



SPOKANE WORKFORCE COUNCIL

MINUTES

FULL COUNCIL MEETING

WEDNESDAY, FEBRUARY 10, 2021 – 7:30 - 9:30 AM

Zoom

MEMBERS PRESENT:

Alisha Benson	Kelley Charvet	Rebecca Cook	Robert Duron	Dan Evans
Lori Hunley	Dr. Christine Johnson	Machelle Johnson	Commissioner Josh Kerns	Wade Larson
Vicki Leifer	Luis Licea	Tina Morrison	Diane Quincy	Ben Small
Staci Taylor	Jennie Weber	Joel White	Diana Wilhite	Ron Valencia – (designee for Commissioner Kerns)

MEMBERS ABSENT:

Dr. David May	Nancy Nelson	Tim Sigler - (designee for Mayor Woodward)	Christina Vigil Gross	Mayor Nadine Woodward
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OTHERS PRESENT:

Mandy Adamson – Talent Solutions	Mark Baldwin – Eastern Washington University	Kevin Brockbank – Community Colleges of Spokane	Rob Crow – Employment Security Department	John Dickson – Spokane County
Veronica Do – Spokane Public Schools	Cami Eakins – Career Path Services	Sarah Flambouras – WorkSource	Mike Glenn – Next Generation Zone	Josh Monroe – Talent Solutions
Jen Morris – Spokane Resource Center	D. Norman – City of Spokane	Tony Parks – WorkSource	Jen Ranney – Next Generation Zone	Lora Senf – WorkSource
Stacey Wells – Next Generation Zone	Kevin Williams – WorkSource			

STAFF PRESENT:

Shannon Brundle – Program Manager	Kate Behrmann – Communications Assistant	Jeanette Facer – Finance Director	Andrea Hixson – Program & Operations Manager	Dawn Karber – Chief Operations Officer
Victor Ropez-Betty – Communications Manager	Angela Maioriello – Office Assistant	Mark Mattke – Chief Executive Officer	Mike McBride – Business & Industry Analyst	Tim Robison – Program & Compliance Specialist

Chair Dan Evans called the meeting to order at 7:33 a.m. with a quorum of members present and conducted introductions of members and guests.

Review of Minutes

Review of December 9, 2020 meeting minutes.

Action: Motion and second to approve the December 9, 2020 meeting minutes. Approved unanimously.

Meeting the Mission

Mark Mattke, SWC Chief Executive Officer

Mark shared that we lead off each board meeting with a focus on success stories from across our system to highlight the great work occurring to meet the mission of this board and serve our business and job seeker customers.

Mark turned it over to Mandy Adamson, who is the manager of our Talent Solutions Team. She introduced Veronica Do, a business partner from Spokane Public Schools to talk about how they have collaborated recently to help them with their hiring needs.

They have had the opportunity to partner over quite a few months to work on a variety of different projects, including consulting on virtual hiring events, rebranding some positions that were harder to fill to attract candidates that are a great fit, and they have considered incorporating some assessments.

Veronica shared that she began working with Talent Solutions in the summer of last year and they have focused on efforts to recruit classified staff that during and prior to the pandemic were very difficult to fill. These positions often have a high turnover for a variety of reasons. They have been able to work with Talent Solutions to host their first virtual career fair with their custodial team, and it was a great experience. The custodial team takes a lot of pride in getting to know their candidates so that face to face time to them is the most important piece of recruitment, more so than collecting resumes. By having a virtual career fair where they set up little breakout groups and had one on one time with candidates, they were able to pick out the top candidates. They hired three people out of that career fair, which seems like a very small number, but three for the custodial team is a lot, especially when they find high-quality candidates. In the past they used to make exceptions and place less qualified new hires into sub roles to test the waters. However, they found three high quality candidates that they hired directly into contracted positions, which is fantastic worth every minute of effort because they are in it for the long run, and they are still working there today.

In addition to the virtual career fair, they have also been working with Josh Monroe on the Talent Solutions Team and he has done a fantastic job. Veronica emailed him relentlessly about many different things and Josh has been able to push out newsletters to help with recruiting custodial staff, nutrition services staff, express staff, and educator staff in variety of roles that have been hard to fill. As a result, they have been able to access candidates that they had not previously reached prior to partnering with Talent Solutions. In addition to the three custodians that they hired this summer, they have hired 10 more and will likely end with 15 people. Their Chief Operations Officer was “doing a little dance” because he never thought that they could do this well recruiting for the custodial staff.

Mandy thanked Veronica for partnering with them and shared that Josh has enjoyed working with them as well. Veronica thanked Mandy and the Talent Solutions Team for the great experience they have had while working with them.

Mark thanked Veronica for being here this morning and for the work she does. Education is such a critical sector in our economy. From K-12 all the way through post-secondary, there are so many jobs in

that realm so our ability to help them stay staffed up, keep classrooms clean and get para-educators and teachers is important for our regional economy.

Mark congratulated Ben Small, Vicki Leifer and Veronica for the successful recent passage of the school levies. He also gave thanks to Alicia Benson for all her work and advocacy with Greater Spokane Incorporated to help get the word out in the community and get this across the finish line.

Victor Rapez-Betty, SWC Communications Manager, shared a quick video that highlights some of our efforts to connect a customer with services at the Next Generation Zone.

- Nikki has been in Spokane since 2017 when she came here as a refugee from a refugee camp in Morocco.
- She heard about the Next Generation Zone from her social worker, and it resonated with her as it was about education and finding a job to help her be independent.
- She just started her job as a nursing assistant and is also taking her GED tests.
- Nikki's goal is to get her diploma and become qualified to be a nurse.
- The Next Generation Zone helped Nikki reach her goals, step by step and she is very pleased.

