

Workforce Innovation Board of Ramsey County
Constructions-Green Jobs Committee Meeting Minutes
Tuesday, March 12, 2024
3:00 – 4:00pm
Zoom Video Conference

Present:

Becky Brink Ray
Don Mullin
Elisa Rasmussen
Mary Rick
Russ Stark

Absent:

Joseph Adamji
Chris Duffrin

Staff/Guests:

Ling Becker, Workforce Solutions
Mariann Macalus, Workforce Solutions
Rachael Molenaar, Workforce Solutions
John O’Phelan, Workforce Solutions

Call to Order & Land Acknowledgement

Mullin called the meeting to order at 3:02pm. Becker read the land acknowledgement aloud.

Approve January Minutes

Motion (Rick/Rasmussen) to approve the January 9, 2024, minutes as presented. Motion carried unanimously by chat vote.

Committee Work Plan

Becker et al. shared the following:

Construction – Green Jobs Related Events

- Metro State STEM Event – March 27: Metro State University, an MOU partner with the CareerForce System, is hosting this event featuring the 3M chief scientist. This is a good way to expose more of Ramsey County’s program participants who are in pathways to STEM or STEM-adjacent training programs. Participants will attend the Keynote speaker. After the keynote speaker, the add-on portion for these participants will be a WIB-sponsored STEM panel of professors, light lunch and Metro State tour. If you know of a program that should get a chance to have their program participants attend, let Molenaar know.
- Youth Job and Resource Fair – April 20 at Maplewood Mall. The Mall is also hosting the Hmong Heritage Day on the 20th which will help with the foot traffic. If you want to be a part of hosting a table or know of others to get the word out, connect with Molenaar.
- Green Careers County Board Proclamation – April 23 at 9am at the Ramsey County Courthouse. If you have interest in attending, you are welcome to join the proclamation session.
- Green Career Fair & Resource Fair (name change to Green Ramsey Expo + Career Fair) – May 1 at Wilder Foundation. This is an opportunity to meet with organizations whose missions include recycling, creating green space, environmental clean-up, etc. to learn about and apply for green collar careers in emerging industries. Becker shared there may be extra space to have a Young Professional networking opportunity. Rick will help with the Young Professional networking portion. She wondered what the target audience might be and mentioned the sustainability event planners from an event she recently attended.
- Launchpad 2024: Journey Beyond High School – tentative date May 9. A new event that the WIB has never done but was requested from the schools for those high school graduating seniors, and their families, who do not have a plan to go to college or any sort of post-secondary plans. Mullin will connect with Molenaar/Becker to determine a location.
- Expand the Toolbox Reinventing Our Construction Workforce Through Technology Advancements – tentative date May 2 or 29. The goal is for non-profits, schools, etc., to learn about the newest trends in technology and how to incorporate into the construction curriculum.

- CERT Connect Open House – May 9 at Maplewood Community Center. This is for small businesses who are CERT certified or have the potential of being CERT certified to connect with County staff who are directly involved in construction projects for the purpose of networking, addressing contractor questions, etc.
- Construction Crew Hiring Event – May 14. This is the 10th annual hiring event. This year it will be held at the Carpenters Union Hall in St. Paul. It is an opportunity for contractors to meet and interview individuals that are looking for employment in the construction industry.
- Construct Tomorrow – Late 2024 or early 2025. This is currently in the discussion and planning stages.

Employer Supports Discussion

- Inclusive Workplaces Cohort: The third cohort will support 11 organizations, which includes several construction companies, in creating a more inclusive workplace. Becker will forward the list of businesses.

Build Your Own Future Campaign Next Steps

While the webpage already exists, some work is needed in adding components to the calendar. Along with that, Becker shared about building out the page with information on an east-side pilot. This would help connect the residents to construction jobs and opportunities by using projects such as the Heights and other economic development construction as a way to create engagement in the community. Construction awareness is going to be a big initiative for the WIB this year. Becker and Stark will connect to align the activities.

Director Updates

The following updates were provided:

Climate Equity Action Plan: Molenaar shared that this plan provides a framework for the work to equitably respond to climate change and advance resiliency. The plan features six areas of focus: clean transportation, climate smart natural land, thriving communities, clean energy and efficient building, healthy lives and clean economy. The work of Workforce Solutions and this Committee are goals for “clean economy”: help resident and business owner applicants in Ramsey County leverage applicable funding; support the development and growth of businesses leading the just transition to a clean economy in alignment with the Economic Competitiveness and Inclusion Plan and support just workforce transitions into the green economy. The link to the County Board’s workshop which goes deeper into the plan will be included in the follow up. Also, the Governance Team Structure will be included in the follow up as part of the plan shows all the departments and how they intersect with the WIB work. Stark shared that the City is updating their climate action plan which will complement nicely with the County’s plan.

MN Skills-Based Hiring Accelerator:

This program is sponsored by Goodwill Easter Seals in partnership with Urban League Twin Cities, and the Minneapolis Regional and Saint Paul Area Chambers. It offers a hands-on assessment and reconstruction of organizations’ hiring, onboarding and talent management processes to move beyond traditional hiring approaches to focus on the true skills and abilities needed to do a job, particularly with people who face systemic barriers to job opportunities. Two Partnership and Outreach committee members have attended the one-day in-person workshop and found it very beneficial in helping their organization build a plan that will attract, hire and retain the best talent. One thing that might be a struggle for non-state employers is changing the requirements as currently the skills-based requirements are only for state positions. Ramsey County is entering into a partnership as a region with the other Workforce Boards in the Twin Cities to support this new program. More details to come about the one-hour orientation for regional workforce board members.

Job Quality Initiative:

The Good Jobs Initiative, led by the Department of Labor (DOL) is focused on providing critical information to workers, employers and government as they work to improve job quality and create access to good jobs free from discrimination and harassment for all working people. The need is to engage employers on job quality overview; recruiting and hiring, growth opportunities, benefits and wages, working conditions and

inclusion. Becker is working with the Partnership & Outreach Committee on how to engage employers as this is important for retention of employees, like a PR campaign. The way this initiative should be presented is in a way that resonates with young people and the employers.

Other Committee Updates

Becker shared the State's Drive for 5 Initiative, which is focused on helping people get training and support for placement in the near term to meet the moment of the State's current high job vacancy rate. The Minneapolis Workforce Board along with the St. Paul Workforce Board, Saint Paul Area Chamber, the Minneapolis Area Chamber and the two counties were awarded an \$800,000 grant. This will accelerate the work of the Minnesota Skills-Based Hiring Accelerator.

Adjourn

Upon completion of the agenda, the meeting was adjourned at 3:57pm.

Next Meeting: May 14, 2024, 3-4pm via Zoom