

Area 14 Workforce Development Board

Executive Meeting Minutes

2/12/2020

Board Members Present: Stephen Carson; Jeff Circle; Tracy Clark; Stephanie Clelland; Laura Davidson; Ginger Gagne (On Behalf of Julie Francis); Josh Hillard (On Behalf of Misty Milstead); Cindy Jackson; Jennifer Kleski; Ted Linscott; Sara Marrs-Maxfield; Robert Ogden; Brent Patterson; Melissa Sheppard; Patti Smith; Jessica Stroh; David Brennan

Guests Present: Laurie Gribble-McKnight; Teresa Garey – ODJFS W/F Area 14; Chris Shank; Theresa Lavender; Jean Demosky; Jim O'Brien; Mendra Hupp; Tracy Helber; David Hansen; Jason Terry; Tami Collins; Joe McGowan; Angela McCord; Nathan Strange; Ryan Evans; Bryn Stepp; Amy Gillilan; Juli Stephens; Michelle Greenfield

The regularly scheduled meeting of the Area 14 Workforce Development Board met at the Ohio University Inn, Athens, OH. A quorum was present with 16 of 19 Board members present.

Chairman Robert Ogden called the meeting to order at 10:10 AM.

Meeting Minutes (November 20, 2019) was presented for approval.

1st – Jeff Circle; 2nd – Stephen Carson

Motion carried without opposition.

Agenda (February 12, 2020) was presented for approval.

1st – Cindy Jackson; 2nd – Stephanie Cleland

Motion carried without opposition.

Introductions:

- New Board Member, Jennifer Chapman-Kleski with Kleski Environmental Services
- New Board Member, Melissa Sheppard with Altercare
- Josh Hillard, Opportunities for Ohioans with Disabilities representing Misty Milstead (Voting Rights)
- Ginger Gagne, Aspire Program representing Julie Francis (Voting Rights)
- Juli Stephens with Congressman Johnson's Office
- Bryn Stepp with Lt. Governor Husted's Office

Guest Speakers:

- Michelle Greenfield, Third Sun Solar of Athens
 - Michelle has been appointed to the Governor's Executive Workforce Board. She will represent Southeastern Ohio to influence and implement policy change, develop best practices, and partner in the OhioMeansJobs.com website updates.

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- Celebrating Third Sun Solar's 20 Years in operation, installing residential and commercial solar panels across State of Ohio and beyond. Employing 25 employees with plans to hire an additional 4 employees in their newly opened remote location in Cleveland.
- Thank you from Laurie for representing SEO and her willingness to hear concerns and give SEO a voice.

County OhioMeansJobs Center Updates:

- **Athens County** – Joe McGowan
 - Athens OMJ partners with the OU Stevens Literacy Center / ASPIRE GED: Program has proven record of success. Year one placed them second to last in the bottom tier. Current standing is within the top two-thirds of the state.
 - MOU with SEPTA/STAR – A increase in successful completion of the math section
 - Area 14 Job Fair on April 22, 2020. Goals include 85 Businesses and 300-400 Job Seekers
 - U.S. Census Representative utilizes the OMJ to enroll / register census takers at \$16/hour
 - New OMJ has fingerprinting on site to boost hiring
 - Jason Terry – A Job Shadowing component was added to CCMEP and job search class which has resulted in increased hiring numbers
 - Shawn Stover and the Athens ReEntry Coalition is recognized by State of Ohio for their collaborative efforts within the community
- **Meigs County** – Theresa Lavender
 - ASPIRE to returned to the Meigs OMJ in January 2020 with a new instructor, averaging 8 students per day and offering the Adult Diploma for students aged 22 and over
 - Adult / Dislocated is stable but focusing on youth to bring students to OMJ
 - Job Shadow within all 3 school districts; the OMJ is recruiting based on the student's industry/job interests
 - Southern High School's Career Palooza event on 2/28/20
 - Meigs High School Career Day in March
 - Opioid Grant Update – Outreach continues in all three school districts. School Monitors hired to work with students with high absenteeism
- **Perry County** – Angela McCord
 - Asphalt Services of Ohio's Open Interviews had 76 job seekers attend
 - U.S. Census hosted several open interview sessions at the OMJ
 - Perry OMJ is providing there Mobile OhioMeansJobs RV to assist the Perry County Census Campaign in nine locations including the libraries and post offices of outlying communities
 - Summer Youth applications in the schools by February 28; with eight job coaches
 - CCU Coal Follow-Up – WIOA applicants completed 2 CDL/Heavy Equipment certifications and 3 are currently enrolled (1 RN, 2 Power Lineman). David Hansen, PCJFS/Director of Educational Opportunities shared that there were 55 Perry County residents. Their goal is to recruit 25 WIOA applicants and 11 spouses to utilize dislocated spouse benefits

