



MINUTES

ROGUE WORKFORCE PARTNERSHIP WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT BOARD

September 30, 2020

Zoom Conference Call

MEMBERS PRESENT:

Robert Begg, Scott Beveridge, Susan Bruce, Alex Campbell, Lance Corley, Mike Card, Bret Champion, Jessica Gomez, Nikki Jones, Brent Kell, Cathy Kemper-Pelle, Kari Kingsolver, Joe Myers, Linda Schott, Sherri Stratton, Kim Whitney, Trever Yarrish

All attendees (members and non-members) attended remotely

QUORUM PRESENT: Yes

OTHERS ATTENDING:

House District #5: Representative Pam Marsh

Josephine County: Commissioner Darin Fowler

Oregon AFL-CIO: Jon Irvine

Business Oregon: Marta Tarantsey

Quantum Innovations - Suz Montemayor

Ausland Construction - Kelsy Ausland

HECC – Office of Workforce Investments: John Asher

Southern Oregon University: Max Brooks

Rogue Community College: Diane Hoover, Donna D’Inzillo

EQUUS: Tabitha Northrop

Oregon Employment Department: Kok Foo, Tammy Schroeder

Youth Pathways Partnership: Joshua Shannon

College Dreams: Jen Perry

Rogue Workforce Partnership: Sherri Emitte, Ida Saito, Jill teVelde, Tami Allison, Greg Thweatt, Jim Fong

CALL TO ORDER

The Board meeting was called to order by Nikki Jones at 10:06 a.m. Chair, Jessica Gomez joined the meeting a few moments later and presided over the remainder of the meeting.

Welcome & Introductions

Rogue Workforce Partnership Workforce Board Members introduced themselves and the non-members roll was documented through the Zoom meeting participants list.

New Rogue Workforce Partnership Workforce Board Member Susan Bruce, Oregon Nurses Association Labor Representative, was welcomed.

Commissioner Darin Fowler gave a update on membership recruitment indicating that there were some good nominees and that a list is being vetted. He added that we are trying to bring more representation from Josephine County to this board and will be reaching out to nominees regarding their interest.

Workforce Board members honored Ron Fox, past Executive Director of SOREDI and past Rogue Workforce Partnership Workforce Board member, after his recent passing. Information about a virtual memorial service scheduled for October 1 was sent out via email. RCC President Cathy Kemper-Pelle talked about the depth of Ron's work and the impact he had on our community. Nikki Jones added that Ron was a no-nonsense person and she loved what he brought to this group as well as many others.

CONSENT AGENDA

The motion was made by Trever Yarrish to accept the RWP Workforce Board minutes from June 19, 2020. Cathy Kemper-Pelle seconded the motion. There was no discussion, no abstentions or opposed. The motion was approved unanimously.

Jim mentioned the Workforce Systems Quarterly Brief that was sent out electronically and directed that any questions regarding the brief be brought forth. No questions were posed.

ELECTION OF CHAIR & VICE-CHAIR

Nikki Jones and Jim Fong reported that both Jessica Gomez and Mike Donnelly have agreed to serve another term as Chair and Vice-Chair.

The motion was made by Brent Kell that Mike Donnelly be elected as Vice-Chair of the Rogue Workforce Partnership Workforce Board. No other nominees were brought forth. The motion was seconded by Alex Campbell. The motion was approved unanimously.

The motion was made by Trever Yarrish that Jessica Gomez be elected as Chair of the Rogue Workforce Partnership Workforce Board. No other nominees were brought forth. The motion was seconded by Joe Myers. The motion was approved unanimously.

RWP BUDGET

Sherry Emitte indicated that the copy of the budget brief presented to the Corporate Directors on July 24th is missing in today's packet and will be sent out directly following today's meeting. Sherry invited questions and asked that members contact her directly.

Sherry reported that in a response to the Board asking for additional detail within the budget, the document before them today is expanded, splitting out the various funding sources, as well as expenditures, by fund and by expenditure type.

Revenue - Line 1 in the Revenues section represents rollover funds that are monies that are remaining to be spent within a multi-year grant. Line 2 represents new funding we're receiving in the current year.

Administration - Sherry indicated that although 10% administration is allowed by WIOA, our administrative function normally runs below 7%. Any excess admin funding may always be used for program costs (but not the other way around).

