

LWIA #15 County Consortium BOARD

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

MINUTES

GOOGLE MEET

DATE: Thursday, April 29, 2021

9:00 am – 10:30 am



- I. Roll CALL and Introductions** - Dave Zimmerman, opened the Virtual Google meeting at 9:02 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) and John Krug (Woodford Co Chair).
Absent Members: Al Curry (Stark Co Chair) and 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)
- II. *ACTION ITEM: Approval of Wed., January 27, 2021 'Google Virtual Meeting' Minutes**
A motion was made by Gary Kroeschen (Marshall Co Chair), and seconded by Ken Walker (Mason Co Chair) to approve the Friday, January 27, 2021 LWIA #15 County Consortium Board Meeting Minutes. Motion carried.
- III. Spotlight Participant (Tazewell County) Presented by Office Manager/Senior Career Planner, Candi Isonhart**
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.
- Candi Isonhart gave a brief story of a Customer who was enrolled in 2012 in Career Link's Tazewell County, Pekin, IL office under Career Planner, David Taylor, caseload. Katelyn was 20 yrs. and she was funded as an Out-of-School Youth in MTI's Nurses Asst. trng. Once Katelyn had earned her Nurses Asst. credential, she began working in a Group Home with people with disabilities through TCR School. She also began taking general education courses in hopes of being accepted into ICC's Radiography training. She was enrolled in the fall of 2018 in Radiography training at ICC. In early 2019, Katelyn was now 26 yrs old w/a four yr. old child, and she was receiving FoodStamps/Medical Card, while employed at a local Nursing Home earning only \$12 per hr while enrolled at ICC's Radiography training. Katelyn completed the Radiography training and earned her Associates in Applied Science at ICC in the summer of 2020 with a GPA of 3.43. She went on to secure employment as an X-ray Technician at Unity Point Methodist at Pekin Hospital and was earning \$23.06 per hr. However, Katelyn did not stop there. She went on to take two more classes on her own in the fall of 2020 and earned her CT certification education which had been her goal all along. With this additional certification, Katelyn recently secured full-time CT X-Ray Technician position at the Pekin, IL Hospital, earning \$26.50 per hour with benefits. She reports that she loves her job. She spoke to Candi recently, and was leaving on a brief family vacation and stated that this was something she would not have been able to afford years ago. She provided a short letter for Candi to read on Katelyn's behalf:*
- 'Hello Everyone! I would like to convey my appreciation to Career Link. I am now a CT and Radiography Technologist. I would not have been able to accomplish this without hard work, determination and funding through Career Link. As a single mother, finances were already tight, and I did not have the extra money to spend on books for my classes or gas to get*

through the week to be able to go to school and the hospital for my Clinicals. This is such a great program with great people working there. Thank you so much for helping me reach my full potential. Sincerely, Katie G.'

Chairman, David Zimmerman asked Candi to express on the behalf of the County Consortium Board, how proud the board members are of her and her efforts. This is a testament to the success of this organization.

IV. Report on Re-opening Status of Offices – Steve Martin, Executive Director

Steve Martin stated that all eight LWIA #15 offices remain closed to the public, remaining status quo. The offices have not had full opening since March 2020. Currently our in-house partner, IDES, have most staff members working remotely, that normally work in the Peoria, IL One Stop Center, which remains closed to the public. With the new variants, there is a continued monitoring of the situation and Career Link is continually processing Program Client Applications online. Rapid Response, Business Services, upcoming Trade events all will be continually conducted online. Career Planner/Client communications are being handled through emails and telephone communication although the enrollment numbers are still down but there are still enrollments and such being done in the LWIA #15 Eight-county area. Steve expressed the dilemma of re-opening the One Stop Center at this time due to some security issues and the long lines. The One Stop Center (Career Link and IDES) in Peoria, IL is planning to re-open in the early fall.

