



Serving as the Workforce Development Board for the Lower Shore of Maryland

Workforce Development Board Minutes

March 9, 2022

11:00 a.m. – 1:00 p.m.

Hybrid Meeting

Members Present: Ruth Baker, Nick Caruso, Jason Cunha, Bo Duke, Paula Erdie, Ambere' Eskridge, Tim Howlett, Roger Martinson, Freddy Mitchell, Tony Nichols, Whitney Palmer, Angela Paris, Danny Thompson, and Francisco Vega

Members Absent: Mike Corbin, Joey Gardner, Michele Garigliano, Walter Maizel, Mitzi Scott, Jennifer Shahan, Nelson Sheppard and Pattie Tingle

Staff Present: Leslie Porter-Cabell, Shelly Brown, Mekia Cherone, Bob Hendricks, David Noonan, La Toya Handy-Duncan, Niccole Oliver, Terri Paige, Dione Shaw, and Sherri Sigrist

Guests: Cortney Monar, Principal, Somerset County Technical High School, Heather Necessary, Somerset County Public Schools, Greg Padgham, Executive Director, Tri-County Council for the Lower Eastern Shore of Maryland, Michelle Stewart (representative for Jena Paquin) and Alicia Warren, Human Resources Director, Atlantic General Hospital.

Tony Nichols, WDB Chairman, called the meeting to order at 11:03 a.m. He thanked everyone for participating in today's hybrid meeting. The Deputy Workforce Director continued with a roll call. A quorum was present.

Meeting Format: The Deputy Workforce Director gave a brief overview of virtual meeting protocol: 1) the meeting will be recorded; 2) identify yourself when talking; 3) identify anyone who is present with you during the call; and 4) mute your line unless speaking.

Announcements: The Chairman introduced the newest Board member Ambere' Eskridge. Ambere' began by saying she is the Human Resources Staffing Coordinator at Delaware Elevator and handles recruitment efforts for the company from Florida to Pennsylvania. She has been in this role for a year and enjoys working with individuals who seek employment opportunities with Delaware Elevator. She is honored to be a part of the Board and cannot wait to bring her perspective and experience to the table.

The Chairman introduced Alicia Warren. Alicia is a prospective Board member and, should she decide to join the Board, she will be filling the Worcester County vacancy previously held by James Brannon. Alicia has been with Atlantic General Hospital over seven years and has recently been promoted to Human Resources Director. Prior to her promotion, she was the Human Resources Generalist at Atlantic General Hospital. She looks forward to working with the Board and helping with local workforce needs.

The first item on the agenda was the Consent Agenda. The Chairman asked for a motion to approve the Consent Agenda as submitted. Ruth Baker asked for clarification of the monthly status report. The Workforce Director provided a brief overview. **MOTION:** Paula Erdie moved to approve the Consent Agenda. Roger Martinson seconded motion. The motion was unanimously approved.

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LSWA Updates

The Workforce Director provided LSWA updates.

Staffing

- Mobile Workforce Development Specialist - La Toya Handy-Duncan has been hired as the new Mobile Workforce Development Specialist. She has a great background in Workforce Development and she will be able to assist others with on-site employment searches and career services utilizing the latest technology that the mobile unit provides.
- Adult Program - Rebecca Snoddy has been promoted to Adult Program Manager. This position was created to align with the other departmental structures. Rebecca has shown great leadership for the team and this was a natural progression.
- Youth Staffing Changes – Shannon Alexander has resigned from her position as Youth Data Systems Specialist. LSWA has eliminated that position and Niccole Oliver, Youth Program Coordinator, has taken on those duties.
- Business Services Specialists - Business Services has expanded to respond to the needs of the region. We are currently interviewing for two new Business Services Specialists. They will serve as a liaison between LSWA and the local business community. Each will focus on a subset of local industries (healthcare, manufacturing, construction, hospitality, etc.)

New Business Services Department

- In order to accommodate these new staff, LSWA will be leasing the former Hot Desk space on the 1st floor of the American Job Center (AJC) to serve as our new Business Services Department Office. For easy access to the business community, this space will have its own entrance. This space will house: Bob Hendricks, Business Services Manager, David Noonan, Grant Manager, the two new Business Services Specialists, and three additional positions dedicated to the Offshore Wind Industry: 1) the Navigator will be working directly with clients; 2) the Program Coordinator will work directly with Orsted and US Wind and their sub-contractor, and 3) the Data Specialist will be responsible for reporting the outcomes and performance for the Business Services Department.

