

**Workforce Innovation Board of Ramsey County**  
**Executive Committee Meeting Minutes**  
Wednesday, March 27, 2024, 7:30-9:00am  
Meeting held using Zoom Video Conference

**Committee Members Present**

Susan Jambor  
Cheniqua Johnson  
Chad Kulas  
Tony Lusiba  
Don Mullin  
Mary Russell  
Aalayha Traub

**Members Absent**

Rena Moran-EA  
John Perlich-EA  
Elisa Rasmussen-EA

**Staff/Guests Present**

Ling Becker, Workforce Solutions  
Karyn Berg, Workforce Solutions  
Melanie Johnson, City of Saint Paul  
Mariann Macalus, Workforce Solutions  
Becky Milbrandt, Workforce Solutions  
Stevenson Morgan, Commissioner's Office

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**Call to Order and Land Acknowledgement**

Chair-elect Jambor called the meeting to order at 7:31am. She read the Land Acknowledgement aloud.

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**Approve November Minutes**

**Motion (Kulas/Lusiba) to approve the November 15, 2023, minutes as presented. Motion carried unanimously by chat vote.**

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**WIB Financial and Strategic Funds Reports**

Becker reviewed the January/February 2024 financial report noting the expenses for the Inclusive Hiring Summit parking vouchers and the cohort luncheon at the December WIB meeting. Becker shared that a supply of swag items for upcoming events was ordered. Overall, the report has nothing unusual. Becker thanked the committee for authoring the funds to support the WIB's strategic priorities. The spending report will continue to be reviewed at each meeting and the funding allocation will be reviewed twice a year.

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**Membership**

*WIB & Committee Demographics Dashboards:* Milbrandt gave a summary of the updated WIB demographics noting only slight changes since it was presented last. Looking at the Vacancy Report, Katie Kapaun's appointment was recommended by the WIB and is pending City approval. Yang's appointment is pending to ensure her job change meets the necessary criteria to be a WIB member. An application was received for Sara Garbe, the new Saint Paul CareerForce Site Manager, which is pending this committee's recommendation. Milbrandt reviewed the prospects for the Business-City vacancy. Becker shared that she and Berg have been working with direct service providers. Some of these organizations could also be potential prospects as vacancies and reappointments come up. A suggestion was made that job fairs might be an opportunity to build future relationships for further recruitment. Milbrandt reviewed the committee dashboard noting the changes from November 2023 in ethnicity and gender. Yang is interested in joining the Equity Committee; therefore, an uptick in Asian representation. With Karcher-Ramos departure from the city, there has been a shift in the number of Hispanics.

*WIB Application: Garbe:* **Motion (Jambor/Kulas) to recommend to the Ramsey County Board of Commissioners the appointment of Sara Garbe to the WIB for a term ending July 31, 2025.**

*Ratification of Committee Appointments: Yang, Rick, Traub, Nayman-Tonn, Kapaun, Rapacz:* Milbrandt gave an overview of those requesting to be a part of various committees.

**Motion (Russell/Jambor) to ratify the WIB Chair's appointments of: Katie Kapaun to the Partnership & Outreach Committee, Ginny Nayman-Tonn to the Youth Committee, Donna Rapacz to the Partnership & Outreach and Policy & Oversight Committees, Mary Rick to the Construction-Green Jobs Committee, Aalayha Traub to the Youth Committee and Ia Yang to the Equity Committee. Motion carried unanimously by chat vote.**

*At-Large Executive Committee Appointment-Johnson and Russell:* Milbrandt explained that at-large members of the Executive Committee must be reappointed every two years. Russell is seeking reappointment. Mayoral Appointee and newly elected Councilmember Johnson will fill out the remainder of Councilmember Tolbert's term, ending July 31, 2025.

**Motion (Jambor/Kulas) to recommend the appointments of Cheniqua Johnson to the position of at-large member of the WIB Executive Committee for a term ending July 31, 2025. Motion carried by chat vote.** Johnson abstained.

