

LWIA #15 County Consortium BOARD

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

MINUTES

DATE: Wed., August 11, 2021

9:00 am – 10:00 am

GOOGLE MEET

Video Meeting ID click here → meet.google.com/oed-peka-ejd

or

or join by phone: dial in +1 650-457-1280 PIN: 467382308

I. **Roll CALL and Introductions** - Dave Zimmerman, opened the Virtual Google meeting at 9:00 am

Roll was called.

Present Board Members: David Zimmerman (Tazewell Co Chair), Roger Clark (Fulton Co Chair), John McIntyre (McLean Co Chair), Gary Kroeschen (Marshall Co Chair), Ken Walker (Mason Co Chair), Al Curry (Stark Co Chair) and John Krug (Woodford Co Chair).

Absent Members: Andrew Rand (Peoria Co Chair)

Career Link Staff: Steve Martin (Executive Director-Pekin office), Dena Weth (Assistant Director-Nrml office), David Vaughn, (Career Link Planner/Tech.Specialist/EEO Officer-Peoria office) LeeAnn(Whitlatch) Norris, (Fiscal Director-Pekin office), Warren Cheatham (One Stop Center Manager, Peoria Office), Norm Griffin (Career Link Business Service Rep-Peoria County) and Shelly Purchis, (Career Link Business Service Rep-McLean County), Kelly Schapmire (Program Manager), David Taylor (Performance Manager) and Lorena Cary (Peoria IL Career Planner).

II. ***ACTION ITEM: Approval of Wed., April 29, 2021 'Google Virtual Meeting' Minutes**

A motion was made by Roger Clark (Fulton Co Chair), and seconded by Gary Kroeschen (Marshall Co Chair), to approve the Wednesday, April 29, 2021 LWIA #15 County Consortium Board Meeting Minutes. Motion carried.

III. **Spotlight Participant (Peoria County) Presented by Peoria, IL Career Planner, Lorena Cary) Introduced by Dena Weth, Assistant Director**

Career Link Assistant Director, Dena Weth stated that the "Participant Spotlight" provides an opportunity to recognize our staff as well as our outstanding customers of the LWIA #15 eight county area. Dena introduced Career Planner, Candi Isonhart. Candi started with Career Link in April 2009 and has worked in various capacities; Trade Program Customer, served as Peoria Office as Office Manager/Senior Career Planner and currently is the Office Manager/Senior Career Planner in the Pekin, IL Career Link office.

Lorena Cary gave a brief story of a Customer who was enrolled in Career Link's Peoria County.

Matthew Clevenger was a dislocated worker from Synergetic Industries as a design engineer for tooling where he worked for four years. The manufacturing plant shut down on 3/15/2020 due to COVID-19. Finding it difficult to obtain work during the pandemic, he applied for tuition assistance and went to CDL training at ICC, which began 3/29/2021. He earned his class A CDL on 4/30/2021. Matthew landed a job with Werner right after he received his CDL. He is a team driver with his girlfriend who attended CDL training about the same time. While his pay is based on how many miles he drives, his take home average is around 1,600 per week. He really enjoys his new job and says he could not have done it without the help of Career link and the WIOA grant. Testimonial: "Thanks to Career Link's assistance I was able to enroll in truck driver training program at ICC after being unemployed as a result of COVID-19. My girlfriend and I completed the training about the same time, knowing we wanted to team drive. We hired on with a major carrier after obtaining our CDL's and began a new hire training program with our new employer. We noticed right away we were more advanced than the new hires in our orientation class. The instructors at ICC gave us the skills and confidence to stand out. In our first few months of professional team driving we've been to 18 states and are loving life on the road together."

Chairman, David Zimmerman expressed his sympathies regarding the death of long time serving Ronn Morehead. He acknowledged that Ronn Morehead, who was such a fixture in the community and on the Boards for so many years, and provided the LWIA #15 organization with so much knowledge and resource and had invaluable influence and will be greatly missed!

John McIntyre stated that the passing of Ronn will be a great loss to the community and stated that his involvement with the Laborers as well as the mental disabilities (Special Olympics Org.) community will feel a tremendous loss.