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Director McKnight:

Training Services Policy – TABE Testing – Director Laurie McKnight

Current Policy Reference: Area 14 WDB; Training Services for Adult, Dislocated, & Youth; Section III – Local Requirements for WIOA Adult & Dislocated or Youth Worker Funded ITAs (Effective 5/15/2019)

Current Policy states:

...be assessed on their academic skills and knowledge prior to authorization based on whether the program is long term (Pell eligible programs) or short term (non-Pell eligible):

- 1. For Pell Eligible Training Programs – Individuals must receive a score of 9.0 or better on reading / math grade levels on the CASAS test (Comprehensive Adult Student Assessment System) or received a score of 9.0 or better on the TABE (Test of Adult Basic Education) in order to be enrolled in a Pell eligible ITA training program.*
- 2. Individuals who are seeking a non-Pell eligible certification, must receive a score of 5.0 or better on the CASAS or TABE in order to be enrolled in an ITA.*
- 3. If recent (6 months or less) scores are available from a college entrance exam, or other suitable assessment tool, Program Operators may use these as a substitute at their discretion.*

Please Note: Suitable accommodations will be provided to participants with disabilities. Individuals that fall short of the required grade level will be referred to the Aspire programs for remediation.

The TABE (Test of Adult Basic Education) has recently changed, eliminating the TABE 9 & 10 and replacing it with TABE 11 & 12, resulting in a drastic decrease in achieving the required 9.0 level.

The 9.0 level ensures that participants are college ready, which is acceptable for college bound students. It is important that we know where participants are at in terms of academics prior to enrolling them in an Individual Training Account. Area 14's training completion performance measure show that students are successfully completing the trainings they are enrolled in, which is a direct result of assessing a student's college readiness. However, the change has resulted in the disqualification of students in certification and credential programs which may not require the same 9.0 level,

Proposal:

Director McKnight proposes amending the current policy to reduce the eligible TABE score to a 5.0 for all non-Pell eligible programs to reduce barriers that are not necessary for short-term trainings.

Discussion:

- **David Hansen** (speaking on behalf of Cheryl Boley) proposed the following:

Per Handout entitled, "Analysis and Proposal for WIOA Assessment"

- Perry County OhioMeansJobs will establish a pilot project for WIOA program pre-participation assessment and evaluation that aligns with the County economic development priority of greatly increasing access to adult learning. The pilot program will

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conform with federal and state requirement for WIOA. The pilot project may include these and other administrative steps:

- Perry OMJ staff will develop a participant pre-assessment routine for program staff that utilizes a portfolio of nationally recognized tests as well as optional alternative assessments including, but not limited to, portfolios, presentations, and hands-on assignments.
- These pre-assignment routines should be diagnostic of participants; current skills and competences rather than benchmarking for eligibility. Caseworker assessments of training success will be probabilistic rather than rule bound, and placements and supports would be developed accordingly.
- Perry OMJ staff will document the pilot project pre-assessment routine and procedures during training if needed (ie, maintain 2.0 GPA) to monitor actual learning gains.
- Each participant will receive from the pre-assessment and caseworker evaluation a beginning point in any pathway of interest and determine for that participant the range of learning and training endpoints that WIOA would support the participant in achieving.
- As results are gathered connecting the pre-assessment diagnosis with training and employment success, Perry County will develop a performance evaluation framework to assess the pilot project's effectiveness at increasing the skill level of its workforce. TABE scores will be recorded for all so that its predictive effectiveness and needed complements can be assessed as a deliverable from the pilot.
- Perry County would share this data with Area 14 in order to promote effective strategies for addressing the region's deficit in learning and skill attainment.
- Mr. Hansen cited the following as found in the handout:
 - WIOAPL 15-09.1:
 - Email from Paige E. Perigo, Policy Program Administrator, Office of WFD to Laurie Gribble-McKnight, Area 14 Director dated 12/5/2019
 - Data Recognition Corp Website's FAQ regarding TABE use
 - "For WIOA Adults, there is no assessment that must be conducted for program eligibility. "....."The Area should establish a list of tests they will use for Adult BSD determination..." – Hansen specifically read.
- Mr. Hansen stated the following in support of the proposal:
 - The current old school policy results in unidentified learning disabilities
 - Area 20 does not have a fixed TABE test eligibility requirement
 - Perry County has 75% of citizens work outside of the county, we are preparing workers to be better workers in other counties
 - Learn to be less afraid of the errors involved and to see reward in making better decisions in area policy
- **Laurie McKnight** – WDB Director

