

Workforce Innovation Board of Ramsey County

Technology Committee Meeting Minutes

Thursday, March 14, 2024, 1–2pm

Via Zoom Video Conference

Present:

Ama Asantewaa
Annie Byrne
Len Cacioppo
Sam Drong
Caroline Karanja
Koami Pedado

Absent:

Tony Lusiba-EA
Sabina Saksena

Staff/Guests:

Mariann Macalus, Workforce Solutions
Rebecca Milbrandt, Workforce Solutions
Matt Saari, Workforce Solutions

Call to Order & Land Acknowledgement

Milbrandt called the meeting to order at 1:02pm. Introductions were made. Drong read the Land Acknowledgement aloud.

Approve January Minutes

Motion (Drong/Asantewaa) to approve the January 11, 2024, meeting minutes as presented. Motion carried unanimously by chat vote.

Committee Work Plan/Project Updates

Tech Month – May 2024: Milbrandt shared that today’s meeting will center on Tech Month events being planned for May and gathering feedback from the committee on how to move forward with planning and partnership. Milbrandt and Byrne shared events being planned which will be included on the landing page:

- Ramsey Green Expo & Careers Fair - May 1, 3:30-6:30pm at Wilder Foundation.
- Expand the ToolBox: Reinventing Our Construction Workforce Through Technology Advancements - tentative dates - May 2 or 29.
- MN Tech Events: Tech Connect – May 8, 8am-5pm at RiverCentre and Tech on Tap – May 9, 4-6pm. The Tech on Tap location is to be determined.
- United We Transform – May 21, 8:30am-12:30pm in St. Paul.
- Enterprise Rising Conference – May 22, time TBD at CHS Field.
- Strengthen the Strong – May 8, 11:30am to 1pm at 370 Wabasha.

Other event ideas that are still being planned includes one with Black Tech Talent, a NASA Mash Up Lab, a similar event from last year’s youth event at Johnson High School, an event aimed at those interested in public sector technologist careers and a roundtable discussion with tech training providers. There was discussion around having RealTime Talent facilitate the tech trainers roundtable. Drong and Asantewaa volunteered to help Becker and Milbrandt organize the event.

Metro State Partnership – March 2024: Saari shared information on the Career Ideas Festival. Metro State, a One-Stop system partner, is hosting this event featuring the 3M chief scientist. The event will feature a keynote address, a reception and book signing and the WIB will be sponsoring a STEM panel discussion with Metro State faculty to learn about industries and the future of work. There will also be a light lunch.

Director Updates

Tech Squads: Saari shared information on this new program for young people ages 18-24 who are receiving paid training in tech support and will have a paid internship (May 1-August 31) after training courses are completed. The goal is that the participants will provide IT help desk services to residents.

Full Stack – WIB Partnership: Byrne shared information on the concept of aligning the work and goals of Full Stack with that of this committee since many of the leaders overlap in both groups. This is an opportunity for Full Stack to create an Executive Committee to formalize more of their work.

Councilmember Johnson will be the newly appointed co-chair of Full Stack. The overall concept still needs

to be brought to the Full Stack chairs and the WIB Executive Committee. The proposed 2024 strategic priorities, success measures and community engagement opportunities were shared.

MN Skills-Based Hiring Accelerator: Milbrandt shared information on the Minnesota Skills-Based Hiring Accelerator. This four-hour program is in partnership with Goodwill Easter Seals, the Minneapolis Regional Chamber, the Saint Paul Area Chamber and the Urban League Twin Cities to create opportunities for workers who have built competencies through experience but do not have a higher education degree, particularly people who face systemic barriers to job opportunities. The important focus of the WIB is to remove barriers to employment based by job seekers by helping employers adopt skills-based hiring and talent management practices. The metro region workforce areas are working together using some of the Drive for Five grant 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 find events that fit their schedules throughout various counties, not just in Ramsey County. There will also be one or two primer sessions for the metro area workforce board members to attend 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 to the info sessions will be sent when the dates are set. Milbrandt will share with Becker the question as to whether there is interest in talking about fair chance hiring or is this group strictly focused on skills-based hiring.

Job Quality Initiative: Milbrandt provided an update that the Department of Labor (DOL) has been sharing out to employers the idea of job quality. The need is to engage employers on job quality overview, recruiting and hiring, growth opportunities, benefits and wages, working conditions and inclusion. This discussion will continue at the next committee meeting as the DOL asked workforce boards to be leading champions in talking about this.

Tech Trainers and Conversations: See above.

Committee Member Updates and Other

Milbrandt will clarify with Becker on the DEED Broadband attachment to the pre-reading.

Adjourn

Upon completion of the agenda, meeting was adjourned at 2:02pm.

Next Meeting: Thursday, May 9, 2024, 1-2pm.