



**The Workforce Connection Board and Chief Elected Officials  
Meeting Minutes**  
**The Workforce Connection Board,  
Workforce Board for Boone, Winnebago, and Stephenson Counties**

**Meeting: March 2, 2021**  
**Time: 8:00 am**  
**Location: Zoom Virtual Meeting**

Board Members Present (22): Ben Bernsten; Karen Brown; Len Carter; Michelle Cassaro; Pamela Fettes; Sue Fischer; Einar Forsman; Dr. Daniel Grohens; Jerry Guinane; Bob Guirl; Greg Harle; Geri Hayden; Vanessa Hughes; Paul Logli; Amy Ott; Jordan Priest; Frank Rotello; Dr. Amanda Smith for Dr. Howard Spearman; Mark Stefanic; Todd Wells; Mark Williams; Ed Wood; Jeff Zeal

Board Members Absent (11): Mark Adams; Scott Bloomquist; Todd Cagnoni; Frank Delarosa; Al Golden; Angela Hite-Carter; Kathy Crandall; James Pirages; Kraig Reichwald; Craig Steege;

CEO Members Present: Thomas McNamara; Joseph Chiarelli; William Hadley; Kevin Catlin for Karl Johnson;

CEO Members Absent: none

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

Partner Staff Present: Sue Carmichael; Courtney Geiger; Jessica Story

Guests Present: Lori Glawe, The Caldwell Group

- TWC Board Call to Order:** Board Chair Frank Rotello presided and called the TWC Board to order at 8:01 am.  
**CEO Call to Order:** Mayor McNamara called the CEO meeting to order at 8:05am.
- TWC Board Roll Call:** A roll call was taken and a quorum was present.  
**CEO Roll Call:** A roll call was taken and a quorum present.
- Approval of Consent Agenda – Action Item:**
  - **TWC Board Meeting Minutes – 12/01//2020**

- **CEO Meeting Minutes – 12/01/2020**

**TWC Board**

**Motion: Ott Second: Brown Approved**

**CEO Board**

**Motion: Stephenson Second: Boone Approved**

**4. Employer/Public Engagement Spotlights**

**Employer-The Caldwell Group**

Lori Glawe the Director of Organizational Development with The Caldwell Group Inc. spoke to the group about how they are taking a broader approach to how their company can obtain the skilled trades workers they need because of the lack of availability in the Rockford area. They decided to train their entry level workers to become skilled trades workers. To become more efficient they needed to invest in automation and people. The funds they received through The Workforce Connection Incumbent Worker Training provided training in CAD Technology, Continuous Improvement and Lean Manufacturing and Programming and Automation Skills to upgrade the skills of their workers. This has helped them become more efficient and effective and has helped to stabilize their growth curve. They would like to look at Apprenticeships for Table Welders and CNC Machinists to grow their own. Bob Guirl asked how many employees they have. They currently have 110 employees and 8 open positions in fabrication. Mark Stefanic asked what the impact will be on their business if they are unable to fill those 8 open positions. The impact on revenue will be significant if they can't fill those positions because they will not be able to fill orders. This is part of the challenge of growing from a small to medium business. Lisa Bly-Jones added how she appreciated the focus on developing talent from within and developing an apprenticeship because it is important for employers to lead apprenticeships.

**Participant**

“Autumn came into The Workforce Connection Career Center by mistake, but it turned out to be a very happy mistake that changed her direction in life.” She was living at the Rockford Rescue Mission and now Autumn is employed and has resources and is excited about the new opportunities ready for her. She is thankful to the team of people at The Workforce Connection, Alex (Career Planner), Keyanna (Business Services Coordinator) and Emily (Youth Career Planner) who helped coordinate services for Autumn to help her meet her goals. She has been in her job for one month and is happy and less stressed.

**5. January 2021 Financial Report**

- **PY2020 Budget Modification**

The preliminary budget for Program Year 2020 (July 1, 2020 – June 30, 2021) was developed and approved by the Board and CEOs in June 2020. Each year a budget modification is completed mid-year to account for actual year to date activity and redistribute unused training dollars to best utilize resources. A summary of the PY20 Budget Modification Funding Sources and Planned Expenditures compared to the current budget was provided.

Motion to approve the PY20 budget modification as presented which incorporates actual year to date activity and redistributes unused training dollars to best utilize the resources available.

**TWC Board**

**Motion: Harle Second: Logli Approved**

**CEO Board**

**Motion: Winnebago Second: Stephenson Approved**

6. **National Association of Workforce Boards (NAWB) Updates from DC**

Ron Painter, NAWB President and CEO spoke to the group about the legislative side of Workforce Development. He talked about the many Acts, Bills and Stimulus Packages that are coming out of congress and how they will affect local workforce boards across the country. He also spoke about some of the larger workforce issues that are affecting Workforce Development across the country and what is happening at the federal level to address these issues and how NAWB is advocating with federal legislators to ensure the best outcomes. Board members asked questions related to Apprenticeships and the connection to the Perkins V Act and local success measures and Ron will connect with them to hear more about these issues and how they can be addressed.