V. MOU Report of Outcomes – Steven Martin, Executive Director

Steve Martin stated that the MOU Report of Outcomes was sent to the Board members for their review. These MOU Report of Outcomes and the MOU Budget for July 2021-2022 were, which begins July 1, 2021, were sent to the State on April 15, 2021, as requested and Steve is happy to report that all partners were in agreement with the MOU Budget. Steve has completed obtaining the signatures of all LWIA #15 County Board Chairmen as well as the signatures needed for the MOU narrative document, which is due to the State on June 30, 2021.

VI. *ACTION ITEM: Approval of the WIB Executive Board One Stop Operator Selection – Steve Martin, Executive Director

Steve Martin stated that every four (4) years, per WIOA LAW, it is necessary for each LWIA area to select their One Stop Operators. The One Stop Operator in LWIA #15 was selected four years ago by a consortium of four Core partners; Career Link, IDES (Illinois Dept. of Employment Security), DHS (Dept of Human Services Division of Voc. Rehab), Adult Literacy & Education; ICC (IL Central College Adult Education & Literacy). Steve Martin stated that the WIB Executive Board met on Tuesday, April 20, 2021 with IDES staff, Sergio Talavera not being allowed to attend due to conflict of interest. LWIA #15 WIB (Workforce Innovation Board) Chairman, Sam Lewis, reported that there was only one (1) Proposal Bid that was received by him: LWIA #15 Four (4) Core Partners: UWDB/Career Link, Illinois Dept. of Employment Security, Dept of Human Services Division of Voc. Rehab, Adult Education & Literacy; IL Central College. Sam Lewis reported that there were no other proposals, emails/letters received, nor did he receive any questions by any other entities. He reported to Steve that this process was legitimately followed through on, in accordance to the instructions for LEGAL NOTICES for the OSO (One Stop Operator) RFP Procurement through the following efforts; there were numerous LEGAL NOTICES run in the LWIA #15 newspapers, website, emails etc. to reach out to as many entities in the public arena. The Evaluation Criteria Score Sheets, completed by each of the four WIB Executive Board members, were very similar in total scoring results. Steve martin stated that the WIB Chairman, Sam Lewis reported that there was a motion made and carried to approve the OSO (ONE STOP OPERATOR) Procurement PROPOSAL from UWDB/Career Link, Illinois Dept. of Employment Security, Dept of Human Services Division of Voc. Rehab, IL Central College Adult Education & Literacy.

A motion was made by Gary Kroeschen, Marshall County Chairman and seconded by Roger Clark, Fulton County Chairman to accept the motion made at the Tues., April 20, 2021 LWIA #15 WIB Executive Board member Meeting with the approval of the OSO (ONE STOP OPERATOR) Procurement PROPOSAL from UWDB/Career Link, Illinois Dept. of Employment Security, Dept of Human Services Division of Voc. Rehab, Adult Education & Literacy; IL Central. Motion carried unanimously.

VII. DCEO Monitoring – Dena Weth, Assistant Director/LeeAnn Norris, Fiscal Director

Dena Weth provided the County Board Chairman a brief overview of DCEO monitoring. She stated that LWIA #15 is monitored every year; 2 sides to each monitoring – 1.) Programmatic aspects and 2.) Fiscal aspects. The monitoring begins with an 'Entrance' Meeting. This is normally done 'on-location' but due to the Pandemic, 'remote' monitoring is conducted. This is somewhat a disadvantage, due to being present with the Monitors and staff and physically having client files and

excel spreadsheets to review together. Every report and file must be uploaded and sent electronically scanned into IWDS, which was quite an undertaking. Weeks can go by before any communication is exchanged between Career Link and the State Monitors. She stated that the time period that was monitored was for business dates of April 1, 2020 through Feb. 28, 2021. The requested Monitor's list of files to be reviewed, requested by them, entailed policies written for OJT (OnTheJob) training contracts, Adult and Youth contracts for Work Experience, National Disaster files, Incumbent Worker contracts, TRADE Funding Program files, Formula files from Adult, Dislocated Worker and Youth Programs as well as several sub-contractor.. There was a 'soft exit' but it was done differently than what was conducted compared to last year's 'soft exit'. One statement from the Monitors was that there were no significant issues to be aware of but once the final determination and exit information has been provided, Dena will report to the County Board on the results at the next County Board meeting.

