



Workforce Development Board

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Meeting Minutes

Monday, January 29, 2024

Duluth Public Library, Green Room, 520 W. Superior St., Duluth, MN 55802

Present:

Jack Carlson, President, Duluth Building and Construction Trades
Andrea Chartier, Workforce Development Specialist, Essentia Health
Kayla Dietzmann, Director of HR & Marketing, SCS Interiors
Brian Durand, Project Executive, McGough
Emily Edison, Executive Director, SOAR Career Solutions
Claire Farmer-Lies, Marketing & Communications Specialist, Residential Services Inc.
Angie Frank, Manager, Duluth Adult Education
Susie Gilbertson, Sr. Recruiter, Maurices Corporation
Lindsey Growette Stingle, Human Resources Director, National Bank of Commerce
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
Jennifer Oakes, DEED Job Service Site Supervisor, Duluth CareerForce
Vance Okstad, Director of Outreach, Cirrus Aircraft
Alex Ren, Youth Representative
Rick Revoir, Dean of Strategic Development, College of St. Scholastica
Scott Vezina, Director of Communications & Marketing, Goodwill
Sonia Vinnos, Rehab Manager, DEED Vocational Rehabilitation Services
Amanda Yates, Assistant Director Economic Services and Supports, St. Louis County
Shayla Drake, Workforce Strategy Consultant, DEED
Elena Foshay, Director, Duluth Workforce Development
Carson Gorecki, Northeast Regional Labor Market Analyst, DEED

Meeting called to order at 2:01 p.m. The Workforce Development Board successfully established a quorum.

Welcome new members

Public Comment:

- Mary Katherine Faulkner from League of Women's Voters Observer Program
 - The League of Women's Voters in Duluth runs an observer corps

- They receive training and work together as a team to choose boards and commissions that align with their interests. They come to meetings and act as silent observers, but take notes using the meeting agenda as a guide and report back to their members.

Action Items:

- November 18, 2024 meeting minutes approved by all members in attendance.
- Letter to Congressman Stauber regarding Workforce Investment Opportunity Act (WIOA) concerns
 - Board support for the letter and continued efforts to advocate for concerns regarding proposed changes to WIOA was approved by all members in attendance.
- Chair/Vice Chair election, approved by all members in attendance.
 - Chair- Kayla Dietzmann
 - Vice Chair-Claire Farmer-Lies
 - Secretary-Monica Haynes

Updates & Announcements:

- Elected Officials open house at Duluth CareerForce
 - Feb. 28 at 5 p.m.
 - Explain what we do and what role of workforce board is
 - Talk about challenges and opportunities
- MOU/IFA negotiations
 - No updates, not complete
- City bonding priorities
 - City Council approved bonding and legislative priorities for 2024
 - We talked about the library and the new administration has different priorities and is exploring a private/public partnership for this building. The project we talked about before will be reconsidered.
 - What is on the table is the Spirit Valley project, near Laura MacArthur School. It would be new construction of a comprehensive community center. It would include Valley Youth Center, indoor recreation, multi-purpose public meeting and activity spaces, and park renewal. It could potentially be another site for the Duluth Community Schools Collaborative and the senior center that's currently housed at the West Duluth Library. There's potential for satellite office and meeting space for Duluth Workforce Development as well.
- NOAA grant
 - Elena Foshay has been in very active conversation and is working with her counterpart in Northwest Wisconsin with the Northwest Wisconsin Investment Board, the Minnesota Sea Grant Office, and port tied employers.
 - They are submitting an application for a large federal grant to fund a five-year project that will focus on maritime workforce, with an angle on how climate change will impact the maritime shipping industry and all the jobs associated with it in the port. A training program or workforce pipeline training tied to the port would be created as well.
 - The grant will be submitted in a couple of weeks. It is an exciting opportunity for Minnesota and Wisconsin workforce systems to work together.
- UMD Business School, Leading Equity & Inclusion in Business certificate program, Monica Haynes
 - New, 10-session program, taught by nine different faculty on different topics

- It is for businesses and business leaders on how to effectively incorporate diversity, equity and inclusion into their organizations.
- It begins March 1, 2024.

Strategic Planning:

- Approve mission and goals
 - Mission and goals revised and approved by all in attendance
- Carson Gorecki, Regional LMA
 - Recent Labor Market Trends
 - The regional population growing slowly and aging; aging not as prevalent in Duluth
 - Labor force recovery appears to have stalled in recent months
 - Unemployment remains low as those that are engaged and want jobs are finding them
 - Employment has recovered better than the labor force; service-providing sectors have lagged goods-producing sectors
 - There are still many people on the sidelines, be that from barriers or circumstance
- Small group work
 - How can we ensure we're creating a workforce system that is responding to local needs?
 - How can we better ensure we are meeting the needs of businesses in our area, both with recruiting/hiring and retention?
 - Thinking about jobseekers, who are we missing that would benefit from our services? What can we do to better reach/serve them?
 - How can we better engage employers, including small employers, in designing and using workforce development programs?
- What best practices do we want to highlight to the state that could potentially be replicated elsewhere or things that we're doing that we're really proud of? Discussion with Mayor Reinert.
 - Emerging Workforce Committee
 - Proud of working with employers, government officials, school districts, community members and local non-profits to promote youth and workforce.
 - Healthcare Working Group
 - This committee is a strong group with a great representation of employers like St. Luke's and Essentia, as well as dental providers, direct and indirect care providers, colleges, etc. They've had some really great outcomes from their work, some of which have become models in other areas of the state. They've created Caring Careers Pathways for healthcare as well as career pathways trainings and events.
 - Equity Committee
 - Engagement of committee members is key.
 - Employer Tool Kit was created for employers to help with recruitment, hiring, onboarding, and retention with a focus on DEI. It is being used across the state.
 - Lunch and Learn series, DEI related, safe space for employers to discuss DEI topics
 - Measurements-- how do we know the work we're doing is working? An equity dashboard is being created and finalized.
 - Good Jobs, Great Cities
 - Engaging manufacturing sector

- Manufacturing is one of the Drive for 5 targeted sectors
 - Using the National League of Cities research team to guide us
 - Exploring the possibility of having a manufacturing expo, based past success with construction/healthcare and Construct Tomorrow
- Construction Working Group
 - Been an amazing place for contractors, union representatives, SOAR, workforce development, and community liaisons. All come together to discuss how someone gets into a construction job and how to break down barriers that are preventing people who want to access those jobs.
 - This committee has great opportunities to share information, strategize, and network (training, recruiting, relationship building).
 - Tribal connections being made.
- Governance & Board best practices
 - This committee works behind the scenes to make sure board runs effectively. They work on bylaws, conflict of interest policies, position descriptions, annual assessment, mentorship program, onboarding/offboarding, and keep a robust repository of documentations over the years. This is a very well, high functioning board.
- Workforce Solutions Series for employers
 - Four-part series that utilized panel members to talk about hiring, onboarding, and retention.
 - May be duplicated on the Iron Range
- Strong board and committee engagement helps us do more work.
- How are going to know if we accomplished what we set out to do in the strategic plan?
 - The state and federal government does not require specific metrics tied to our strategic plan.
 - In our public facing version of the strategic plan, Elena Foshay would like to include our goals, strategies and how we're going to measure progress towards goals over time.
 - Think about what are the metrics you would Elena Foshay to bring back to the board so that you can do your job to know whether we're making progress and accomplishing what we set out to do in our plan.

Adjourn 3:53 p.m.

Next full board meeting: Monday, March 18, 2:00-4:00 p.m., Duluth Public Library, Green Room, 520 W. Superior St., Duluth, MN 55802