



## SPOKANE WORKFORCE COUNCIL

MINUTES  
FULL COUNCIL MEETING  
WEDNESDAY, OCTOBER 14, 2020 – 7:30 - 9:30 AM  
Zoom

**MEMBERS PRESENT:**

Robert Duron	Dan Evans	Kelley Halverson	Lori Hunley	Machelle Johnson
Commissioner Josh Kerns	Teresa Kutsch	Luis Licea	Tina Morrison	Tim Sigler - (designee for Mayor Woodward)
Nancy Nelson	Diane Quincy	Ben Small	Ron Valencia – (designee for Commissioner Kerns)	Christina Vigil Gross
Jennie Weber	Joel White	Diana Wilhite	Laura Wood	

**MEMBERS ABSENT:**

Alisha Benson	Staci Franz	Dr. Christine Johnson	Wade Larson	Vicki Leifer
Lowell Sather	Mayor Nadine Woodward			

**OTHERS PRESENT:**

Mandy Adamson – Talent Solutions	Rebecca Cook - (IATSE) Local 488	Rob Crow – Employment Security Department	Andy Dwonch – Career Path Services	Cami Eakins – Career Path Services
Kayci Loftus – WorkSource	Dr. David May – Eastern Washington University	Kodie Misiura – WorkSource	Jen Morris – Career Path Services (SRC)	Jen Ranney – Next Generation Zone
Terrance Nixon – Open Doors NGZ	Valerie Senatore – Community Colleges of Spokane	Stacey Wells – Next Generation Zone	Kevin Williams – WorkSource	

**STAFF PRESENT:**

Shannon Brundle – Program Manager	Jessica Clayton – Program & Development Director	Kate Behrmann – Communications Assistant	Jeanette Facer – Finance Director	Andrea Hixson – Program & Operations Manager
Dawn Karber – Chief Operations Officer	Victor Rapez-Betty – Communications Manager	Angela Maioriello – Office Assistant	Mark Mattke – Chief Executive Officer	Mike McBride – Business & Industry Analyst

Tim Robison –  
Program &  
Compliance  
Specialist

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Chair Dan Evans called the meeting to order at 7:35 a.m. with a quorum of members present and conducted introductions of members and guests.

### **Review of Minutes**

Review of August 12, 2020 meeting minutes.

**Action: Motion and second to approve the August 12, 2020 meeting minutes. Approved unanimously.**

### **Recognition of Success**

*Mark Mattke, SWC Chief Executive Officer*

Mark highlighted some of the great work happening at the Spokane Resource Center. They have expanded their scope of work to better meet the needs of the many folks in our community that are in crisis. A video was shown to the board that shared stories of the impacts the Spokane Resource Center is achieving.

### **CEO Report**

*Mark Mattke, SWC Chief Executive Officer*

Mark provided a brief summary on the status of the system as we have worked to respond to the COVID-19 crisis.

- Work is occurring at the state level to ensure that the governor and the state workforce board are aware of the needs of our community.
  - One of the areas that we need support from the state is flexibility in the policy environment and funding to support the work that we are doing.
    - This is a very new environment that we are currently in due to the pandemic and the policies that are in place sometimes constrain our ability to adapt to varying situations.
    - Mark has been working to advocate on behalf of local boards to ensure that we have the policy flexibility we need and resources to fund the efforts.
  - An example is at the beginning of the pandemic we were granted the ability to not have to meet customers face to face to collect documentation for program eligibility because of the transition to all virtual services.
    - That waiver is expiring so we want to have that extended by the state for the duration of the crisis to align with the needs of the system.
  - We want to ensure that we continue to take advantage of what has been learned from this crisis and deliver better services for our customers.
- Staff are also working to better understand the disproportionate impacts of the crisis on different populations in our community.
  - We know that certain industries have been impacted worse than others, such as leisure and hospitality with the closing of bars and restaurants and retail stores where some have closed, and others are open with limited capacity.
  - Within those industries we are seeing greater numbers of women that have been dislocated as well as populations of color and young people that are being impacted by this disruptive event.

# TAB 1

- We are also seeing large numbers of individuals and families that are now receiving food and cash assistance, as well as greater housing instability.
- We have been tracking the rental crisis that is upon us right now to try and better understand what these impacts are upon individuals and households in our community.
- The lack of childcare is also a major issue in our community and nationwide, impeding working parents' ability to provide care for their children so they can go back to work or school.
- System leadership is working very hard to develop strategies to connect people back to reemployment or obtain some training to move out of the career they were in and reengage in the economy.
- There are 11 other local workforce boards across the state of Washington that are doing the work that we are engaged in as well.
  - All are actively working together to make sure that we are navigating our way through this crisis as a state.
  - To help support this effort our state association of the 12 local boards is creating more awareness of the work that we are doing with the governor, the legislature, and other stakeholders across the state.
  - A series of videos has been commissioned to help better tell the story of what local boards do and the impact we are making in our individual communities.
  - The Washington Workforce Association selected our board as the first one to highlight and Mark shared the video they produced on our behalf.
- Dan thanked everyone for the work they are doing and mentioned this is an extraordinary time and he appreciates our efforts meeting the community's needs.

