



Missouri Workforce Development Board

June 8, 2021 from 12:00 p.m. to 5:00 p.m.

Meeting Minutes

Camden on the Lake

(650) 479-3207

Code: 133-242-9652

Members Present: Chair Len Toenjes, Vice Chair Cara Canon (proxy), Garland Barton, Greta Bax, Tony Bryan, Dr. Don Cook, Celeste Cramer, Kristie Davis, Astra Ferris, Dr. John Gaal, Assistant Commissioner Tim Gaines, Sen. Denny Hoskins, Director Anna Hui, Commissioner Gary Jungermann, Kathy Lambert, Commissioner Zora Mulligan, Gregg Roberts, LeRoy Stromberg, Joshua Tennison, Virgil White, Jill Williams

SWDB Staff: Allyssa Johnson and Dr. Mardy Leathers

CALL TO ORDER & WELCOME: Chair Len Toenjes called the meeting to order at 12:00 PM and welcomed everyone.

ROLL CALL: Allyssa Johnson conducted roll call and quorum was declared.

NATIONAL AGOVERNOR'S ASSOCIATION WORKSHOP—REVIEW STRATEGIC PLACEMAT: Rachael Stephens and Loren Shimanek from the National Governor's Association stated, the State Workforce Development Board (SWDB) must ensure their roles and responsibilities are fulfilled through strategic vision and guidance to the public workforce system. This includes setting and communicating a vision, modeling, and managing strategic partnerships. These important aspects of the board's role can help support the state's recovery strategy from the pandemic. SWDB is made up of 51% business to guide the needs of businesses on the greatest demand. This provides a voice and platform for members to participate in workforce strategic thinking. In addition to strategic vision and managing partnerships, the board can help keep the workforce system accountable by examining data to identify needs and opportunities within the state.

SWDB retreat last October had several outcomes such as a strategic plan and the establishment of a new committee. Loren asked what is the status of your strategic plan? What has been accomplished since October 2020?

Tony replied, the committee has met and he was able to attend some Local Workforce Development Board (LWDB) meetings to identify best practices across the state.

Gregg Roberts added he is continuing to engage going forward. Gregg stated his perspective is different because he also serves as a LWDB Chair in Northwest and is able to leverage that perspective when engaging other LWDB Chairs.

Ken Mall added engaging the local boards is a challenge because of the pandemic. The State & Local Board Engagement Committee met and decided to begin connecting with the LWDB Chairs and attending meetings.

Chair Toenjes asked what are our three priorities?

Tony Bryan states the scorecard appears to be arbitrary, typically three of the four comments are negative. It is requested to have more board chair communication to have efficient meetings. For example, the Central Region leverages several staff members to have an active role in the LWDB meeting.

Ken Mall shared, the Office of Workforce Development is launching a new scorecard and process.

Gregg Roberts suggested bringing a success story to each LWDB meeting to bring real life situations to workforce development. This will help the LWDB members understand how their decisions impact Missourians.

Commissioner Zora Mulligan added success stories are helpful, but the data at scale also needs to be considered.

Chair Toenjes suggested the success stories should not be on one person, but should also be the businesses.

Ken Mall added SWDB does not have a shared language across the state. Ken recommended moving from compliance to strategic thinking, the state has moved to how we need to help the regions.

Chair Toenjes added that the public workforce system needs to do a better job of inviting job seekers back into the job centers. OWD can leverage the marketing and promotional videos created by the Department of Higher Education and Workforce Development. The excitement from the private partners are lacking.

Tony Bryan said the front line staff need to be engaged and be excited to serve citizens and employers.

Astra Ferris stated that the public workforce system needs to recruit more businesses and hone in on delivering services.

Ken Mall suggested engaging with affiliates to connect with businesses effectively.

Jen Roodhouse added the Employers Relation and Engagement (ERE) team launched in February and added additional staff. It is important this team is aware of which businesses are engaging with the state and understand how to best support the business's needs.

Kristie Davis said the Missouri One Start team engages with the ERE team to collaborate on business engagement. It is important employers and partners are not fatigued by the various programs or outreach conducted by the state.