Adult/Dislocated Worker - These funds are our largest funding source each year. Sherry pointed out two new funds in this category – the Dislocated Worker Grant (DWG) Disaster Recovery and DWG Employment Recovery. These were part of special grants that the state applied for from the US Department of Labor in order to address the impacts of COVID-19, and will be used in just about the same way as we use Dislocated Worker funds – to provide training and help to get people back to work.

WIOA Title IB Youth - These funds are also funds that we see each year to provide services to youth. High Concentration of Eligible Youth funds are additional monies we receive based upon a formula, by area, of those in the state with a high concentration of eligible youth.

State General Funds - Competitive Strategies, Work Experience, and Industry Engagement are biennial allocations we receive from the State General Fund and are funds that we have been receiving year after year. This is the second year of these two-year funds.

- Competitive Strategy funds are the least restrictive of the three and are used internally to supplement our general systems development work.
- The Industry Engagement funds are provided specifically for our sector work and we are paid as we establish and meet our various sector goals.
- The Work Experience funds are mainly distributed to our service providers as additional funding for client work experience and training and must be matched. We have designated a large part of these funds for a new effort with which we are partnering with AllCare Health that we will be launching in October 2020.

We are co-investing in a SNAP Training & Employment Program (STEP). "SNAP" represents those clients who are receiving SNAP (Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program, aka Food Stamps) benefits. In this program, non-federal funds invested generate a match from the US Department of Agriculture whereby 50% of all expenditures generated through this program may be reimbursed by USDA to use for future services. The reimbursed funds are no longer considered federal funds and may be reinvested into future services and used to generate additional federal reimbursements, thus compounding continuing investments.

AllCare's non-federal funds in the amount of \$150,000 will go toward funding a Career Coach to support up to 40 AllCare patients who are receiving SNAP benefits. RWP's co-investment of \$150,000 over the coming October-through-September period will be used to provide training services to these individuals. This is the first time in this state or nation that a CCO/Medicaid organization will be joining with a Workforce Board to jointly provide these kinds of services.

Other Funds- This category includes four funding sources.

- US Forest Service – will be used to fund forestry work for our youth as the USFS has the need.
- Revolving Tuition Fund – comprised of funds generated in the two previous years by our Rogue Advanced Manufacturing Partners who have reimbursed RWP 50% for training of their incumbent workers.
- The Endowment Fund and Careers in Gear funds include revenues and expenditures for those efforts.

Sublease and Reimbursements - We currently have only two subleases -- for the OED Economist and the Governor's Regional Solutions Team at our Central Avenue location. In addition, we have an arrangement with the Southern Oregon Visitor's Association whereby they may reimburse us for the use of our copiers and for parking permits.

A question was asked about comparing and contrasting building costs from last year. Sherri indicated that rental income is down over \$179,000 and rental expense is also down so it just about evens out.

Other Notes - Jim added that we are continuing to work towards outcome data and have some dashboard information; however, given COVID and the wildfires, we are behind in getting to this bucket of work. We hope to get back on track in this area within in the next 6 months.

Sherri clarified that other than disaster relief funds, we did have a small increase in funding overall of about 4-5% from the prior year.

Expenditures - Include Direct Program, Sector and Systems, and Administration and Overhead.

Comparison to Prior Year – Highlights

	Increase (Decrease)	Reason
WIOA Revenue	\$469,945	Increased allocations and new DWG grants
Work Experience Revenue	\$174,522	Remainder of unused funds flowing into second year
Rental Income	(\$179,538)	Elimination of large sublease agreements
Personnel Expense	(\$ 57,297)	Elimination of IT staff – replaced with subcontractor
Workforce Services	\$776,500	Additional revenues passed on to service providers

Sherri shared that the Corporate Directors did an in-depth review of this budget at their July 24, 2020 meeting, and the action they took was to recommend to the full RWP – Workforce Board that you approve this budget.

The motion was made by Kari Kingsolver to approve the budget as presented. The motion was seconded by Trever Yarrish. The motion passed unanimously.