Jennifer Ranney, Next Generation Zone Director, thanked Victor for creating this video of Nikki and capturing not only her story but her essence. She also gave a shout out to Mike Glenn, Nikki's career specialist at the Next Generation Zone, who is actively helping her reach her goals. Nikki is just one of the amazing young adults at the Next Generation Zone and her experiences reflect how the classroom and career teams work together to help people overcome challenges to achieve their goals. Currently, they have about 47 young people who have received their GED and their in-house testing center is up and running successfully, which they are incredibly excited about. They continue to serve people with a hybrid of in person and virtual services both on the education and career side. They look forward to Nikki becoming an RN and she thanked everyone for the great collaboration.

Mark thanked Jen for all the work she does to help young people, Mandy for all the partnerships she is establishing in the business community and the impact they are making in our community. Our team is excited to create more of these videos to share with a wide range of audiences, our representatives in Congress and elsewhere, to tell the story about what the workforce system is accomplishing. He thanked the team for putting this video together and congratulated Nikki.

Staci Taylor requested a link to this video and any others to share with the National Association of Workforce Boards (NAWB) as they are trying to collect these types of stories. Victor will send her a link to download the videos. Mark shared that we plan to have more of these videos available on our website so folks can click on them, hear the stories, and understand the value of our system.

CEO Report

Mark Mattke, SWC Chief Executive Officer

Mark gave a brief update and provided an outline of the meeting.

- Our focus continues to be identifying and meeting the needs of our current customer base during this disruptive time and positioning them for success in the recovery.
 - There are over 5,700 jobs currently posted while simultaneously very high numbers of people are still unemployed with over 22,000 people on unemployment insurance claims in Spokane County.
 - Many of them are now in the category of long term unemployed (for six months or more) as their skills become less sharp and they may disengage from the labor market.
 - Many are also reaching the end of their claims and are close to not having income support anymore, presenting a fresh set of challenges in paying for basic needs.

- There are also over 89,000 people that are still receiving food assistance in Spokane County. This is a tremendous number of people and it is likely an undercount, given the fact that not everyone who is eligible applies for food assistance.
- This also corresponds to the housing insecurity that many folks are facing as well with the inability to pay rent due to the prolonged lack of a lack of income.
- To meet many of these challenges we continue to extend our partnerships across the workforce system and across the community so we can ensure we have resources, whether they are via our workforce service providers or other partners, to meet all these needs that are out there.
 - We have been successful in partnering with the City of Spokane and Spokane County to disburse almost \$2 million out in rental assistance over the course of the last few months, which is huge shot in the arm to a lot of households in Spokane County, to help pay the rent and get stabilized.
 - There are more resources on the way from both the city and the county and we hope to be able to continue to be part of that ecosystem of support around housing.
- It is hard for folks to think about what their next job opportunity might be or going back to get some retraining if the roof over their heads is unstable.
 - We must address these basic human needs and get people on a career path.
- We have also retooled our services and we will hear more from some of our folks at WorkSource about how they are responding by delivering more effective remote services and high-quality content so that people have access to information that is timely, cutting edge and reflects what is happening out there in the changing labor market.
- As we talked about back in December, we launched a new campaign to reach people across various media channels.
 - It is called *(re)Employ Spokane* and it focused upon having customers reconnect to our system to 1. get a job immediately, 2. obtain short-term training in order to return to work, or 3. if necessary and a person has the wherewithal, attend longer term training to retool their skill set entirely and go into a new industry.
 - We will hear a bit more about that from Victor about its launch and review the website and messaging.
- Then we are going to be asking the board for your insights to help give us some real-time intelligence about what is happening in your own organizations around adapting to remote work and the use of technology.
 - This input helps to inform our understanding of what is occurring in the workplace and better advise both our business and job seeker customers about what they can expect when they interview and onboard, whether it will be remotely or in-person.
- We have also been working on a number of partnerships to strengthen linkages with different partners at the local, state, and federal level, so we can better meet our customer needs.
 - The goal is to use our integrated service delivery model and have all our partners work together in concert to bring these resources into the system, streamline how we access them so the customer does not have to navigate a challenging, bureaucratic environment, and they can just get to what they need as efficiently and effectively as possible.
 - This work includes better understanding the impacts of racial inequity in our community and how that impacts people differently, and how the workforce system can improve access and outcomes for everyone that we serve.

Mid-Year Fiscal Report

Jeanette Facer, SWC Finance Director

Jeanette shared the mid-year fiscal report beginning July 2020 until December 2020.

	December 2020 - SWC Active Grants Under Management: \$14,798,861	% of total	December 2019 – SWC Active Grants Under Management: \$10,258,513	% of total
WIOA Programs	\$7,145,868	48%	\$5,868,205	57%
WIOA Competitive	\$4,018,088	27%	\$3,376,917	33%
Other	\$3,634,905	25%	\$1,013,391	10%

- SWC Grant Funding Income Sources July 1 – December 31, 2020
 - State of WA (ESD): \$3,185,098
 - City of Spokane: \$1,725,364
 - Spokane County: \$115,899
 - Other State Agencies (LNI, DSHS, WTECB): \$106,644
 - Private Funding: \$15,000

SWC Subcontracted Client Services July – December 2020	Expenditure	% of total
Rental Assistance (718 clients served at an average of \$2,247 per client)	\$1,613,589	39%
Salaries & Benefits	\$1,559,419	37%
Operating Costs	\$580,046	14%
Training Services	\$350,603	8%
Supportive Services	\$64,553	2%