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- All three OMJ Supervisors agreed that the changes implemented in the TABE Test have made it more difficult for students to achieve a passing score. Together, they suggested reducing the non-Pell certification and credential programs to 5.0
- The original local policy was written when the original state policy was implemented. Local changes require a majority vote of the Board.
- One county cannot be a stand-alone pilot project, all three counties must agree
- Local policy can be less restrictive but not more restrictive than state policy
- Encourage consistency with state and WDB practices
- Keeping the policy as it is will result in continued negative results to applicants
- **Tami Collins** – Athens OMJ
 - Asked for employer input from the Board Members
- **Stephanie McClelland** – Board Member
 - McClelland stated that participants in the STNA classes can work for four months prior to state STNA testing and are allowed three attempts.
 - She often loses her best, most caring workers because they can't pass the written portion of the state test due to disabilities and test anxiety. Should we be disqualifying workers based on a hard number?
 - Recommends approving the proposal of Director McKnight to help those who are in immediate need and researching the additional testing options and policies.
- **David Hansen** – Perry OMJ
 - Questioned the Board stating, "Do you prefer to pass Performance Measures or take a risk to better the region. Risk and reward."
 - In a good position to have conversations with state and federal policy makers to change the rules to our benefit
- **Laurie McKnight** – WIB Director
 - Performance Measures are how we receive funding, Department of Labor releases funds to areas that perform well. Performance Measures failures could result in the reduction of funding or counties / area being moved to a different area.
- **Theresa Lavender** – Meigs OMJ Director
 - Consider Pell vs Non-Pell training. There must be an eligibility threshold for Pell training.
- **Jennifer Kleski** – Board Member
 - Suggests capping the timeframe to research alternatives

Motion to reduce the eligible TABE score to a 5.0 for all non-Pell eligible programs to reduce barriers that are not necessary for short-term trainings. Additional stipulation to continue exploration of options to be reported at the May 13rd 2020 Board Meeting.

1st – Stephen Carson; 2nd – Stephanie Cleland

Motion passed without opposition.

Incumbent Worker Training – Director Laurie McKnight

- Reference: Letter – "Subject: Interim Incumbent Worker Training (IWT) Policy Update" dated January 17, 2020

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- Interim policy update to WIOAPL 15-23 (Incumbent Worker Training (IWT) Guidelines) states:

Eligibility of Incumbent Workers

If IWT is being provided to a cohort of employees, not every employee in the cohort must have an established employment history with the employer for 6 months or more. If the majority of employees being trained meet the employment history requirement, the training is allowable.

Allowable and Unallowable Costs for IWT Program

IWT funds may be used to train employees in management skills such as Six Sigma and LEAN if promotional opportunities or increased wages can be identified post training. IWT funds may not be used for LEAN/Sigma Six training for the purpose of layoff aversion.

Cost Sharing Requirements for Incumbent Worker Training

Local WDBs are required to establish policies regarding the non-federal share of the cost of IWT. Employers are required to pay for a significant cost of the training for those individuals in incumbent worker training. This can be done through both cash payments and fairly evaluated in-kind contributions. The wages paid to individuals while in training may be considered as a source of matching funds.

Discussion:

- **Laurie McKnight** – WDB Director
 - Currently only 20% can be spent on IWT. Consider a funding cap per employee.
- **Tracy Clark** (RXQ Compounding) – Board Member
 - The cohort of employees language would have been helpful during the RXQ expansion
- **Sara Marrs-Maxfield** – Board Member
 - Encouraged that businesses no longer are required to state that they are in trouble or threatening layoff. The policy change will promote expansion and open lower level positions as people are promoted. Agrees to cap

Laurie will recommend policy amendments at future meeting.

OMJ / OneStop Procurement - Director Laurie McKnight

The RFP will be issued for the One Stop, WIOA Adult and Dislocated and Youth services this year. Meigs will have the option to either extend their contract for 1 year or participate for the last 3 years of the new RFP. Director McKnight will present this to the Meigs Commissioner's at their next meeting. This will need to be done prior to the release of the RFP due to language.