## **Board Business**

*Dan Evans, SWC Board Chair*

Our board has had several vacancies occur as members have transitioned in their jobs. One is Teresa Kutsch, from the Division of Vocational Rehabilitation, who has taken a new role at the agency.

Lowell Sather has resigned from the board and Rebecca Cook, Vice President of International Alliance of Theatrical Stage Employees (IATSE) Local 488, is interested in serving as a labor representative for the SWC board.

Dr. David May was recently appointed as interim president of EWU and is interested in serving on the SWC board and continuing to help inform our work and strengthen the connection to the K-16+ education system.

Dr. David May thanked the board for inviting him today and he looks forward to working with everyone on the board. He mentioned the interface between higher education and workforce development is a crucial one. He appreciates the opportunity to hear firsthand from the board and bring to the board the perspective of higher education. As we move through this pandemic and ultimately beyond this pandemic, upskilling and rescaling are going to be incredibly important parts of economic recovery. Eastern Washington University and the sector needs to be very involved and responsive to the changing economic needs. He thanked the board for their time and offered to answer any questions.

Rebecca Cook shared that she comes from the entertainment industry. The IATSE Local 488 represents many film crews in the area that are completely out of work, likely until there is a vaccine, so she is really happy at this time to help be a part of a crucial system here in Spokane, regardless of the

pandemic. The systems are so important and continuing employment for as many people as we can is crucial, especially right now. She thanked the board for having her today.

Mark thanked Teresa Kutsch for her service for the last couple of years on the board. We will miss you and wish you the best in your next role.

Mark also thanked Lowell Sather for his service on the board over a number of years. He traveled to Washington D.C. to the national conference and has been a great member of our board.

***Action: Motion and second to nominate Rebecca Cook and David May as members of the board and forward to our Chief Elected Officials for appointment. Approved unanimously.***

## **System Operations**

*Dawn Karber, SWC Chief Operations Officer*

Dawn shared that the team has been absolutely amazing. There is an incredible amount of work going on behind the scenes and she wanted to take the opportunity to thank everyone who has been a part of this and the board members for supporting us. Several people have been on site since March 17<sup>th</sup>, helping as many customers as we possibly can in person, but it pales in comparison to the number of individuals who have been helped virtually by our workforce system staff from across the campus. She is so thankful and so proud.

The grant writing that has occurred has brought in several million dollars to help with youth services and housing supports. We also provided food to customers in need. Dawn wants the board to know that staff are doing a fantastic job and we have been contacted on behalf of the United States Department of Labor to participate in a report about high-performing workforce boards from across the country. We are one of seven boards that will be featured in the report and we will share that with the board as soon as it is published.

## **WorkSource Spokane**

*Kevin Williams, One-Stop Operator for the WorkSource Campus*

Kevin mentioned that we have transitioned our services to virtual and he is extraordinarily proud of the staff and the pivot that they have made. A large majority of our staff from Employment Security Department made the change to work in unemployment insurance since it was much needed. Most of our staff have returned and we applaud them for the work they did when they were helping with unemployment insurance. As they come back to work in a virtual environment, there is training that we need to do. He applauds the managers and the staff for being able to shift very quickly and recognize how we can work effectively in a virtual and remote environment.

Kevin recognized all the great work that Rob Crow has done as our Employment Security Department administrator. Rob has gone on to be the Central and Eastern Regional Operations Manager. Kudos to Rob for all the work that he did during that timeframe. He has been a huge asset to us over the last three years and has provided the push to set up and be able to do things in a virtual environment. Jennie Weber is looking for a new ESD administrator and we are looking forward to the new person coming on.

Staff training has continued to progress. We have been very proud of the fact that we have had extensive professional development here at WorkSource and that has been one of our pillars of our ability to perform this work so well. As we moved to a virtual environment and lost a large portion of our staff, we realized we need to bring professional development back to the forefront. We recently started doing more staff training and ensuring our staff understand all the virtual tools that we use so they can

best serve the customers. Also, our staff have had a lot of change management, much like we did when we implemented integrated service delivery. This has been a huge shift for our staff in an environment where we typically did one-on-one work with customers. We are now training for a virtual environment and how to have engaging and productive career coaching. At the same time, we realize we all get “Zoomed out” a bit so we are helping our staff understand how to work through that. When staff are doing virtual career coaching, we need to have those decompression times and understand we are doing something that is not easy to do when it is not face-to-face.