Steve Martin stated that the Career Link lost a very important member and his guiding presence, who passed away on Friday, July 2, 2021. Steve expressed that Ronn was a person that if anyone ever needed help with Workforce initiatives, Ronn was the man to call. Ronn served on the WIB Board for over 40 years and also served as President of LWIA #15's Corporate Board for several years as well as a member of Career Link's Youth Advisory Council. Ronn will be missed by many in the eight county area and the whole EDR region. He was very active with the State of IL and at the Federal Level on Workforce Initiatives. He was a champion of the Career Link Agency. He will be greatly missed. Board member, John McIntyre expressed that Ronn was highly involved in so many boards as well as the Laborers, he also was the Chairman of the Development Disabilities Board for McLean County.

IV. *ACTION ITEM: Approval of AJC (American Job Center) One Stop Center Reopening Plan – Steve Martin, Executive Director

Steve Martin reported that the tentative re-opening date of the Peoria, IL AJC (America's Job Center – One Stop Center) located in Peoria, IL will be re-opened, by appointment only, and is slated for August 30, 2021. CMS (Central Management Services) of the State did a walk-through and made some security suggestions both inside and outside of the building. There is a form issued by the state that has been completed by the physical partners of the AJC (America's Job Center-One Stop Center); IDES and Career Link. An agreement has been established between the partners and sent to the IDES director for approval from the State. In the meantime, the Chairman of the LWIA #15 County Consortium, David Zimmerman needs to approve this as well with his signature as well as the Workforce Innovation Board to approve this as well. WHOI news ran a segment regarding incidents that happened at the Peoria IL center with bomb threats, etc. since some IDES staff are occupying the building, but most staff are adjudicating claims from their remote locations. Board Member, Gary Kroeschen asked about security. Steve stated that currently Peoria, IL IDES office have two security guard; one armed and one unarmed security guard patrolling the outside and the inside offices when appointments begin. The plan at this time, there will be a triage center in the parking lot in Peoria, IL. There is enough for staff to park in the rear area and cones and barricades will be set up in the parking lot to direct traffic. The reason for this is to keep citizens away from the center, that do not have appointments. Once the Center is reopened, only those with appointments will be allowed to enter the facility for both IDES and Career Link. The appointments will be scheduled from 9a to 12(noon) and 1:30p to 4:30p. Steve stated that Career Link follows IDES office's lead as to when it opens. Career Link needs customers and need to get the building open to have a much larger chance of serving more customers. Unfortunately, the Delta Variant Virus creates additional obstacles. The other seven (7) Career Link offices, are open by appointment only, using proper protective protocol. Steve stated that the goals and expenditures and performance goals, etc. etc. are part of the 80% expenditure requirement and the 50% training requirement goals are still set by the state for all LWIAs. Some LWIAs are open but most are not that are partnered with the IDES offices.

A motion was made by Marshall County Chairman, Gary Kroeschen and seconded by Mason County Chairman, Ken Walker to approve of AJC (American Job Center) One Stop Center Reopening Plan. Motion carried.

V. MOU Submittal – Steven Martin, Executive Director

Steve Martin reported that the MOU revisions have been completed and he indicated to the Board that the report of outcomes were submitted. He officially submitted the MOU for PY2021 along with the budget and the signatures of all of the Partners to DCEO on June 30, 2021 and he is waiting on the State for approval and feels that we are in good standing as far as the MOU.

VI. DCEO Monitoring – Steve Martin, Executive Director, Dena Weth, Assistant Director/LeeAnn Norris, Fiscal Director

Steve Martin stated that he sent in Career Link's obligations and expenditures report. At the time of the monitoring, Career Link's obligations and expenditures were low in every category; Youth, Adult and Dislocated Workers. He submitted a report to DCEO with an explanation of how Career Link plans try to meet the expenditure goals. All LWIAs across the state are experiencing similar issues with meeting the required goals, due to the COVID-19 Pandemic. The issue when making this Report, the COVID-19 Pandemic would not be allowed as a reason of not meeting the goals, according to the DOL. Career Link has asked for a waiver on the 80% expenditure requirement and on the 50% training requirement. Career Link is in the same position that quite a few employers are in with trying to get people through their doors applying for training, especially for Youth Work Experience area, when all of the work experience closed down for the year. We were unable to meet that requirement, as well. We are hoping that the plan we have of meeting the expenditures and obligations moving forward, helps us obtain those goals but it also depends on if things can change around and open the One Stop Center to Full capacity, it should make a big difference. There has been advertising to inform the public of our 'OPEN for Business' services and see if

