



SPOKANE WORKFORCE COUNCIL

MINUTES SPOKANE WORKFORCE COUNCIL EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

April 16, 2020 – 12:00-1:30 PM
Spokane Workforce Council – 140 S Arthur St, Suite 300C

MEMBERS PRESENT:

Robert Duron	Dan Evans	Staci Franz	Alan Hart
Machelle Johnson	Commissioner Josh Kerns	Tina Morrison	Ron Valencia, designee for Commissioner Kerns
Diana Wilhite	Mayor Nadine Woodward		

MEMBERS ABSENT

GUESTS PRESENT

John Dickson

STAFF PRESENT:

Mark Mattke – Chief Executive Officer	Dawn Karber – Chief Operations Officer	Jeanette Facer – Finance Director	Jessica Clayton – Program & Development Director
Angela Maioriello – Office Assistant			

Chair Dan Evans called the meeting to order at 12:05 PM with a quorum of members present.

ITEM #1 – REVIEW MEETING MINUTES

Review of March 18, 2020 meeting minutes.

Action: Motion and Second to approve the March 18, 2020 meeting minutes. Approved Unanimously.

ITEM #2 – GRANTS AND CONTRACTS

Dawn Karber reported out on the following grant and contract:

- *Basic Food Employment and Training (BFET) Subcontract to Career Path Services*
 - Spokane Workforce Council has been awarded up to \$173,483 from the Department of Social and Health Services (DSHS) to support customers at the Spokane Resource Center.
 - The funding is a 50% match on non-federal funding.

- The SWC will be leveraging multiple private and county grants that qualify for the match.
- The SWC would like to issue a subcontract to Career Path Services for up to \$52,000, which would be 30% of the 50% that the SWC will receive for the match.
 - Career Path Services will run the BFET program out of the SRC and will serve current SNAP recipients with job search, training, education and job readiness activities to improve BFET participant's employment prospects and wage earning potential.
- The grant will run through September with additional funding potential for subsequent *years*.

Action: Motion and Second to authorize SWC to award \$52,000 to Career Path Services. Approved Unanimously.

ITEM #3 – MONTHLY FISCAL REPORTS

Jeanette Facer shared the fiscal report for February 2020:

- Cost Reimbursement Funders
 - Employment Security Department – Staff is working from home. No delays in draw requests.
 - City of Spokane – No delays in draw requests.
 - Workforce Training & Education Coordinating Board & LNI – 1-2-month delay projected.
- SWC Current Resources
 - SWC Operating Cash balance \$430,000
 - SWC Money Market Account \$169,067
- Upcoming Closing Grants
 - PY18 Rapid Response Increase Employment – 6/30/20
 - City of Spokane CDBG – 6/30/20
 - Opportunity Partnership – 4/30/20 (moved up from original end date of 5/30/20)
- WIOA Formula Funds Expenditures & Obligations as of February 29, 2020
 - Adult – 54% Expenditures, 78% Obligated
 - DW – 48% Expenditures, 74% Obligated
 - Youth – 51% Expenditures, 73% Obligated
 - Goal for 6/30/20 – 70% Expenditures, 80% Obligated
 - The state is discussing a possible recapture of funds that are not obligated and reassigning them to contracts that have greater need.

ITEM #4– COVID-19 PLANNING & RESPONSE

- Mark Mattke reported out that when we last met, we were in the process of shutting down all the WorkSource centers across the entire state and moving staff to remote services.
 - Since then, we have gone almost entirely to remote services across the workforce system.
 - A few staff come in and out of the center occasionally to do some training.
 - There are also a couple staff stationed at the center to field basic questions as people drive up.
- We have responded to this pandemic by protecting staff and customers while delivering services in a timely fashion.
 - Staff has done an outstanding job across the board, which includes the SWC, WorkSource, Talent Solutions Center, the NGZ, and the SRC.

