



**SWC MEETING MINUTES**  
**APRIL 20, 2022 – 7:30 - 9:30 AM**  
**Ruby River Hotel**  
**700 N Division St – Shoreline A Ballroom**

**MEMBERS PRESENT:**

Kelley Charvet  
Rebecca Cook  
Mary Crago  
Robert Duron  
Dan Evans  
Lori Hunley

Machelle Johnson  
Luis Licea  
Steven MacDonald  
Tina Morrison  
Diane Quincy  
Staci Taylor  
Derek Tyree

Christina Vigil Gross  
Jennie Weber  
Joel White  
Diana Wilhite  
Ron Valencia

**MEMBERS ABSENT:**

Alisha Benson  
Dr. Christine Johnson  
Vicki Leifer

Dr. Wade Larson  
Dr. David May  
Kimberly Myles

Ben Small  
Commissioner Josh Kerns  
Mayor Nadine Woodward

**OTHERS PRESENT:**

Sarah Flambouras – WorkSource  
Lora Senf – WorkSource  
Kevin Brockbank – Spokane Community College  
Jen Morris – Resource Center of Spokane County  
Scott Simmons – Spokane County  
Lori Veitenheimer – WorkSource

Terrance Nixon – Next Generation Zone  
Cami Eakins – Career Path Services  
Braden Fish – Goodwill Industries  
Andy Dwonch – Career Path Services  
Kathy Hammonds – Resource Center of Spokane County

**STAFF PRESENT:**

Mandy Adamson – Program Manager  
Jessica Clayton – Program & Development Director  
Jeanette Facer – Finance Director  
Laurel Henderson – Program Coordinator

Andrea Hixson – Program & Operations Associate Director  
Dawn Karber – Chief Operations Officer  
Mark Mattke – Chief Executive Officer  
Kevin Williams – VP System Advancement

Chair Kelley Charvet called the meeting to order at 7:36 a.m. with a quorum of members present and conducted introductions of members and guests.

## **MEETING THE MISSION**

*Mark Mattke, SWC Chief Executive Officer*

Mark introduced Jen Morris—Director, Resource Center of Spokane County (RCSC), and a video was shared with the board of a customer served by the RCSC. Mandie was connected to housing assistance to stabilize her residence and then received help finding employment and successfully transitioned to a full-time job on a career pathway that meets her needs. She is a great example of how the multiple services available via the RCSC meet people where they are and help them move to self-sufficiency.

## **REVIEW OF FEBRUARY 9, 2022, MINUTES**

Review of February 9, 2022, meeting minutes.

***Action: Motion and second to approve the February 9, 2022, meeting minutes. Approved unanimously.***

## **CEO REPORT**

*Mark Mattke—Chief Executive Officer, Spokane Workforce Council*

Mark acknowledged the challenges taken on by the staff, our partners, and our board over the past two years and expressed gratitude for the commitment on everyone's part that has resulted in many positive impacts for our community. He also thanked the staff who have successfully applied for and received numerous competitive grants that have secured new resources for our local workforce system. These grants are vital to maintain the level of and scope of services for our customers as we work to improve our regional talent pipeline. Mark also mentioned the upcoming KHQ/WorkSource Job Fair on May 11<sup>th</sup> at the Convention Center. This is our largest hiring event of the year and occurs at a time when employers are experiencing workforce shortages and will help make connections to narrow gaps in our labor market.

## **RESOURCE CENTER OF SPOKANE COUNTY**

*Dawn Karber, SWC Chief Operations Officer*

*Jen Morris, RCSC Director*

The RCSC has served in an expanded capacity over the past two years to meet the needs of our residents, leveraging a variety of funding sources, including rental, mortgage, and utility assistance, to support individuals and families impacted by the economic disruption of the pandemic. The staff and leadership of the RCSC continue to work with its network of 19 partner agencies to ensure that the array of onsite services is integrated to support not just the immediate situations our customers are facing, but also connect to training and employment that leads to longer term stability and self-sufficiency for our customers.

The initial concept was to assist people who were at risk of experiencing homelessness, not to be a homeless response center. Since the pandemic, we have seen the needs for housing, food, and mental health challenges really increase.

The RSCSC has been open for 3 years, starting with 2 staff and now has 23 full-time on site. The SWC and our partners have raised over \$7.6M in non-federal/private grants to fund its services, but still requires ongoing fundraising to meet its operating costs and the many unmet needs of our customers.

Since opening, the RSC has served 7500 individuals and outfitted 250+ customers with clothing for work, including professional attire and other such as construction wear and scrubs.