any results come from that outreach. Board member Gary Kroeschen asked if the lack of customers could be the supplement from IDES unemployment is delaying people from contacting Career Link for training. Steve stated yes, this is a very large factor of people not taking the opportunity until the U.I. benefits are exhausted and sometimes this untimely effort for them to get into training programs are delayed because classes have already started for the fall, spring semester, etc. etc.

Dena Weth referred to the programmatic aspects regarding the monitoring visit. She had reported that there was a 'soft-exit' with the monitors. At that time, all files and reports, were done remotely as it was basically done, again the same way at the recent monitoring this year. She stated that at that time, there were no major findings. She gave an example of what all is involved with monitoring. There was a customer's Trade program file that had 225 case notes that were uploaded and reviewed by the monitors. In addition, there were 35 additional randomly selected files and the majority of policy files were selected, randomly selected Incumbent Worker projects, a number of Work Experience file as well as a number of Contracts and the National Disaster Grant information were all selected for reviewed. She commended the hard work and efforts of all of the Career Planners. There have been four different monitoring groups that have performed monitoring over the last four years, so they each can have their own interpretations that can vary significantly different. One area that the monitors pointed out, was with one of the 36 customers where there was not a 90-day two way communication entry but instead it was entered on the 100th day. Up to this point, this gentleman, who was not in compliance and is no longer in our program. The two other areas that stand out, that the Management Team tried to get the Monitors to change their minds to no avail, Dena stated that at least since 2006 up until April 2021, once a file is created by a career planner and all documentation is turned in, we refer to that as going through a certification process and at that time Career Planners enter an occupational training line. The Monitors felt that this was incorrect and instead they wanted the occupational training line to be entered on the first day of training, which does not help our Nursing students, our CDL students who have pre-requisites to complete. Our Nursing students often times have projects, reading projects to complete. So we agreed upon sticking with putting the date as the start date of when the semester starts at the school but if we have to put it earlier, we will case note it as to why we are starting them on the certification date. The one that really intrigued us the most, is we have 11 sub-contractors who we have worked with since the early 2000s with many of them, and each of the programs have always had an incentive component. The Sub-contractors directly provides the incentive to the student so our involvement has included with LeeAnn will review their incentive program at different times, making sure that students are signing off for gift cards, making sure they are meeting the guidelines of why that card is being given to the student. This group of monitors suggest that every time a subcontractor would issue an incentive, we were to get a receipt of that incentive and open up a service line. That could entail 200 kids at least a couple times a month and we argued that in no way could our Career Planners maintain this heavy load first of all and it would be very difficult to go into like Bloomington, IL District 87 and ask Fiscal Dept to provide us with receipts every time a gift card is given out to a student. Career Link sent in our rebuttal and we all agreed upon that we would just add a service line at the very beginning of the semester specifically stating that they are receiving an incentive and it is being provided directly by the subcontractor. So those were the main issues that were pointed out to us during the visit.

LeeAnn Norris stated that regarding Fiscal monitoring aspects, had a familiar monitoring group that she had worked with in the past and they were familiar with Career Link's Fiscal situation and familiar practices of Career Link's Fiscal Dept. The final report showed that there were no fiscal findings.

VII. Overview for Fiscal and Programmatic Monitoring for Sub Contract Youth Programs – Dena Weth, Asst Director/LeeAnn Norris, Fiscal Director

Dena Weth stated that she and LeeAnn Norris do separate monitoring. Dena stated that she monitors programs by looking at the end of the school year as to whether the sub-contractors have met the guidelines set forth in the program abstract and goals throughout the year. She reported that she is happy to commend those participating in today's Virtual meeting for those that coordinate/administer the programs and appreciate how diligent they work with students; those that are going hungry, having trouble signing up for food stamps, finding housing and you all stepped up to the plate and provided referrals services to our youth and we definitely appreciate that.