7. **Services from the Workforce System:**

Courtney Geiger presented the services available to Career Seekers and Employers and a general description of how services are provided. She noted that because we provide individualized services, each Job Seeker's and Employer's experience is different. There are multiple entry points into the system with the most common being connecting through the One-Stop Career Center. She discussed Basic Career Services available for individuals looking for employment, Program Enrollment leading to Occupational Training or Work Based Training and Employment Services. Service Integration is also provided to those who need connection to holistic services to help overcome barriers to employment by navigating the various service providers and connecting individuals to ensure the person's needs were met.

Employer Services can include Recruitment Assistance consisting of Job Postings on the TWC website or IL Job Link, Hiring Events or screening resumes of qualified candidates. Subsidized Employment is another service available consisting of Work Experience, On the Job Training or Apprenticeships where the wages of new workers is subsidized in exchange for the employer providing the needed training. Upskilling of current workers is a service available through Incumbent Worker Training where the employer is reimbursed up to 90% of the cost of training depending on the business size. Assessment of skills for potential or current employees can be done through the workforce system using WorkKeys with modules in Math, Workplace Documents, Graphic Literacy, Talent & Fit and others. Business Service Reps are available to work with employers to design programs specifically for their business.

8. **Diversity, Equity and Inclusion: Our Workforce and Why It Matters**

Dr. Lisa Bly-Jones remarked how Workforce Development has always been a champion for equity and this is shown when Career Planners work with an individual to meet their needs based on their unique circumstances. We are starting to hear a lot about Diversity, Equity and Inclusion and we recently held Employer Forums titled Building a Business Case for Diversity. She referenced McKinsey & Company Reports on diversity from 2015 through 2020. The McKinsey Findings were that diversity brings a competitive advantage for organizations that are able to attract and retain diverse talent; diversity matters because we are live in a global world that has become deeply interconnected and more diverse companies are better able to win top talent and improve their customer orientation, employee satisfaction and decision making, leading to a cycle of increasing returns. Ways The Workforce Connection is addressing racial equity is through the application for the Kellogg Foundation Racial Equity Grant and the Illinois Healing Grant. Equality and Equity are not the same. Equity means giving each individual what they need for a fair chance to enjoy access and opportunities. We want to make sure we think about the terms that we hear and understand what they mean. Having an inclusive workforce means that the potential of people reflects our community and that everyone has access to obtain the skills necessary. If we want to fill open positions and have a vibrant community, it starts with having an inclusive workforce. Having an inclusive workforce is an intentional process from the place of attraction, developing staff, mentoring staff, sponsoring staff for available opportunities, retaining staff and maintaining leadership at every level. Lisa invited the Board members and CEOs to reach out to her to talk about the voice the Board has in the world of workforce and provide any feedback or ask any questions.

9. **Workforce Highlights from Chief Elected Officials**

Winnebago County Board Chairman Chiarelli reported on the priorities of the county. The Clean Energy Initiatives and Jobs and how waste can be utilized for energy and jobs can be created. This is an emerging sector in business.

Boone County had nothing to report at this time.

Stephenson County Board Chairman Hadley talked about a business that was having a job fair and how they worked with the county and Greater Freeport Partnership and local media, social media, and print media. Attendance was good and they had over 150 applications, with 146 jobs offered on the spot. 133 emails with resumes were also sent and 42 Facebook applications. The company was very pleased with the outcome.

City of Rockford Mayor McNamara shared that a stimulus package of \$1.9 trillion is slated to be released with the City of Rockford may receive \$48 million and Winnebago County may receive \$50.5 million. Also there is a \$4 trillion capital investment plan in the works to improve infrastructure and may create jobs. He also shared how he is working with Rockford Promise to attract and retain businesses. A proposal is going to City Council to be approved for i-fiber throughout the city to create a more diverse economy and attract high tech jobs at a cost of \$250 million. Lastly he is concerned about the layoff of 150 Chrysler employees and transportation to the new Rock Valley College Advanced Technology Center located in Belvidere. He would like to see quick routes at meaningful times that provide access to all for this educational opportunity.

10. **Executive Director Report (Hand out)**

A written report was provided.

11. **Board Chair's Perspective**

Frank Rotello remarked on the Employer and Individual Spotlights and how Autumn said that what makes her happy is working. He also remarked on the power of collaboration through The Workforce Connection working with a business to help them grow and referral from a training provider to TWC as a small business resource.

12. **Announcements**

None

13. **Member Comments:**

Pamela Fettes reported that she has been in talks with Stellantis (Chrysler) along with Boone County Administrator Kevin Catlin and DCEO. Stellantis reported that these layoffs were planned last year and moving forward we have to plan for what the merger means as well as the advancing technology in automation and electric vehicles. Stellantis has not yet identified a project for the plant for next year. There will be another meeting in April and they will be presenting the benefits of staying located in Northern Illinois. This location affects the workforce from 3 states. They will need to engage more partners going forward to be ready to respond.

14. **Public Comment:**

None

15. **Adjournment**

TWC Board Motion to adjourn at 9:33

**Motion: Ott Second: Guirl Approved**

CEO Board Motion to adjourn at 9:33

**Motion: Boone Second: Stephenson Approved**

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Respectfully submitted,  
Cathy Cornelius

Date: May 19, 2021

ITEMS INCLUDED IN THE MEETING PACKET

*TWC Board Meeting Minutes 12-01-2020 (Action Item)*

*CEO Meeting Minutes 12-01-2020 (Action Item)*

*January 2021 Financial Report*

*PY2020 Mid-Year Budget Modification Action Form (Action Item)*

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