We have been able to take our Career Quest tool and our website and build upon that to make it much more impactful. Thank you to the SWC and the board for having the vision of putting that into place a couple years ago. We are now really seeing it come to fruition in this era of all virtual services.

A facility remodel is occurring and the entirety of WorkSource is gutted. There is new carpet throughout the center and will also be a technology refresh coming on with all new computers for both the job seekers and our staff and sit/stand desks to be more ergonomic as well.

Kevin shared that he cannot thank the staff enough as we move into 2021 for making this happen by listening to what the customers have to say and coming up with great ideas of how to use human centered design to remake WorkSource so it is even better for our customers.

## Talent Solutions

*Andrea Hixson, Program and Operations Manager*

Andrea provided an update on the Talent Solutions team since they physically closed in March. They have been busier than ever. The team has provided more than 1600 services since mid-March. That is a duplicate number for businesses who needed multiple services, but it shows how incredibly busy the team has been. This has been a difficult season for the business community in Spokane and the team has worked to become experts in navigating with the myriad of resources available. From transitioning between layoff response services to helping hire in a pandemic to doing virtual workshops and business guides.

One of the big new initiatives has been providing virtual hiring events. After reopening we anticipated that virtual events will be part of the landscape of the new economy, interview and hiring practices will persist into the future. The state of Washington has been researching platforms that can give all areas in the state a common virtual job fair platform to use long term. Our area has been helping with that research project and we have been testing various platforms as well.

Since 2014, KHQ has been partnering with us on a large-scale community job fair every May. Unfortunately, the 2020 event had to be canceled and to help fill that gap, KHQ offered to do outreach on behalf of two of our virtual events this year. Their partnership has been extremely valuable in putting on these community wide events.

In the near future, our team will be focusing on some smaller scale hiring events utilizing Zoom. Mandy Adamson, Talent Solutions Manager, shared that they are piloting their first Zoom hiring event this week. Many employers have numerous openings right now and it is not always timely to have to wait for the next large hiring event. They also recognize that they will continue to hold some of these virtual events even when there is a return to in-person services, so the team is using Zoom to highlight employers who have various openings. They are piloting one with the Spokane Airport right now where the employer can come in and speak to all the candidates that have registered, talk about their positions, share what they are looking for, let people apply and answer any question that candidates

have. From there they are going to continue to expand out and explore how they can more frequently offer some smaller, single focused, one-on-one employer hiring events.

Andrea mentioned there were challenges and successes with doing virtual events. Some of the successes are our effective marketing practices. A useful feature of the Brazen platform was their tool that allows us to track outreach efforts by getting the click-through and conversion rates. We are able to see that our targeted email invitations to individuals receiving unemployment insurance were the most effective means of outreach for the events – followed by KHQ, the WorkSource Spokane website and the WorkSource Washington website. Facebook has traditionally been a successful avenue for promoting our events, but there were some technical issues with the Facebook platform during the September event. We were not able to boost the event so that was further down the list, but Facebook was one of the effective marketing outreaches for these events.

Another valuable feature of virtual events is that the outcomes data is better than we can obtain for our in-person events. In-person events are more fluid, and it is hard to get immediate feedback from recruiters about how it went and which candidates they are following up with. The virtual events offer real-time data such as how many interviews were scheduled and how many candidates were being put forward for more screening. We are extremely pleased with the positive numbers that came out of these chatting events and that the online nature of these events allows better data gathering from the employers about their interactions with job seekers.

There are challenges and technology is one of the big challenges with doing virtual events. Online events can be challenging from an equity standpoint because our customers vary in their access to technology as well as their tech savviness. The more tech savvy users thought it was great. Those who had technology challenges did not have as good of an experience. Also, if there is an internet outage or the system crashes it can be really challenging to pull off a positive event.

Our recommendations moving forward as the state continues to do research on these platforms is to prioritize accessibility and find as simple of a system to use while still delivering needed functionality. The shifting economic landscape has been really interesting between May and September. In May, we found there were a lot of job seekers recently laid off who were eager to reenter the labor force. But we had a little bit of trouble recruiting businesses as they were still super stressed from being early in the pandemic and many were not hiring yet. Then in September, many businesses were eager to attend as hiring had ramped back up but finding talent had become more challenging as we saw less interest from job seekers. It feels like as the crisis drags on many are facing challenges with their health, childcare, fatigue, school issues and a mismatch between their skills from previous employment and what employers are looking for now. As that landscape shifts, we must keep a close pulse on it so that we can deliver these events in a timely way and do effective marketing and recruitment to make those matches.