VIII. Budget Update - LeeAnn (Whitlatch) Norris

LeeAnn stated that Career Agency staff are making increased efforts to get as many clients 'through the door', so to speak, during this Pandemic. 80% of Funding must be obligated by the end of June, each year. 50% of Adult and Dislocated Workers funds must be spent directly on training and 20% of Youth Funds must be spent on Work Experience Program. The Work Experience portion may be difficult due to the lack of participants. This is a problem throughout the entire state with other LWIAs.

IX. Selection of Drop Out Recovery and Transition Service Providers - David Vaughn, Technical Specialist/Planner/EEO

David Vaughn stated that every three(3) years, Career Link rebids the YOUTH PROGRAMS for Providers to provide services. Career Link is in the middle of procuring two (2) of those Youth Programs. Back in January 2021, the 27 member WIB (Workforce Innovation Board) Board authorized Career Link to release two (2) RFPs to select suitable Drop-Out-Recovery and Youth Transition Service Providers. The Drop-Out-Recovery programs operate GED programs for WIOA Eligible Youth, ages 16-24 yrs., and the Youth Transition Service Providers, help those students in the Drop-Out Recovery programs, successfully complete the GED and then transition to either employment or post-secondary education, sponsored by Career Link. The roll of these Youth Providers is similar to a mentor as their staff builds a relationship with the Student to come along beside them and help them achieve their goals. Two RFPs had been released with the Proposals due on April 02, 2021. A committee of three individuals rated the proposals that were received from each of the RFPs. Last week, these results of the ratings and recommendations were presented at the WIB (Workforce Innovation Board) Board meeting. There were six(6) Drop Out Recovery Proposals: 1.) Blackhawk College, 2.) Heartland Community College, 3.) IL Central College, 4.) Peoria Park District, 5.) Spoon River College and 6.) Tri-County Urban League of Peoria. Career Link has not yet received the PY21 WIOA Allocations but DCEO has advised all local workforce areas should expect a significant cut in WIOA Youth Funding from the D.O.L. next year. In an effort to reserve funds for the Out-Of-School participants to attend post-secondary training, and based on the proposed budget, it was recommended to award the five (5) highest rated bidders: 1.) Blackhawk College, 2.) Heartland C.C., 3.) ICC, 4.) Peoria Park District and 5.) Spoon River College. In response to the Transition Services RFP Providers, there were three proposal received from the following: 1.) Goodwill Industries of Central IL 2.) Tri-County Urban League and 3.) YouthBuild McLean County. The intention with Transition Services Providers is to provide the transition service assistance to as many as possible for the Drop-Out Recovery programs operating across our LWIA #15 eight-county area. Career Link received bids from 1.) YouthBuild of McLean County and two (2) Peoria based providers: 1.) Tri-County Urban League and 2.) Goodwill Industries. Tri-County Urban League's proposed service area is the City of Peoria and surrounding areas. Goodwill Industries' proposal is to continue their established program, and continue to serve Fulton, Mason and Peoria Counties. As Tri-County Urban League received the lowest score of the three bidders, it was Career Link's recommendation to award two(2) transition service contracts: 1.) Goodwill Industries and 2.) YouthBuild McLean County. The WIB Board agreed and gave Career Link the authorization to begin negotiations with those bidders: 1.) Blackhawk College, 2.) Heartland Community College, 3.) IL Central College, 4.) Peoria Park District, 5.) Spoon River College 6.) GoodWill Industries of Central Illinois and 7.) YouthBuild of McLean County. Career Link will begin drafting contracts and negotiating with those bidders. The contracts would begin July 1, 2021 and last one(1) year, with the option written into the contract, to extend to two(2) additional 'ONE YEAR' periods.

