



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

**Meeting: December 1, 2020**  
**Time: 8:00 am**  
**Location: Zoom Virtual Meeting**

Board Members Present (22): Ben Bernsten; Karen Brown; Michelle Cassaro; Kathy Crandall; Pamela Fettes; Einar Forsman; Dr. Daniel Grohens; Jerry Guinane; Bob Guirl; Greg Harle; Geri Hayden; Vanessa Hughes; Paul Logli; Amy Ott; James Pirages; Frank Rotello; Dr. Howard Spearman; Craig Steege; Mark Stefanic; Todd Wells; Mark Williams; Jeff Zeal

Board Members Absent (11): Mark Adams; Scott Bloomquist; Todd Cagnoni; Len Carter; Frank Delarosa; Sue Fischer; Al Golden; Angela Hite-Carter; Jordan Priest; Kraig Reichwald; Ed Wood;

CEO Members Present: Thomas McNamara; William Hadley; Frank Haney; 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: Brissa Berman-Dixon; Seabreeze Non-Emergency Medical Transport (via video)  
DeShawn co-enrolled in Elevate and Life Launch Re-entry program and Grant Shubert, Life Launch Supervisor (via video)

1. **TWC Board Call to Order:** Board Chair Frank Rotello presided and called the TWC Board to order at 8:06 am.

**CEO Call to Order:** Mayor McNamara called the CEO meeting to order at 8:09am.

2. **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.

3. **Approval of Consent Agenda – Action Item:**

- TWC Board Meeting Minutes – 09/01//2020 w/ correction for spelling of Bourn & Koch
- CEO Meeting Minutes – 09/01/2020

**TWC Board**

**Motion: Williams Second: Forsman Approved**

**CEO Board**

**Motion: Winnebago Second: Stephenson Approved**

4. **Employer/Public Engagement Spotlights**

**Employer-Seabreeze Non-Emergency Medical Transport**

Brisa Berumen-Dixon owner of Seabreeze Non-Emergency Medical Transport will join us via video to talk about her company.

Seabreeze Non-Emergency Medical Transport is a local small business located in Rockford serving Winnebago, Boone and McHenry counties and they continue to grow. Seabreeze is a certified women and minority owned business. Seabreeze began when they saw the need for a safe, affordable, and reliable option for residents who need to get to important appointments on time. They are available every day 7am-7pm.

Seabreeze connected with The Workforce Connection and has a productive and impactful relationship. Just recently, Seabreeze has been able to utilize the on-the-job training and work experience programs, which has provided opportunities for employment for both the TWC program participants and the company and a portion of the training and wages is paid for through WIOA grant funds.

**Participant**

DeShown joined via video with LifeLaunch program manager, Grant Shubert. DeShown is a TWC Elevate participant who is co-enrolled in the Goodwill LifeLaunch program. The LifeLaunch and Elevate Career Planners work together to ensure that Deshown has services that meet his needs and are holistic. He has been able to enroll in GED classes at Roosevelt, begin a work experience, and get forklift certified, with support and assistance from both TWC and LifeLaunch staff together.

5. **Data Analysis RFB – TWC Board and CEO Action Item**

TWC has developed A Request for Bid (RFB) seeking technical assistance with data analysis and program evaluations. The scope of work will include, evaluation design, data collection, data analysis and reporting utilizing data visualization for workforce development programs and systems.

A motion to approve a contract with Forland and Wheeler Consulting for \$15,000 to provide the data analysis and program evaluation services.

**TWC Board**

**Motion: Ott Second: Pirages Approved**

**CEO Board**

**Motion: Winnebago Second: Stephenson Approved**

6. **Approval of ITA Programs –TWC Board Action Item**

Frank Rotello asked for a motion to approve the following ITA Programs:

The Pathways to Careers Committee approved the following requests by Current Eligible Training Providers for training programs to be available to further the skill development and education/training of Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act program participants. Board staff reviewed labor market information and outcome data to garner information on the effectiveness of programs as well as available industry recognized credentials.

All programs meet the Individual Training Account (ITA) federal and state guidelines, Local Workforce Board policies. All of these providers are on the approved training provider list for the State of Illinois. DCEO requires all programs to be re-approved every two years. All programs listed for re approval have met performance standards.