Mandy reported that the theme for the Talent Solutions team over the last few months has been to focus on providing support and connection. Support to businesses in their business needs and then aid in connecting with employers to job seekers, to information, and to other employers as well. Some of the support projects we have been working on is a series of Zoom video tutorials built for employers that are brief and easy to watch, but they are really aimed at these businesses that are trying to lead, manage and do their work in remote teams. These trainings start anywhere from simply accessing a Zoom event to using some more advanced collaboration tools. As we all know, retail businesses and restaurants were hit quite heavily. The ability to pivot and provide those services and goods in an online store was a need that we saw so we started working with businesses on that and created a training video for it.

Staff also put together a reopening guide for businesses to help guide them through the phases of reopening. This guide was created in a unique way by utilizing as many local resources and information as possible so that it was very Spokane-specific and was sent out via email and on social media. It is also live on our website, which means it can be updated at any time with current phases or information. Any link the employer has will also update for them as well, so they do not have to have a series of reopening guides as the information and phases change.

Some additional things the team has worked on to aid with connection is the next employer survey going out this week. This is aimed at getting a current pulse on what is going on in the business community right now. The team is also getting ready to do their third sector strategy report that will go out to the WorkSource campus as well as the business community. It gives a snapshot of what is currently going on in each of the targeted industries.

We are doing our first industry roundtable aimed at connecting businesses with other businesses because we realize one of the challenges right now is that not only are we cut off from some of our employees in this remote world but many businesses have been cut off from their industries as well. The first pilot starts today with the healthcare industry.

They have also started a monthly newsletter, and are on the third month, to connect employers with some information that is timely and important to help them thrive. Staff have been working to connect employers with job seekers, which has been quite a challenge. They are helping businesses step up their targeted promotions rather than just emailing out job posting after job posting. They are teaching businesses how to better target where they are trying to hire and how to create a job posting in a way that is very timely in this online environment so their much more likely to get access to the job seekers that are out there.

## Next Generation Zone

*Jessica Clayton, Program and Development Director*

Jessica shared how proud she is of the team at the Next Generation Zone and in particular, our leadership: Jen, Stacy, Terrance, and their teams. They continue to surprise us with how creative and positive they have been during the last seven months, so she wanted to give a big shout out to them and their teams.

The team is engaging with youth but also with the community right now and have tried some new and innovative means to connect during this time. If you are not an avid Next Generation Zone follower on social media, she encourages you to go on Facebook and follow the Next Generation Zone so you can see some of the campaigns we are going to share.

The Education team has a couple of stats to share, last year during the school year 75% of the youth we contacted became a part of our family. Those are youth that attended orientations for Open Doors and our classroom then actually enrolled with us. In addition, our passing rate for GED tests, and there are four GED tests across the subject areas, is 87% – which is one of the highest in the state. We are proud of the Education team for continuing to successfully connect with youth virtually during this time.

Our Career team has been focused on work-based learning opportunities. Recently, three participants who were accepted into the Providence Medical Assistant Apprenticeship program. The NextGenZone has a longtime partnership with Providence and their staff. They have helped our young people apply for the program and reduce barriers to being in the program.

The SWC also received a grant from the Building Changes Foundation out of Seattle to provide additional support to young adults experiencing housing insecurity. To date, over 19 Next Generation Zone youth who are experiencing house insecurity during this time have been served. From those who are literally homeless to those who are couch surfing with friends or family to those who are staying in temporary lodging, we have been able to provide them with additional support to help them maintain their housing. During this time, the SWC has also received a grant from the city of Spokane CARES Act funds to provide housing rental assistance to young adults through the end of December. We are excited to be able to get more rental money out to our young adults.

Our team hired a new Career Connections instructor, Kelly, in July and she has gone to work quickly revamping our 21<sup>st</sup> Century Skills Academy, which in the past was a three week in-person course. She completely redid all of the content, put it all on Zoom and is conducting a refreshed, engaging online curriculum for young adults who are accessing this service in a new way and we are doing it in a reduced timeframe. It is exciting to pilot a new and refreshed Academy with updated content and curriculum.

Jennifer Ranney, Next Generation Zone Director, shared some of the great work going on at the Next Generation Zone. A big focus is on outreach and marketing right now and we are currently refreshing our website to make content and navigation more meaningful, including updates making it very clear how to contact us and information on our newest virtual 21<sup>st</sup> Century Skills Academy and GED classroom. This is still in progress and there is more to come but we invite you to come check it out.

New billboards went up in four different locations around town with the new tagline, Own Your Future, which was created by our very own Stacey Wells. The design was a collaboration between Victor Rapez-Betty and our Ambassador Stacia. At these locations we should be getting over 325,000 weekly impressions. Stacia also created these incredible new postcards that we are handing out at community events such as the Native Project, The League of Women Voters and Second Harvest Foods. We even have a QR code for quick access to our Contact Us page that is going out on more of our marketing materials.