- A newsletter went out earlier this week that details our system response and the variety of services being provided to the different range of customers, as well as information about the numbers of customers being served.
- People are reaching out to the workforce system as they seek services and we are there to help.
- Staff are on the phone and computer serving almost 2000 customers over the last several weeks providing information about unemployment insurance and connecting to other resources across the community so they can pay their rent or make sure they have enough food or transportation assistance.
- Information comes out every Thursday about the number of people on unemployment insurance in our area and what industries are being particularly hard.
 - In the last four weeks we now have experienced 40,000+ new unemployment insurance claims in Spokane County and almost every sector in the economy is being impacted by this.
 - Accommodation, food service, and retail trade are on the leading edge as bars and restaurants closed down.
 - It has since expanded to other industries, including healthcare as ambulatory care and elective practices shut down.
 - For the first time, doctors, nurses and other healthcare professionals are applying for unemployment insurance.
 - There are also 1300 claimants from the construction industry.
 - Some individuals are going on to standby claims, which are shorter term, because they anticipate their employers to reopen when the economy starts phasing back in.
 - We are trying to figure out how to best serve standby workers to get them prepared to rejoin the economy when things open up again.
 - Some workers may not want to come back to their jobs, or the economy may shift, and they may want to get into a different job.
 - We are working on strategies to invest in their training and development so they can come back into the economy in an even better place than when they left it and help to contribute to an accelerated recovery.
- We are also looking at resources and bringing in additional funding to help with this effort.
 - We have applied as part of a \$53 million statewide grant for disaster assistance, of which we would receive a share.
- The 12 local boards across the state are in the midst of developing another grant application for approximately \$60 million across the state for another round of resources that would help us to fund people receiving training, skill development and credentialing that positions them for success in this new economy.
 - This is a pretty broad-based grant that will be able to plug into a variety of sectors in our region in order to help businesses and people move forward as the economy reopens.
- Mark and Kevin Williams appeared at the Emergency Communications Center during a Facebook Live event last week.
 - Staff have had several TV appearances to talk about what is happening in the economy, what employers are hiring and what people are experiencing.
 - Mark mentioned the weekly newsletter that details the services we are providing.
- Our system is utilizing social media including Facebook and LinkedIn to get the word out.
- Mark has presented at several business recovery work groups that GSI is hosting with other business and community leaders around the region to help focus on business recovery efforts and services right now to mitigate the damage and then look to the future.

- We are deploying all the resources we have right now in a strategic and effective way to meet the community need and engaging with all the partners and making sure we are informing people of what services are available and how people can access those.
- Mayor Woodward and Mark had a conversation last week about this to make sure we are connected to the City of Spokane's strategic planning efforts.
- Spokane county is also putting together a taskforce on sector recovery and we plan to engage with that as well.
- Mayor Woodward replied that whenever she shares our mission out in the community to invest in training and development for a workforce that is sitting idle, such as in the hospitality or retail trade where they are living paycheck to paycheck, and help workers be in a better position with income and job security when we get to the other side of this, their ears perk up and they are so excited to hear what this is about. She is sharing this with her staff and the City would love to partner with us on whatever they can do to help in this mission and to message it and get it out in the community.
- Dawn Karber shared that she is at the WorkSource Center every day with Kevin Williams, the one-stop operator, and they are taking turns attending Zoom meetings and helping customers that come to the center access phone or online resources.
 - All WorkSource staff are working remotely.
 - The majority of questions from customers are about getting help with their unemployment claims.
 - They are also helping many people access food, free Wi-Fi and clothing.
 - There has been a surprising number of individuals that need first day of work clothing and have received help from the Spokane Resource Center clothing closet.
 - The Talent Solutions team have been on the phones every day working with employers and many services are regarding layoff response.
 - They have also helped many employers with layoff aversion by helping them get signed up for Shared Work and other programs for their business.
 - WorkSource recently began providing access to computers on Tuesday and Thursdays from 9 AM to noon in a temporary computer lab set up in the hallway.
 - Some customers need access to computers to file their unemployment claims.
 - They are sanitizing equipment between customers.
 - There is also a free cell phone provider who provides this service to customers in the WorkSource parking lot each week, so they have access to smart phones.
 - We are working with the City to get nine computers to homeless shelters and provide access to their medical appointments and any other appointments that are being held virtually.
 - We are working with the libraries to support the new financial line they have set up to provide information for folks who have unemployment insurance questions.
 - We have provided a useful fact sheet that lists every question that has been coming in about unemployment insurance and our staff is also helping with customer questions.
- Machel Johnson asked if an employer participates in the Shared Work program and reduces to 50% time for employees, will individuals claiming unemployment still be eligible to get the new Pandemic Unemployment Compensation payment of \$600/month in addition to the other unemployment compensation via the Shared Work program?
 - Dawn will find out and circle back with Machel.
- Mark thanked Dawn and Kevin for their amazing work at the center and the huge difference it makes for customers to meet with a real person for guidance and information. Being able to

comfort people, give them the encouragement they need, connect them with resources and technology can make all the difference.

