



REGION 3 LEADERSHIP & PLANNING BOARD

AGENDA

Friday, April 29, 2022
9:00 am–11:00 am
via Zoom

Members

- Rick Greene, R3LPB Chair, CMJTS JPB Chair, Chisago County Commissioner
- Steve Heinen, R3LPB Vice Chair, Career Solutions JPB Chair, Benton County Commissioner
- Lisa Fobbe, CMJTS JPB Vice Chair, Sherburne County Commissioner
- Jill Magelssen, Career Solution WDB Vice Chair, Franchise Owner of Express Employment Professionals
- Jeff Mergen, Career Solutions JPB Vice Chair, Stearns County Commissioner
- Loren Nelson, CMJTS WDB Chair, President of Aurelius Manufacturing Co., Inc.
- Brian O'Donnell, CMJTS WDB Vice Chair, Owner of Priority One Metrowest Realty
- Bernie Perryman, Career Solutions Vice Chair, CEO of Batteries Plus Bulbs
- Tammy Biery, Executive Director, Career Solutions
- Barbara Chaffee, CEO, CMJTS

Staff

- Kari Court, Executive Assistant, Career Solutions
- Luke Greiner, Regional Analyst, DEED LMI
- Victoria Hosch, Executive Assistant, CMJTS
- Audrey O'Driscoll, Program Director, Career Solutions
- Leslie Wojtowicz, Workforce Development Division Manager, CMJTS

Guests

- Della Ludwig, Region 3 Workforce Strategy Consultant, DEED
- Ben Baglio, Director of the Governors Workforce Development Board

- 1. Welcome and Introductions**
- 2. Additions/Deletions to the Agenda (motion to approve)**
- 3. Minutes of Previous Meeting (attachment) (motion to approve)**
- 4. Review Local, Regional and State Plans – Baglio**
- 5. DEED Visiting Each Area in 1st or 2nd Quarter**
 - Discuss Job Service and VRS leaving sites by June 30, 2022 and taking computers, printers, phones, and furniture – anything with their asset tag on it
 - Library Career Corners and local CBO's – will they be moving the items to these locations
- 6. \$20 Million Flexible Funding (Handout)**
- 7. Grant Updates – Wojtowicz & Biery**
- 8. Region 3 Workforce Strategy Consultant Update – Ludwig**

9. Announcements

- Infrastructure Funding Agreements (IFAs): Adding WIOA Partners
- Mass Layoff Project Updates

10. Next Meeting Date

- Barb Chaffee hosting

11. Agenda Items for Next Meeting

12. Adjournment

Region 3 Leadership & Planning Board Minutes

November 19, 2021

Virtually via Zoom

Present: Rick Greene (chair), Steve Heinen (vice chair), Lisa Fobbe, Kelly Hansen, Jeff Mergen, Loren Nelson, Brian O'Donnell, Bernie Perryman, Tammy Biery, Barbara Chaffee

Absent: Brian O'Donnell

Staff: Victoria Hosch, Kari Court, Leslie Wojtowicz

The meeting was called to order at 9:00 am.

Welcome and Introductions

Additions/Deletions to the Agenda

Addition under DEED Updates: Job Skills Partnership Board (JSPB) Request for Membership

Motion: Heinen made the motion to approve the amended agenda. **Seconded by:** Nelson. Motion carried.

Approval of Previous Meeting Minutes

Motion: Biery made the motion to approve the minutes from April 23, 2021. **Seconded by:** Perryman. Motion carried.

