Workforce Development Board Minutes

September 11, 2024
11:00 a.m. – 1:00 p.m.
Hybrid Meeting

Members Present: Ruth Baker, Sara Chapman, Dr. Tyrone Chase, Paula Erdie, Ambere' Eskridge, David Galeone, Jennifer Gauthier, Lori Lee, Mandi McWhirt, Cortney Monar, Tony Nichols, Jena Paquin, Daniel Thompson, Francisco Vega, Anthony Ward Jr., Alicia Warren

Members Absent: Robert Duke, Vicente Hernandez, Walter Maizel, Roger Martinson, Claudia Nelson, Whitney Palmer

Staff Present: Leslie Porter-Cabell, Bob Hendricks, Lashika Bonner, Julie Allen, Johanna Allen, Caroline Webber

Guests: Gregory Padgham, Tri-County Council; Gary Cohen, BCR Cyber; Chris Shank, BCR Cyber; Jeremy Michalski, Somerset County Public Schools, Jesse Ferrio, DORS

Welcome and Rollcall - Tony Nichols, WDB Chairman, called the meeting to order at 11:09 a.m. He thanked everyone for participating in today's hybrid meeting. He welcomed a new member to the Board:

- Mandi McWhirt, Sysco – representing Somerset County

He continued with a roll call. A quorum was present.

The WDB Chairman asked for a motion to approve the consent agenda – **Motion:** Daniel Thompson moved to approve the consent agenda. David Galeone seconded the motion. The motion was unanimously approved.

Guest Presentation

Chris Shank gave a short presentation on BCR Cyber and the importance of cyber security.

Workforce Development Board

- Membership – The LSWA Administrative Specialist gave an update on the current board membership.
  - Somerset County still has two vacancies that need to be filled.
  - Two Worcester County members have expiring terms this year. They do not want to be reappointed so we have asked Worcester County to help fill these spots. Some suggestions were given as potential companies to ask to join the Board.
- Steering Committee Vacancies – There is a vacancy on the Steering Committee representing Business. A call for nominations will be going out to the Board before the next Board meeting.

Finance Update

- WIOA - The WIOA budget and expenditures are on target, and performance is on point. LSWA had a financial audit earlier this summer and there were no findings. The Department of Labor is happy with our budget and spending.
  We have been running into obstacles with putting participant through training at Wor-Wic Community College (WWCC). Due to the popularity of their CDL classes, and the difficulty finding CDL instructors, many of the WIOA participants are ending up on a waiting list and being put into classes

many months out. Ruth Baker gave some insight into the issues that WWCC is facing and brought up that there are other training programs that participants are not taking advantage of.
There have been very few instances on the Lower Shore of companies closing so the Dislocated Worker funding has been underutilized this year. The Department of Labor approved transfer of these funds to the Adult program so we can send more participants through training.

- ARPA 1 – There are five awardees for ARPA 1. All funds have been obligated, and funding ends December 31, 2026.
- ARPA 2 – ARPA 2 funds will also facilitate the continuation of the OJT programs such as Wor-Wic Skilled Trades and MAC, training classes such as the Forklift Class, and apprenticeship programs at Seaside Plumbing and Maryland Broadband.
- Blueprint for Education – Year two of the pilot program has started and is going well. LSWA is looking to collaborate more closely with the Career Coaches and WWCC to expose more students to career opportunities.
- Maryland Works for Wind – The program is still moving forward despite some setbacks.
- The Maryland State Plan – Still in the review process with Governor Moore.

Program Updates

- Business Services –
  - Staffing – Two full-time Career Specialists have been hired, Patricia Bell and Maxx Hart.
    A new Data Specialist, Paul Haddad, has been hired to work on the Maryland Works for Wind grant.
  - Lower Shore Business Blitz – LSWA and our AJC regional system partners will be participating in a business blitz in Somerset County on September 18, 2024. They will be providing resources and information about the organizations and what they do.
  - Wheels for Work – LSWA is collaborating with Backstreet Bikes to collect and repair bikes to distribute to members of the community that need assistance getting to work. Various community partners and AJC agencies will be working with us to determine who in their customer base is eligible to receive a free bike. The Town of Fruitland recently donated 48 bikes to the cause. LSWA received a grant from the Community Foundation to support this initiative.
  - Arcon Training Center – A Maryland Energy Association grant to teach a Global Wind Organization Certification class was awarded to the Arcon Training Center. Unfortunately this is on hold at the moment as they are searching for an instructor.
  - Outreach Activity – LSWA has participated in six job fairs, nine chamber events, and four business tours this year. We've also participated in six student selections and mock interview and three apprenticeship trainings.
  - IEC Roundtable – on September 12, 2024 there will be a roundtable at Wor-Wic. The Maryland Department of Labor Apprenticeship Navigator and LSWA will talk to electrical contractors in the community about what services are available to them. This will also give the contractors and opportunity to discuss what workforce needs they are facing.
  - Mobile Unit – We have had 158 visitors this quarter, helped with 41 employment applications and referred 32 visitors to the AJC for further help. The mobile unit has been maintaining ongoing visits to ECI to assist the reentry population.
  - Blueprint for Maryland's Future – A Career Carnival will be held in October at Junior Achievement.

There will be games and food and an opportunity for kids and parents to talk with employers in different industries.
In an effort to foster better communication between LSWA and the Tri-County LEAs, the monthly Career Coach Meetings and Career Exploration days are going through a restructuring process.

- Social Media Updates – The Marketing Strategy Specialist gave a brief update on how LSWA is developing their marketing strategies to provide support for all departments. An update was given on how the LSWA Facebook page is metrics are doing, and a spotlight on the Job Journal was given.

Adjourn: A motion was made to adjourn the meeting at 12:48 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Johanna Allen
Administrative Specialist

Approved: December 11, 2024