LeeAnn Norris reported that fiscally, from the monitoring that she conducted with the Sub Contractors, she found that there were very minor issues with just a couple of the Sub Contractors but overall the Sub Contractors have done really well. She anticipated some documentation lacking but everybody had everything that she needed and was able to get it all to her electronically so she was able to get through it all in a very timely manner so she finished her monitoring sooner than she normally would having to travel there. There were very minor issues and overall she was very happy with the fiscal monitoring this time with COVID and the remote nature of it all ended up going better than she anticipated.

VIII. The National Disaster Grant Update Report – Dena Weth, Assistant Director

Dena Weth reported on the update of the National Disaster Grant update. She stated that for those persons that are new to the board or guests, she stated that this National Disaster Grant was started back in late summer/early fall of 2020. It is a

direct result of the COVID-19 Pandemic and is a humanitarian program. It's original intent was to help out businesses with putting protocol into place that would keep businesses who had to either shut down or reduce hours for their employees. Career Link applied for the National Disaster Grant and was awarded \$250,444. Career Link developed job descriptions and sought out different businesses in the public sector only, who needed workers to basically run their daily activities. This grant started late in the Summer of 2020 and continues through March of 2022. Currently there are 18 participants that are enrolled and possibly enroll two(2) additional participants in place at the One Stop Center in Peoria, IL and one in the Normal, IL Career Link office. They would be responsible for tasks of deep cleaning the areas where the Career Planners meet with customers/potential applicants. Most current customers work up to 26 weeks and a maximum of 52 weeks and the most hours per week they can work is 29 hours for each participant. There were some positive outcomes for two participants was that one was offered a full-time position at the Stark county school district in their maintenance custodial dept. and recently in July another participant took a part-time position at MCCA as a general maintenance individual. Career Link continues to fill positions until the Grant concludes in March 2022.

IX. Navigator Position/Grant - Steve Martin, Executive Director

Steve Martin reported that Career Link are in the process of writing a Grant and enlisting the assistance of our key partners in the EDR Region #3 Region area to hire a person for Regional Apprenticeship Navigator and this will be awarded sometime in January 2022. The Navigator will take a proactive approach in establishing and maintaining relationships with businesses, education partners, local workforce areas, chambers of commerce, and other apprenticeship partners in Economic Development Region 3. Steve explained that the Grant that is being applied for has a submittal deadline of Sept. 15, 2021. The Navigator will be responsible for creating workforce opportunities within EDR Region #3 which is ten counties (eight counties which are in our WIA Region) and the other two counties being Livingston county and DeWitt county. In addition to being responsible for creating the workforce opportunities, in essence, they also will be developing a talent pipeline. Some of the objectives of the Navigator will be to provide apprenticeship consultation to businesses and education providers, local workforce areas, coordinate sector partnerships with interested parties and connecting those apprenticeship components, facilitating regional coordination partnership with apprenticeship stakeholders. These are just a few of the items that this navigator will be doing. This isn't only about apprenticeship, but also about incumbent worker training, on-the-job training etc. involving all the partners in our area. In order for this to be successful, we are counting on all of our partners within the region to engage with us including the community colleges, the EDCs and the Chambers. It is our hope that Heartland, ICC and Spoon River apply as intermediaries. LiUNA, plans to apply as intermediary as well with their apprenticeship program. GPEDC (Greater Peoria EDC) has taken a lead in getting the word out in the western corner of LWIA #15. Kari Rauh of GPEDC has been active in bringing awareness of this Grant opportunity and will act as a convener for this part of the region. Kari will also be joining our board in October, to replace Chris Setti's Board position. The position will be open in December 2021.

