



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

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

Meeting: November 2, 2021
Time: 8:00 am
Location: Zoom Video Conference

CEO Members Present (4): Joseph Chiarelli; William Hadley; Karl Johnson; Thomas McNamara;

CEO Members Absent (0): None

Executive Committee Members Present (9): Ben Bernsten; Karen Brown; Michelle Cassaro; Pamela Fettes; Bob Guirl; Vanessa Hughes; Amy Ott; Frank Rotello; Craig Steege;

Exec. Comm, Members Absent (1): Scott Bloomquist;

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

Partner Staff Present: Courtney Geiger; Karen McDonald; Tabitha Sims; Dr. Amanda Smith; Jessica Story; Tonya Thayer;

Guests: None

1. **Executive Committee Call to Order:** Board Chair Frank Rotello presided and called the Executive Committee to order at 8:03 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 August 3, 2021, Meeting Minutes– Action Item:**

- **TWC Executive Committee**
Motion: Guirl Second: Ott Approved
- **Chief Elected Officials**
Motion: Boone Second: Stephenson Approved

4. **Search Firm Approval**

Under the TWC Board Procurement Policy, a Request for Bid from agencies with experience in successfully conducting executive searches in the Rockford area was released on October 8, 2021, for the search for an Executive Director for The Workforce Connection with a deadline of 4 pm on October 29, 2021.

The bid included the scope of work/project implementation plan; terms and conditions; bid outline; and rating criteria.

The bids were reviewed by the search committee and Workplace was selected as the winning bid.

Motion to approve a contract award to Workplace as recommended by the Search Committee.

TWC Executive Committee

Motion: Brown Second: Fettes Approved

5. Committee Updates:

- **Finance**-Amy Ott, committee chair reviewed the Finance Report Summary for October 2021.
- **Operations Management Council**-Ben Bernsten, committee chair, reported that the committee has had great participation and attendance. The committee's big focus at the last meeting on September 21, 2021, was Service Integration highlighting removing barriers and streamlining systems between partners.
- **Youth Council**-In the absence of the committee chair, Dr. Lisa Bly-Jones reported that the Youth Council is focused on 21st Century Skills, reducing barriers, career exploration/career exposure, and youth disconnected from both educational systems and employment. Amanda Sink added that they are also working on an initiative related to Keys for Workplace Essential Skills Training. The committee is also planning to create a community campaign for Healthcare Pathways starting with Certified Nursing Assistants (CNA).
- **Pathways to Careers**-Pamela Fettes, committee chair, shared that this committee has been working on determining our Region's livable wage. They are using data from the MIT Calculator for current information by county and by self-sufficient household. The committee also discussed mandatory vaccines and the effect that could have on employment at both the employer level and the employee level.
- **Employer & Public Engagement**-Craig Steege, committee co-chair reported that the group met on October 12, 2021, and reviewed the Efforts Report on Business Services. Dr. Lisa Bly-Jones gave an update on Business Service Team changes that will allow business partners to better connect with that team. Amy Hesselbacher and Courtney Geiger gave an overview of the Workplace Skills Certificate training that has been piloted with some employers and have received positive feedback from both the participants and the employers. Lastly, the committee discussed expanding TWC's workforce dollars by providing services for a fee. They discussed the types of services to be offered. Amanda Sink added that the Workforce Development Symposium that was under planning discussions has been postponed until a new Executive Director is in place.
- **Human Resources Committee**-Karen Brown, committee chair, reported that the committee is working on the recruitment of a new Executive Director and reviewed the Executive Director job description, and developed some interview questions. Karen also welcomed Kim Kuborn as a new member of this committee.

6. Chief Elected Officials Reports

City of Rockford: Mayor McNamara gave the committee an update on the Hard Rock Casino's temporary location reporting that 285 people have been hired and they are scheduled to open in 2 weeks. He also reported that Amazon has purchased a 140,000 sf location for the opening of a new distribution center in

Rockford. The City of Rockford has distributed \$932,000 to micro-enterprises, forgiven all loans made during the beginning of COVID, and waived 50% of liquor license fees. Mayor also informed the committee that there is interest in the Barber Coleman site with the idea of being a city within a city. Jay Jeffers, the interested party has 150 days remaining of due diligence.

Boone County: Chairman Johnson reported that legislation was passed for incentives for Stellantis to stay in Belvidere. They continue to petition Stellantis to convert the plant for their electric vehicles.

Stephenson County: Chairman Hadley reported that Stephenson County held their first Black Expo in participation with The Workforce Connection. He also said he is hearing good feedback on the TWC Access Site in Stephenson County. He also shared that they are working on Mill Race Crossing Industrial Park as a TIF District and have created an Intergovernmental Agreement between the City of Freeport and the County.

Dr. Lisa Bly-Jones thanked Courtney Geiger and Jessica Story for making the connection for the expo.

Winnebago County: Chairman Chiarelli reported that the county is working on strategies for workforce shortages and are discussing things such as pay and childcare. The county is also working with developers for a solid waste management plant for converting waste into energy. This could create thousands of jobs.

7. **Chairman's Remarks:**

Frank Rotello remarked that working together is the key. Frank challenged employers to work together to find solutions. He also commented that they are being very mindful in the search for a new Executive Director and structured the timeline to allow time to get the right fit. They are expecting that a choice will be made in February. He informed the committee and Chief Elected Officials that Dan White will serve as the Interim Executive Director. Dan White thanked Frank and the Board Officers for having faith in him to do the job.

Pamela Fettes thanked Lisa for her leadership and for moving the Board forward.

8. **Executive Director Report:**

Dr. Lisa Bly-Jones thanked the Executive Committee and all the committee chairs for their hard work and leadership. She thanked Bob Guirl for leading the charge to know our data and set up processes for regularly collecting data. She thanked the Chief Elected Officials for setting aside time to talk with her and for their leadership. She also thanked the Board staff for being the wind beneath her wings and doing all the dishes behind the scenes. The Board and Program staff were able to help her think about Workforce Development beyond WIOA. She expects that the hand-off to Dan White will be a smooth transition.

She then elaborated on the Fees for Service discussion. Some of the services could be:

- Procurement Services – these can be workforce or economic development related and TWC would get a portion of the awarded contract.

She also laid out the staff reorganization with the reduction of 2 staff positions; the Business Account Manager and the Compliance Manager. The Compliance Manager duties were divided between the Planning and Quality Assurance Manager and Program Staff. The PQA Manager took on the duties of the Equal Opportunity Officer and related compliance-related duties and the Program took on the data reporting.

With the reorganization of the Business Service Team, the Business Account Manager's role of "selling" Incumbent Worker Training was folded into the current suite of services for the Business Team. The Strategic Initiatives Manager developed a playbook of processes & procedures for the Business Team to follow. The SIM will also be the bridge to the program and help with strategic aspects. The Employer & Public Engagement Committee will have oversight of the Business Services Team. Craig Steege commented that streamlining is always good and this structure makes sense and he is confident referrals will get the services they need.

9. **Member Comments/Announcements:** None

10. **Public Comment:** None

11. **Adjournment:**

A motion to adjourn the meeting of the Executive Committee was made at 8:53 am.

Executive Committee Motion: Steege Second: Fettes Approved

A motion to adjourn the meeting of the Chief Elected Officials was made at 8:54 am.

CEO Board Motion: Boone Second: Stephenson Approved

Respectfully submitted,
Cathy Cornelius

Date: January 25, 2022

ITEMS INCLUDED IN THE MEETING PACKET

Agenda November 2, 2021

Executive Committee / CEO Meeting Minutes August 3, 2021

Search Firm Approval Action Form

Executive Director's Report
