



## Workforce Development Board

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Duluth, Minnesota 55802

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## Meeting Minutes

Monday, September 20, 2021; 2:00-4:00 p.m.

Virtual Meeting via WebEx

### Present:

Anthony Bonds, Assistant Superintendent, ISD 709  
Andrea Chartier, Career Services, College of St. Scholastica  
Corey Cusick, Community Services, United Way  
Brian Durand, Project Executive, McGough  
Emily Edison, Executive Director, SOAR Career Solutions  
Chiamaka Enemuoh, President, Lifestone Health Care  
Claire Farmer-Lies, Marketing & Communications Specialist, Residential Services Inc.  
Patty Fleege, Adult Basic Education (ABE) Manager, Adult Learning Center  
Lindsey Growette Stingle, Human Resources Director, National Bank of Commerce  
Marla Halvorson, HR Director, St. Luke's  
Monica Haynes, Director, UMD Bureau of Business & Economic Research  
Duane Hill, District Engineer, Minnesota Department of Transportation  
Liz Huldin, VP of People and Organization, Cirrus  
Julie Johnson Atkinson, Vice President of Convention Sales, Visit Duluth  
Pam Kramer, Executive Director, Duluth LISC  
Thomas Kriske, Workforce Development Director, Lake Superior College  
Laura Krollman, Manager, Minnesota Power  
Jennifer Oakes, DEED Job Service Site Supervisor, Duluth CareerForce  
Paul Pedersen, Director of Outreach, MAC-V  
Scott Vezina, Communications & Training Manager, Goodwill  
Ian Vincent, Senior Business Developer, APEX  
Amanda Yates, Financial Services Manager, St. Louis County  
Elena Foshay, Director, Duluth Workforce Development  
Carson Gorecki, Northeast Regional Labor Market Analyst, DEED  
Shawn Herhusky, Workforce Strategy Consultant, DEED  
Carol Turner, Operations Manager, Duluth Workforce Development

**Meeting called to order at 2:03 p.m. The Workforce Development Board successfully established a quorum.**

Welcome Ali Haworth, Social Work Intern from UMD, will support board work.

Welcome new board members:

- Corey Cusick, Community Services, United Way
- Tom Kriske, Workforce Development Director, Lake Superior College
- Jennifer Oakes, DEED Job Service Site Supervisor, Duluth CareerForce

**Public Comments:** None

### **Action Items:**

- June 21, 2021 board minutes approved by board members in attendance.
- Talent Attraction committee discussion
  - Northforce is taking the lead on talent attraction in the community.
  - Instead of duplicating efforts, the Talent Attraction Committee will be disbanded and the board will work with Northforce directly.

### **Updates & Announcements:**

- Child care task force update-Shawn Herhusky
  - New chair
  - Pandemic goals were keeping childcare providers open, access to grants
  - Now work is focused on capacity building and issues like pay not being sustainable and mental toll on workers
  - Family providers closing, larger sites expanding
  - Kindercare, working to bring into community
  - Elena noted that the City of Duluth is using American Recovery Plan dollars to invest in childcare and workforce development.
- Legislative update
  - Letters have been sent to support workforce development
  - Infrastructure bill didn't include workforce development
- New procedure for letters written on behalf of the board
  - Before a letter is sent to recipient, a draft will be emailed to the board for review.
  - A deadline will be given for feedback on the draft.
  - If board members do not reply it is assumed that they do not have any objections to the letter.

### **Committee Updates:**

**Governance Committee:** The process and timeline for chair and vice chair have been formalized. At September meetings there will be a call for nominations and submitted to Elena Foshay by September 30. Elena presents those to the Governance Committee and they review the nominees for qualifications under WIOA in the bylaws. The committee will reach out to those nominated to see if they are interested in serving as an officer. This will be done by October 15 of each year. Interested and qualified nominees will be asked to submit a brief biography and short statement of interest to Elena by October 30. The executive committee reviews the information and brings matter to a vote by November board meeting. If there's one nominee then a voice vote occurs. If there's more than one nominee, a secret ballot will be used to conduct the election. Ballots are counted by the governance committee and the term of elected officers begins in January.

If you have someone to nominate let Elena know. They must be from a private business (not education, non-profit, etc.). No term limits.

**Emerging Workforce Committee:** We will be seeking a new chair. Thank you to Patty Fleege for your work on this committee. The goal of the committee is addressing the needs of young people, ages 16-24.

**Construction Working Group:** Continues to meet, work and track the status of construction work in the community. Have been discussing construction training programs. The Community Liaisons that MnDOT is helping to support have been able to go on job site tours. They are reaching out into the community to identify individuals to enter the construction careers, with a really strong focus on women and people of color.

**Healthcare Working Group:** Focusing on upcoming MN DEED P2P application that would help provide job training that would support our healthcare industry.

**Equity Committee:** The Employer Champions initiative was held, with great employer and community turnout. Focused on hiring and recruitment. The plan was to continue these trainings, but funding has not been approved in our regional plan. The committee discussed the I-WE Designation. The challenges employers may face regarding vaccine mandates was also discussed.

