



SPOKANE WORKFORCE COUNCIL

MINUTES

SPOKANE WORKFORCE COUNCIL EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

March 18, 2020 – 12:00-1:00 PM

Spokane Workforce Council – 140 S Arthur St, Suite 300C
877-594-8353 63820824#

MEMBERS PRESENT:

Robert Duron	Dan Evans	Staci Franz	Alan Hart
Machelle Johnson	Tina Morrison	Diana Wilhite	Paul Warfield, designee for Mayor Woodward

MEMBERS ABSENT

Commissioner Josh Kerns	Ron Valencia, designee for Commissioner Kerns	Mayor Nadine Woodward
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GUESTS PRESENT:

John Dixon

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 12:03 PM with a quorum of members present and conducted introductions of members and staff.

ITEM #1 – REVIEW MEETING MINUTES

Review of February 13, 2020 meeting minutes.

Action: Motion and Second to approve the March 13, 2020 meeting minutes. Approved Unanimously.

ITEM #2 – GRANTS AND CONTRACTS

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 source of the match funding.
- The BFET program will operate out of the SRC and serve current SNAP recipients with job search, training, education and job readiness activities to improve BFET participants' employment prospects and wage-earning potential.
- The grant will run through September with additional funding potential for subsequent years.

Action: Motion and Second to approve contract for up to \$173,483 from DSHS. Approved Unanimously.

Notification Only: Opportunity Partnership Program (OPP) – Additional \$13,000

This grant, funded by the Washington State Workforce Training and Education Coordinating Board (WTB), is focused on connecting first-generation college students at the Community Colleges of Spokane with mentorships and other employer experiences to help increase their matriculation rates and connect them with employment opportunities after graduation.

- We were offered an increase to this year's award which will allow us to develop new techniques for connecting students and employers digitally.
- As this increase did not require board approval, we have accepted the increased funding and have processed a vendor contract of \$3,795 with Career Path Services to perform a research project on the best ways to utilize LinkedIn and other social media for networking and employer connections.
- The remainder of funding will remain at our level and allow us to purchase quality video equipment and develop video trainings to disseminate to both students and employers.
- Original contract: \$42,500. New contract: \$55,500

Notification Only: Contract with SCC for Curriculum Development - \$6,205.40

This year's JP Morgan Chase Foundation grant has been focused on career and technical education; the funds are supporting the opening of our Skilled Trades Center at the SRC as well as helping us expand apprenticeship services in our area. In addition to these efforts, funding has been made available to support the Center for Workforce & Continuing Education at SCC to develop new course offerings that will lead to industry-recognized credentials in in-demand industries.

- We are entering into a vendor contract with them to support them in developing a Mental Health Associate training.
- This credential will qualify applicants for openings at MultiCare and other area healthcare providers.

ITEM #3 – ANNUAL RETREAT/STRATEGIC PLANNING

Mark is recommending postponing the annual retreat as a health precaution given the current pandemic and restrictions being placed upon public events. The convention center has notified us that they can no longer accommodate this event. We have already carried out development of the Local Integrated Workforce Plan (LIWP). This meeting is not mandatory.

- The board will look at rescheduling the retreat in June or August.
- The LIWP has been released for public comment for the mandatory 30 days and will expire the first week of April. Then we will submit it to the state for their consideration and comments.
 - Once we have addressed the comments we will ask the board via electronic vote to approve submitting the draft plan to the state.
 - We are considering asking USDOL for an extension on the deadline for submitting plans due to the extraordinary circumstances we are experiencing.

- So much is changing that it will be hard to craft a plan now that takes into account the many emerging new factors in our regional economy and how we will need to adapt our strategies.
- It makes sense to push this back until we can see what the impact on our system will be.
- All board members received a copy of the plan and it is also available on the SWC website.

Action: Motion and Second to approve postponing the April 8, 2020 Executive Committee Retreat. Approved Unanimously.

ITEM #4 – COVID-19 PLANNING & RESPONSE

The workforce system is moving quickly to respond to this crisis by increasing access to services while also keeping people safe and healthy.