WILDFIRE & WORKFORCE

Federal Disaster Recovery Workforce Funds & Regional Coordination - Jim told the board about the grant application that the state Higher Education Coordinating Commission (HECC) intends to submit to the Department of Labor. The deadline to submit our proposal to the state is October 5th. If awarded, these will be separate disaster relief funds from the COVID-19 disaster money. Disaster funds may be used to hire temporary workers for humanitarian aid, disaster clean-up, reconstruction, etc. It would also provide funds for our more conventional employment and training services. In Jim’s preliminary estimate, he indicated that because the Rogue Valley has about half of the property damage in the state, we could easily ask for \$12 million dollars.

We are currently reaching out to cities, public works departments, Red Cross, LaClinica, etc., to mobilize what we can to bring resources to our region.

Discussion took place regarding coordination with FEMA and the work that they do. Jim said that these funds that the state will be applying for would be complimentary to FEMA and private insurance. It’s a relatively small amount compared to what these primary disaster recovery funds provide. And there is a lot of other ancillary recovery work that needs to be done beyond what FEMA and private insurance will cover. Alex Campbell added that there is a lot more FEMA assistance in hazardous waste cleanup than in debris removal, as well as other gaps that FEMA reimbursement will not cover.

Kelsy Ausland stated that Ausland Construction, among others, is volunteering pro-bono to prepare sites for emergency housing as well as infrastructure for temporary housing to be in place before winter. They are also seeing lots of gaps in what FEMA will provide. **RWP staff will keep everyone up to date as more information is received to ensure that connections are being made.**

Wildland Firefighting / Forestry Sector - Jim indicated that conversations at the Regional Economic Recovery Team (RERT) earlier this year led RWP and SOREDI to meet with sector industry leaders who are critical first responders for our region. In investigating their needs, priorities, and interests, we found that employers are hungry for local talent to step into entry-level jobs with good career pathways. Based on the coordination efforts to date, the RWP Corporate Directors and staff recommended that the RWP-Workforce Board approve the addition of this industry to our list of priority targeted sectors. Jim added that Southern Oregon is #1 in the state and #10 in the country as far as fire hazard.

Given these realities, SOREDI also has identified this sector as a potential industry to create a regional Center of Excellence around. In addition, Senator Golden is taking the lead at the Oregon Legislature on addressing wildfire issues for the state. So, having the RWP focus on this sector makes a lot of sense for our region.

Board members discussed and made the following suggestions:

- Work with partners on getting a better handle on labor market data; breakout wildland from regular fire fighters
- Cross promote other sectors identifying other career paths
- RCC could offer training but are curious about how to recruit people into perceived seasonal work
- Leverage prevention and fire control into the current training
- Show entry-level positions that lead to earn and learn progression and then show the pathway to more year-round positions
- Creating an entry point is important and can be looked at as a broader career path to natural resource management which will produce people who understand forest management in Oregon
- SOU is interested in a short-term credential for people who developed some experience and are interested in moving into management

Jessica Gomez made the motion to approve the addition of Wildland Firefighting / Forestry as an RWP targeted industry sector. The motion was seconded by Trevor Yarrish. There was no further discussion and the motion passed unanimously.

RWP Strategic Roadmap / Objectives & Key Results

At the June Workforce Board meeting, members affirmed that the basic elements in our 2020 Strategic Road and OKRs were still very relevant and applicable in the COVID-19 environment. In order to update this document for 2021, Norm Kester has carved out time to consult with RWP staff to do a next iteration of applying the OKR toolset. This work is ongoing as we simplify, streamline and create bite-sized pieces of work, plus ensure we're aligned to our big RWP strategic objectives. We also want to break down the tasks into the teams like we already have in the industry sector groups, to better distribute the workload.

Jim invited board members to participate with Norm and RWP staff in framing our objectives using an online brainstorming platform called Jamboard.

Nikki Jones shared that she appreciated the percentages listed on the progress report and applauded staff for getting tasks done during these trying times.

Essential Employability Skills + Personal Effectiveness Skills

Trever Yarrish of Zeal updated the group on work that he and his company Zeal has taken on to task of developing an online app site where students and adult job/career-seekers can rate themselves on the Essential Employability Skills Rubric. And the platform would allow teachers, counselors, career coaches and employers to rate their students, customers or employees as well. Students could then also voluntarily share this information with employers. Jim added that as Trever is developing this application, conversations are taking place with Work Source Rogue Valley to be the beta test site for the roll out of the application. It will allow feedback to be given in a virtual way for students, career seekers, etc.

