

CAREER LINK
Corporate Board
of *LWIA #15*

Serving the counties of: Fulton, Marshall, Mason, McLean, Peoria, Stark, Tazewell and Woodford

MINUTES

DATE: Wednesday, April 09, 2025

9:00 am to 10:00 am (approx.)

Telephone Conference Call

DIAL IN: 1-309-585-6250

PIN: 5856

I. ROLL CALL - CHAIRMAN, BRUCE MARSTON

Chairman, Bruce Marston opened the meeting at 9:02AM with a roll call.

Corporate Board Members Present: *Bruce Marston, Eric Snow and Luke Gruden*

Career Link Staff Present: *Executive Director, Steve Martin, Assistant Director, Assistant Director, Dena Weth, Fiscal Director, LeeAnn Norris.*

II. *ACTION ITEM: Approval of Thurs., October 24, 2024 Corporate Board Tele-Conference Minutes

A motion was made by Eric Snow and seconded by Luke Gruden to approve the (R) 10/24/2024 Corporate Board Meeting. Motion carried.

III. Audit Report – LeeAnn Norris, Fiscal Director

Fiscal Manager, LeeAnn Norris provided an Audit Report on the programmatic for the Board members to review. She reported that an independent CPA Auditing firm performed in the Fall of 2024. She stated that with the External Audit, everything on both the Programmatic and Fiscal sides found no issues, findings or weaknesses. The state DCEO monitoring occurs in the coming week.

IV. Discussion on 401-K Fiduciary – Fiscal Director, LeeAnn Norris, Executive Director, Steve Martin, Assistant Director, Assistant Director, Dena Weth

Fiscal Manager, LeeAnn Norris stated that the Fiduciary responsibilities is on her and the Executive Director, Steve Martin. After reviewing several options, FISHER Financial Services seems to be the best fit for Career Link staff vs what Career Link currently has through Principal. FISHER would provide more individualize attention and more information on investments, etc. Assistant Director, Assistant Director, Dena Weth stated that several staff are very enthused to have this added service of meeting one on one. Principal used to provide a more one on one attention, but now they just send out quarterly reports that you can view as to what your investments are doing. The Career Link staff would benefit from the educational aspect of investing. Staff has limited options in directing their funds and they are mostly Principal funds. Going with Fisher investments would open up to other funds and not just Principal. The costs would be either cheaper or slightly more, depending on how they invest. The percentage that was presented to Career Link was 6% and with the correct investment strategies, they could possibility get it up to 12% or 13%. There was some discussion. The investment money would remain with Principal and use the same website to access their accounts but they would have more options available to the staff as well as having an adviser to assist in making sound financial decisions. This LeeAnn stated that there are contracts where the fees are made off of what the account makes so this will not cost the Agency an additional funds. Luke Gruden feels this is a positive move and asked if Fisher would be the Agent of Records through Principal and manage and so on? LeeAnn felt that this is better for the staff and would relieve the burden of her ongoing responsibilities when trying to assist staff with questions.

V. *ACTION ITEM: Discussion and approval of BSR Salary change, educational requirements & Job Description –

Steve Martin, Executive Director/Assistant Director, Dena Weth, Assistant Director