PY20 WIOA Monitoring Report – Spokane Workforce Council – Executive Summary

- Background and Monitoring Objective
 - Employment Security Department’s Workforce Monitoring Unit (ESD’s Monitoring Unit) conducted an annual onsite compliance review of the Spokane Workforce Council on October 12 – 21, 2020.
 - The review was conducted in accordance with the Uniform Administrative Requirements 2 CFR Part 200; the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA), Sec. 184(a)(4); and additional requirements established by Department of Labor Employment and Training Administration (DOLETA) and ESD policies, rules, and regulations.
- Results
 - ESD’s Monitoring Unit determined that there were no findings, questioned costs or disallowed costs.
- Noted practices observed during the program review included:
 - ISD model-braiding of resources – Spokane Workforce Council, in collaboration with WorkSource Spokane, have implemented a system wide integrated service delivery model that ensures participants receive assistance across all programs they are eligible for.
 - This approach maximizes the ability to braid resources to meet the needs of as many participants as possible.
 - Objective Assessment Tool:
 - Spokane Workforce Council has a very efficient Objective Assessment tool that helps address all the elements when performing an assessment for participants during the enrollment process.

- The tool is designed to generate the information into a well-structured case note that is easily added to the Note Section in the Application touchpoint ETO.
- Services:
 - Spokane Workforce Council's youth service providers are doing a great job of providing youth participants the 14 programmatic elements during this unprecedented time of COVID-19.

WorkSource Operations – Focus on Teams

Dawn Karber, SWC Chief Operations Officer

Dawn provided a quick overview of our integrated service delivery model, which was noted as a positive practice from the Employment Security Department monitors, the Department of Labor monitors, and from others around the country. She thanked the board once again, for supporting integrated service delivery. We brought this concept to the board and over the period of several years have been able to design our WorkSource Center and services to better meet customer needs. It is not designed for program monitors or program managers but is a great business model for those whom we serve to make it easier to navigate and obtain what they need to advance in their careers.

The teams that we have include: The Technology Hub, Customer Assistance Resource Team, Home Team Career Coaches, Workshop Team, Assessment Team, Continuous Engagement Team, and the Financial and Resource Management Team (FiRM). We have taken the 30+ funding sources that present in the center and rather than having 30 departments by program, we have several departments based on customer needs.

Those needing the most basic assistance with job search assistance or resume creation are helped in the Home Team. The Workshop Team has been helping customers by providing virtual workshops. The Continuous Engagement team are those folks that focus on individuals who have intensive needs. Maybe they want to switch careers, or they want to go back to school for training. These folks specialize in helping people return to school.

For us, this customer-centered, integrated model makes sense – but it is worth pointing out that this model is not happening around the country as many workforce systems are still mired in a program-focused environment. Today, Kevin and Tony will share how well it is working. Dawn thanked the entire team and the board for supporting us in this endeavor as it continues to help move our system forward.

Kevin Williams, One-Stop Operator, shared some of the work that the Continuous Engagement Team (CET) has been doing as we went through the pandemic.

- They continue to connect individuals who have been affected by the pandemic with new opportunities through formal, short term trainings or post-secondary educational opportunities.
- He gave a shout out to Jamie Pierce, CET manager and her lead, Becky Somerville, as well as the rest of the team because they had to pivot and work at trying to figure out with training providers what had changed with the training platforms, both with our educational providers in our community and partners, but also with the training providers providing new short-term, formal trainings for individuals.
- Figuring out the platforms took a little bit of time, there were a lot of hands-on pieces that had not moved to online yet.
- The CET also shared what other training providers were doing in our community and help them partner with the Talent Solutions Team to have a discussion of how they can best serve our community through the training capacity that they have.
- The CET provided 447 people with individualized services, helped place 12 customers in work-based learning and 51 customers in occupational skills training.
- They have an 89% placement for training/WEX outcomes with a \$20/hour median wage.

A client named Dan reached out to Kevin and said he was connected with Peggy, who is one of our superstars on the CET, and she was able to assist him with choosing the right training program to start a new career. Dan was an individual who after spending almost 12 or 13 years in the retail industry, was not exactly sure how he could move forward. He had moved up to a middle management position in retail but had a difficult time over the last couple of years, especially during the pandemic, maintaining employment. Speaking with Peggy and with some of our individuals as well on the Home Team, he was able to see that he had transferable skills. In Kevin's discussion with him on the phone he said that what really changed for him is that he took an assessment which showed him some transferable skills, and then in his discussions with Peggy, he was able to choose that right training program that he knew that was going to provide a sustainable wage for him and his family of three to move forward.

Tony Parks, WorkSource Campus Assessment Coordinator, splits his time between assessments and workshops. He collaborates with the CET and the Home Team to promote the assessments that they offer and help guide job seekers, especially when it comes identifying those transferable skills for those who are leaving declining industries to pursue occupations that are more in demand.

- Tony's Workshop Team currently covers about 65% of the statewide online workshops, which is something that they take a lot of pride in, representing Spokane across the state, and facilitating a vast majority of those workshops every week.
- They were the first ones to start developing the statewide curriculum and their facilitators make up the entire statewide revision team.
 - The five job seeker offerings are:
 - Resumes workshop, Successful interviewing, Apply Now, which covers the entire application process building those out both online and in person, Assessments workshop, and Strategic job search.
- They have three professional development offerings for their strategies for success.
 - Four specialty group offerings are:
 - Layoffs Services for Veterans, Jumpstart to Employment, which focuses on those individuals who have been justice involved and are trying to rejoin the workforce, Enhancing Employment for Mature Workers, which is focused on helping people overcome ageism, and Job Discovery Club, which has a less structured curriculum and is more participant led with a facilitator simply kind of being there as a guide to the conversation.
 - Job Discover Club is something they offered in-house before COVID and it was very successful, so they are excited to offer it virtually now.