DEED Updates – Barbara Chaffee, Tammy Biery

- Due to the State Plan not being written, DEED is pushing out approvals of these documents until July 2022:
 - Local and Regional Plans
 - ♦ These plans were submitted at least two years ago; they will need to be updated again.
 - Subsequent Designation
 - ♦ Recently received approval 2-1/2 years after submission to DEED.
 - Infrastructure Funding Agreements (IFAs)
 - ♦ These have been updated numerous times.
 - One-Stop Operator (OSO) Agreement
 - Partner MOU
 - Once the State Plan is completed, DEED may want the above documents changed, which is a lot of work.
 - With reauthorization of WIOA, Biery and Chaffee have been meeting with Senator Klobuchar's staff and Congressman Emmer's team to convey there are changes we like and requested removing the component of the extra work required with the OSO.
- DEED's new department changes:
 - The GWDB now is in charge of the Local and Regional Plans.
 - ♦ Minnesota is the only state in the nation that has a JSPB (Job Skills Partnership Board) and GWDB (Governor's Workforce Development Board).
 - ♦ Nelson has been appointed as the chair of the committee reviewing the above documents.
 - DEED's new Operations Department now is in charge of all other documents and approvals.

- ♦ Chaffee noted that under federal law, federal documents must be approved by DEED within 90 days. If not, they are automatically approved.
- JSPB Request for Members
 - ♦ Nelson and Lance Lewis of Lewis Industries, in Paynesville, have been asked to be members of the JSPB to fill the GWDB seats that must be employers.
 - ♦ The JSPB is where the WSAs go if they need additional state dislocated worker funds and also where the JSPB grant requests are approved. The people that currently sit on this board are from higher education. Biery feels adding businesses to the decision-making process is key as the JSPB's current view is from academia when making decisions on the JSPB grants, not knowing whether what they are suggesting will or will not work in the for-profit world. Adding businesses will enhance the conversations and decisions made by the JSPB.

The Future of CareerForce Comprehensive and Other Sites – Tammy Biery

- Commissioner Grove's personal understanding of Customer Center Design and how it may affect customers if DEED is no longer our partner in centers is different from LWDAs.
- DEED has reallocated many of its people to calling clients who are on UI:
 - CMJTS and Career Solutions (CS) are not seeing many referrals coming to them from this process.
 - Regarding IFAs, CS has been open only part-time during the past six months (due to DEED being the leaseholder) and local services have only been run by CS—they have not had any other support from any other DEED agencies working in the center. In the past, for VRS and Services for the Blind, if they had any allocations in the IFA, they paid Job Service for those duties. Since Job Service is not working in CareerForce St. Cloud at all, Biery has approached VRS and Services for the Blind with an agreement that CS would like to serve their time in the Career Lab. Both are open to this. She is waiting for data from DEED on computer usage to determine allocations and will then develop a contract to hopefully expand CS's hours with those additional funds. This will help increase DEED's Job Service numbers served by CS helping jobseekers and the community. Currently, Biery has directed her staff, since Job Services is not participating in managing the lab at any level, to give customers Job Services' phone number and stopped helping people set up MinnesotaWorks accounts (which takes at least 20 minutes/person) to avoid over-inflating Job Services' numbers. If Job Service is not contributing to IFAs, CS is not going to contribute to their numbers. CS is moving forward to take care of themselves and their customers. The centers are here to help those that are not on UI.
 - Chaffee added that CMJTS was able to open all but one site because CMJTS is the leaseholder. CMJTS has only one Job Service person (part-time) in its comprehensive center, however, he is not allowed to work in the Career Lab. CMJTS had to hire a part-time staff person for the Career Lab in Monticello.

One-Stop Operator (OSO) Update – Barbara Chaffee, Tammy Biery

- Reviewed the October 11, 2021, OSO Progress Report. Chaffee noted:
 - The OSO has added grant opportunities to its ongoing agenda and determined a side group needed to be brought in for planning from each agency (CMJTS, CS, ABE, and VRS).
 - Surveys: Chaffee would like to bring customer comment cards/surveys to the R3LPB and the LWDDBs so they are understanding more of what the clients are saying.
 - Improving the look and feel of our centers: Chaffee would like pictures taken of the sites to show how the centers have been upscaled/upgraded to bring back to the boards.
 - The best referrals are warm hand-offs, which we are not getting right now.
 - ♦ Biery recently presented to the leaders of CareerForce, VRS, SSB, and Job Service. The message she tried to convey to them from her time in the for-profit world is: If you get a lead, you need to act on that lead ASAP. The longer you sit on it, the colder it gets. DEED's current referral process since changing to UI calls being made randomly by people across the state, sending the information to Job Service, who then sends it to the provider (e.g., CS) is

cumbersome and is slowing down the process. If the person is not called back within 24 hours, they often don't recall that they were going to be contacted, etc. Or, for dislocated workers, they may be interested in talking to us because they want to go back to school. If not contacted right away, self-doubt starts to creep in. The faster we can act on it and help them see the vision, the better everyone will be. If DEED had the UI calls made by region, they could immediately transfer the calls. Biery is pushing to have the process relooked at, revamped, and streamlined.