- We have developed a range of scenarios that would help to categorize the risk to staff from customers or other staff coming in sick and the process to clean or close centers if there is contamination.
- Effective today, all WorkSource centers are closed to customers across the state.
 - Staff are allowed to work out of the centers.
 - They are working towards delivering services remotely by phone, online workshops and virtual job fairs.
 - Some employers are hiring: Amazon, Fred Myer, Albertsons/Safeway and we are trying to connect job seekers with gainful employment.
 - About 95% of the customers seeking services need unemployment insurance. The unemployment insurance system has not been able to keep up with the current demand.
 - Phone calls are experiencing long wait times and calls dropped.
 - Websites have been unable to process all the requests.
 - People are showing up in person because they are worried and unable to get their claims started.
- The Next Generation Zone and the Spokane Resource Center are also closed to customers.
 - Staff is working to deliver remote services.
- Mark praised Dawn Karber for her work to help our staff and centers respond during this crisis.
 - Both Dawn and Kevin Williams have been standing in the parking lot at WorkSource to talk with customers as they drive up and help reorient them to services that are available remotely.
- Questions
 - What is the timeframe for getting paid family leave and unemployment insurance with the increase in claims?
 - Employment Security Department manages both paid family leave and unemployment insurance.
 - Soon they will remove the waiting week that is required for unemployment insurance in order to expedite claims.
 - How are we protecting staff so they can continue to provide financial services during this crisis.
 - They have a strict response to the variety of scenarios that could happen when someone is exposed to the virus or has a family member that is sick.
 - They are focusing on cross-training staff, especially to help provide unemployment insurance services.

- WorkSource is closed to customers which reduces exposure.
 - Half of the staff are working from home, everyone else is teleworking and practicing social distancing.
 - They have implemented a four times a day cleaning policy.
 - If anyone presents with symptoms they wipe all surfaces, wrap up any contaminated items in plastic and have everyone leave the building until it can be deep cleaned.
 - They are also focusing on mental health and morale is high.
- The Spokane Resource Center staff are helping families thanks to the county Homeless Housing Assistance Act (HHAA) grant.
 - They are providing food and resource lists to those who need it.
 - There are people who have never had to use these resources coming to see what is available and they are deeply grateful.
- Dawn mentioned we have a fiscal team ready to provide assistance to families and asked the City of Spokane and Spokane County to consider sending any extra funds to the SRC so they can get funds to customers the same day it's requested.
 - John Dixson offered to check with the county Community Services team to see if he can free up some more funds for rental assistance.
- Mark shared that the SWC is financially solvent and we will be able to get through the next month paying bills, subrecipients and vendors in the event that the government shuts down.
- We are using this crisis to identify gaps and ask how we can drive some change in the system to help our customers and do our jobs more effectively.
- We are able to keep track of all the calls and individuals seeking services across the campus.
 - Yesterday they served 250 people.
 - Staff is also tracking the number of people having challenges getting through to the unemployment insurance claims center.
- Members of the board asked how they can help and Dawn requested they help get more news coverage around employers that are hiring in our market.
 - If board member's companies are hiring, please let us know.
 - Companies are trying to keep their doors open and retain their staff to the extent possible.
- Staff will be working to increase media coverage to ensure customers are aware of the resources available through the workforce system.
- The other challenge is helping our customers get access to technology now that WorkSource and libraries are closed.
 - Even if we get donated laptops or smart phones, keeping equipment clean and sanitized is still an issue.
 - Staci Franz will send procedures on sanitizing computers and equipment.
- We will continue to develop remote working and delivery of services.
- We also want to focus on our rural customers that cannot make it in to a WorkSource location or connection site by making more resources available online.
- Tina Morrison asked if they were able to provide cell phones or PCs whether there is a company that can provide sterilization and is there funding for that?
 - Staff will look into how we can sterilize equipment.
 - Dawn said flip phones are being given out Thursday so people can call in their UI claims.
 - Tina will ask her board if they can donate the older phones and laptops they have.
 - We need to make sure that upgrading the operating systems on devices is not cost prohibitive.

ITEM #5 – ACTIVITIES AND UPDATES

- NAWB Forum in March has been postponed. We will update with new dates when they become available.

OTHER BUSINESS:

None.

Meeting adjourned at 12:53 p.m.

NEXT MEETING:

The next Executive Committee meeting is scheduled for April 15, 2020 from 12:00 – 2:00 p.m.