Executive Director, Steve Martin expressed that as of late last year and then again last month, both of the Career Link Business Service Representatives have taken leave of employment to go to work with another employer. There is currently one person hired as a replacement in the Peoria County office and surrounding counties and he is being trained at this time but it is a slow process. Career Link is looking for another Business Service Representative to work from the McLean County office and the surrounding counties. At the time, the salary was starting at \$38K. but in order to bring people to apply for the job, Steve and the Management Team felt it was best to not only raise the starting salary to \$40K, they would also reduce the qualification requirements from BS to a Associates Degree and additional Sales experience in Business, etc. and hopefully the right candidate will come along. Assistant Director, Assistant Director, Dena Weth expressed that there was a recently job fair and two IDES office recruitment staff, recommended was to reduce the educational requirements because the pool of applicants who would be experienced enough would open up more applicants tremendously. Last week there were five interviews and they were all BS degrees or Higher and the \$38K annual salary was not appealing to them enough for them to accept employment. Having an Assoc. degree will still provide some critical skills level thinking that they have learned out of their classes which will be beneficial. The other staff that are Career Planners, will remain with the minimum of BS degrees etc. but it is better to separate the Business Service Rep. who is more on the Sales Side of business vs the Career Planner need to have the educational component regarding attending schooling, etc. That is where the division is. Steve Martin explained that the main job requirements of the Business Service Rep. is to go and meet with Businesses to discuss the business services that Career Link can offer to them, such as On-The-Job training, Incumbent Worker training, Apprenticeship Training, etc. If these areas are a good fit for these various types of businesses like Manufacturers of Car Dealerships, Incumbent Worker projects and contracts with a number of different types of businesses. It is the job of the Business Service Rep. to find out what is a good fit for Career Link and the Businesses so salesmanship is a big part of it. Cold-Calling in general, and without that experience this would be a difficult task if it doesn't come naturally. Bruce Marston asked if a staff is actively working and stay for over a year, is there any compensation or finder's fee from those companies, like selling people to Manufacturers for employment? Steve said that a lot of training areas that the BS Rep. goes to business to drum up interest in our program such as our eligible Career Link incumbent worker customers. For instance, if there is an Auto dealership where they need three or four individuals that need Automobile Technician Service at a near-by college; for example, Heartland or IL Central College. Career Link would then sign a contract with that Manufacturer and they would put up an 'In-Kind' which is the employee's wages and Career Link would pay for their School Training for them to obtain their Automotive Technician Certificates and that individual would continue working for the Auto Manufacturer and have obtained those certificates. This is how the funding for Incumbent Worker training works in these programs, that are part of Career Link Agency. OJTs (On-The-Job Training) is where Career Link would contract with an Employer, maybe already have an individual is a fit for that particular company, and then we would contract and place that individual with the Employer, and maybe give them six months and pay for half the wages of that employee to stay on with that specific Employer. Assistant Director, Dena Weth stated that basically, this cuts down on the Employer's overhead, is what OJT comes down to. Career Link pays for a portion of their wages while under a specific contractual arrangement with the Employer. Bruce Marston inquired how the reducing the BSR to Assoc. Degree for educational qualifications, how would this impact those who have a BS with a lesser starting salary rate. Steve stated there is always a quandary of how to spend 50% training funding costs and increasing the Career Planner salaries at this time, especially during these unpredictable times that we are in as well as having the next program year is July 1 – June 20. Business Services is being pushed by DCEO quite a bit during the past two/three years, apprenticeship is very popular, Alan Pipeline Management is very popular with LWIAs and Colleges and businesses and Career Link feels that they have to attract the right talent to represent Career Link. Assistant Director, Dena Weth stated that if the funding is increased or comes through, then it would be something to research to see how that salary would affect the 50% minimum training requirement that the State expect from LWIAs. At this time, most current staff make over \$38K so this would affect those who are initially coming in new. Steve said that this will be discussed later down the road.

Steve stated that currently he is in talks with DCEO, three colleges and three LWIAs in a Regional Approach with Rivian. Rivian has reached out and wants to take part in Career Pathways Training to attempt to obtain skilled workers for their Automotive Factory. Steve and staff took a tour of their Facilities. They are interested in Career Link 'NAVIGATOR' to assist with this. Steve said that this is something to talk further if this is going to be part of whoever is going to administer the grant which would be substantially be more salary. Dena asks that the job description could be worded for minimum requirement for education; Assoc. Degree but prefer Bachelors Degree. Steve doesn't think this would work well in a HELP WANTED Advertisement. Luke Gruden stated that the best approach is to keep it simplified.

A motion was made by Luke Gruden and seconded by Eric Snow to approve of Business Service Representative Salary change, educational requirements & change the Job Description posting and also in the Employee Personnel Handbook. Motion carried.

