



MINUTES

**JOINT MEETING OF
ROGUE WORKFORCE PARTNERSHIP - CORPORATE DIRECTORS &
ROGUE VALLEY WORKFORCE CONSORTIUM**

December 17, 2020 ♦ Zoom Video Conference

MEMBERS PRESENT

Chair Jessica Gomez
Vice-Chair Mike Donnelly
Commissioner Bob Strosser – *RVWC Member*
Commissioner Darin Fowler – *RVWC Member*
Shawn Hogan
Nikki Jones
Robert Begg

MEMBERS ABSENT

OTHERS PRESENT

Jim Fong, Executive Director, Rogue Workforce Partnership
Sherri Emitte, Chief Finance and Administrative Officer, Rogue Workforce Partnership
Jill teVelde, Workforce Development Manager, Rogue Workforce Partnership
Ida Saito, Program Engagement Manager, Rogue Workforce Partnership
Greg Thweatt, Data and Program Analyst, Rogue Workforce Partnership
Tami Allison, Senior Project Manager, Rogue Workforce Partnership

Quorum Present: Yes

1) Call to Order

Mike Donnelly and Commissioner Fowler called to order the joint meeting at 11:05 a.m.

2) Consent Agenda

Commissioner Strosser moved to approve the consent agenda consisting of the July 24, 2020 Joint Corporate Director & RVWC Meeting minutes. The motion was seconded by Shawn Hogan. The motion passed unanimously.

Commissioner Strosser moved to approve the consent agenda (RVWC minutes are within the Joint Meeting Minutes of July 24, 2020). The motion was seconded by Commissioner Fowler. There was no discussion. The motion passed unanimously.

3) RWP Membership

New Appointments to fill three vacant Business Representative Positions – At a previous meeting, Jessica Gomez, Chair of the RWP Corporate Directors, and Commissioner Fowler, Chair of the Rogue Valley Workforce Consortium, volunteered to form an ad-hoc membership committee to review potential candidates. Jim reviewed the [possible candidate list](#) with the group and indicated that whoever is not selected for the three vacant positions will be placed on a waiting list. Jim added that we want to be sure to have strong representation from Josephine County, as well as all our Industry Sectors.

Jessica clarified that the only confirmed person to date is Matt Ochoa from the Hemp Industry. "It is time that this industry is looped in with the community," Jessica stated. In background conversations with Jessica, Matt indicated that he has two businesses and that one is solely dedicated to Hemp and will not conflict with federal laws. His business focuses mainly on the processing of hemp and not on the growing, which would fit nicely into the manufacturing sector with a crossover into agriculture.

Jim indicated that Kelsy Ausland has not yet given her decision on whether she would be interested in joining the Workforce Development Board.

The Rogue Workforce Partnership Corporate Directors recommends that the Rogue Valley Workforce Consortium appoint Matt Ochoa as a member of the Rogue Workforce Partnership Workforce Development Board. The Corporate Directors also recommend that the Rogue Valley Workforce Consortium approve Kelsy Ausland contingent upon her acceptance, and that Wildland Fire Fighting/Natural Resources be deferred until more conversation can be had with these industry leaders (Gary and Brian Wheeler of Grayback Forestry).

Shawn Hogan moved to recommend to the Rogue Valley Workforce Consortium that Matt Ochoa be appointed and Kelsy Ausland be appointed (on contingency), and that Wildland Fire Fighting/Natural Resources be deferred. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Fowler.

Discussion: Commissioner Fowler indicated that the inclusion of legal hemp is wise as they are having a lot of workforce issues at management as well as middle-management levels, and that it will be beneficial to have their voice at the table. Commissioner Fowler also expressed his excitement about the Wildland Fire Fighting/Natural Resources and Construction industry sectors being represented.