- We are making phones and computers available to customers that have no access to technology so they can get unemployment insurance flowing or obtain other needed information.
- Robert Duron thanked Dawn, Mark and the whole team for going above and beyond to make sure there are resources available for folks who are more stressed at this point than usual while taking the precautions needed to keep everyone safe and healthy.
- Spokane county has experienced record numbers of initial unemployment insurance claims – over 40,000 in the last four weeks.
 - The volume has decreased from 11,300 in the prior week to about 8,300 this week
 - Before the pandemic there were about 500 claims a week.
- The downturn in claims is not going to last as the federal CARES Act has new unemployment insurance provisions that will drive another increase.
 - Individuals who have not had much of a job history/not enough hours worked, those who file as IRS-1099 workers, and gig workers will now also be eligible for unemployment insurance.
 - We anticipate a surge in the number of claims filed next week.
 - In preparation for this, the unemployment insurance system is working to rapidly increase its capacity and be better able to handle the flood of new claims coming in.
 - ESD has been trying to staff up by 1000 people over the last several weeks to add to their capacity to better respond to inquiries and answer calls but it does take time to hire and train people to become experts in these program and their computer system is just not built to handle this volume.
 - Our local system is responding by scaling for the next wave of need and deploying some WorkSource staff to provide unemployment claims support.
- As things stabilize, staff are planning for what services and resources will be most in demand for the next phase of this crisis.
- One of the challenges is the lack of a complete view of all the individuals that are impacted by this crisis.
 - There has been a rolling wave of layoffs occurring from industry to industry.
 - Some claimants are on standby unemployment insurance and if, after the 12 weeks of standby elapse and their job does not yet come back, they could transition to full unemployment insurance for up to 39 weeks.
 - Our staff are working to gauge what is happening in each sector and the level of need of both the employees and small businesses.
- We have about 11,000 small businesses out of a total of 15,000 total and our Talent Solutions Team is working closely with these firms to understand what they are currently facing so we can offer timely assistance and help position them for recovery.
 - Talent Solutions Team staff are developing expertise in the various SBA loan products, such as the Economic Injury Disaster Loan and the Paycheck Protection Program. and how to connect people with those products.
 - Some businesses have successfully been able to apply and receive those loans from our local lenders.
 - However, the PPP closed as of today until there is another infusion of cash back into it and people will not be able to apply for that.
- A lot of partnership is going on with other entities in the community.
 - The City and County are leading efforts, all our local chambers are very engaged as is the ADO and community-based organizations.

- All partners are doing their best to understand the impacts upon Spokane and work quickly to develop strategies that help our community.
- Tina Morrison mentioned the news has shown musicians and stagehands have been impacted since the first wave, along with restaurants and hotels, and since they are in the non-traditional category of employment, they have not been able to apply for unemployment insurance yet.
 - She asked that if our staff learn about clear guidelines or information they need to have in order to apply it would be greatly helpful to get that word out.
 - We are talking about our local symphony musicians, who get paid by service, not based on hours.
 - For stagehands it's not uncommon for them to have multiple employers, maybe up to 18 in a year, potentially more.
 - Another concern is for older workers with no computer skills or access to technology.
 - Providing information to help non-traditional workers and those without technology skills prepare for filing claims would be very helpful.
 - Staff will look into how we can get that message out through different media channels.
- Everyone is being encouraged to do all the preparation they can in advance of filing a claim.
 - Go online and create a SAW account, which is a Secure Access Washington account that must be used in order to create an insurance claim.
 - There are webinars available to watch that walk through the claims process at esd.wa.gov.
 - It is recommended to use a computer and not try calling on the phone because the computer system has a greater capacity to quickly process claims.
 - If there is an issue that affects a claim and requires a phone call, then that will need to be resolved before it is approved.
 - If there are no issues and a claimant signs up for direct deposit, payments will come within 48 hours while checks will take longer.
- One thing that is a silver lining as a result of all this is that our state will obtain a clearer understanding of who and how many 1099 and gig workers are in our economy.
 - It has been very hard to track them since data sources usually come from payroll.
 - This new information will provide a better picture of how much of our economy is comprised of these workers and what their occupations are and that will assist us in developing our service strategies. Overall, it is hoped that more data will come out of this that will aid us in understanding additional parts of our economy.
- Mayor Woodward shared a program that they just launched today that might be able to help some of the people that come to the SRC.
 - The City of Spokane is leveraging \$100,000 in CDBG funds and partnering with Craft3, a lender, to provide half a million dollars in loans to small businesses that can no longer apply for PPP or the Commerce Department's \$5 million statewide grant program that amounted to \$300,000 in Spokane County.
 - GSI is helping to facilitate, they had more than 1600 small businesses apply for about 30 grants that are available.
 - There is a huge need for resources for smaller businesses with 50 or less employees.
 - The City and Craft3 will offer half a million dollars in loans from \$10,000-25,000 starting next week.
 - Craft3 can get funding to these businesses within a week to 10 days and they are deferring the first three months and offering interest only payments after that.
 - After those funds are exhausted, the City is hoping to find more money that they can leverage to offer more loans and continue to partner with agencies.