VI. *ACTION ITEM: Discussion of Agency Performance Report & Approval of 5% Staff bonuses - Steve Martin, Executive Director

Executive Director, Steve Martin provided the Board with the Performance Report stated that Career Link has met and exceeded. He feels that the staff is deserving of a 5% bonus. In addition, there are Grants that have been added on to the staff; Apprenticeship Expansion Grant, 1-E Grants that are Rapid Response and also a Grant, JTED for Home Illinois which is serving homeless people in the Central Illinois area of four counties. Career Link has also have assisted the State with spending General Revenue Funds that Career Link acquired through DCEO for projects that are not WIOA related or with all of the WIOA strings attached and requirements and performance measures attached, which makes Career Link able to fund other projects that are worthy and helpful for a lot of people. There are a lot of projects on the Staff's plates. The number of staff have shorten up over the past year, with people needing to be let go for not showing up for work. And there were two that were hired but only remains and yet there are other staff positions that remain to be filled in both the Peoria and the Normal offices. With the staff that Career Link has, they perform tremendously and it would be good to give an incentive to stay on. Therefore, Steve and Dena would like to request the board to approve a 5% Staff bonus across the board. Bruce Marston asked if the percentages that are obtained on July 1-June 2024, were the performance levels negotiated with DCEO this coming fiscal year? Steve stated that David Taylor and Steve lead the negotiations with DCEO. It happens that if a LWIA meets or exceeds the goals, every year, DCEO gives LWIAs more performance levels. Steve has been very careful to negotiate with DCEO to try to keep a balance when negotiating. If a LWIA fails one performance measure, then they all fail and this shouldn't be that way. Sometimes even one even two customers who don't perform, can cause a LWIA to fail a measure. The 5% bonus is for Fiscal year ending in June 30, 2025, correct? This would be given to Staff in May of 2025 which would be total w/taxes \$65K.

A motion was made by Luke Gruden and seconded by Eric Snow to Approval of a 5% Staff bonus. Motion carried.

VII. *ACTION ITEM: Motion to move out of 'OPEN SESSION' and INTO 'Closed Executive Session' to discuss and complete & vote on Career Link Executive Director's Evaluation Evaluation/Compensation. (this closed session is held with only Corporate Board Members & Steve Martin, Executive Director) – Chairman, Bruce Marston

A motion was made by Luke Gruden and seconded by Eric Snow to move out of OPEN SESSION and INTO 'Closed Executive Session' and discuss and complete & vote on Career Link Executive Director's Employee Evaluation/Compensation. Motion carried. 09:42 am

***ACTION ITEM: 'Closed Executive Session' to approve Executive Director's Employee Evaluation/Compensation -**

Chairman, Bruce Marston

A motion was made by Eric Snow and seconded by Luke Gruden to approve Executive Director's Employee Evaluation/and 5% Bonus Compensation. Motion carried.

VIII. *ACTION ITEM: Motion to move OUT OF 'Closed Executive Session' and return back into 'OPEN SESSION'- Chairman, Bruce Marston

A motion was made by Eric Snow and seconded by Luke Gruden to move OUT OF 'Closed Executive Session' and return back into 'OPEN SESSION'. Motion carried. 10:01 am

IX. *ACTION ITEM: MOVE INTO 'OPEN SESSION' & Motion to approve Executive Director's Employee Evaluation/Compensation - Chairman, Bruce Marston

Motion to approve Executive Director's Employee Evaluation/Compensation Motion carried. 10:03 am

X. Other Comments

Board member, Eric Snow asked if there was a possibility to use another Meeting outlet instead of Tele-phone conference calling. Steve Martin agreed that a different outlet should be used in the future. Theresa Kotte stated that since Career Link Agency has a subscription account with ZOOM, all future Corporate Board meetings can and will be held using this outlet, if this is the preferred method of communication for Corporate Board meetings. The Board members agreed that this would be a better option to meet by. Theresa Kotte will set up all future Corporate Board meetings using ZOOM from this point on.

XI. Public Comments

There were no public comments

XII. *ACTION ITEM: Adjournment

A motion was made by Eric Snow and seconded by Luke Gruden to adjourn. Motion carried. Adjournment @ 10:04 am

Respectfully submitted,

Recording Secretary,
Theresa Kotte, Executive Assistant
LWIA #15

04/09/2025 trk