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### **One-Stop Operator Request for Quotes**

Milbrandt reviewed the One-Stop Operator (OSO) functions and provided an update as to the timeline/next steps for releasing a Request for Proposals competitive solicitation. The current agreement with the OSO expires June 30. A MOU Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with a new OSO needs to be in place by July 1. The WIB will consider approval of the solicitation at its April 4 meeting. The OSO selection and MOU will be reviewed and approved at the June 6 WIB meeting.

**Motion (Russell/Jambor) to recommend the release of the quotes for the One-Stop Operator to the WIB. Motion carried unanimously by chat vote.**

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### **WIOA Adult and Dislocated Worker Vendor Request for Proposals**

Berg provided an update on the vendor Request for Proposals for both WIOA Adult and Dislocated Worker services. The current vendor contracts will expire on June 30, 2024 for services to begin on July 1. This will come back to this committee and the WIB, who has oversight of the WIOA funding, to approve the vendors. The current vendors are HIRED, Goodwill Easter Seals, and YWCA who have been utilized in the last five-years.

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### **2024-2027 WIOA Local and Regional Plans**

Becker provided an overview of the Plan, shared the steps taken to get to this point and highlighted the key themes:

- Multi-faceted labor market data with increased focus on equity.
- Deepening focus on alignment, coordination and partnership.
- Optimizing service delivery and operations post pandemic.
- Investing in the Future – a more inclusive workforce and more inclusive employers.

The Plan is due to the Governor's Workforce Development Board by the end of May. Work is also being done on the Regional Plan. Approval of the Local/Regional Plan by the full WIB will be requested at the April 4 meeting before it is sent to the Ramsey County Board for final review and approval. Becker thanked everyone for their help to write and give input on the Plan. The Plan is available for public review and comment through April 4.

**Motion (Jambor/Kulas) to recommend to the WIB the approval of the Local and Regional Plans. Should DEED ask for minor changes, the Executive Director has authority to make the needed edits. Motion carried unanimously by chat vote.**

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### **WIB Bylaws Amendments**

Milbrandt provided an overview and background of the WIB Bylaws which were last amended in 2017. Suggested amendments to the Bylaws include:

- Edit the abbreviation for LWDA (Local Workforce Development Area)
  - Adjust the expenditure approval thresholds and authorities to reflect the WIB's larger budget and to comply with the Open Meetings law given the Executive Committee's preference to meet virtually.
  - Change the term of WIB officers to two years.
  - Adjust the language to make the election of a committee vice-chair optional
  - Remove the reference to the length of the terms of the committee chairs.
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**Motion (Kulas/Jambor) to recommend the approval of the WIB Bylaws Amendments. Motion carried unanimously by chat vote.**

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### **Committee Updates**

*Youth Workforce Champion Awards:* Becker shared that the Vern Vick Award has been renamed to the Youth Workforce Champion Awards for people who have made a significant impact in supporting young people by fostering their personal and professional growth. The award presentations will take place at the April 4 WIB meeting at the High School for Recording Arts. The recipients will also be honored at the Youth Works! Networking event happening on May 29. Traub shared that Hannah Chan, representing Saint Paul Public Schools, and LaShay DeClercq-Ransom at Elpis Enterprises, will be the recipients of the 2024 Youth Workforce Champion Awards.

*High Performing Boards:* Becker shared information on high performing boards that she hopes this committee will be interested in helping to assess work and committee activities and members in doing a self-assessment. A brief discussion of what members understand as their role in being part of the WIB and how they engage in improving the work that is required of the board. There was support for this as a key effort in 2024. Becker will discuss it further with Rasmussen. Anyone interested in being part of the planning and/or reviewing of the assessment, please let Becker know.