- Mark thanked the Mayor for innovating around helping small businesses and figuring out the gaps in funding to provide assistance and help them come through this time and still be solvent.
 - As more information becomes available, we will pass it along to our Talent Solutions team so they can get that word out as well.
- The Mayor also announced today the City's accelerated construction project schedule which will put \$70 million out there for private contractors and they added another \$10 million to get more people working.
- The County Commissioners, City of Spokane and other area cities asked in a letter to Governor Inslee to open up residential construction so we can get that industry back to work.
- Commissioner Kerns echoed what the Mayor said, and they are hoping to facilitate a lot of individuals in this industry to get back to work.
 - Amongst all this there is still a housing crisis in our community so we really hope that the Governor can heed our advice there.
 - The county will be receiving an allotment from the federal government from the CARES Act for our region for approximately \$89,856,000.
 - Those funds are probably the most flexible dollars that our region is going to get.
 - The county wants to hear from citizens, much like they do with their annual budget process, to decide how to utilize and disburse these funds.
- Commissioner Kerns thanked Mark and Kevin for the fantastic job they did at the Facebook Live event and the whole team for the huge difference they are making in a lot of people's lives right now.
- Dan Evans replied that they expect there will be another round of PPP program funded in short order.
 - Bank of America has received over 350,000 loan requests and they along with the other big banks have taken upwards of 3000 employees from their day jobs and provided crash course training for these loan applications to address the need.
 - They are all continuing to work as if there will be a second round of funding.
 - They will continue to populate the queue with applications that they feel are meeting the criteria and will be funded once the economy turns on again.
 - They are being cautious to get the money out in the right fashion.
 - Thanks to community banks and the big national banks for working really hard to process applications and help get the money out.
 - There is more money going back into that fund, which is good news for small businesses.
 - The Main Street program, while much less forgiving, is targeted to much larger, more complex borrowers with upwards of 500 non-seasonal employees.

ITEM #5 – ACTIVITIES & UPDATES

- Every year we look at our prior program service providers and our One Stop Operator, and every three years we have the option of renewing their contract for the coming year.
 - The Services and Oversight Committee recently discussed this and agreed that our system will be best served by extending those contracts as business continuity is very important right now.
 - That will come through in the next month before the Executive Committee, regarding the extension of those contracts.
- The board has been working on the Local Integrated Workforce Plan for quite some time and it has been thrown in disarray by the crisis we are going through.
 - It was going to be due to the state board in April, but they have now pushed that back and are awaiting further guidelines.

- We may only need to complete a couple elements of that in order to be approved in June to continue doing business under the requirements of the Workforce Innovation Opportunity Act.
- Much is changing in the economy and our service delivery system that we will want to ensure is taken into account before completing the full plan.
- Jessica Clayton provided a quick outline of the grants in play which include:
 - Bank of America.
 - The Innovia Foundation regular grant process and the new COVID-19 fund.
 - Economic Security Challenge award of \$10 million, our proposal has moved on to the panel review process.
 - Several COVID-19 grants that we have not received word on yet.
- We are in negotiations right now with the State Board with regarding performance targets for the year for our three WIOA Formula programs, adult, dislocated worker, and youth.
 - This is an annual process all local boards go through and set multiple separate target for each program. Measures include employment, credentialing, wage increases, measurable skill gains.
 - We have not finalized negotiations yet, but we will bring those to our next meeting for discussion.
 - It is a challenging time right now to anticipate how our programs will perform in the future, given what is occurring in the economy.
- The annual NAWB Forum in Washington, D.C., has been re-scheduled for June after being cancelled back in March.
 - Mark will send out an email asking you to make your air travel reservations.
 - We already have your accommodations and conference registration taken care of.
 - This is where our board will receive the Trailblazer award and we look forward to having staff and board members present for this honor.
- The annual KHQ/WorkSource job fair that occurs in May and the Workforce System conference that occurs in June as being postponed.
 - There are too many unknowns right now so we are working on other options, e.g., a virtual job fair and other ways which we can help employers that are hiring connect with job seekers.
- Mark will send another email regarding the date of the May Executive Committee meeting.

Meeting adjourned at 1:00 PM.