Jennifer also reported on the Voice Your Vote campaign that brings civic engagement opportunities to our youth. To help us get prepared for the campaign and truly incorporate youth voices, a survey of young adults was conducted and asked them what their most meaningful topics are. The top three were housing, jobs, and climate change. We asked our Ambassadors to create videos from their point of view on those subjects and ultimately created a campaign from start to finish. A video created by our Ambassador, Christian, on housing was shared with the board. Other resources that are available to help our young adults with the Voice Your Vote campaign includes a website called On the Issues, that quickly lets people know where candidates stand on key issues. We invite members to check out the page at [www.nextgenzone.org/voice-your-vote](http://www.nextgenzone.org/voice-your-vote). A huge shout out to the SWC, the amazing Victor and Kate for their help and support of this campaign.

The Next Generation Zone is also continuing with virtual services but are thrilled to announce we are now open for small group live instruction with our 21<sup>st</sup> Century Academy and our GED classroom. This will be by invitation only with priority given to those with technology barriers or Individual Education Plans (IEPs) which indicate that online learning will be too difficult. Safety measures are firmly in place with all young adults who come into the Next Generation Zone getting their temperatures checked and self-attesting to no other COVID-19 symptoms which helps with contact tracing, a hand sanitizing station, ample amounts of masks and cleaning supplies. Students will either be in the upstairs classroom or the downstairs lab but will not be invited into offices or any other spaces. This will also allow us to prototype the virtual life hybrid classes, which we are excited to explore as a new model moving forward even when we are back in the brick and mortar location. For those who want to attend virtually but also

have limited technology, we offer Chromebooks and WIFI hotspots that can be checked out along with resources for free internet so we can make sure we are giving all of our young people the support that they need to make it through these times.

Jessica provided a quick snapshot on our performance year to date. So far, the team has started over 13 paid work experiences since July 1<sup>st</sup>, placed 5 young adults in short term training and many of those are healthcare focused. We now have 18 high school equivalency graduates since July 1<sup>st</sup>, 14 young adults have entered employment and 3 have were accepted into the Medical Assistant Apprenticeship program.

## Spokane Resource Center

*Shannon Brundle, Program Manager*

Shannon expressed how amazed she is with the Spokane Resource Center team. Jen Morris and her team have been incredible standing up the rental assistance program so quickly and getting so much rental and housing assistance out the door very rapidly. The SWC has brought in \$1.5 million from the city of Spokane and at this point, our staff are able to disburse about \$200,000 a week in rental assistance to the community. This happened very quickly and now we have been able to build up our team and ramped up to processing applications rapidly, and we have built out our phone system to accommodate all the calls coming in. Last week, Dawn and Jen gave a live presentation to the Spokane City Council and we are in the process of applying for another large county CARES Act grant to assist with housing in the new year once the current funding runs out. These funding streams are vital, and we are grateful for the city of Spokane for having worked so quickly to get the contracts to us and supporting us.

Another area of focus is modifying some of our larger state and federal grants to meet customer needs. Staff are negotiating to change some of the parameters so that they are more suited for the climate that we are currently in and are thankful to ESD for the flexibility on those large grants.

There are some customers beginning training right now in CDL and a few other programs. Staff are researching a common database for the Spokane Resource Center so we can share our programs and outcomes across the different partners. A lot of grant writing is occurring and will benefit from a robust database to support our efforts to communicate with funders.

Since opening the doors of the Spokane Resource Center in April 2019, we have brought in a significant amount of funding, approximately \$7.6 million. We are able to serve the high number of customers that we have because of this support. There are so many people in our community that need funding and we are thankful to be able to provide housing and other assistance in that space. Our Financial Stability Center is a key part to many of the grants that we operate. It is a big resource for customers to help them stabilize as they move towards their employment goals.

Jen Morris, Spokane Resource Director, thanked Shannon for all her help. This has been a trying last few months and our team has been amazing at providing funding to the community for rent assistance. In the last three weeks, we have received over 1700 calls regarding services that we provide here. Most of the calls have been for rent or utility assistance from the CARES Act grant. We have spent out 52% of that grant as of October 9<sup>th</sup>. The grant started in September so since then we have provided services to 196 households and over \$400,000 in funds. That has been just amazing in a four-week period. From the Tenant-Based Rental Assistance (TBRA) grant we have helped 109 households since August and disbursed \$260,000. We have a little more time to spend the TBRA grant than we do the CARES grant. We have had the county Homeless Housing Assistance Act (HHAA) grant since June and have served 54 households and it is being utilized by all the partner agencies at the Spokane Resource Center.