X. Performance Report – David Taylor, Systems Manager

David Taylor reported on the Performance Report update. Despite the challenges of COVID-19, the report showed that 72% of Low-Income Adult clients earned a credential. 57 of those clients, earned a degree in either an RN or LPN. All together, there were 66 nurses were trained and employed in 2020-2021 program year. There were 26 Low-Income Adults that leave training which reflected Career Link ability to reach the anticipated expenditures. Predominately these Adults were single mothers who were forced to address child-care and home schooling issues. This trend has continued into the new program year, as well. One example of a success with Career Link's program was with regard to a single mother, receiving food stamps when first enrolled into the Career Link Nursing program. She finished the Nurses training and gained employment afterwards, making \$92K annually as a Registered Nurse. There were 135 Adult customers in 2020-2021 and cumulatively, they have earned to date, \$4 million dollars. This is good to see that how these training programs assist many low-income families now have the ability to afford better housing, purchase appliances, cars, etc. and in turn contribute back to their communities. There were 54 Dislocated Workers that were exited after their training completion. This was significantly down from the previous year of 210 Dislocated Workers that were exited. Truck Driver training was the most prevalent of form of training for Dislocated Workers. The top earner, was a former lay-off of CAT and after his nursing training, he was able to be employed as a Registered Nurse, earning \$75K his first year of employment. The Youth program enrollment numbers were lower, but even with the Pandemic, the successes were 51 youth that earned a High School diploma, 35 earned a GED and 10 youth earned a post-secondary credential. A vast majority of youth that previously were employed in the retail and restaurants industries, had lost their jobs in late 2020 due to COVID-19 Pandemic. A 22 year old youth participant graduated from Methodist College of Nursing and earned \$42K her first year. Board Member, Wendy Hess stated that these numbers are great to see. David Taylor provide a snap-shot of the current program year 2021-2022. He stated that currently there have been 103 customers that have exited. 83% of them have earned a credential, despite the Pandemic. 19 Youth did leave training (20% of the current customer base) as home schooling and day care issues have been quite a challenge. 86% of the

Low-Income Adults are working, which this could be contributed to gaining employment in the field of Health Care Industry; LPNs, CNAs, Dental Assistants, etc., etc. There have been 33 Dislocated Workers, so far this current program year; 84% have earned a credential and only 6 participants left training. 90% of the Dislocated Workers participants are fully employed and working strong. This is very encouraging. The Youth participant numbers are generally always questionable, but especially due to the COVID-19 Pandemic. 4 Youth left the GED program so far, 2 left High School and 2 left the College training program. There have been 98 Youth participants have been exited and 69% Youth participants have earned a credential so far, and 72% youth are either working or attending post-secondary training. Optimism is strong, although a slow process of getting the Youth back to work, as employers are now desperately looking for those entry-level workers. Many Youth are frustrated with the on-line education process whether it being in High School, GED and post-secondary education program. Many youth are taking a GAP year as they try to get through the Covid window, to getting back to developing their career paths. Board Member, Steve Timmermann asked if any Youth have been placed at Rivian. Business Service Rep, Shelly Purchis stated that Rivian has a very specific process for hiring and Career Link has referred people to apply for Rivian's on-line application process. Warren Cheatham stated that Rivian hires were 2,100 individuals that were hired and 175 construction workers as well. There was further discussion regarding Rivian and their hiring, etc., etc. Chairman, Sam Lewis asked if there is a reason when Youth don't make it through the program. David Taylor stated that generally it is due to the frustrations and Covid-19 fatigue depression that is created due to the COVID and the changes in the new ways of adjustments needed to be made. Guest, Dawn Fentem of ICC, stated that in their GED program, that many students lack online technology resources which in addition means they lack skills and access. There was technology fatigue as well as the barriers, as well. She stated that ICC had 62 GED completions, but technology was a driving factor of low numbers, as well as taking a GAP year for some participants. David Taylor expressed that Career Link does serve a large rural population where the technologies have much greater challenges due to the broadband and being able to access the internet and technologies are much more difficult to access in those rural areas. John McIntyre expressed that as time moves on, there will be even more need for just routine jobs to fill. The need is there but the people are not there.