Mark shared that our system is very focused on our local residents and businesses, providing the best quality services for them, but we are also very interconnected across the entire state. That ability to provide statewide leadership and help advance how these workshops are revised, formatted, and rolled out is just a great testament to the quality of work that is being done in Spokane. That we help other areas across the state to also figure this out all the while keeping our eye on delivering the local services that make a difference in our community. We are a very connected system with a lot of experts across the state, and frankly a lot of experts right here in Spokane, like Tony, Kevin, Jamie, and the folks that do the work every day.

Robert Duron recalled when Dawn shared a draft of the integrated service delivery model with them a number of years and said it is phenomenal to see that it worked out to be very successful. Dawn thanked Robert and the board. We could not have accomplished the changes without their support.

Dan thanked everyone for their hard work and willingness to jump in and for reporting out on the progress they have made.

Regional Economic Update

Mike McBride, SWC Business & Industry Analyst

Mark shared that things change quickly in our regional economy, across the state and the nation so we asked Mike to highlight some of the elements of what we are seeing and how that is influencing our strategies currently, what we are seeing over the horizon, some of the weaknesses in the regional economy, some of the strengths and where we are heading.

Declining Labor Force

- Over 20,000 people have exited the labor force in Spokane County over the last year.
- Once the pandemic economic impacts began to be felt, labor force participation dropped immediately, and has not returned to prior levels.
- We are seeing some trends, including the most concerning one which is the sharp decline of females in the labor force.
 - They are mostly leaving the labor force due to childcare burdens being disproportionately applied to females in the households.
 - The primary reason for those exits is because there are so many children who are doing schooling from home and the lack of available childcare.
- There are also safety concerns within the workplace, and it is possible that people are not accepting a job that might be available or they are not applying out of concerns for their own safety.
- We also had a large amount of people in the 65 plus range going into the pandemic who were in the workforce and with the stock market having not suffered the same decline that the economy overall has it may have incentivized people to continue with retirement plans.

Mark added that once people exit the labor force, they are also not counted in our unemployment numbers. We may see the unemployment number as what we think is evidence of the extent that people have been dislocated from their jobs and are on the sidelines, but in reality, if people are no longer in the labor force, they have stopped looking for all the reasons that we are talking about and they are out of the count. That is troubling because we rely upon this one barometer and look to it a lot and see positive signs when it goes down but in fact many people are on the sidelines. We need to keep that in mind as we are seeing a lot more women impacted by this. The 140,000 jobs lost nationwide in December were all women. This is unfortunately impacting women for a variety of reasons we are developing strategies to better serve them, target more directly to engage them, and figure out solutions for the childcare issues. Of course, all of our schools are working to figure out how to get back to in-person instruction and take that burden off parents having to be home and monitor their children while they are doing distance learning.

Then the other thing to focus on is the retirement piece. This is very different than the last downturn when there was a “Wall Street recession,” and the stock market took a big hit that prevented people from retiring. We saw a lot of older workers remaining in the workforce, occupying jobs that had been occupied by younger workers, oftentimes in retail or food service. They had to retain a job for the income and the benefits that come with employment.

This recession is the opposite; the stock market has done very well with historic highs so 401Ks are robust and that changed the dynamics in the labor market of who is staying and who is going.

Oftentimes we look at past patterns of recessions and what happened and base our strategies upon that because they have been normal economic events that occur every so many years. This one is so different, because of the pandemic, and the fact that it was a Main Street recession, not a Wall Street induced recession. This is not an average event, and it continues to plague us with different permutations that we have to consider that we have not had to in the past.

Mike pointed out that the unemployment rate of 7.4% shared earlier is counting about 17,000 people who are considered unemployed and looking, which is the U-3 unemployment rate. U-6 generally captures people who have left the labor force for economic reasons and are not necessarily looking for another job. If we have had a drop in labor force participation by over 20,000 people you can assume that U-6 is possibly double what the U-3 rate is now, which is significant.

Mark replied that there is also opportunity. We have a lot of people on the sidelines that can plug back into the economy when it starts going again. Our charge is to figure out what they need to get skilled up to get back into those jobs that the economy needs as we start to rev up the engine again. If there is a silver lining in this it is that we have talent on the sidelines, we have a labor force that we can mobilize and activate around this if we can connect them to our services and resources and to training that is going to match the jobs that are out there. That is our goal right now, to reach them, figure out what they need to be successful, and help them to make it into the next opportunity.

Food Insecurity

- In Spokane County, there were approximately 89,500 residents receiving SNAP basic food assistance in November 2020.
 - That is over 10,000 basic food recipients more than compared to the same month in 2019.
- The numbers jumped enormously due to the recession and food insecurity has been such a major issue for a lot of people but 89,500 is roughly 17% of Spokane County's entire population.
- The number of people who are eligible could be quite a bit higher, potentially over 100,000 if national trends are applied locally.

Spokane Rent Report – February 2021

- Rent has increased sharply over the last year, actually 6% year over year and 0.2% over the past month, while nationally and statewide rent rates have dropped during the pandemic.
- Spokane is continuing to grow and get excessive demand in comparison to our housing availability, and both the rental prices and the mortgage prices are going up.
- Everything is going up in terms of how much it costs to live here and so our cost-of-living index has increased significantly in Spokane, it is no longer a cheap place to live, as it is commonly thought of.
- Median rents in Spokane stand at \$765 for a one-bedroom apartment and \$1,051 for a two-bedroom.
 - These are expensive numbers compared to what it used to cost to live in Spokane.