Training Institution	Approval or re-approval	Program	Target Industry	Certification/Degree Earned
Rasmussen University	Approval	Network Support Certification	Information Technology	CompTIA A+ (part 1), CompTIA A+ (part 2), CompTIA Network +, Windows 10 MD-100, Cisco CCNA
Rockford University	Approval	Bachelor's degree in Human Development-Child Adolescent Concentration	Human Services	Bachelor of Arts
North Shore College	Approval	Practical Nursing (LPN) Program	Healthcare	Practical Nursing (LPN)
Highland Community College	Approval	Certified Administrative Professional with Microsoft Office Master 2016	Administrative	Certified Administrative Assistant
Highland Community College	Approval	Certified Bookkeeper	Administrative	Certified Bookkeeper
Highland Community College	Approval	Certified Medical Administrative Assistant with Medical Billing and Coding	Medical	Certified Medical Administrative Assistant (CMAA)
Highland Community College	Approval	Medical Billing and Coding (CBCS)	Medical	Certified Billing and Coding Specialist (CBCS)
Highland Community College	Approval	Medical Billing and Coding (CCA)	Medical	Certified Coding Associate (CCA)
Highland Community College	Approval	Medical Billing and Coding (CPC)	Medical	Certified Professional Coder (CPC)

Highland Community College	Approval	Pharmacy Technician	Medical	Certified Pharmacy Technician (CPT)
Highland Community College	Approval	Certified Electronic Health Records Specialist	Medical	Certified Electronic Health Records Specialist (CEHRS)
Highland Community College	Approval	Certified Electronic Health Records with Medical Terminology	Medical	Certified Electronic Health Records Specialist (CEHRS)
Highland Community College	Approval	Certified Medical Administrative Assistant (CMAA)	Medical	Certified Medical Administrative Assistant (CMAA)
Highland Community College	Approval	Optician Certification Training	Medical	American Board of Optician (ABO) certification

**Motion to approve the above ITA programs as recommended by the Pathways to Careers Committee.**

*Abstentions: Craig Steege, Employed by Rasmussen College; Karen Brown, Employed by Highland Community College*

**TWC Board**

**Motion: Forsman Second: Logli Approved**

**CEO Board**

**Motion Winnebago Second: Boone Approved**

**7. MOU Technical Changes:**

As a point of notification and not for approval, the TWC Board and CEO Board were notified of technical revisions as required by the State Interagency Team to the MOU between The Workforce Connection and Local Workforce Area 3 One-Stop Partners. These changes are only technical and do not change the MOU as was approved on November 19, 2020 by the State of Illinois Interagency Team.

**8. October 2020 Financial Report**

Amy Ott asked Dan White, TWC Fiscal Manager to give an update of the Financial Report. Dan reported that there is continued improvement with the Adult and Dislocated Worker minimum training spending requirement of 50% as well as the Youth Training spending requirement of 20%. Many new participants started training in October. Historically we would see a higher percentage at this time but given the circumstances of COVID, numbers are still in a good place. Frank Rotello asked Dan to review the year over year numbers. Dan reported that in October 2019 the Adult was 58% vs 49%, DW was 114% vs 59% and Youth 56% vs 79%. Courtney Geiger said that they feel good about the numbers but they are still seeing COVID uncertainty from customers. COVID is having a different effect on Youth and we are seeing higher participation. Subrecipient spending is where expected with one of the subrecipients falling slightly below due to a vacant position and training and travel funds that were not spent due to COVID. Subrecipients will review their spending and adjust or deobligate funds based on actual spending and projections for the remainder of the year. Combined actual costs and obligations for all funding streams are nearing the 80% requirement goal. Participant service levels are increasing for the Adult program so there

are no concerns. Unrestricted or non-WIOA funds have been slowly increasing with revenue from WorkKeys Assessment Proctoring. These unrestricted funds will allow for TWC to fund Workforce initiatives outside of WIOA parameters.

9. **Request for Proposal**

- **One Stop Operator and Title I Career Services** – includes Adult, Dislocated Worker training funds, and Adult WEX & OJT funds. We are required to go out for competitive bid every four years; with the last being in Program Year 2017. Currently these services are provided by a consortium of Rock Valley College, Goodwill and IDES. This will go out for procurement in January 2021. Proposals will be evaluated by a team of Board members and the contract awarded for 1 year with the option to renew for 3 years, effective July 1, 2021.
- **Stephenson County Youth** – This contract is only for 3 years and will be the same process as the OSO RFP. Proposals will be reviewed and approved by the Youth Council and will be effective July 1, 2021.

