

Workforce Innovation Board of Ramsey County

Technology Committee Meeting Minutes

Thursday, January 9, 2025, 1:00pm–2:00pm

Via Zoom Video Conference

Present:

Ismail Ali
Annie Byrne
Len Cacioppo
Sam Drong
Tony Lusiba
Abdi Mohamed
Koami Pedado
Jenni Severson

Absent:

Ama Asantewaa
Caroline Karanja-EA
Sabina Saksena
Jaime Wascalus-EA

Staff/Guests:

Mariann Macalus, Workforce Solutions
Rebecca Milbrandt, Workforce Solutions
Mary Rick, City of Saint Paul
Sharon Kennedy-Vickers, Software for Good

Call to Order & Land Acknowledgement

Lusiba called the meeting to order at 1:01pm. Rick read the Land Acknowledgement aloud.

Introductions

Introductions were made. Milbrandt shared that new Workforce Solutions Director and WIB Executive Director Catrice O’Neal had a conflict with today’s meeting. O’Neal will be at the February WIB meeting for a meet and greet.

Approve November Minutes

Motion (Cacioppo/Byrne) to approve the November 14, 2024, Tech Committee meeting minutes as presented. Motion carried unanimously by chat vote.

Conflict of Interest Acknowledgement

Lusiba read the Conflict of Interest Policy. Milbrandt explained that any WIB or committee member who has a conflict of interest should abstain from discussion and voting. The policy is reviewed by every committee and the WIB each year as a reminder of the responsibility to abstain from discussion and voting as necessary.

Committee Work Plan/Project Updates

2025 Vision Tracker Organization Planning: Rick reviewed the Full Stack workforce one-year workplan. With one training provider exiting the market, the discussion focused heavily on training challenges, the right model for solidifying goals and continuing to build employer relationships. Rick is seeking feedback on establishing employer partnerships and collaborating with local partners to streamline communications and information sharing. Committee members’ input on how to develop literature/resources for tech partners would be helpful. Ali shared that MNTech is creating a guidebook for onboarding non-traditional talent and is happy to share it when completed. Mohamed shared a couple of companies (Beta.MN and Atomic Data) should be on the radar as they hire junior talent. Any additional ideas can be sent to Byrne.

Tech Trainer Project: Milbrandt recapped the project started last year with a tech trainer roundtable, led by RealTime Talent (RTT). This year’s goal is to engage tech trainers via interview or survey regarding program outcomes to define specific challenges and needed interventions in talent program completion and successful employment placements in tech careers. A small workgroup is being formed, including Cacioppo and Wascalus, to advise RTT on development of the survey tool. Mohamed volunteered to be part of the workgroup. Information that would be helpful is how different training programs are reaching out to employers, what we want to learn from the tech trainers, what level of engagement is happening right now to see if there are any similarities or differences, placement rates, and insight on what employers want/really need. It is important to get trainer perspective first and then see what employers are looking for. Milbrandt will send more information on Tech Squad which is being done within Ramsey County.

Tech Month 2025: Milbrandt provided a recap of the 2024 Tech Month events. She is looking for suggestions for this year. Given feedback from last year, the 2025 Ramsey Green Expo & Career Fair will be held in March. One thing that stood out was the social media campaign spotlighting local businesses leading in tech innovations. Rick shared that Full Stack is working on a social media storyteller series highlighting tech force entrepreneurs/leaders/trainers that could land in Tech Month. She would like to hear from committee members who could be spotlighted not just for Tech Month but throughout the year. Ali shared that MNTech is hosting Tech Connect again on May 7. If anyone has speaker ideas, especially civic and non-profit leaders, please contact Ali. One suggestion was a get together to promote business/city leaders, workforce development, state/city leaders, training program advisors, etc., to celebrate Tech Month but also allow them to connect.

MSP Tech Hire 2025

Byrne provided an update on the positive outcome of the city's pilot program that started with six interns in the fall and completed in December. This year's program will be about redesigning how the funds are distributed through a request for proposal (RFP). They will be asking training providers to respond with a proposal that includes a paid internship phase. The goal is to release the RFP the end of March. Reach out to Byrne directly with thoughts or suggestions.

The Opportunity Project for Cities (TOPC) Wrap-Up

Milbrandt shared that during TOPC demo day in November, participants shared what they learned over a 20-week program working with their communities to understand, design and test a digital tool that meets residents' needs. The city now owns the digital tool to help address resident challenges, powered by local data. The link for demo day will be provided in the slide deck.

Staff Updates

Upcoming Events: Milbrandt briefly shared (more details in follow-up email) the following and asked that committee members promote the upcoming WIB-supported events and initiatives:

- Inclusive Workforce Summit – January 29, 8am to 1pm at the Science Museum of Minnesota. WIB and committee members are asked to volunteer to help in a variety of ways including greeting attendees and hosting breakout rooms.
- Top Trends to Watch in 2025 Webinar – February 19, Noon to 1pm, facilitated by Erin Olson from RTT.
- Artist Job & Resource Fair – February 27, 2-5pm at Springboard for the Arts.
- Ramsey Green Expo & Career Fair – March 19, 10am-1pm at Minnehaha Rec. Center.
- Inclusive Workplaces Cohort - Applications will open this month.

Committee Member Updates and Other

No further items discussed.

Adjourn

Upon completion of the agenda, meeting was adjourned at 2pm

Next Meeting: Thursday, March 13, 2025, 1-2pm