Gregg Roberts said the public workforce system is a hidden gem, and employers and citizens are not aware of the services available.

Ken Mall questioned, who owns the employer relationship? How does the public workforce system best serve?

JOB CENTERS OF THE FUTURE & JOB CENTER CONNECT WORKSHOP: Ken Mall thanked the board. This is the close out of Missouri Job Centers of the Future and now the launch of Missouri Job Center Connect. OWD has issued a new process, which will include the Local Workforce Development Boards and stakeholders in the policy process. This will allow for implementation to take effect in a timely fashion. Chair Toenjes added business input before staff develop policies is an important step. This inclusive process will allow businesses to have a voice before the policy is approved and implemented. Ken Mall stated that data can be leveraged to inform policy, and the board can consider the policy's impact on the business community.

Ken highlighted there are more than 100 policy recommendations for Job Centers of the Future. Dr. Mardy Leathers reviewed the policy framework which includes citizens, employers, education and training providers, and infrastructure, all in which must support sustainable employment.

Kathy Lambert added that sustainable employment is key and the public workforce system must engage the front line staff that serve citizens every day.

Virgil White said sustainable employment looks different and employees do not stay in jobs as long.

Director Anna Hui cautioned that workforce programs are complicated and language must be adjusted to connect with employers, stakeholders, and citizens. Director Hui also recommended engaging in self-service for citizens is necessary in today's world.

Chair Toenjes suggested the elements employers use to make hiring decisions should match the unemployment insurance system.

Director Hui added the Department of Labor and Industrial Relations has the ability to filter information on the recipients to help the citizens consider sustainable employment. Further some citizens do not understand the public workforce system and the next step. The unemployment insurance system and the public workforce system has the ability to make meaningful connections on a regular basis.

Chair Toenjes asked how can the public workforce system be attractive to employers. He also asked how to best triage job seekers.

Astra recommended to use analytical data to improve the public workforce system.

Ronda Anderson added the Missouri Economic Research and Information Center (MERIC) has many resources and research to identify how individuals can transition to new career fields with transferrable skills.

Kathy Lambert added that the public workforce system is historically a reactive system in which staff wait for the citizen to come to the center.

Ken Mall encouraged the public workforce system to be proactive and to simplify the process from the citizen or business' perspective.

Tony Bryan suggested the job centers leverage automation to make it simple for staff and the citizen to gather information.

Ken Mall stated that WIOA funding is continuing to diminish across the nation, and there are a lot of silos across the state. How can Missouri leverage a regional approach?

Commissioner Zora Mulligan added the department has made progress on short-term credential attainment and has expanded access to apprenticeships. In 2019, legislation was passed to support short-term training through Fast Track, however under current economic conditions, community college enrollments are declining and struggling to get students to leverage Fast Track. Child care, transportation, time and self-doubt are barriers to training and education.

Chair Toenjes stated depression, self-confidence are challenges citizens are facing as they return to work or to access education.

Ken Mall asked what skills businesses are seeking in a job seeker.

Tony Bryan answered St. Louis County has focused on closing the skills gap for the last five years and translate current skills into a job opportunity.

Greta Bax added AFL-CIO is investing in pre-apprenticeship programs to support individuals interested in construction apprenticeship programs. These programs are concentrated in St. Louis, Kansas City, and Springfield.

Celeste Cramer suggested the schools have invested more in building career pathways, and recommended the state offer sample policies or work commitments to help employers.

Ken Mall commented that job centers need more assistance in reaching out to employers. He added the public workforce system needs to make better choices on where training dollars are spent.

Dr. Mardy Leathers added other states have a higher success rate on converting citizens into WIOA and actively connecting individuals into short-term training. Local funds are locally controlled.

WRAP UP: Chair Toenjes thanked all of the board members for engaging in the board retreat. This information will help the staff change the culture and engagement with the citizens and employers.

Dr. John Gaal moved to adjourn and Tony Bryan seconded.

The meeting ended at 5:00 P.M.