Mark shared that this influences our strategies around helping people get into family sustaining wage jobs. As someone comes to us, we need to recognize that they have to make a certain wage in their household to be sustainable. In the past, it was less than other areas across the state and in the country, but now we are rapidly catching up with that. We are focused on a quality jobs approach to this and considering the jobs that get the person to self-sufficiency.

Back in December we heard from our friends at United Way about the Asset Limited Income Constrained - Employed (ALICE) report indicating that a lot of folks are working but not making it. A big part of our effort is to make sure we are matching people to skill development, credential acquisition, and jobs ultimately that that are at a self-sufficient level for themselves and their family. Getting them on a pathway that gets them to a point where they are not receiving supports while working, still on food stamps and having issues with their housing security. This helps to illuminate for us just the scope of what we are looking at in Spokane, and then make sure that we are doing all we can to help mitigate it.

New Monthly Job Postings in Spokane

- New Postings in January 2021: 5,789 (27.91% increase)
 - If we look at the past year that would be at the high point of the entire last year, only similar to October 2020, so that is a very good number.
 - Healthcare and Social Assistance (1,381 new online job postings)
 - The industries that we are seeing posting a lot of jobs are healthcare and social assistance, that is our largest industry in Spokane so that makes a lot of sense why it is always number one, but retail is number two.
 - Retail Trade (552)
 - There is a lot of churn in retail so that is why there is a lot of job postings, but a lot of retail is doing well – think grocery and hardware and similar stores.
 - Manufacturing (378)
 - Finance and Insurance (370)
 - Administrative and Support Services (273)
- Three of the top five industries are targeted industries for the Spokane Workforce Council and we focus our efforts towards where those jobs are growing right now.
- There are a lot of more service-based jobs that have popped up in January so that is a shift in terms of just the sheer quantity, which is potentially good and showing that some of the jobs that saw some of the most significant losses are starting to be posted again.

Mark mentioned he heard some recent news around the Triumph site that is slated to close and the loss of around 134 jobs over the course of the next 18 months. That was a blow but at the same time the hope is a lot of those workers can transition to other opportunities within the manufacturing industry, which can readily absorb a good number of workers. He was on a conference call this week with Senator Cantwell and discussion centered on growing the advanced manufacturing/aerospace industry in Spokane and what she can do to help with that. The Senator is interested in helping us to make progress and keep this sector strong.

Ben Small shared that one of the things they are finding is that K-6 kids are back to school every day, all day and yet they still have about 1,200 families who have chosen to for their kids to stay in the virtual environment. They believe that even as the pandemic wanes they are going to see a significant number of students, upwards of maybe 500-600 students, that will stay virtual, and we will offer some kind of virtual option. He thinks that we will see that become more likely across the K-12 education sector. His concern is that we may see a drain on the available workforce because parents will make the choice to do what is best for their child in education and may forego reentering the labor market. Have we thought much about that? Is there anything we can do as a workforce council to work with our businesses to understand that new dynamic that might be coming their way?

Mark replied that it is important to be thinking about that.

- What do those businesses need?
- If people are likely to stay home, do they want to stay working to some degree part time or remote full time?
- Is there a way to keep that talent and those skills still engaged the economy in some way that balances their home and educational needs for their children at the same time?
- How can we make sure we retain skilled labor and skill and talent?
- How do we get workers that are in other industries and are not coming back to move into those positions as well?
 - We are talking about those 22,000 plus people that are on the sidelines right now plus those that are discouraged and not counted.
 - How can we engage with them so they can backfill, so we do not have a gap?
- The key is going to be talking to business about what are the business needs and answering the following questions:

- What are they experiencing currently?
- Where are there gaps?
- What skills do they need now that they did not need before?
- What workers do they have who have elected to stay at home?
- What is the impact upon them?
- We are gathering business intelligence from our talent solutions team, partners at GSI, and the other regional chambers and AWB, so we have a clear understanding of the changes that are occurring in this new environment.
 - Part of this breakout for the section after next is to discuss what is happening in the workplace so we can make investments and engage with people, so they are prepared to fill the gaps as they occur in this changing landscape.

(re)Employ Spokane Campaign

Victor Rapez-Betty, SWC Communications Manager

Mark mentioned that at our December meeting that we were preparing to launch a campaign to engage with our community and increase the throughput of customers in our system. Many people are sitting on the sidelines waiting and hoping their job comes back while unemployment insurance benefits are running out for many of them. We wanted to be more proactive in our outreach efforts, so we designed and launched a new initiative that Victor Rapez-Betty, our communications manager, will talk more about.

He also gave a shout out and thanks to our business members on the board who stepped forward and provided footage for our intro video. This campaign will continue to progress over the course of time, but it is an all-hands-on deck effort to get more people to understand that now is the time to figure out what their next steps are, whether it is a job right away, short term or longer-term training, we have a solution for them, just contact us.

Victor shared that we developed a campaign landing page for (re)Employ Spokane.

- Customer feedback led us to segment our track into what we call the three T's which are transfer, train, and target.
 - For customers that are looking for immediate job opportunities and want to transfer their skills, they can follow the transfer track.
 - Career coaches are being trained to identify those who would benefit from the train track, which recognizes there might be a technical skill that is missing that a short-term training could fill to help them achieve their reemployment goal.
 - Then there is a target track which will help customers get back into post-secondary education to start or complete a degree to pursue careers like nursing, which is our still the largest job available in our area.
- We have a section online to stay informed, job seekers can input their information so that we can keep them connected with hiring events, workshops, or any of the offerings at WorkSource.
- We also provide a high-level overview of labor market information that we keep updated monthly with job openings and the top in-demand skills so that jobseekers can be a bit more prepared with what it looks like to be reemployed.
- The transfer track leads to the job opportunities page on WorkSource Spokane where we have a weekly hot jobs link that the Talent Solutions Team generates an email to job seekers.
- The train track leads to our new career training page, which is reflective of short-term training, and how our Continuous Engagement Team guides customers into finding the training program that is best for them.

