

Duluth Workforce Development Board
Monday, September 21, 2020 – 2:00-4:00 p.m.

Virtual Meeting through WebEx Events

Meeting Minutes

Present:

Anthony Bonds, Assistant Superintendent, ISD 709
Kim Burke, Workforce Development & Sourcing Specialist, Essentia Health
Andrea Chartier, Career Services, College of St. Scholastica
Shayla Drake, HR/Payroll Coordinator, Aftenro
Brian Durand, Project Executive, McGough
Emily Edison, Executive Director, SOAR Career Solutions
Claire Farmer-Lies, Marketing & Communications Specialist, Residential Services Inc.
Lindsey Growette Stingle, Human Resources Director, National Bank of Commerce
Marla Halvorson, HR Director, St. Luke's
Monica Haynes, Director, UMD Bureau of Business & Economic Research
Duane Hill, District Engineer, Minnesota Department of Transportation
Julie Johnson Atkinson, Vice President of Sales, Visit Duluth
Pam Kramer, Executive Director, Duluth LISC
Art Larsen, Field Operations Area Manager, DEED
Jay Ott, Owner and CEO, AdMax
Paul Pedersen, Director of Outreach, MAC-V
Erik Simonson, Executive Director of Continuing Education and Customized Training, Lake Superior College
Renee Van Nett, Community Services Director, AFL-CIO/United Way
Ian Vincent, Senior Business Developer, APEX
Sonia Vinnos, Rehab Manager, DEED Vocational Rehabilitation Services
Elena Foshay, Director, Duluth Workforce Development
Carson Gorecki, Northeast Regional Labor Market Analyst, DEED
Shawn Herhusky, Workforce Strategy Consultant, DEED
Carol Turner, Operations Manager, Duluth Workforce Development

Meeting called to order 2:04

Action Items:

- Approval of minutes from June 15, 2020 meeting.

Updates & Announcements:

- Welcome to new member, Anthony Bonds, Assistant Superintendent, ISD 709.
- The physical location of CareerForce remains closed, but still serving clients. DEED staff have received over 3000 calls since April regarding unemployment insurance and finding jobs. DWD

staff are managing social media, with an increasing number of job seekers reaching out to us that way. We're seeing more referrals from K-12 and college education partners.

- Art Larsen provided an update on virtual services provided. Locally, staff are providing one-on-one resume reviews and mock interviews. Statewide, DEED staff are hosting weekly job clubs, resume classes, and computer skills classes. The phone is still point of contact for a lot of people to our services. Art has been leading a lot of statewide efforts to convert to virtual services.
- A Drive-Through Job Fair was held at Wheeler Field September 16. 198 participants received a bag with job postings/flyers provided by 50 employers, and some received short job counseling sessions with job counselors. Follow up survey will be sent to employers.
- Local hiring events have been held with multiple employers in fields of long-term care and hospitality. Currently planning an event regarding jobs in transportation. Two or three employers give a presentation at each event. Job seekers can talk to employers for more information.
- Webinar hosted for employers to provide supportive environment for parents of school-aged kids. Duluth superintendent presented and information from other area school districts was shared as well. 75 employers participated.
- Large layoffs have occurred in our community. A two-year grant from the state was received to serve VERSO employees. A webinar was hosted on MNSure. Currently creating a webinar on how to start a small business and making sure employees get individualized attention.
- The Digital Inclusion Initiative formed to close digital divide in the community. Organizations participating include DWD, LISC, Soar, Community Action Duluth, ISD 709, Lighthouse, and others. SOAR is offering an IT training in partnership with Lake Superior College. Currently in recruitment stage, and classes start in October. Training will prepare participants for an entry level job in IT or help teach digital literacy to people receiving free devices through this initiative. Send referrals to SOAR. DWD responsible for employer engagement.
- Pipeline program, employer education training partnership program supported by state grants, holding virtual event on September 30.
- Wealth Entrepreneurship Economic Sustainability (WEES) Working Group is tasked with coming up with an action plan to strengthen workforce and entrepreneurship to benefit people of color in our community. Organizations participating include: LISC, Community Action Duluth, DWD, NAACP, SOAR, Family Freedom Center, Family Rise Together, representatives of the Indigenous community, and Entrepreneur Fund. They gathered feedback with surveys and will compile information to create an action plan. Emily Edison reported on initial findings.
- LISC has virtual annual event on September 22.

- Sonia Vinnes shared that Vocational Rehabilitation Services (VRS) is continuing to meet with clients virtually. They are reaching out to clients and people in their support systems to make sure that individuals have the opportunity to work.
- Elena Foshay is working on the 2021 budget, and will be giving a budget update at the next board meeting. The city's budget is looking better than we had hoped. Actions we took to quickly cut budget were beneficial to our department. A little additional state funding and city CARES Act funding through CDBG was received. 2021 is looking okay. Elena will present budget at October 26 city council presentation.

Committee Updates:

Governance Committee: Looking for new members for several committees due to layoffs, prioritizing including people of color and looking for other ways to improve diversity of board overall. Also making sure that everyone on the board is in a committee, and updating committee assignments. Please communicate with Elena or Monica if you want to join a committee.

Talent Attraction: This committee was formed right before COVID. Lost Board member participants due to layoffs. Put on hold until new Board representatives step up to chair the committee. The work will continue, Northforce is leading talent attraction for the region and we will continue to support that.

Youth Committee: Has been actively meeting and talking a lot about youth services, both in and out of school. What do young adults need, especially those not engaged in school, struggling, or falling through cracks? What does our in-school work look like?

Equity Committee: A lot of their work has focused on the employer tool kit to help employers focus on equity and inclusion around recruiting, hiring, on boarding, and retention. The final version is not ready to approve at this meeting. Members would like the chance to look over the final draft and vote will be taken by email. There will be a deadline to approve/add feedback.

Construction Working Group: We had a presentation from a successful apprenticeship prep program in the Twin Cities. They talked about how they have transitioned to virtual training. The next meeting will be about what it would take to move that model to Duluth and add it to Tools of the Trade.

Healthcare Working Group: Float pool event will be held on October 1, for shared workforce amongst multiple long-term care providers. Talking about virtual job fair. AmeriCorps volunteers may be available to help with documents.

Update on economic impact of COVID in labor market in NE MN-Carson Gorecki and Monica Haynes

- Carson Gorecki, DEED Labor Market Analyst provided an update on the impact of COVID on our workforce and economy to date.
- Monica Haynes, Director of UMD Bureau of Business and Economic Research provided an update on jobs posted in St. Louis, Carlton, and Douglas Counties.

Equity Activity and Discussion (wealth gap video)

What stood out to you?

- Statistics about household wealth, savings, investments, minus debt.
- Wealth not growing due to helping other family members.
- Unfortunately it did not touch on history of Indigenous people.

What role does workforce board have to address?

- To provide sound advice on lending.
- Educating each other and employers in community on bias/hiring practices.
- All committees should prioritize aiding Black, Indigenous and People of Color.
- It is every employers responsibly to promote diversity and inclusion in hiring and promoting practices and truly try to engrain that in their culture, that should be our goal is to promote that awareness for employers
- Educate each other on systematic bias
- Support programs that help build wealth - community banks
- Create open doors for employment
- Really focus on what's going to work to bring in applicants
- Support efforts led by indigenous people to take the wealth there is and invest in ways that benefit the community

Meeting adjourned 3:58 p.m.

Next Duluth Workforce Development Board Meeting is November 16, 2020, 2:00-4:00 p.m.