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The rental application for the CARES Act grant is accessible on our website and is available in different languages and we are getting a lot of resources and referrals from our partner agencies and extended agencies. We have served over 6,000 individuals since opening in April of 2019. The initial estimates were that the SRC may serve around 500 people in the first year, but it has proven to be a vital part of our community's framework for serving many vulnerable populations both pre-COVID and now. That is evidence of the incredible work by our partner agencies. Worth noting is the Clothing Closet that has helped outfit 250 folks for either their first day of work, job interviews or with work boots for their job.

There are 18 partner agencies with six partners having full time staff at the Spokane Resource Center. Currently, there are four partner agencies that are allowing their full-time staff to be located on site as they normally would be for walk-ins. There are eight staff now with capacity for ten. Walk-ins are not allowed at this time, however, that is something we are hoping to do soon.

We are diligently working on pre-employment and housing. All partners are still collaborating just as much as would occur if all were on site, it just may take a little longer because it is occurring via email and phone. Folks that call in are still receiving direct referrals to a person, not an agency, so they are receiving a lot of one-on-one work and not getting lost in the shuffle. There is a weekly staff huddle occurring via Zoom to support the team. All of our services can be accessed virtually, and we have links that are specific to COVID-19 as well.

The Financial Stability Center has a new VISTA member, Christina, that started mid-August. She has been working with Victor on marketing and updating the website. She has been looking into all the different Cash Coalition members and bank agencies in order to build a calendar of events and online workshops. In the next three weeks we will have those available on our website.

## Regional Economic Update

*Mike McBride, SWC Business & Industry Analyst*

Mike reported out on the most recent labor market data before teeing up this year's Occupations in Demand list discussion.

### Spokane's Labor Market

- Total Civilian Labor Force: 253,204 (August 2020)
- Total Employment: 229,680
- Total Unemployed: 23,524
- Unemployment Rate: 9.3% (WA State avg. is 8.4%)

### County Unemployment Rates

- Spokane County unemployment rate down from the all-time high of 16.7% in April 2020
  - Unemployment rate in August 2019 was 5%
- Pend Oreille County has the highest unemployment in the state at 11.5%

### Food Insecurity – Spokane County

- Individuals and families depending on SNAP Basic Food Assistance had increased from 78,640 in February to 91,109 in August
- Overall population from the census has Spokane County at 522,000
- Roughly 17.5% of residents are on food stamps or food assistance

### New Weekly Initial Claims – Spokane County

- Initial claims continue to drop significantly
- In April we were reaching 9000 new unemployment claims in one week at the peak
- In October it has come down to around 1000 new unemployment claims per week
- This is a couple hundred more new weekly claims than we were experiencing this time last year

### Unemployment Claims by Type

- Week 39 ending October 3<sup>rd</sup>
  - Regular Continued Claims: 9,754 (-14.2% from prior week)
  - Pandemic Unemployment Assistance (PUA) Continued Claims: 5,852 (-3.6% from prior week)
  - Pandemic Emergency Unemployment Compensation (PEUC) Continued Claims: 3,204 (+19.6% from prior week)
- PUA expanded the unemployment eligibility and PEUC expanded the length of time for a claimant to collect unemployment
- PEUC claims indicate a level of long-term unemployment as they have exhausted their regular unemployment claim
- The longer someone is on unemployment, the more difficult it becomes to get reemployed

### Continued Claim by Occupation and Type

- Food Preparation and Serving continues to have the highest level of regular and PEUC UI claims
- Management and Office/Administrative Support come in second for regular UI claims
- Personal Care and Service have the highest PUA UI claims
- Construction and Transportation have quite a lot of regular claims

### Uneven Recession, Uneven Recovery

- Year over year, total employment in the Spokane MSA is down -8.2% or 20,800 jobs
- Certain industries are significantly down:

- Leisure and Hospitality: -31.3%, -7,800 jobs
- Mining, Logging and Construction: -14.1%, -2,300 jobs
- Government, including education: -11%, -4,400 jobs

## COVID Impacts on Projections

- Overall new job growth in Spokane County was projected to be 0.7% over the next year before COVID
- Projecting the overall job impacts, one-year job decline is now expected to be -6.6%
- Will likely take 2 to 3 years to recover the total jobs lost, however, retirements and churn will continue to create job openings
- Approximately 20,000 less total demand from 2020 Q1 to 2021 Q1 projected due to COVID

## Industry Projections: One-year Projected Demand post COVID

- |                                                  |                                |                                       |
|--------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------|---------------------------------------|
| ● <b>Accommodation and Food Service: -2,442</b>  | ● <b>Manufacturing: 1,143</b>  | ● Educational Services: 711           |
| ● <b>Healthcare and Social Assistance: 2,403</b> | ● Public Administration: 825   | ● Admin. Services: 608                |
| ● <b>Retail Trade: 1,742</b>                     | ● Wholesale Trade: 861         | ● Transportation and Warehousing: 396 |
| ● <b>Finance and Insurance: 915</b>              | ● Prof. Sci. & Tech. Svcs: 774 |                                       |
|                                                  | ● Construction: 727            |                                       |