- The success story of Peggy earlier in the meeting is exactly the step-by-step process that she followed to help that customer, Dan, identify the training program that he wanted to get into to achieve his reemployment goals, which starts with an assessment.
- The target track leads to our website and the planning pathway guide, where we have a table that can guide customers into identifying the various degree programs at SCC and SFCC that can lead to the positions they want once they complete their degree or their program and what they can expect in terms of the salary range.
- We are also working to expand this to other post-secondary partners, including EWU, and others in the area so people can see the complete continuum of available programs that lead to in-demand jobs in our economy.
- We have also created a special landing page, a social media toolkit for businesses to participate with us and to download any of our pre-made social posts, to use the hashtag (re)Employ Spokane so that we have visibility of campaign participation and can help promote that through our social media channels.

In response to a question, Victor indicated that apprenticeships fit in the transfer track because most people enter apprenticeships as an entry level job and get paid while they are working and learning. He will be sure to add apprenticeships to the transfer track.

Mark mentioned that we are expanding our connections to apprenticeship programs. These include the building trades and utilities as well as some recent successes in healthcare, e.g., medical assisting apprenticeships and others. We were on scheduled to open an Apprenticeship Information Center at the Spokane Resource Center when the pandemic hit. That set us back a little bit in terms of the timeline, but we do have an interest and resources devoted to expanding apprenticeships and we want to be sure we are including that in our messaging.

Regarding how businesses are learning about this campaign, Victor shared that he is going to work with Mandy Adamson, Talent Solutions manager, to develop a communication plan so that businesses can participate in the campaign and learn how to use the hashtag to create visibility so that we can generate success stories. We can track those stories through the hashtag, or at least track that lead, so that we can develop more stories like Nikki's.

Mark also shared that the Talent Solutions team is reaching out to businesses and directing them to the webpage and that the media toolkit is a business-focused page.

Understanding the New Work Environment – Breakout Session

The board broke into small groups to address the topic of “What is Happening in the Workplace” through the lens of technology impact, performing work and the hiring process in general. This is vital information, especially in the current environment, to ensure we better understand what is occurring, in real time, in our workplace and that we can adapt our services to meet the needs of the clientele.

Breakout Room Questions & Responses:

What percentage of work is now done remotely via technology in your organization? What details can you share about the types of jobs that are now performed 100% off site?

- Talent Solutions: Everything that can be is being done remotely. 2000 employees Spokane County, 700 working from home almost full time.
- Providence: 25% of workforce
- Bank of America: All of their workforce
- Wilhite Industries: two thirds remote – all administrative functions, marketing, sales are 100% remote.

TAB 1

- Pearson Packaging: 35%, all administrative functions, marketing, sales are 100%
- City of Spokane/City Hall: majority working remotely, office jobs, directors while all city services are working fully in person.
- Spokane County: 40%, 64-person community services team 100%, billing 100% offsite, assessor's office 100% offsite.
- CHAS: about 40% of their work is being performed offsite. Healthcare requires in-person services and all their area clinics are operational. Very small number of staff are 100% remote, mostly in call center or billing roles. Most staff want to be on site at least one day a week. Employees get a choice in how much they work from home/in person.
- Construction: construction industry has to be on-site. Their office staff work on-site as well with masks and social distancing. Larger networking events have been delayed or changed, but they did hold a 67-person networking event at Northern Quest recently.
- Next Generation Zone: They are offering hybrid services and seeing much more youth engagement now that they have started in person scheduled meetings. Staff can come back, and they are offering a great deal of flexibility, but 90% of staff are onsite.
- Talent Solutions: All their positions can be 100% remote because they do not meet companies in person any longer. It is much more productive.
- Wagstaff: It is more difficult to work from home in manufacturing. They have the blue- and white-collar workers and have sent the white-collar home.
 - They adapted and have leaned their organization – 20% less staff – and are taking this year to take reevaluate who we are and what we are doing. Working with the colleges to tailor education.
- Spokane Public Schools: Most staff had never worked remote before pandemic, so basic support around virtual work was a major push.
 - How to use teams/etiquette for online communications and moving to digital vs. paper
- Film industry: They are shooting their very first film in Washington since COVID-19.
 - All office staff 100% from home.
 - Crew members have everything they need available online (timecards, contracts etc.).
- Spokane Resource Center: They are open to 10 staff from different agencies, majority are all from home, technology is a barrier for population/customers served.
 - Maintaining internet for people who have difficulties with having internet provided.
- Central Valley School District: Open by appointment only to public, but full staff coming in to work daily.
 - Shored up critical systems that allows them to keep paying their bills.
 - 80% of staff is working in school buildings.
 - 10-15% in virtual environment as students have chosen to be there, 5% with underlying conditions work from home.
 - Inconsistent internet has been the biggest barrier.
 - Predicts we will see some families choose to stick with the virtual environment.
 - Workforce will likely change due to this.
- EWU: About 90% of instruction is currently being done remotely. Admissions work and campus tours are being done remotely.
- ESD: They have had to abide by Governor's order as a state agency.
 - Had to move to 100% virtual very quickly with no experience beforehand.
 - Due to the high demand for UI, staff had to be re-deployed and trained into the UI division at the same time as transitioning to remote work.