- ♦ Chaffee noted in Monticello, the CMJTS' Universal Team and Adam (DEED) developed a flow chart so anyone providing coverage will know how the customer flow should work to have warm hand-offs. It takes positive relationships.
- ♦ People on UI are receiving letters that they will receive a call on a certain date to get a referral, but they don't. They then come into the centers with the letters and think we are the problem because they think we are DEED. We are spending a lot of time putting out fires.
- ♦ More than half the calls St. Cloud has received since re-opening are UI-related.
 - When talking about the IFA, why doesn't UI have a stronger commitment in the whole IFA structure as the majority of the work being done in the Career Labs and on the phone is helping people with UI.
- ♦ Wojtowicz reported Monticello created an electronic survey as part of the login before people come into hiring events. It provides information on the people who want follow-up right away. It also provides traction on how to market the hiring event. Adam is provided the list to contact the people who indicate they want help. CMJTS staff follow up with those individuals who want more information about our programs.

Motion: Fobbe made the motion to approve the One-Stop Operator Progress Report. Seconded by: Nelson. Motion carried.

Grant Updates – Leslie Wojtowicz

- DEED grants: Had only six weeks to write many grants—have only heard back from a few:
 - CMJTS was awarded the Youth Support Services grant.
 - Received WIOA Regional set aside funds for Region 3 and recently resubmitted a new plan.
 - O'Driscoll took the lead and wrote a grant on behalf of several LWDA's for a federal proposal; however, it did not get funded.

I-WE Initiative Update – Leslie Wojtowicz

- Have 5 businesses in the pilot project.
- Ludwig and Wojtowicz are heading up the committee; Angie Dahle has been a significant contributor.
- A lot of information has temporarily been placed on CMJTS' website: <https://www.cmjts.org/business-services/central-minnesotas-inclusive-workforce-employer-designation-program-i-we/>. The goal is to seek funding to develop a regional website to host the Regional Plan and all the work being done together as a region, such as Rural Career Counseling. Unfortunately, the Bush Foundation grant was not funded. Continuing to look for funding, which has been a challenge.
- When other regions wanted to incorporate I-WE, there wasn't a clear matrix of what employers had to do to receive the designation—it was very subjective. Chet, in the NW region, is working with the U of M Extension to create an assessment that employers will be encouraged to take so they are all starting from the same baseline assessment. They are also creating a rubric to use when evaluating the applications. Additionally, in January 2022, the U of M will provide training so all the committee members that are working with the employers can have better knowledge on facilitation, collaborative work with employers, and how to score the rubric.
- Biery noted we have regional planning funds (WIOA set aside funds) to use for some regional efforts. The state was passionate about I-WE and wanted to see it implemented statewide and set aside

\$70,000 for implementation. However, it is causing some controversy as I-WE was developed by Rural MN CEP. Three of Minnesota's six regions that are implementing I-WE will receive \$12,000 of the funds for implementation. The remaining is there in the hope the other three regions will join in. If they don't, the remainder of the funds will go back to DEED. The feeling is that the remaining funds should be split between the three regions as a lot of time and money goes into the implementation of the program.

