add an equipment clause and sign out sheet as well as additional Cyber insurance.

8. **Chairman's Remarks:**

Frank Rotello remarked how quickly things can change and it's very impressive how adaptable the efforts of the team to carry forward the Regional Plan. He thanked the staff and One Stop Partners for their efforts. We will be stronger as an organization when we come out the other side.

Frank gave an update on the lease for the Rockford One-Stop Center noting that a phone conference with CMS will be later this week. There is an opportunity to save approximately \$100,000 per year by reducing square footage from 21,700 to 15,000. The reduction would be on the 2nd floor. The savings on overhead will be put into programs. The new lease will be for 5 years with a 5 year renewal option.

Going forward our meeting style may change due to continued social distancing. Seeing how efficient some positions are able to work remotely, it's a good opportunity to restructure the workspace.

The only concern IDES has is the loss of 2 conference rooms on the 2nd floor. Dr. Lisa Bly-Jones addressed this concern by stating that there are 3 classrooms on the 1st floor that can be better utilized and those rooms are larger than the 2 conference rooms.

The Belvidere lease is also be negotiating with the landlord, Midland Bank. We will be looking for a smaller space because we will no longer be co-located with RAMP.

9. **Executive Director Report:**

The written report was emailed to the Executive Committee and CEOs.

10. **Chief Elected Officials Meeting Adjourn:**

Items for review prior to adjournment included a question on additional COVID related funding. Currently there is a grant opportunity for employers that was released and the Business Team is working with employers to complete the grant applications. Additional funding for Dislocated Workers is not yet known and the timing of those funds are not yet known. The US Department of Labor has announced that \$500 million dollars will be released nationally. This equates to \$5million for Illinois or \$230,000 for each LWIA in Illinois and this includes Chicago and they are advocating Congress for an additional package. We won't know which areas receive what amount, until DCEO announces the awards.

Motion to adjourn Chief Elected Officials Meeting at 9:05am

Motion: Winnebago Second: Stephenson Approved

11. **Adjourn to Closed Session for the Executive Committee to discuss the following:**

- Executive Director and Board Staff Performance and Compensation

A motion to adjourn to Closed Session at 9:07

Motion: Ott Second: Steege Approved

Frank Rotello called the Executive Session to order at 9:09 am.

Frank Rotello called for a motion to adjourn the Executive session 9:27 am

Motion: Ott Second: Fettes Approved

12. **Reconvene Open Meeting:** The meeting was reconvened at 9:28 am

13. **Approval of any action taken as a result of the Closed Session (Action Item):**

No action was taken.

14. **Member Comments:** Craig Steege applauded the great work with technology and keeping efficiencies by meeting virtually to meet the needs of everyone.

15. **Announcements:** None

16. **Public Comment:** None

17. **Adjournment:** A motion to adjourn was made at 9:32 am.

Executive Committee Motion: Cassaro Second: Ott Approved

Respectfully submitted,
Cathy Cornelius

Date: July 15, 2020

ITEMS INCLUDED IN THE MEETING PACKET

Agenda 05-05-2020-2020

Executive Committee / CEO Meeting Minutes 02-04-2020

Telecommuting Policy (Action Item)