XI. Business Services Rep. Reports {OJTs, IWTs, etc.} – Norm Griffin (Peoria Co. Rep) & Shelly Purchis (McLean Co. Rep)

Shelly Purchis, who is the McLean, Marshall, Stark and Woodford Counties Business Service Rep, stated that there is an overwhelming need of businesses in the area that need workers. This is carrying over in terms of trying to get new incumbent workers projects, new apprenticeship projects and new on the job training because people want workers and they want them now and they don't want to wait for paperwork, or apply for programs. They just want workers and they needed them 'yesterday'. Shelly is continuing with informing the employers of the OJT programs but it is moving along somewhat slower. She met with Brandt and their H.R. reps. They no longer have a local H.R. It was absorb with a person in Canada, who flew in and met with Shelly and several other. They are desperate need of at least 45 workers right away to fill their first and second shifts. They initially wanted experience people, but now they will take who they can take. They also need 70 additional people needed to fill their third shift but they will fill the first and second shift to get those filled first. Shelly is doing everything to reach out to as many individuals and agencies and Career Link Career Planners, to inform them of these hiring positions. She stated that there are so many more businesses, such as the Restaurant Industries, the Art Industries, in addition to all of the manufacturing hiring needs. She stated that she is wrapping up a current project with Heritage and ACC Electronics and Bridgestone that are finishing up. Afni has a new OJT project beginning as well as several Businesses that are in the works for OJTs. There are ongoing discussions with the local Chamber of Commerce and local EDC regarding the Navigator position that she and Norman Griffin are having discussion for partnerships with them. In addition, Shelly stated that Flexi-tech in Bloomington and Emerald in Henry, IL were approved for Trade and several people are applying for that funding program.

Norm Griffin, who is the Peoria Tazewell Mason Fulton Counties Business Service Rep., referred to the Navigator position and that he has been participating with a group with partnership of the Greater Peoria EDC, exploring workforce in the area how to solve those needs and how to bridge the skill gap. The areas have large businesses that participate in this committee that are discussing over the last 6 months, on how to bridge the workforce gap and finding out what companies need hires and figure out how to stop 'cannibalization' that happens in different industries, particularly in the Peoria area, where the businesses seem to keep trading the same people; robbing Peter to pay Paul . . . fighting over \$2 or \$3 per hour, someone will quit one business to go to another. . . talking talent pipeline management. . . long term/short term needs, immediate needs, five year needs, ten year needs. . . That is how this whole Navigator position is playing into this. He is hopeful that Career Link will be the Navigator as Career Link is applying for this position. Norm feels that Career Link would be a great partner for the whole region and the local community colleges and is very excited to work with everyone and see how this plays out, if this comes to fruition. He stated that the biggest complaint, as Shelly Purchis stated, that employers cannot get people in their doors to work. He feels this is not just local problem but rather a national problem. He recently

spoke to Liberty (formerly Keystone) in the Bartonville IL area. They held their own Career Fair recently. They needed to hire 100 people but only hired 20 people from their Career Fair. So they are looking for an additional 80 additional hires. Norm reported that he spoke to a rep from the Tri-Valley development out of the Peoria area, and there is a business called 'Source Fresh Water' and they are looking to solve two problems; 1.) find a local environmental problem with a 'Invasive' (Asian) Carp fish and finding something constructive to do with the fish in the Illinois River area by harvesting them, like they were doing in the Beardstown, IL area and turning them into human food and 2.) turning the fish into fertilizer or animal feed. 'Source Fresh Water' business is looking to add employees at entry-level positions to 'be their own boss' so to speak; they are looking for people to go out with their own boats to harvest these fish out of the Illinois river. This is a unique opportunity. Norm is trying to get this approved and turned into a DOL apprenticeship and go from there as far as positions go. Norm has a project with RIO Engineering, which is an ISO project, to get them certified. He reported that he has another one with the leadership with Morton Industries. Norm has two additional Incumbent Worker training projects; a subsidiary company named 'Bradley Services' and another contract will be with Morton Industries, directly, for robotic welding. They will have employees set for upscaling welding to make their jobs more secure. Morton Industries who have been a great partner with Career Link and Morton Industries Director of Organizational Development, Steve Stewart will be joining the WIB board in October. Also, Kari Rauh of the Greater Peoria EDC, made a referral who will be starting with Morton Industries. In addition, a company named BTB in Washington, IL will have an incumbent worker training project coming up.

XII. OSO Report – Warren Cheatham, One Stop Manager

Warren Cheatham stated that the members received his report prior to the meeting. There was no discussion.

I. Other Comments

There were no further comments.

II. Public Comments

There were no other comments.

III. *ACTION ITEM: Adjournment

A motion was made by John McIntyre and seconded by John Krug to adjourn. Motion carried. Adjournment time: 1:02 pm

Respectfully submitted,

WIB Recording Secretary,
Theresa Kotte, Executive Assistant
LWIA #15

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