

Workforce Innovation Board of Ramsey County
Executive Committee Meeting Minutes
Wednesday, September 25, 2024, 7:30-9:00am
Meeting held using Zoom Video Conference

Present

Cheniqua Johnson
Chad Kulas
Tony Lusiba
Yolanda McIntosh
Rena Moran
Don Mullin
John Perlich
Elisa Rasmussen
Mary Russell
Aalayha Traub

Absent

Staff/Guests

Ling Becker, Workforce Solutions
Mariann Macalus, Workforce Solutions
Becky Milbrandt, Workforce Solutions
Rachael Molenaar, Workforce Solutions

Call to Order and Land Acknowledgement

Chair Rasmussen called the meeting to order at 7:31am and read the land acknowledgement aloud.

Approve May Minutes

Motion (Kulas/Moran) to approve the May 22, 2024, minutes as presented. Motion carried unanimously by voice vote.

WIB Financial and Strategic Funds Reports

Milbrandt reviewed the July-August 2024 financial report noting revenues are behind one month and reporting at next meeting will be up to date. All expenditures are typical. The next report period will reflect some member development and conferences which didn't get captured on this report. Milbrandt also reviewed the Strategic Priorities Supplemental Budget Report for July-August 2024 noting the WIB approved at their last meeting an additional \$50,000 for event funding for a total of \$100,000. Spending to date totals a little over \$50,000, with \$48,000 remaining to be used for the rest of the year. Any unspent funds will carry over into next year.

Motion (Perlich/Kulas) to recommend approval of the July-August 2024 Financial and Strategic Funds Reports. Motion carried unanimously by voice vote.

Membership

WIB & Committee Demographics Dashboards: Milbrandt provided an update on the WIB membership makeup, noting the report reflects 30 members. There have been changes in the race and ethnicity areas and an increase in medium-sized business category. There was a reduction in the construction category and an increase in the suburban area demographic. Milbrandt reviewed the changes to the committee membership race/ethnicity and gender demographics pending approval at today's meeting. There are 26 non-WIB members who are members of committees.

WIB Applications-Ali, Goodlaxson, Garcia: Milbrandt asked this committee to consider recommendations for the appointments of Ismail Ali, Ethel Garcia, and Fidelity Goodlaxson to the WIB.

She explained that if these three positions are approved by the county board, all member vacancies will be filled. Becker indicated this is a good time to reach out to prospective folks to join committees for future vacancies.

Motion (Mullin/Lusiba) to recommend to the Ramsey County Board of Commissioners the appointment of Ismail Ali (Director of Talent Initiatives, Minnesota Technology Association), to fill a Business seat on the WIB for a term ending July 31, 2025; Ethel Garcia (Director of HR at Innovize) to fill a Business seat on the WIB for a term ending July 31, 2026 and Fidelity Goodlaxson (Interim Director of Financial Opportunity Programs at CAPRW) to fill the Community-Based

Organization seat on the WIB for a term ending July 31, 2026. Motion carried unanimously by voice vote.

Ratification of Committee Appointments-Goodlaxson, Severson, Wascalus: Milbrandt gave an overview of those requesting appointment to various committees.

Motion (Perlich/Lusiba) to ratify the WIB Chair's appointments of Fidelity Goodlaxson to the Partnership & Outreach Committee and Jenni Severson and Jaime Wascalus to the Tech Committee. Motion carried unanimously by voice vote.

Workforce Solutions Leadership Transition

Becker shared the leadership changes with her transitioning to County Manager on September 1, 2024. She will continue to support the CareerForce funding negotiations with partners as needed. Belitz, Molenaar, and Milbrandt have taken on leadership responsibilities. Deputy County Manager Kari Collins will lead the search for a new Workforce Solutions (WFS) Director with the hope of filling the position by the end of the year.

Committee Updates

Becker shared that the county has started work on the legislative platform for 2025. WFS and the WIB stay connected on state and federal workforce policy through the Minnesota Association of Workforce Boards (MAWB). MAWB's 2025 priorities will focus on a few key asks including continuing funding levels of the MN Youth Program. The WIB Policy & Oversight Committee will work on having 1:1 meetings with legislators to talk about the work for the WIB and WFS.

Policy & Oversight:

- WIOA Dislocated Worker Dashboard: Becker provided an update of the WIOA dashboard which was recently added to the county's Open Data Portal. It provides outcome data based on race, gender and age group as well as program performance for credential completion, skills gained and employment after program completion, and the number of participants employed by race, gender and occupation.

Tech Committee:

- Full Stack Alignment: Becker thanked those who helped bridge the work with Full Stack. There are two chairs for this, both of which provides leadership to the WIB's Tech Committee leading meetings and guiding initiatives. The Full Stack organization structure was shared noting that the Tech Workforce Committee strategic focus is training and connecting an agile tech workforce as a strategic priority. Lusiba shared the three aligned action areas: tech training and placement opportunities; building employer relationships and ecosystem advocacy; and coordination with partners. Full Stack is using a Vision/Traction Organizer model to set strategy and track its goals.