Regional partners are also exploring ways that might also augment this online tool with the New World of Work badges that's rolling out in many other regions around the state.

Tiffany Grimes at Evolutionary Consulting has also created a set of short online video webinars specifically designed to help develop these Essential Employability Skills. Coupled the powerful 1-on-1 coaching she and her team of coaches can provide, as well as other short online webinars on coping skills, self-care and mindfulness – these provide a rich array of supports to nurture deep personal growth and Personal Effectiveness Skills. Variations of the Wings seminars are also now available to WorkSource Rogue Valley job/career-seekers online, pending the re-launch of the in-person seminars. Our goal is to “bake-in” these services into the usual and customary employment and training services provided to customers.

Jim referred to the links in the agenda for the [Rogue Valley Essential Employability Skills](#) presentation that Business-Education Partners provided to the State Workforce & Talent Development Board and the [New World of Work Badges](#) and encouraged members to review. This is not all about training but also personal development and humanistic growth – how do we support people? Not only give them feedback but then give them the opportunities for growth.

President Linda Schott introduced Max Brooks who is excited to integrate this work with their students at SOU. Max Brooks and Stacey Derrig, both of SOU, are on the Joint Business Services Team and have been contributing to live discussions about this subject, as well as coordination of outreach efforts to create a comprehensive communication strategy.

President Cathy Kemper-Pelle reported that RCC is implementing this in all CTE programs, as well as some continuing education programs. “It has been great for students as well as faculty, to talk about creating ways to imbed this to make sure that students have both technical as well as behavioral skills needed,” President Kemper-Pelle stated.

“Reimagining Higher Education” in the Rogue Valley

An update was provided on meetings with RCC, SOU, Medford and Grants Pass School Districts, SOESD, and RWP that were convened by Representative Pam Marsh on the future of post-high school training and education in our region. Representative Marsh recruited key partners in the community to sit down and reimagine and identify points where we can be effective and ensure that the system is integrated and provides access to higher education career paths of a student’s choosing.

System integration will start with data-sharing over time, automatic admission, concept of higher education/college recruitment structure, etc., with the goal of recognizing that if we want to keep a vital workforce and provide equitable pathways for 5-year-olds, we need to figure out how to make institutions seamless as children move through them.

While parents play a key role, they could also benefit from additional education for themselves. Adult learners create a circle that reinforces examples for their young children. It also enables parents to get higher paying jobs and create a web of supports that, over the long run, will raise the economic and civic quality of life in the Rogue Valley.

Cathy Kemper-Pelle reiterated that although we want to share data to make sure alignment is working, it is easier said than done to work within regulations to create data sharing systems. “We want to be able to track the student success rate across a continuum of education and communicate with potential students and their parents. High school graduates are missing the opportunity to get a jump on living wage opportunities,” she stated. Currently, RCC has an MOU with Grants Pass School District to share data and it’s working well. The hope is to roll this out to more school districts to share data with them in the future.

Jim briefly talked about the group that visited the Pharr-San Juan School District in Texas several years ago that had their system aligned between K-12 and higher education. However, what became apparent was that they were missing alignment with workforce.

Cathy Kemper-Pelle stated that there is really great work being accomplished in many states and examples that we can model ourselves after, where we can start aligning student outcomes from high school to college, and college to university to provide a meaningful transition.

Linda Schott acknowledged the work that Southern Oregon Success has done which provides a great foundation and another way to link the critical piece to having a healthy community.


Jim shared that this work is embodied as part of the RWP Strategic Roadmap, and the key results associated with having a strongly aligned K-12 and higher education system that feeds directly into meeting regional workforce demands. Appreciation was shared with the leaders who came together to do this forward-thinking work. The Workforce Board will be updated regularly on these efforts, as part of our ongoing review and coordination efforts related to the RWP Strategic Roadmap, Objectives and Key Results.

ADJOURN

With no further discussion, the meeting was adjourned at 12:01 p.m.
Respectfully Submitted,

Tami Allison
Senior Project Manager
/tka

APPROVED:

Chair 

Date 2-2-21

DRAFT