## New Weekly Job Postings in Spokane

- About 1200 weekly job postings prior to the pandemic in March
- As the pandemic hit job postings dropped to 700 per week
- Over the last couple of weeks, we have been extremely volatile with some weeks back to pre-pandemic levels and some weeks are quite a bit lower
- This has a lot to do with different industries that do large hiring in certain months

## New Online Job Postings

- |                                        |                                        |                                       |
|----------------------------------------|----------------------------------------|---------------------------------------|
| ● <b>Registered Nurse: 208</b>         | ● Customer Service Representative: 107 | ● Inventory Associate: 85             |
| ● <b>Laborer/Warehouse Worker: 151</b> | ● Sales Representative: 106            | ● Janitor/Cleaner: 69                 |
| ● <b>Retail Sales Associate: 144</b>   | ● Tractor-Trailer Truck Driver: 101    | ● Retail Store Manager/Supervisor: 67 |
| ● <b>Physician: 131</b>                | ● Office/Administrative Assistant: 90  | ● Building Maintenance Technician: 61 |

## Occupations in Demand List

- Methodology is based on short/medium/long term projections, job posting analytics, and unemployment claims
- The algorithm for running the data has not been adapted to the COVID-19 pandemic and has erroneously classified most occupations as not in demand, due to the massive unemployment and significant drop in job postings
- The current list is significantly flawed and will require ample feedback to assure accurate designations, based on your expected job demand

## Demand Occupations

- Only 23 occupations were classified as in demand in Spokane County
- 1/3 of those occupations are healthcare practitioners and managers
- We use the in-demand classification for both filling current need, as well as priming the pump for future labor demand

## **Board Discussion – Occupations in Demand**

Mark asked board members to share what they are seeing in their industry and what jobs they anticipate having a greater demand in the future. As Mike indicated, we have about 16,000 people on different kinds of unemployment insurance claims right now, we have others who were denied unemployment insurance that are not in that count and there is still more working part time but want full time work. We have a lot of people that need good advice as to what is going to happen in the economy, what should they be looking to do in the future, what kind of skills should they acquire and what kind of credentials do they need. This list helps to give them advice and guidance, but it also controls whether they can still get unemployment insurance benefits while they are in school, so they can have some level of income support.

Machelle Johnson with Pearson Packaging Systems is seeing that in the past, a lot of professional positions had to be located in Spokane, or in one of our facilities. What she is seeing now with a virtual set up, the ability to attract talent nationwide and not necessarily have to be in the Spokane area, which is interesting. Her demand is very high-end engineering, project management and technicians. She has more positions open now than at the beginning of 2020. They are losing some of their talent because they can go work for different competitors that are not located here. This is going to change the landscape of how you recruit as more businesses are allowing employees to work from their home in several different professional roles. Their pool of candidates has enlarged because of this new virtual format.

Laura Wood echoed what Machelle said as they are seeing a lot of the same thing. They have a big need right now for real estate related positions. Anything from processing to underwriting and they have had to go out nationally to fill some of those positions. It has been difficult for them to hire as those jobs are really in demand here in Spokane. They have been able to get a lot of people from California. Another area that they always have a challenge filling is in technology. Interestingly, they have had a lot of people applying with them that have been dissatisfied with how their employers have handled the pandemic situation, whether it is allowing them flexibility, or they are being furloughed and they are trying to find a better work environment. They have a lot of openings in their branches because they are fatigued from having to serve the members in person and they are looking for other opportunities in the back office area so we have many openings for frontline retail positions right now.

Rebecca Cook shared that for her industry – entertainment, live events, film and its diverse workforce of technicians, artists, and actors – until there is a viable vaccine available there will not be full time work available. There is some gig work, but it varies in availability and duration and is problematic as offers no benefits, etc. As a result, there are a lot of people looking for new jobs and skills.

Ben Small asked why Spokane has such a strong housing market right now and what is impacting that? Housing continues to be developed and built. What is driving this demand?

Diane Quincy replied that she has many realtor friends that have shared how technology has made it possible for people to work remotely. The Vice President of Amazon moved from Seattle to Spokane because she only must commute to Seattle once a month to have meetings with her staff. Many people are finding that Spokane is an attractive place and very economical compared to the rest of the country.

Joel White replied that remote work is part of it, but the other part is the overall economy. We had such low housing inventory going into the pandemic. There is still a lot of outsourced demand for housing and a lot of buyers are coming in from out of the area. They are using the equity they have earned in Seattle or the west coast to move here and work remotely. It is also a buyer's market with the low mortgage rates so the time to buy is now. If you have equity you can come to Spokane and get a much nicer house than in Seattle or San Francisco and a better quality of life.