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

Dena Weth reported on the update of the National Disaster Grant update progress. She stated that for those persons that are new or unfamiliar with this grant, she stated that this National Disaster Grant was started back in late summer/early fall of 2020. Career Link applied for the National Disaster Grant and was awarded \$250,444 and the grant timeline extends until March 2022. The grant is a direct result of aid given towards businesses during the COVID-19 Pandemic and is a humanitarian grant either to assist businesses with COVID guidelines in putting protocol into place that will keep businesses open or to reopen them, in addition to providing work opportunities to customers. Career Link was given the tasks to identify the employers that would fall under the criteria and must be public businesses, not private businesses. The businesses receiving some of these funds are those that have current Career Link clients that are employees enrolled at the worksites and are scheduled for 26 weeks up to a maximum of 52 weeks and the most hours per week they can work is 29 hours for each participant. Their wages are based on the standard wages that that particular employer pays out for that position. When these job positions are established, they cannot be what is considered 'standard-operational'. They must be specifically related to the COVID Pandemic so all job descriptions must be written in that respect and must obtain DCEO's approval. Board member, Gary Kroeschen of Marshall county, asked what happens to the employee when this Grant money runs out. Dena stated that for at least two of participants, they would either go into post-secondary training or go into an OJT contract and remain with the employer, etc.

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

Shelly Purchis (McLean Co. Rep) stated that she has been reaching out to the current customers that her predecessor, Dona Nanney, had left. She presented at the McLean Co. Chamber's 'Chamber Chat' about Business Services, at a recent event as well as a Podcast that was put out by Blm/Nrml EDC to help with outreach. Shelly reported that there have been several Rapid Response Virtual events due to closings due to COVID-Pandemic or other reasons. Shelly is working with Plexi-Tech, who was just approved for the Trade Funding Program. When a business is approved for Trade funding, there are several aspects to the TRADES Benefits; one benefit called RTAA is when the employee would go to another employer and receive 'matching wages' (a type of wage subsidy) as well as training services. She stated that the 'TRADE Program' funding is the Cadillac of the 'Dislocated Worker Program' funding. The 'TRADE Program' participants receive an increased amount in various areas, than what the Dislocated Worker Program funding participants receive: TRADE Program participants have an increase in their mileage funds that they receive and their U.I. benefits have an extended length of time to receive benefits as well as wage subsidies from their former employer to the new employer. In addition, due to the *Predatory Loans LAW* that the IL Governor recently signed, there were Consumer Loan companies that have closed across the state; one in particular in McLean Co. that Shelly contacted. Shelly is working with Emerald Performance Materials in Henry, IL that is shuttering and have three(3) Rapid Response workshop sessions; two in May and one in June. Shelly stated there is a new apprenticeship project with Bridgestone in Bloomington IL that was just approved by DCEO. A few Incumbent Worker projects have wrapped up. There are two Incumbent Workers that should finish up in May/June 2021 with Heritage and ACC Electronics. AFNI was just completed with their Incumbent Worker contract. She continues to reach out to many employers. She has seen many businesses that are hiring and she is reaching out to offer them Career Link funding for OJT (On The Job) training for new employees. BOPI (Bloomington Off-Set Printing) have had several OJT Contracts with Career Link continues to be in contact for future OJTs. Many businesses have let her know that they are struggling with finding employees to apply or even have potential employees show up for their interviews. Shelly is trying to assist businesses, with coordinating with social service agencies and other businesses on her lead team to see how is best to assist with this dilemma of lack of potential employees to hire. She is also reaching out to businesses to use grant money from the National Disaster Grant funds. Board Member Gary Kroeschen asked if Virtual Sessions seemed to be helping during this time of not meeting in person. Shelly said that they have hard copies of workshop materials and just need to attend virtually with materials already given to them. John McIntyre stated that RIVIAN manufacturing has over 1000 employees but they are finding the need to bring in employees for hands-on workers and welders. HCC is starting an electric car assembly program to provide more opportunities for workforce. Governor signed \$7.5+M towards that program for Rivian's Autoshop there at HCC. The need is still very large though. Steve Martin stated that Career Link is very engaged with communication with HCC & Rivian and assisting with training.