Discussion

- If we were to reimagine Region 3 workforce development services to jobseekers and local businesses, what would that look like in our 13 counties?
 - Wojtowicz: A mobile career lab or employment and training type lab that can be taken across all the counties. Could have hands-on training opportunities in the mobile lab, as well as computers. Go to where the people are because we know transportation is a barrier.
 - ♦ Biery: Legal Aid recently came out with "Justice Bus," a 16-passenger vehicle that they wrapped on the outside and take into the community.
 - Fobbe: Continue perfecting utilizing partnership of space such as libraries. If we can't rely on bricks and mortar, how do we continue looking at our services and capitalizing on the remote access that people have, recognizing it's not as great as face-to-face. Potentially could meet and serve many more people. Take the best practices we have learned during the pandemic to take our services to the people.
 - Greene: Where are people going who quit their jobs? So many businesses need employees.
 - ♦ Chaffee added the big issues are childcare and caring for seniors.
 - ♦ Fobbe – Many people have quit their jobs to start a business out of their homes.
 - ♦ Biery – Many are leaving to find jobs that offer more flexibility, e.g., the ability to work remotely.
 - Nelson: Some business plans do not allow for high wages. If we could partner with those employers so they could offer a job that doesn't initially pay a lot, to provide training for the employee to earn a certification, job-readiness skills, etc., giving them an opportunity to move up to a better paying job. If a business can't use raw money to pay employees those high wages, perhaps they could become a training center to keep people moving upward.
 - Hansen: What can we do regionally to address applicants who do not pass background and drug tests/are under the influence for the safety of us and our workforce (e.g., when operating heavy equipment)?
 - Perryman: More branding of the services and tools that Career Solutions and CMJTS provide—many employers don't know who we are or what we do.
- What would be the top five areas the R3LPB should address to support Region 3 businesses?
 - Perryman: To retain employees in her smaller business, she has built a strong culture. Given the current tactics, other businesses are trying to attract employees—offering higher wages, sign-on bonuses—need branding so smaller employers know of the services, tools, training, etc., that we can provide them to retain and hire employees.
 - ♦ Biery: For nonprofits who cannot afford the higher wages and bonuses, especially those who require bachelor's degrees for many of their positions, these new tactics are enticing—they can earn a higher wage and not take home as much stress, burden, concern, etc. We need to retain our talented staff. Need to ensure businesses know what everyone else is paying so they can understand part of their hiring challenges—they need to be competitive. Businesses also need to understand their benefits—teaching people to look at the full package, not just the dollar amount.
 - Fobbe: She is seeing with the 20+ generation that they won't just work anywhere—it's not only the money, the benefits. They are looking for a culture—a place to belong, a place that feels almost like family. Childcare, broadband, how do we support people starting businesses out of their home or working from a different location.

- ♦ Perryman added it's important that they also feel there is good leadership and a way to promote themselves up the ladder—to make them all engaged and part of the solution—it translates to the customer. If they feel good behind the walls, they will feel great working with the customer.
- Biery: Jobs that offer flexibility.
- Nelson: Partner with employers to provide funds to train/retain employees without costing the employer.
- Nelson: Rather than requesting marketing funds from DEED, he suggested requesting funds for education—bundling it as part of committee outreach.
- Biery: How can we support the entire family, not just the youth or the adult that qualify. With WIOA reauthorization, we are asking for those requests that will help us better serve. We know what work needs to be done. We just have to stop bumping our heads against the walls they have built around funding to do the right thing.
 - ♦ Barb added the caps need to be removed. For example, for incumbent workers, there is a cap of 20%. Between CMJTS' and Career Solutions' areas, they serve approximately 1,000 employers each year. How do you select 5, 10, or 15 that really need your help?

Announcements – Barbara Chaffee, Tammy Biery

- Mass Layoff Projects
 - Emerson Tescom in Elk River (layoff date – April 2022)
 - Electrolux (ends June 30, 2022)
 - X-Cel Optical (ends June 30, 2022)
 - Coleman (started September 2021)
- If members hear of layoffs, please contact Chaffee or Biery.

Next Meeting Date

- TBD
- Tammy Biery hosting

Agenda Items for Next R3LPB Meeting

- Contact Tammy or Barb with items.

Adjournment

Motion: Greene made the motion to adjourn at 10:27 am. Seconded by: Biery. Motion carried.