During the pandemic, five different rental assistance grants provided by Spokane County and the City of Spokane allowed the RCSC to serve 1165 households in the last year.

We also provide phones to many people, which has been a nice incentive to bring people in and then they can be connected to myriad other services.

Barriers that RCSC customers continue to face are housing, childcare, healthcare, technology, COVID related fears about workplace safety, entering new industries, need for flexibility.

The RCSC serves a very diverse section of our community, including Marshallese, Russian and recent Ukrainian refugees. All are able to access our life-changing services, resources, and support.

## **NEXT GENERATION ZONE**

*Kevin Williams, VP System Advancement/Director, Next Generation Zone*

*Jessica Clayton, Program & Development Director*

The Next Generation Zone has emerged from the pandemic stronger than ever, with increased numbers of youth participating in our education programs and obtaining employment. The team has also successfully executed its shift in the physical facility to bring all staff and resources together on the same floor and support further integration of our many services. Kevin Williams, VP of System Advancement/Next Generation Zone Director, and Jessica Clayton, Program and Development Director for the SWC will provided the board with an update on our progress.

The Next Gen Zone is the only place in Spokane County for youth to receive education, career, and wraparound services at the same location. Youth can come there to get their education and move forward into a career.

## **Overview of Disconnected Youth**

May 2020 Data (pre-covid)

In the US, 39M youth 16-24 and 11.2% in Spokane County are disconnected youth – approximately 6,900 – and are not in school or not working. This is pre-COVID data and numbers have likely increased.

Overall unemployment is 5.5% whereas youth ages 16-19 are at 19% unemployment.

Next Generation Zone serves a diverse population with many more people of color than the proportionate number of the population. Barriers of our customers include 96% low incomes, 33% identify as having a disability, 24% homeless or housing insecure, 7% have limited English proficiency, 12% are pregnant or parenting, 18% are justice involved.

## **Monthly Numbers Served**

224 – Classroom

WIOA Youth – 220

Orientation & Walk Ins –82

## **Challenges**

Next Gen Zone has experienced a number of challenges as well as opportunities over the past year. Like much of the economy, we have seen staff turnover, including leadership transitions, and are working on

strategies to retain our current staff and bring on new ones to help achieve our mission. Our leadership are committed to workplace culture & team development and are conducting listening sessions with all staff members to inform how to best support our staff as we all work through very tough times with our customers and in our own lives.

The return to in-person services post-COVID has been important in building our workplace culture and we remain committed to using principles of Customer-Centered Design to inquire with customers what their needs are and figuring out how best to serve them.

## **Onsite Behavioral Health**

Onsite mental health services for youth are a national best practice. The pandemic has led to a lot of stress and trauma for young people, and they need access to counseling to process what they are experiencing. Next Gen Zone now has onsite behavioral health two days per week and the specialist is currently serving eight youth and adding more soon.

## **21<sup>st</sup> Century Skills Academy**

This is a life skills academy where youth learn job skills, create their personal brand, learn how to manage money, perfect their résumé and more. Any youth ages 16-24 are eligible to enroll to learn these skills.

The move to 1<sup>st</sup> floor has been a benefit for both staff and students. It is helping with cohesiveness and continuity of operations.

90 youth graduated with their GED this year, with an 80% pass rate for GED tests, and 63 placements in post-secondary education.

The graduation ceremony and brunch for 2022 GED graduates, *Embark 2022* will be held June 14<sup>th</sup> at the Hemmingson Center. all Board Members are invited.

## **BRIEF ECONOMIC UPDATE**

*Mike McBride, Business & Industry Analyst*

New data indicate that Spokane's labor force has significantly increased with the highest number of individuals in the labor force ever, while at the same time we continue to face headwinds of the "Great Resignation" with people leaving the workforce and people who have remained on the sidelines since the start of the pandemic. Population growth, specifically in Spokane County (1.2% increase since April 1, 2020), which is much higher than the US population growth at 0.1%. This continues to put an excessive demand on housing. Retirement continues to have a huge impact on the labor force with 2M people retiring since the start of the pandemic.

- Spokane County unemployment rate 5.1%
- Strong population growth 546,040 population in July 2021(1.2% population growth)
- Labor Force participation rate is 62.4%.

There was a recent email and text messaging campaign sent out to 5,500 former Pandemic Unemployment Assistance claimants and had a 26% click rate on emails. There has also been an uptick in the last two weeks for people engaging with WorkSource. This is not a definitive correlation or causation, but it seems likely that there are still large groups of people that are seeking resources to reengage in the work force.

Wages have increased but inflation has as well and therefore individuals are still struggling financially. For employers to attract talent, not only do they need to have competitive and attractive wages, but other benefits, supplements, and an attractive company culture are also key factors.