Norm Griffin (Peoria Co. Rep) stated that with regards to the Rapid Response, he had four(4) locations of the Consumer Loan companies that have closed across the state; one in Pekin, IL, one in East Peoria, and two in Peoria, IL. The State reached out to these businesses and informed of potential employees that would be affected by these closures. However,

the State numbers were pretty off with the number of employees affected. He stated that the Government had signed a bill that stops predatory loan practices which will cap 37% on interest rates that will be a reduction from interest rate of between 300% to 400% on some of these Title & Loan Companies. The Loan companies decided to close all of their Illinois Loan Companies so that is affecting several individuals. He stated that there has been extensive outreach for Incumbent Worker training to companies for OJT (On-The-Job) opportunities and to assist locating eligible candidates to receive training funding. There is one new project with Custom Power Products for an OJT opportunity. They continue to find eligible people. He is hoping that more companies would reach out to Career Link that may have eligible people as well. Another project is a return customer; All Cast Products. Their training is to help them work with the program that they use daily in various aspects in their five buildings. Rapid Response virtual sessions have been ongoing in the eight county area for businesses that have closed. Flex-Tech had a rapid response session by Career Link. Norm said he reached out to Mason City, IL Bahr and has a meeting and said they will be closing so a Virtual Rapid Response service will be provided. There have had multiple companies about the lack of people to fill positions in their businesses. Morton Industries has had problems keeping people even after a week. They just stop showing up. IBP Plastics, Morton Industries, Krafts, Parsons and Case are all actively seeking employees and having a difficult time in filling positions and keeping them employed. Another project with ISO in Peoria, IL will help grow their business and add more employees. He and Shelly have been working closely with Career Link FACEBOOK page and keeping it updated. Norm and Shelly are setting up a Virtual Rapid Response Services to other businesses as well as resources. Shelly and Norm are planning to hold a Virtual Job Fair on the IL workNet site at the end of May 2021. Morton Industries is holding OPEN JOB FAIRS every Thursday in person. If a person walks in and is qualified, they will walk out with a job. They are that desperate. There was no further discussion.

XII. OSO Report – Warren Cheatham, One Stop Manager

Warren provided a report on the OSO (One Stop Operator) current quarter. Per the report numbers, COVID-19 has had a dramatic impact on referrals due to the flow decrease of customers coming into the One Stop Center facility. He stated that the costs for utilizing Midwest Advertisement Customer Lead report which is Communications marketing program using Facebook will be reviewed by the partner Agencies, for discussion regarding the expense for providing this service and the pros/cons of using this service. There was a lack of responses/inquiries from outside potential customers, during COVID-19 Pandemic. Warren stated that there was a referral system used in Danville, IL and possibly to Champaign at a cost of \$30K annually. Still waiting on their input and the success of this program. All partners are looking to having an electronic referral system to make doing referrals easier and keeping track of what's taking place with the referral, as well.

XIII. Other Comments

Steve stated that Career Link is continuing to move forward in provided Business services and participant training services throughout the Pandemic and at some point in time, whether in the fall or whenever, we will be able to meet again in person. David Zimmerman agreed and stated that these days have been and continue to be very trying times for everyone.

XIV. Public Comments

There were no Public Comments

XV. Adjournment

Chairman, David Zimmerman adjourned the meeting. Adjournment time: 9:55 pm

Respectfully submitted,

Recording Secretary,
Theresa Kotte, Executive Assistant
LWIA #15