- Current Committee includes Rob Ogden (Perry), David Brennan (Athens), and a vacant Meigs (requires Meigs employer) seat which will meet to score the proposals and present recommendations to the Board of Commissioners.
- Tracy Clark (Meigs County) volunteered to fill the vacant committee seat.

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- The proposal cannot be discussed outside of the Committee at this time. Committee remain after meeting to develop meeting dates.

No motion required at this time

2019 Annual Report – Director Laurie McKnight

Director McKnight acknowledged numerous successes across all programs in all three counties within the Area. She is proud of the work of the Board and the OhioMeansJobs staff and partners. A few of the successes are:

- Distributed “Area 14 – 1029 Report” summarizing the efforts of Area 14
- 18,425 OMJ Center Visits
- 1,274 Resume Assists
- 910 OMJ Registrations
- 46 Certification / Degree Completions
- 29 Diploma Supportive Services or GED Completions
- 23 On-The-Job Training Completions
- 11 Rapid Response events with 8 different employers
- 81 Employers; 261 Job Seekers attended 2019 Job Fair
- See report for additional statistics

Performance Reports Distributed – Director Laurie McKnight

- Program Year 2019 Unadjusted Performance Quarter One Report
 - Program year 2019 runs from July 1, 2019 to June 30, 2020
 - The Office of Workforce Development has not given us the adjusted reports yet.
 - Adult category for Employment After Fourth Quarter is currently failing which is a result of this being the first quarter and the numbers are not very high currently. Anticipate improve to at least meet the measure in the following quarter.
- Program Year 2018 Adjusted Annual - WIOA Performance Report
 - A14 does not have a high percentage of participants compared to metro areas
 - Met or exceeded every goal
- Program Year 2019 Unadjusted Annual Performance Report
 - Adult Employment (Pg 68) failed to meet 70.7%; Second Quarter after Exit failed to meet the negotiated rate of 78.5%. (Historically this happens in the First Quarter numbers)
- Full Reports available upon request

Appreciation Letter – Director Laurie McKnight

Letter presented to the Board from District Manager of Marshall’s in Athens County expressing his gratitude to the Athens OMJ Center staff for going above and beyond in their efforts to assist Marshall’s with recruitment, interviewing, and onboarding for their new retail store.

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Additional Reports – Director Laurie McKnight

- County OMJ Center Data for Quarterly Report – October 2019 to December 2019
- Online Job Postings Report – October 2019

Fiscal Report – Mendra Hupp

- WIA Area 14 Fiscal Update – February 11, 2020 Report submitted to the Board
- OWIP – Ohio Works Incentive Program ends June 30,2020
- National Disaster Grant - NDWG OH30 Flood
 - \$1,940,336 Total Area 14 Award – Ended & Liquidated December 31, 2019.
 - \$5,207.57 Area Total Remaining
- National Disaster Grant - NDWG OH32 Flood
 - \$1,856,762.86 Total Area 14 Award for grant period April 1, 2019 through March 31, 2020.
 - \$1,539,354.85Area Total Remaining
 - All three program's crews are operating on sites
 - Requesting Extension to 12/31/2020

Motion to extend the National Disaster Grant – OH32 Flood Grant deadline from March 31, 2020 to December 31, 2020.

1st – Sara Marrs-Maxfield; 2nd – Stephen Carson

Abstain: Jessica Stroh

Motion passed without opposition

- Opioid Grant #3
 - All three counties included in the award totaling \$167,329.00
 - Received and distributed the First Increment of \$56,044.00
 - All three counties are operating within their approved plans
- OWD Audit scheduled in February by Perry & Associates, initial requests have begun

Other Business – Director Laurie McKnight

- Text Reminders – Director McKnight will text meeting reminders to those who provide their cell phone number. Calendar Invites via Email will continue. The Director will look into phone apps to manage alerts.
- David Brennan suggested texts are helpful due to the limited internet accessibility within the area. He appreciates reminders to reduce no shows and scheduling conflicts.

Motion to adjourn (11:28 AM) until the next meeting scheduled for May 13, 2020 at 10 AM at OU Inn and Conference Center, Athens, OH.

1st – Cindy Jackson; 2nd – Jeff Circle

Motion passed without opposition.

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