How is your organization dealing with the potential downside of non in-person interaction in relation to retention?

- Talent Solutions: Employees saying they like it.
- Providence: Focusing on virtual social hour.

- Spokane Public Schools: Retirements expected to uptick when return to work occurs, may have an incentive to induce retirements.

How much of hiring is predicated on access to technology at home?

- Bank of America: Hiring freeze at the moment so not relevant question but when we do, we will not give a lot of support.
 - Employees will have to figure it out on their own but pushing the cost to employees essentially.
- Providence: We will provide a lot of support.
 - All employees working remotely get \$25/month for tech supplies.
- County: Hiring freeze so question does not apply.
- Wilhite Industries: All virtual interviewing, nothing specific about technology requirements at this time. They provide equipment.
- Pearson Packaging: They provided an allowance for internet and supplies equipment.
- County: They provided laptops, remote interviewing.
- City: They provided equipment.
- CHAS whenever people are comfortable, hiring is still done on site. Whether they need technology at home is predicated upon each position. When employees do not have access to the technology they need, it is treated on a case-by-case basis and they can accommodate employees who cannot work remotely at one of their sites.
- EWU: Almost exactly the same as CHAS.
- Construction: The construction industry does not have the need for technology at home.
- ESD is opposite: Home technology is required right now for a remote environment.
- Spokane Public Schools: Completely virtual recruitment with Microsoft Teams interviews.
 - Online school positions can be remote from anywhere, but all other hires are expected to live in Spokane area. This has been really helpful for out of state candidates, could not reimburse travel previously, so this has been helpful. Administrative and above get a lot of out of state candidates and teaching jobs are now getting more out of area applicants, too. Note: social media advertising is a whole new realm to enter.
 - Pre-employment testing used to be all in person, now this allows for changes, potentially not use it to screen candidates out with (Q: can this be trainable?). Screening for personality is more key than hard skills.
 - Scenario based questions to speak to cultural competence.
 - Ghosting has not been a specific problem with applicants; however, job shopping has been a concern (applying to many jobs at once, with only one in mind).
- Wagstaff: The new staff coming into white collar work – they are looking for folks with different skill sets – more flexible and can cross train and agile.
 - Competency based mentality for hiring.
- SRC: Not an issue, company-issued laptops and MiFi's.
- Film industry: not a huge issue there.
- Central Valley School District: It is an involved process to hire principals, community forums where people meet prospective principals and get their vibe etc., we cannot do that now.
 - Could potentially do webinar-type, but not the same.
 - Families could not provide feedback easily via webinar.
 - Have had to redo this process.
 - Makes it very difficult to hire and be a jobseeker in the current environment.
 - Some candidates do not have access to internet or a computer with a camera.

How much do you expect employees to be virtual /productive tech savvy?

- Spokane Public Schools: If a candidate is unable to use zoom effectively, it may indicate a poor fit.

- Pearson Packaging: Engineers are already tech savvy, built in expectation.
 - For shop employees there are built in expectation as well but has not been an issue to address during pandemic.
- Wilhite Industries: Same, except for collaboration with the field and remote workers.
 - Working on setting expectations for that.
- County: They have robust IT services and have made remote work very simple.
 - No additional tech savviness required, just tech friendly.
 - Struggling with rapid communication management.
- City: Echoes the county.
 - SRC: The hardest part is when there is an issue at home as no IT staff who can just walk over and check things out. Troubleshooting without help has been the biggest issue.
 - Technology was used daily before pandemic; new technology is the complication.
 - Forming connections is very difficult virtually.
- Central Valley School District: How to use Zoom effectively.
 - Breakout rooms used in classrooms, figuring out new technology.
 - How do we train people on this new interface? How is it best to use Zoom, Teams, WebEx, etc. People need to be versed in multiple platforms and understand the nuances of them. The need for multiple platforms in case one fails.
- Film Industry: Tech savvy comes with the nature of the work and has not been affected by COVID-19 specifically.
 - People have had to step up virtually, but not hugely.
 - Ergonomics need to be addressed.

How are you conducting onboarding of new employees?

- Providence: Self-paced learning on learning online platform.
- County: Done virtually 100%.
- Pearson Packaging: Hybrid between virtual and in-person, added a fit-for-duty test done in person.
 - Pearson pays for the FFD test.
- Wilhite Industries: Same, hybrid between virtual and in-person.
- Wagstaff: For onboarding, they have streamed systems.
 - They went to Paylocity and reduced admin overhead.
 - Managers and employees spend less time on systems.
 - They go into an online learning process.
- City: Done virtually, with exceptions for certain city service positions.
- SRC: All done via Zoom.
- Central Valley School District: They send the message that a safe environment is important for employees and would love to meet in person, but it is just not possible to do without putting that person at risk. Small one-on-one distancing meetings might be possible, but everything is done through Zoom. Minimal contact is very important with distancing, masking, etc. and are being strict about protocols.

Have you received feedback from your employees on whether they “like” working from home?

- Providence: Those employees that are customer-facing are really struggling.
- Bank of America: Sales staff are miserable.
- County: County employees saying they like it; but those who are not able to work from home report feeling jealous of those who can.
- Pearson Packaging, City: Yes, for majority.
- Wilhite Industries: It was mixed.
- Construction: Concerned that individuals who chose to sit on the sidelines while receiving UI may face backlash/difficulty finding new work when they try to come back.