### **Updates & Announcements (continued)**

- Regional planning funds update
  - We generally receive an allocation of funding from DEED to support regional efforts, employers and equity training, and training for staff. DEED has decided to set aside a portion of funds statewide to support implementation of I-WE Certification. Not a total departure from what we're already doing, but need to work out some details and revise budget. Employer champion workshops on hold until then. We usually get around \$40,000.
  
- CareerForce operations update
  - Serving in person by appt only, door locked, cannot work with drop ins as much
  - Jennifer Oakes, Job Service supervisor provided a description of available services.
  - Computer lab is really critical for walk in clients. It is not open to the public unless they have an appointment or there's an open appointment when a walk-in shows up.
  - The library is seeing more job seekers, CareerForce posters and brochures shared with them
  - Job Service staff and staff on the ground are doing an amazing job serving clients and connecting them to resources. Every one is doing the best that they can with the constraints they are given.
  - How are employers being served and how?
    - Employers can post jobs on Minnesotaworks.net
    - Back-to-school job fair
    - Liz Jennings, state staff working with employers, looking at ways we serve employers

### **Update on status of the labor market-Carson Gorecki**

- In the labor force if you are looking for work, or if you have a job
- At a point with labor force participation we haven't been at since 1978 - had been going down pre-pandemic
- About 6700 people have left the labor force during the pandemic in NE MN, and we also have fewer people unemployed than before the pandemic
  - Largest decline among women and Black workers
  - Slight increase among teens and Hispanic workers

- Largest increase among those with a HS diploma or less, and even worse for those with some college - college grads were more protected
  - Some college includes those who have started but haven't finished college, AND those who have a 1-2 year degree - why larger decline here?
    - Tend to be in occupations that can't telework, were less insulated from impact of pandemic
    - Not able to parse out, suspect it's that the types of jobs this group enters were hardest hit by the pandemic
- Labor force participation in 16-19 year olds dipped but overall continues to grow
- 20-24 year olds hasn't totally bounced back to pre-pandemic levels
- Older worker participation has barely recovered since start of pandemic
- We still have 5300 fewer jobs than pre-pandemic
- Youngest workers were more likely to file UI, older workers less likely to file claims, more likely to leave labor force altogether
- Rise in long term unemployment - different approach to outreach and engagement of this group
- We have seen wages increase, but have not seen a corresponding increase in employment - will have to wait a bit longer to see if there's an impact of higher wages on employment. Fair to say that increased wages lead to increased retention
- **Discussion:** Where to focus our energy as a board/agency?
  - Re-engage younger workers in labor force
  - More career ladders - bring people in at entry level and support them to go to school and advance - tuition assistance, pathways, progression - Employers realizing they have to grow their own
  - Career change - more stability, higher wages
  - More connection to work from home jobs - local and not local
  - Stronger connection to entrepreneurship/business startups
  - Shorter/more flexible shifts - "uberizing"/ gigging of traditional job pools, allowing work from home wherever and whenever possible, educational stipends
  - Employing international students, immigrants
  - Reframe part time jobs as paid internships
  - Training programs focused on specific occupations
    - CDL training - huge need for drivers
  - Talk to young people about STEM careers

### **How ISD709 students are preparing for career pathways – Anthony Bonds**

- In person learning full time, masks required
- Increased enrollment in district
- Some students are struggling with transition, working to help students
- Devices, blended initiative, an effort to provide students with devices. Grades 3-12 will be assigned devices, K-2 have tablets in classrooms.
- School resource officer reviews and engagement event being held, food and transportation, how safety is provided in schools.
- School district is hiring, not all require college degrees, full time plus benefits.
- Started and adopted strategic operating plan, four key areas focusing on academic outcomes for students needing more support, mental health support/socioemotional needs. Check and Connect is a mentoring program for middle and high school students, thanks to a 1.6 million dollar grant from SLC. Equity is also addressed in plan, providing extra support for students and families.

- CTE - have several career cluster programs
  - Lays out a series of courses for students
  - Includes some kind of career exploration and internship
  - How can we better connect CTE students to entry level jobs/internships at local employers?
    - Join forces to apply for grants together to build out CTE/employment connection
  - Conducting a program evaluation this year - funding, participation, outcomes
  - Potential new federal funding for CTE, wanting dedicated leadership
  - Looking to improve articulation with college - earn college credit in high school
  - Challenged by school schedule - 6 periods is a tight schedule, not a lot of opportunity to explore anything outside of core subjects
    - Most CTE classes are electives, don't count for core credits - state requirements limit options
  - Could virtual CTE courses be made more available, so students can still do them but outside the 'regular' school day
  - Could CTE classes be opened to a broader audience? - ALC, ABE students?
  - More exposure in middle school and even elementary - intentional effort to get students thinking earlier about CTE pathways

**Meeting adjourned 3:57 p.m.**

**Next meeting is Monday, November 15, 2021 from 2:00-4:00 p.m., via WebEx**