



Workforce Development Board

402 West First Street
Duluth, Minnesota 55802

 218-730-5241

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Meeting Minutes

Monday, September 15, 2025

Duluth City Hall, Room 330, 411 West First Street, Duluth, MN 55802

Present:

Andrea Chirhart, Rehab Manager, DEED Vocational Rehabilitation Services
Nicole Christiansen, Human Resources Manager, Aspirus/St. Luke's
Corey Cusick, Community Services Director, United Way
Kayla Dietzmann, Director of Administration, SCS Interiors
Classie Dudley, Executive Director, Community Action Duluth
Brian Durand, Project Executive, McGough
Chiamaka Enemuoh, President, Lifestone Health Care
Claire Farmer-Lies, Marketing & Communications Specialist, Residential Services Inc.
Angie Frank, Manager, Duluth Adult Education
Lindsey Growette Stingle, Human Resources Director, National Bank of Commerce
Monica Haynes, Director, UMD Bureau of Business & Economic Research
Eric Nordgren, Director, Center for Professional Training and Lifelong Learning, College of St. Scholastica
Jennifer Oakes, DEED Job Service Site Supervisor, Duluth CareerForce
Vance Okstad, Director of Outreach, Cirrus Aircraft
Danette Seboe, Principal Career and Tech Education & Career Readiness, ISD 709
Ian Vincent, Director of Business Services, True North Goodwill
Faith Wickenhauser, Associate Human Resources Consultant, Terch & Associates
Amanda Yates, Assistant Director Economic Services and Supports, St. Louis County
Shayla Drake, Workforce Strategy Consultant, DEED
Elena Foshay, Director, Duluth Workforce Development
Carson Gorecki, Northeast Regional Labor Market Analyst, DEED
Carol Turner, Operations Manager, Duluth Workforce Development

Meeting called to order at 2:04 p.m.

Public Comment: None

Board Actions:

- Board members awaiting appointment in attendance: Susan Hundman, Christie Erickson, Caroly Haney-Sears, Brianna Gunderson
- Board member appointments update
 - Chair and vice chair election process and timeline
 - Kayla Dietzmann is stepping down from role of Chair.
 - Every year we elect a Chair and Vice Chair.

- Send nominations to Elena Foshay by the end of the first week of October. Individuals who have been nominated will be contacted by the Governance Committee.
 - To chair the board, you must be serving on the board as a business representative.
 - At November meeting, there will be a chance for candidates to share why they're interested.
 - Possible vote at November meeting, or January meeting
- Welcome Therese Tomanek, City Council
- Discussed board appointments, federal compliance and suggested changes to bylaws

Action Items:

- Quorum met
- June 2025 meeting minutes were approved by all in attendance
- Virtual vote taken after the meeting to approve three items:
 - Change to bylaws
 - Approval to send letters on behalf of the board to Duluth's congressional delegation regarding full funding of WIOA
 - Approval to send a letter to the Mayor, if needed, regarding new member appointments

All three items were approved by a majority of board members, with Jennifer Oakes and Andrea Chirhart abstaining.

Updates and success stories:

- An MFIP participant went to cosmetology school and passed. They now work at a local salon, doing really well, and on the way to financial independence.
- A YES Duluth participant dropped out of school after 8th grade and struggled with addiction. They are now a year sober and passed two of their GED tests with flying colors. They have a job and haven't missed a day of work yet. They are starting to think about what comes next!
- Summer outreach recap
 - DWD staff tabled at several community events. Good engagement, strong interest in job fairs
 - Job Fairs over the summer were well attended
- MAWB Summer Conference recap
 - The Governor's Workforce Development Board held their meeting in Duluth right before the conference. Members from that board and staff from DEED stayed in Duluth and attended the MAWB Summer Conference.
 - New marketing tool kit launched
 - Presentation on Artificial Intelligence impact on the current and future workforce
 - Overview of Office of New Americans
 - Federal and state legislative updates
 - Discussion of future of workforce system
 - Gave input at what state Workforce System Reform Task Force needs to be looking at
- Strategic plan progress update
- Duluth Adult Ed updates, Angie Frank

- Opportunities for employees and clients
- GED or diploma, teach English (beginning to advanced), build core skills (reading, writing, math, computer), college prep classes
- DAE@ISD709.org
- Budget and legislative updates
 - Reviewed core budget principles key priorities
 - Provided a status update on DWD's budget
 - Funding updates
 - MYP funding, back to pre-pandemic levels (53% decrease)
 - State dislocated worker, 55% decrease
 - Federal budget proposal in the House that would eliminate adult ed, SCSEP, Job Corps, WIOA Adult and Youth
 - In the senate, a bill for WIOA reauthorization that we advocated for may pass if brought to a vote.
 - SCSEP (old worker program) funding has been delayed. This program helps poverty level seniors get work experience and earn income. Participants have been furloughed. Duluth has been running this program since the 1960s.
- Funding overview
 - \$50,000 from city eliminated in 2026 budget supporting Community Benefits
 - Reserves may need to be used
 - Applying for more grants
 - 2026 funding by program
 - Staff costs, services and staffing levels
 - Big questions about future of service delivery
 - Governor's Workforce Development Board forming committee to discuss, Elena participating

Duluth housing study results overview – Tom Church

- Housing and workforce development
 - Demographic analysis
 - Duluth is growing!
 - Duluth is building!
 - Housing demand summary
 - Age-restricted senior housing in high need
 - Duluth needs 6,192 housing units by 2030
 - Rental survey analysis
 - Median rent: \$1443
 - 53% of Duluth renters are “cost burdened”
 - Housing priorities and opportunities
 - Build senior housing
 - Build balanced neighborhoods
 - Rehab existing building stock

- What's next?
 - At least 300 new housing units anticipated over the next six months
 - Action plan for housing
 - Future presentation
 - Maxfield presentation
 - Housing trust fund COW presentation: October 14
 - 2025 Duluth housing strategies conference: Nov. 14

- Committee updates
 - Manufacturing Working Group
 - Planning expo for Nov. 2026
 - Healthcare Working Group
 - Regional Healthcare Summit, September 30, College of Saint Scholastica
 - Construction Working Group
 - Big picture of Blatnik project and workforce needs
 - Emerging Workforce
 - High school technical education and how to support it
 - Governance,
 - Bylaws, membership

- Elena will follow up with new members regarding committees

Meeting adjourned at 3:58 p.m.

Next meeting: Monday, November 17, 2025, from 2:00 p.m.-4:00 p.m. at Duluth City Hall, Room 330, 411 West First Street, Duluth, MN 55802