- There may be some pressure and expectations to work in person.
- Some suppliers are working from home and building permits have been slow because permitting office was closed for so long.
- EWU: Students have been responding overall positively.
 - Admissions/advising is improved as one-on-one direction with advisors is more targeted and students have been opening up.
 - On the instructions side, it is a huge struggle.
 - Students are “satisfied” but more reluctant. Students do recognize that in-person instruction would be better.
- ESD: They are looking forward with high hopes to being able to re-open facilities.
 - There are customers that cannot navigate the system virtually (lacking digital literacy).
- SRC: None of the employees like working from home it is a very social job.
 - Mental health has been decreasing among staff.
- Central Valley School District: Some teachers have enjoyed it and been more comfortable.
 - Length of time is wearing on employees – now it is normal to work from home.
 - Some staff have gotten into a good routine – may be hard to relearn how to work with each other.
 - Adjusting back to the culture of dressing up for work will be difficult.
 - Culture shift: people have grown accustomed to working from home – moving back into the office, whether employees are excited about it or not, will be a challenge.
 - Everything from how to interact with coworkers to how to dress.

Standing Committee Reports

Youth Career Readiness Network – Staci Taylor, Youth Career Readiness Network Chair

Staci reported out on the meeting last week.

- They also met with Mike to go over the data and spent some time talking about the youth unemployment rates.
- They had some conversation regarding some feedback that they heard from the Education and Training Alliance.
- Ben and his colleagues, superintendents from around the city, had just stated that they have seen or heard when rounding, an increase in youth employment due to the availability of switching to a virtual environment for education.
- Some of the numbers that Mike was sharing is validating those statements.
- We heard some Next Generation Zone updates.
 - We have three new ambassadors, and this program is working very well.
 - These are young adults that are being served at the Next Gen Zone.
 - They are bringing in some social media graphic design, illustration, videography skills, and it has increased our marketing for the Next Gen Zone.
- They heard from Shannon and the team about the system equity work that they are doing on the workforce campuses.
 - Staci gave a huge shout out to the commitment that these groups have had in diversity, equity, and inclusion efforts on our campuses.
- Our numbers are down just a little bit for the Next Gen Zone but that is to be anticipated.
 - We are starting to see an increase after the first of the year with lots of robust programs and GED testing in virtual and in-class settings for students.

Executive Committee – Dan Evans, Chair

Dan mentioned an item that the Executive Committee discussed was the scheduling of this year's annual board retreat. Normally this board takes a half a day in April as they have done for years to dive deeper into the issues that the board faces and to identify priorities and inform our annual work plan. This year we are not going to be able to meet in person by April. They have discussed pushing the retreat out into the fall of this year when we might get together face to face. That will make our April 14 meeting just a regular two hour zoom meeting. Comments and feedback were requested. All board members agree to move the board retreat to fall of this year.

Review of Action Items

At its December 17 and January 21 meetings, the Executive Committee took action on the following items:

WIOA Formula Funds Modification for Talent Solutions

At the start of the program year, Career Path Services staffing at Talent Solutions was not funded for the full 12-month period. Staff worked to fill that gap with funding brought in from the two National Dislocated Worker Grants. However, a small gap remained to fully fund their staff for the remainder of the program year. Staff identified under-utilized funding in other WIOA Formula contracts and the One-Stop Operator contract. Staff proposed to shift the funding to increase the overall budget for CPS Talent Solutions by \$32,000.

Action: Motion and second to authorize the SWC to approve shifting \$32,000 in funding to support Career Path Services Talent Solutions staff. Approved Unanimously.

Spokane Resource Center Lease.

The Spokane Workforce Council continues to work with the City of Spokane to identify funding to support lease costs at the Spokane Resource Center. The city has not identified funding to continue supporting the costs and as the resource center is essential, particularly during the pandemic when they have served over 4,000 residents of Spokane County, the SWC has offered to help identify funding to support the lease costs through at least May. Within existing budgets, the SWC has access to \$108,000, which is the cost of the rent and utilities from December 2020 through May 2021. These funding streams include:

- \$60,000 set aside for rental/utilities in the Economic Security for All grant.
- \$6,500 set aside for rental/utilities in the JPMorgan Chase grant.
- \$25,000 from earned income received from the Basic Food & Employment grant; and
- \$16,500 from WIOA funding set aside to support the SRC in case of emergency.

Action: Motion and second to approve use of \$108,000 in grant funds for Spokane Resource Center facilities costs and enter into MOU with the City of Spokane to commit these funds.

COVID-19 Employment Recovery Dislocated Worker Grant

The SWC has received two National Dislocated Worker grants from the U.S. Department of Labor – a disaster-focused and employment recovery-focused grant – to help serve workers who have been dislocated as a result of the pandemic. For the Employment Recovery grant, a portion of funding was reserved at the SWC level to support staff time for program oversight. As the program has been implemented over the past several months, there is an identified need for additional oversight of and support for our operators across our campus. Staff requested to move \$123,899 from the SWC level to the subcontract with Career Path Services so that they can hire a Director of WorkSource Services. This position will be in a supervisory and coordination role above the site operators, as well as filling additional need for general campus oversight, increasing capacity to organize, coordinate, and market

our services. SWC program management staff roles are fully covered by other grant resources. This grant funding expires in March of 2022.

Action: Motion and second to approve increasing the award to Career Path Services for the Employment Recovery Dislocated Worker Disaster Grant by \$123,899 to a total of \$844,904.

FINANCIAL IMPACT

Approximately \$108,000 obligated in grant funds.

Other Business

Mark let the board members know that a racial demographic survey will be sent to each of them to collect information about our board members. It is totally optional to complete it. A lot of our funders ask about the racial and ethnic composition of the board and how we reflect the diversity of the community we serve. We appreciate your completing it and the SWC will benefit from having this information as we respond to future funding opportunities.

Meeting adjourned at 9:31 AM.