Construction-Green Jobs Committee:

- The Opportunity Project for Cities (TOPC): Ramsey County, the City of Saint Paul and Goodwill-Easter Seals are currently working with the Centre for Public Impact on TOPC. The program uses effective partnership-building between communities, local governments and tech experts to build digital solutions to solve the challenges residents face. TOPC is supported by the Knight Foundation and through pro-bono technical support from Google.org. The project team is building a digital tool to assist job seekers with learning about and connecting to career opportunities in the green construction and clean energy industries. Two focus group sessions are being conducted to gather ideas and help expand green job opportunities locally. More information about the digital tool will be shared in the next few weeks.

Youth Committee

- Youth Systems Building (YSB) Academy Next Steps: Ramsey County was selected to receive technical assistance and support from the U.S. Department of Labor with other communities around the country. The county has been leading a team with representation from five other partner organizations to build out a YSB plan for the next two years. Most of the work is focused on ensuring Youth Works! partners work together cohesively, enhancing efficiency and effectiveness. The plan is for the WIB's Youth Committee to be a more active participant in this work to provide guidance and

direction and to play a larger role in leading the systems change work. A youth advisory board will be developed to allow young people to determine their own work plan for up to a two-year commitment paid by the county.

Equity Committee

- *Inclusive Workplaces Cohort*: The current cohort started in late February. Summer sessions focused on bias in hiring practices and creating a culture that builds retention. Overall survey responses have been positive, with the exception of the August session. This session had a couple negative responses on the facilitation and time for interactions/Q&A likely due to the fact that it was virtual. The remaining session topics were shared. A recognition lunch will be held December 5 at the Minnesota Humanities Center. Polar Semiconductor withdrew from the cohort due to a job change.

Partnership & Outreach

- *Inclusive Employer Toolkit*: The Toolkit continues to evolve with new resources on the topics of skills-based hiring and creative employee benefits packages. The Toolkit was submitted as a Ramsey County project to the Minnesota Association of Government Communications (MAGC), an organization dedicated to improving public sector communications. At MAGC's July 17 Northern Lights Awards ceremony, the Ramsey County Communications & Public Relations team received several awards including a silver award for the Toolkit. Ideas for how to continue sharing and expanding the use of the Toolkit include testimonials from business leaders about how the Toolkit benefits them/their organization and hosting virtual lunch & learn sessions each featuring a section of the Toolkit.
- *Ramsey County Means Business Site Refresh*: Current work with the site host and Ramsey County's Community & Economic Development is moving forward to approve new page templates, refresh the look and images, and check colors, contrasts and layout to ensure accessibility.

Staff Updates

Milbrandt provided updates on the following:

CareerForce Relocation: Work on the CareerForce center relocation is progressing, with space planning and build out, partner MOU/IFO negotiations and legal agreements with the state happening simultaneously. Milbrandt shared a diagram of the floorplan and the timeline with the hope of having the CareerForce open to the public February 2025.

Other Upcoming Events:

- *Youth Works! Networking*: This event, planned for October 3 at Rondo Library, is hosted twice a year by the Youth Committee to bring Ramsey County youth program practitioners together to celebrate the work happening in local schools, employers and community-based organizations.
- *Career Connect Day*: New this year is a "day in the life of" experience in various sectors. WIB and committee members are invited to spend time in the booth talking with students on October 15 at the St. Paul RiverCentre.
- *Inclusive Hiring Connections Summit*: Planning is underway for a Summit to be held in January 2025. WFS' Employer Services team is in the process of determining breakout topics, some similar to last year and some new topics. More information will be provided once a new location is selected since the Metro Square Conference Center is under renovation this year. Assistance will be requested from WIB and committee members to introduce sessions and host a WIB table to promote the cohort and inclusive resources and events.
- *Workforce Development Month*: Milbrandt extended thanks to all committee members for their leadership and commitment to driving innovative workforce strategies in the community. These efforts have a meaningful impact on the job seekers and businesses of Ramsey County.
- *October WIB Meeting – WIB Equity Training*: The October WIB meeting will include the Racial Equity Framework Training. The County Manager's Office has adapted the training from an internal training series available to new and current county employees and is supported by ongoing funding included in the county budget. The purpose is to educate and inform community advisory board members on how to utilize a racial equity lens when working with the county. A lot will be covered in

the one-hour training. Please share feedback on the training with Milbrandt. She will check into further offerings of this training and whether recordings will be available for new WIB members.

Other

No other topics discussed.

Adjourn

The meeting was adjourned at 8:48am.

The next Executive Committee meeting is Wednesday, November 20, 2024, 7:30-9am.