## **NAWB DEBRIEF**

*Kelley Charvet, Board Chair*

SWC Board Members and staff traveled to the Washington DC National Association of Workforce Boards conference last week. Feedback was that the conference was engaging and informative and helped the board and staff learn best practices from around the nation. Themes included continuing to innovate and use technology to improve access and breadth of content available using online platforms, our system needs to ensure businesses are articulating new skills sets and employment needs as the economy shifts and that we are highlighting what it takes to be a competitive employer, that lenses of equity and inclusion are critical to ensure all populations participate in workforce programs and achieve outcomes, and blending human services with workforce development is key to helping people get and keep a job. The need for advocacy with our legislators was also stressed, to support our workforce system funding as well as ensure that policy changes help us adapt to the changing economic landscape in the U.S. Local Boards are encouraged to tell our stories to demonstrate the impacts we have upon our communities and sustain our efforts.

## **Executive Committee**

### Review of Action Items

At its March 24 meeting, the Executive Committee acted on the following items:

### **Economic Security for All – Round 2**

Economic Security for All (EcSA), is a poverty reduction pilot program that the SWC has been operating out of the Resource Center of Spokane County since spring of 2019. It utilizes WIOA funding to provide intensive case-management to adults who are receiving public assistance and below 200% of the federal poverty level, to help them reach their self-sufficiency goals. The program was started with four pilot areas, and this last year was expanded to be statewide. The SWC was offered Round 2 funding to extend our program until March of 2024. This program provides essential staffing for the RCSC and is the programmatic backbone at the center, onto which our Basic Food Employment & Training (BFET), CDBG, and rental assistance programs layer. Staff sought approval to bring in the \$369,630.00 in funding via the Employment Security Department and subcontract \$330,630.00 to the Spokane WorkSource Consortium.

***Action: Motion and second to accept \$369,630.00 in Economic Security for All funding and subcontract \$330,630 to the WorkSource Consortium. Approved unanimously.***

### **WIOA Funds Transfer**

WIOA law allows local areas to transfer funds from the Dislocated Worker program to the Adult program, or vice versa, once per year. The SWC does not execute a funds transfer each year and our last transfer request was in January 2016. However, this year we have multiple discretionary Dislocated Worker grants, combined with a higher than anticipated number of Adult customers. Adult customers are also needing more intensive and fewer basic services than we saw pre-pandemic, and direct client costs are high, particularly for occupational skills training which has been the most effective and popular offering to connect our higher-needs customers back to the workforce.

Staff submitted an application to the state to transfer \$250,000 from the Dislocated Worker program to the Adult program to allow us to meet the increased customer demand. The state approved the request and staff sought board approval to sign the contract modification to shift those funds.

The transfer will allow us to serve 500 additional Adult customers, 57 of whom can receive training services, and will not negatively impact our ability to serve Dislocated Worker customers. The transfer

accounts for 18% of our DW allocation for this year, well below the allowed limit. Lastly, these are PY21 funds, which we have until June of 2023 to fully expend. This means that if all \$250,000 additional Adult dollars are not expended by June of this year, they will roll over into next year's contracts.

***Action: Motion and second to approve the transfer of \$250,000.00 of PY21 WOA formula funds from Dislocated Worker program to Adult program. Approved unanimously.***

## **FINANCIAL IMPACT**

Addition of \$369,630.00 to the operating budget.

## **SERVICES AND OVERSIGHT COMMITTEE**

*Robert Duron, Chair*

*Dawn Karber—Chief Operations Officer*

The SWC is currently conducting its procurement process for WIOA-funded system services with four open Requests for Proposals (RFPs) representing approximately \$3.45M in funding over the next year. The Services and Oversight Committee (SOC) is charged with managing this process on behalf of the board and bringing recommendations to the Executive Committee on May 26<sup>th</sup> and then to our June 8<sup>th</sup> Full Council meeting for final approval.

## **YOUTH EMPLOYMENT AND CAREER READINESS NETWORK**

*Staci Taylor, Chair*

No new updates from the YCRN, but Staci Taylor will be leaving the SWC Board and the YCRN committee and this is her last meeting after 8 years of service. Mark thanked her for all she has done as a member and leader of this board, including serving as the Chair of our youth committee and on the Executive Committee of the board. She has partnered with us on grants and helped to design and implement new and innovative ways to recruit and train new workers in the healthcare industry. Staci will be missed from our board, and we wish her well as she moves on to her next opportunity.

Next Meeting is June 8<sup>th</sup>—the plan is to meet in person.

Meeting adjourned at 9:30am.