Program Updates

Youth Program

- Sub-Grantee Contract Termination - LSWA has evaluated Grace Center's performance and they have consistently been non-compliant with contract deliverables. They were awarded \$352,000 and have spent 53,739.03 with 0 new enrollments. In PY19 they were contracted for 27 new enrollments and enrolled 6, and this was prior to COVID. In PY20 they were contracted for 30 and enrolled 13 and in PY21 they were contract for 27 and enrolled 0. The contract will end March 15, 2022, and current participants will be split between Telamon and LSWA.
- Policy: WIOA Out-of-School Youth Program Services - The Department of Labor requires LSWA to have a policy stating how services are provided to youth. The current policy states LSWA sub-grants this program. Since LSWA is terminating a sub-grantee and bringing Youth Program Services in-house, there should be a temporary policy that states how LSWA will provide services until the end of the program year. After review, the Chairman asked for a motion to approve the new temporary Youth Program Policy. **MOTION:** Whitney Palmer moved to approve the temporary Youth Program Policy. Francisco Vega seconded motion. The motion was

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unanimously approved. This policy will be in effect from March 15, 2022 through September 30, 2022 at which time LSWA will need a new policy for the new program year. Starting in October, which is the beginning of Program Year 2022, LSWA will be bringing the OSY Program in-house and managing services through MOUs with community service providers, including Telamon. Service providers will be providing the services outlined in WIOA Youth Program 14 Elements. LSWA will be hiring two new Youth Engagement Specialists to do case management.

- Sub-Grantee Contract Termination Timeline:
 - Formal notification of termination – February 15, 2022
 - Temporary local policy approval by Steering Committee – February 17th
 - Local Policy confirmation by WDB – March 9, 2022
 - Final termination date – March 15, 2022

Business Services – The Business Services Manager provided updates.

- Off Shore Wind - New York recently set a record with \$4.37 billion for offshore wind lease areas. This record setting auction demonstrates how the offshore wind industry is taking off. Bob will be attending a three day training seminar focusing on the supply chain hosted by the Business Network for Offshore Wind. The training will be held at the Greater Salisbury Building on March 16-18.
- Welding Training - The current class is filled to capacity with 10 students and no dropouts. Graduation will be in late April and ARCON is expecting a large employer turnout to interview the graduates. Chesapeake Shipbuilders, one of our industry partners, was recently awarded a contract to build 12 new cruise ships. They are expecting to double their welding workforce over the next two years and are looking to the training class to help them fill the spots.
- The Berlin Job and Resource Fair is scheduled for March 16, 2022, from 3-6 p.m. at the Berlin Branch. It is being hosted by the Worcester County Library in partnership with Lower Shore Workforce Alliance and DORS. Employer response has been overwhelming and all the tables are reserved. The event has been heavily promoted and job seeker turnout is expected to be good.

Special Projects

“Good Jobs Challenge” Grant – Off Shore Wind Initiative - LSWA was asked by the Maryland Department of Labor to submit a proposal for the Good Jobs Challenge” Grant – Off Shore Wind Initiative. Maryland Department of Labor submitted a proposal just short of \$25 million dollars as part of a \$500 million dollar U.S. Department of Commerce grant. LSWA’s proposal was for \$750,000 and includes three additional positions dedicated to the Offshore Wind Industry: 1) the Navigator will be working directly with clients; 2) the Program Coordinator will work directly with Orsted and US Wind and their sub-contractor, and 3) the Data Specialist will be responsible for the outcomes and performance for the Business Services Department. LSWA is anticipating grant approval in May and operational in July.

Lower Shore 4E Partnership – The LSWA Grant Manager gave a brief overview of the Lower Shore 4E Partnership. The Lower Shore 4E Partnership envisions a community where businesses and job seekers come together to strengthen workforce readiness in Somerset, Wicomico, and Worcester Counties through implementing strategies that address four essential E’s:

- **ENGAGE** – Engaging Businesses and Job Seekers through marketing, virtual and in-person job fairs, easy online applications and reaching out to businesses to listen to their needs and adapt programming to address those needs.

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- **EMPLOY** – Increasing employment opportunities by offering re-employment incentives to assist businesses in filling positions, online job readiness training for job seekers and businesses, career counseling, job fairs and recruitment events.
- **EDUCATE** – Training tuition funding and completion incentive awards toward earning a professional credential and obtaining employment Coaching for those enrolled in online trainings to support achieving learning success. Full access to SkillUp™ Lower Shore to explore career paths and enroll in any of over 5,000 courses.
- **EQUIP** – Assisting job seekers, employees and business in addressing barriers to employment, including transportation assistance, referrals to appropriate social service providers, assisting a business in setting up an apprenticeship program or on the job training program to upskill current employees.