*Legislative Update:* Becker provided an update noting that the state is forecasting a surplus; however, a structural imbalance is still forecasted for the next biennium, with spending predicted to exceed revenue through 2027. The county's focus is on homelessness and downtown infrastructure investments. Workforce Solutions has focused on digital equity with Representative Noor, the Saint Paul Welcome Back Legislators Event and a doula training request from Representative Hussein. The county's Communications department prepared a one-page handout to be used to introduce the WIB to legislators interested in workforce development. This will open the door for next year to engage the legislators in the work done by the WIB and support needed legislation.

*Board Equity Training:* Becker shared that the WIB has some member development funding to offer training to deepen individual and collective understanding around equity. There was discussion on potential training options in the fall as this could be an additional time commitment for members. A suggestion was to cancel the October WIB meeting and hold the training that month instead. There is agreement that this is a good idea, especially the choice with options. Becker will continue to work on planning.

*Upcoming Events:* Becker shared the following:

- Metro State STEM, March 27: Building on a Metro State event by added a panel discussion and tours following the keynote speaker.
- Youth Job and Resource Fair, April 20: A youth focused hiring event at Maplewood Mall. It coincides with Hmong Heritage Day which is the same afternoon at the Mall.
- Green Career & Resource Fair, May 1 at Wilder Foundation. This is in partnership with Ramsey County Public Health/Environmental Health. Businesses whose missions include recycling, creating green space, environmental clean-up, etc. will exhibit as a blended resource fair and career fair where attendees will learn about and apply for green collar careers in emerging industries, as well as businesses and trades who have shifted to more sustainable practices. This is a great opportunity for those interested in learning more about environmental activities in the county.
- Launchpad 2024: Journey Beyond High School, May 9 at Eastside YMCA: This is a new event which was requested from the schools for graduating seniors and their families who do not have a plan to go to college or any sort of post-secondary plans.
- Tech Month: Planning is underway on a number of events in May.

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### **Director's Updates**

Becker provided updates on the following:

*Drive for Five:* The Minneapolis Workforce Board, who partnered with the Saint Paul Area Chamber, Minneapolis Chamber and the two counties was awarded an \$800,000 grant which focuses on job

placements and employer supports. The State's Drive for Five initiative focuses 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. This will accelerate the work of the Minnesota Skills-Based Hiring Accelerator.

*MN Skills-Based Hiring Accelerator* This program is being offered in partnership with Goodwill Easter Seals, 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. The important focus of the WIB is to remove barriers to employment faced by job seekers by helping employers adopt skills-based hiring and talent management practices. Engaging with the legislators might help in getting the Department of Human Services to change their credentialing rules to coincide with the Governor's goals in breaking the four-year degree hiring barriers. The metro region workforce areas are working together using some of the Drive for 5 funds to support this initiative with a goal of having a landing page that will have a calendar of all the Accelerator events throughout the metro. This will help employers be able to go to events that fit their schedule throughout various counties, not just in Ramsey County. There will also be one or two sessions for the metro area workforce board members to attend a shorter program so they can act as champions for the program. There are also plans to have training in the fall for workforce practitioners to support job seekers as they navigate employers utilizing a skilled-based hiring system. A link for the info sessions will be sent for the morning of May 29<sup>th</sup> and the afternoon of June 5.

*CareerForce Relocation:* Becker provided an update and shared the next steps. The WIB finalized the relocation in February. Both DEED and all the MOU partners have been notified via email memo. Becker met with DEED to clarify legal mechanism for their use of the space. Work is being done on the floor plan.

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*CareerForce Engagement Report Year End Summary:* Becker provided some statistics for 2023, stating there are challenges to getting better data on who is being served as well as impacted.

*Guaranteed Basic Income:* This will be covered at the next Executive Committee meeting.

*Youth Systems Building Academy:* This will be covered at the next Executive Committee meeting.

*April WIB Meeting:* In addition to the Youth Awards presentations, DEED Commissioner Matt Varilek will speak.

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### **Other**

No other topics were discussed.

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### **Adjourn**

The meeting was adjourned at 8:57am.

The next Executive Committee meeting is Wednesday, May 22, 2024, 7:30a-9am.