Tina Morrison shared her concern for our young people that are trying to buy their first home. It is a very complicated time, and she has been wondering about how the migration is going to impact our communities. Going back to the original question, so many people in our workforce have been hit where their industry has been shut down or their older workers who are thinking about trying to go through any sort of retraining. What would they retrain into to maintain the type of salary level that they had before? That is also going to be problematic.

Mark mentioned that is always a challenge having long tenured workers that are making higher level compensation and they lose their job. They normally do not reenter a job at the same level so how do they make that up? We see this in recession after recession where people are forced to take what are called "survival jobs" just to cover the lowest level of bills and still stay afloat. It is always a challenge to have a strategy that can get somebody the skills that are aligned with what their prior income levels were quickly, so they can reenter the workforce and go back to the same standard of living.

Diane replied that it is a big jump to get people prepared for the four or five high demand occupations from a food service worker to an engineer.

Robert Duron shared that he has several friends in the Portland and Seattle area that are purposely moving to the inland northwest based upon socio-political factors.

Mark indicated that in-migration is a good thing for our economy as we will need more people to perform the work over the course of time as the baby boomer generation retires in increasing numbers and birth rates do not keep up with the need for replacement workers. It is our responsibility to help ensure that they have the right skills that match with the opportunities that are going to equate with a good quality of life. He asked the board if anyone has feedback on jobs that are not coming back within their own industries and the need to transition workers into a new role, strategies for how that might be occurring with incumbent workers and how you can retain a worker but have them do something else?

Ben shared that Central Valley School District will have a robust virtual learning platform available for K-12 and when this comes out you will have teachers who are teaching in a totally virtual world. As a profession, they are not really prepared for teaching in that virtual world, but he thinks that the transition to doing that for professional development is going to be a lot easier. Their paraeducators, bus drivers and custodial staff have to be on site so none of that is going to change for them. He thinks there will be a different platform for education. They have got about 2,000 students that have chosen a virtual platform for the entire year, no matter if we go back to in person teaching or not. The biggest elementary school in the CVSD now has a virtual platform and he thinks they will continue that into the future.

Diane mentioned that the transportation and delivery industry will be affected. Many businesses are becoming a hybrid, even when the pandemic is not an issue. All kinds of products will need to get to workers located all over the place verses dropped off in one building.

Robert agreed with Diane and said his past business in office coffee systems made him think of any business service type industries are not going to be needed as people are vacating some of those offices, even real estate management for that matter.

Mark asked Ben if all the parents that are taking part of the virtual elementary school able to work from home and how is that impacting the working parents that are taking part in that modality of instruction?

Ben replied that the families that have chosen to continue in a virtual world are in a position that they can stay home and manage that with their family. They started kindergarteners back in the buildings on October 5<sup>th</sup> and will phase in first grade starting on October 21<sup>st</sup>. A lot of those families may not think it is safe to have their children back in school do not have another option. With the virtual learning they

have established, most of the time those parents have a plan to stay home or have somebody watching their children while they are at work. If they do not have that option, they have chosen to return to in-person learning. The parents who say they are going to stay virtual have their plans ironed out. It is the large group of parents who do not that they are providing support to through Learning Centers and childcare with the Boys and Girls club. They have about eight churches who volunteered to house these Learning Centers to support these students as they make this transition.

## Standing Committee Reports

### **Services and Oversight Committee – Robert Duron, Chair**

- No updates

### **Youth Career Readiness Network – Jessica Clayton, SWC Program and Development Director**

- They have been meeting regularly every two months as scheduled and had a meeting at the beginning of October
- The highlight was hearing about the homeless point in time count data and some of the measures that the city staff are implementing to have better real-time data around youth homelessness in our community
- They are also doing their annual Second Harvest volunteer event in smaller numbers
  - If members are interested in joining, they are going next Tuesday and one day in early November
  - Email Jessica for more information and available times

### **Executive Committee – Dan Evans, Chair**

#### Review of Action Items

At its August 19 Special meeting, August 27, and September 24 meetings, the Executive Committee took action on the following items:

*CARES Act grant from City of Spokane*  
*COVID-19 Employment Recovery Dislocated Worker Grant*  
*Basic Food Employment and Training grant*  
*Eviction Rent Assistance Program for Young Adults*  
*Next Generation Zone Lease*

## **EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE ACTION**

***Action: Motion and Second to accept grants and subcontracts. Approved Unanimously.***

***Action: Motion and Second to approve entering into the lease. Approved Unanimously.***

## **FINANCIAL IMPACT**

Addition of \$1,950,933 to the operating budget.

2% increase in rental rate equates to \$2,592 over the course of the 12-month extension.

## **Other Business**

No other business

Meeting adjourned at 9:35 AM.