ARPA Funding - The Workforce Director provided a brief update on the ARPA funding. The deadline to submit proposals was December 31st. Twelve proposals were received and evaluated. The evaluation committee selected four proposals for funding: 1) Vehicles for Change – Full Circle Mechanic Training and Placement Program, 2) Wor-Wic's CEWD: Business & Industry Training (Skilled Trades), 3) TidalHealth Nursing Assistant Training Program, and 4) MAC Inc. – Caregiver Advantage Workforce Development Program (CAWDP). Contract negotiations are ongoing and the distribution date for funds is to be determined.

Workforce Development Board

WIOA Training Links - The Deputy Workforce Director said the Maryland Department of Labor is providing some short trainings as an introduction to the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) for Local Workforce Boards. The trainings are concise and informative regarding WIOA Title I, II and III, the purpose of the Workforce Development Boards and the Benchmarks of Success. The list of trainings (six thus far) will be emailed to the Board with direct links to the training. Module one is not missing. It was an introductory video for workforce staff to learn how to use the platform that is hosting the videos. These will be very useful in helping Board members, new and old, understand the different aspects of WIOA and how the Board is an integral part of its success. **Action Item:** The Deputy Workforce Director will email the training links to the Board.

Youth Committee Chair - The Workforce Director said Ivy Wells has resigned her position on the Board, so she must also resign her position as Chair of the Youth Committee. The Youth Committee Chair must be a member of the Workforce Development Board. LSWA is in desperate need of a Board member to step up and assume this responsibility. The Operations Coordinator emailed a Call for Nominations last week. The Chairman asked if there are any nominations from the floor? At this time, there were none. The Deputy Director stressed the importance of this position and provided updates on the Youth Committee Strategic Plans. **Action Item:** Roger Martinson said he was not volunteering at this time, but he would like to receive information on the Youth Program and the Youth Committee.

Board Member Spotlight – The Workforce Director said LSWA would like to bring back the “Spotlight” to the Board meeting. It would give an opportunity for Business members and/or Public sector members to tell everyone what is going on at their business or in their industry and what their workforce needs are. The Workforce Director asked for thoughts and/or suggestions. After discussion, the Board choose to allow one Business member and one Public sector member a few minutes at the beginning of each meeting to talk about their industry. The Spotlight segment will begin at the June Board meeting.

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Department of Labor Meet & Greet – The Workforce Director told the Board that the State has scheduled a Meet & Greet with her on March 22, 2022. This invitation is being extended to the LSWA staff and all Workforce Development Board members. This will be a great opportunity for any/all Board members to get a better understanding of the relationship between the Local Workforce Board and the Maryland Department of Labor.

WDB Social – The Workforce Director said the Steering Committee has been discussing ways to engage Board members with LSWA and the Community. LSWA would like to hold a Board Social on March 23, 2022 from 4-6 p.m. This would be an informal, less structured, event that would allow Board members to get a better understanding of who the other Board members are and what they do, and how the Board can move forward to better serve the workforce needs of the Tri-County Region. Bo Duke, Project Manager of the Harrison Group, has graciously offered a penthouse suite at the Doubletree Hotel in Ocean City, to hold the Social. On behalf of the Board, the Workforce Director thanked Bo Duke for his generosity. An official invite will be emailed to all Board members in the near future.

Meeting Platform – The Workforce Director reminded the Board that all upcoming Board meetings will be held in person with a virtual option. For those members attending virtually, the Operations Coordinator will be sending an email requesting your feedback on today's meeting and how we can improve this process moving forward.

Membership Review – The Workforce Director said, as mentioned earlier, Ambere' Eskridge was appointed by the Wicomico County Council February 1st. Therefore, all five Wicomico County business seats are currently filled. However, Michele Garigliano has informed LSWA that she will be resigning her seat on the Board at the end of her term on May 1st. She has retired and no longer represents the business community. Ivy Wells' position on the Board is not one of the required 51% business owners, so the Board is not required to fill that position immediately. However, the Board should consider having representation of economic development from all three counties. There is still one business vacancy in both Somerset and Worcester Counties. The Chairman and the Workforce Director are more than happy to pursue suggestions/recommendations for any Board replacement, whether it is an individual or a business that should be targeted. The Workforce Director thanked Alicia Warren for attending today's meeting. Alicia is the new Human Resources Director at Atlantic General Hospital and has expressed interest in joining this Board representing Healthcare. Should Alicia decide to join the Board, she would fill the Worcester County business vacancy.

Adjourn: A motion was made to adjourn the meeting at 12:30 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Dione Shaw
Operations Coordinator

Approved September 7, 2022

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