Chris shared the timeline for release of the RFP through contract award. Board will vote on the approval of the contract award at the June 1, 2021 Board/CEO meeting.

Any Board members who would like to be a part of the evaluation team to review the proposals should reach out to Chris Connors at [CConnors@TheWorkforceConnection.org](mailto:CConnors@TheWorkforceConnection.org)

10. **Economic Conditions and Opportunities**

Amanda Sink, TWC Strategic Initiatives Manager shared data on Job Postings over the last 30 days. The data showed postings are trending with those posted in 2019. The employers showing the most postings are Mercy Health, Amazon, OSF and other healthcare providers. Truck Drivers, Nurses and Retail positions are posted most frequently. The top skills required for the jobs that are posted are certifications such as CDL, CNA, ASE, Hazmat. These certifications can be obtained through TWC Training. Transportation/Warehouse and Healthcare continue to be in-demand occupations. Frank Rotello added that food processing is growing in Boone and Stephenson counties. 69% of the jobs posted list no experience necessary.

The Labor Market Information report may be found on the TWC website.

11. **Pivoting and Re-Prioritizing**

Dr. Lisa Bly-Jones highlighted some observations of the past 8 months. There has been an increase in Business Service requests and we've worked harder with employers to support their efforts to apply for state grants. Usually, in times of recession, we see an increase in individuals seeking to reskill, retool and in search of post-secondary opportunities. However, during this pandemic, we are seeing a lag in those seeking training. Individuals don't have the luxury to choose between work and training and so we are seeing an increase in On-the-Job Training and Work Experience training through our Business Service programs. These programs are a win-win situation for both the individuals and employers.

Dr. Bly-Jones touched on a few examples of requests that may be questioned by a monitor and may require additional conversations internally, with colleagues across the country and with the employer. She asked the Board members for feedback on these scenarios to get their perspective and help to explain how monitors may look at scenarios. This exercise was used to demonstrate how most scenarios are not cookie cutter and require additional discussion to help to avoid disallowed costs.

12. **Restore Illinois and Re-Opening American Job Centers**

Dr. Lisa Bly-Jones reported that with the resurgence mitigations, Career Services are being offered remotely and Board Staff have moved to total remote working. Courtney Geiger confirmed that services are being offered remotely but they are offering services by appointment to serve those without technology in a safe manner.

13. **Executive Director Report**

Dr. Lisa Bly-Jones’ report was made available in the agenda packet. She did talk about the podcast topics coming up will be related to stepping up. How to do we see ourselves stepping up as a local workforce board. When we look at the exposure of the digital divide during the pandemic in an era of a digital economy, how do we step up and address issues such as this? One way is to increase our non-WIOA funding to be able to address Workforce issues or matters that don’t necessarily meet the WIOA guidelines. Providing access to resources and education around skillfully utilizing technology is one way the local workforce board can step up.

14. **Board Chair’s Perspective**

Frank Rotello echoed Dr. Bly-Jones’ sentiments around being resilient and being able to pivot during these unprecedented times. He stressed how being data driven, and communicating what we learn from that data is critical. The Local Workforce Board needs to be proactive and ready to leverage everything we’ve put in place in anticipation of the needs of individuals and employers in 2021.

Frank informed the Board and CEOs of the early termination of the Apprenticeship Navigator contract that we put in place with a grant from DCEO. Legal counsel has been consulted and are working on transitioning for the grant.

Dr. Bly-Jones reported that we will revert back to educating employers on apprenticeships. The grant was meant as a short-term promotion of apprenticeships. Chris Connors and Robert Jones will work to educate employers and use past experience to coordinate apprenticeship opportunities. Chris Connors will be the point of contact for any apprenticeship questions.

15. **Announcements**

None

16. **Member Comments:**

None

17. **Public Comment:**

None

18. **Adjournment**

TWC Board Motion to adjourn at 9:24

**Motion: Logli Second: Steege Approved**

CEO Board Motion to adjourn at 9:24

**Adjourn by declaration**

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Respectfully submitted,  
Cathy Cornelius

Date: February 22, 2021

**ITEMS INCLUDED IN THE MEETING PACKET**

*TWC Board Meeting Minutes 09-01-2020 (Action Item)*

*CEO Meeting Minutes 09-01-2020 (Action Item)*

*Data Analysis RFB (Action Item)*

*ITA Program Approval (Action Item)*

*MOU Technical Changes*

*October 2020 Financial Report*

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