Mike Donnelly indicated that he feels that Kelsy Ausland is a good nominee for construction; however, he wondered about whether the wine and vineyard industry should be included as well. Jim indicated that a number of years ago, he and RCC's workforce training director had attended a few of the Southern Oregon Winery Association (SOWA) meetings to see what workforce and education partners could do to support this industries workforce needs. The biggest priorities identified at that time were tasting room workers and Spanish language training for supervisors. SOWA, RCC and RWP partners ended-up not doing any follow-up work on these needs due to limitations in organizational capacity. The other challenge with the wine industry is that, while they're traded sector, the career pathways into high-wage occupations are fairly limited compared to RWP's other targeted sectors. Mike then agreed that this challenge is a good reason to not add them in as a targeted sector at this time.

The Chair called for the vote. Commissioner Bob Strosser abstained from voting (because he was not in attendance for the entire discussion). All other members voted in favor.

For the RVWC, Commissioner Fowler moved to approve the recommendation that Matt Ochoa be appointed to the Rogue Workforce Partnership Workforce Development Board, and Kelsy Ausland be appointed (on the contingency that she accepts), and that Wildland Fire Fighting/Natural Resources be deferred. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Strosser. The motion passed unanimously.

4) Reimagining Our Workforce & Education System - COVID-19 & Wildfire Response

Disaster Dislocated Worker Grants and other grant funds update – A major outreach campaign is underway -Jim shared the [media advisory and infographic](#) with the group and indicated that RWP is working with employers to recruit and pay for temporary workers to assist with humanitarian aid as well as debris removal that is an augmentation on top of what FEMA and private insurance covers.

Employment and training opportunities can also be offered to individuals who are laid-off, impacted by COVID-19 and/or the Wildfires, or who are long-term unemployed.

Since many different organizations in the region will be bringing on these temporary workers, RWP staff determined that the most cost effective and efficient way to administer the distribution of these resource/staffing allocations would be to have them all go a single third party staffing agency. RWP staff therefore conducted a procurement per RWP policy, and Express Employment Professionals won the award to be the employer of record and onboard these positions.

Sherri added that we are only allowed to fund work done on public lands; however, work on private lands that has a community-wide impact are allowable with Federal DOL approval.

Jessica inquired if a restoration company was to receive an award for clean-up, could they apply for this grant to obtain workers? Jim indicated that they could; however, we would not be able to reimburse them for their current workers, only to onboard temporary workers.

Jim said that he has received three inquiries about childcare workers in addition to the humanitarian aid positions and feels we can make a pitch to get these positions funded.

In addition, in recent meetings with Ashland Innovation Works, RWP staff met an SOU intern with extensive experience in manufacturing and project management who is seeking to make a career change. We'll be following-up to explore her interest in working for RWP to help us with business services and the project/grants management that will be needed to administer these new grants.

Communications and Outreach Campaign – RWP staff are pivoting quickly in relation to COVID-19 as well as the wildfire disaster to reach out to impacted workers. Unemployment benefits are scheduled to end December 26, 2020, and a comprehensive communications campaign is being launched to get the message out about the great jobs and career pathway in our targeted industry sectors. The work includes:

- Launch of the [Rogue Careers Website](#)
- Updating the WSRV website
- Expanding our presence onto multiple social media platforms (Facebook, Instagram, YouTube)
- Social media internet ads on Facebook and Google
- Putting in place a web-based platform called Podium that creates a single point of communications for all phone, text, chat and email with customers
- Mass emails out to 13,000 people on unemployment as well as SNAP benefits
- Conversations are under with TV stations to partner, buy ads, do PSA's, have on-air interviews, etc.
- Creating a speaker's bureau to get our message out on multiple media platforms
- Ongoing career and job fairs

Reimagining WorkSource Rogue Valley - This is an initiative to re-design the customer experience for job/career seeker, especially in this age of COVID-19, closed one-stop centers and the need for more services being provided virtually. Although RWP recently submitted a re-opening plan to the state (*the first from any region*), we don't anticipate fully opening to the public any time soon given the limitations being place on state agencies. So, we need to pivot quickly into virtual services, as well as creating bite-sized, "hands-on" career exploration and short "on-ramp" training experiences that can then lead to more extended training or directly into employment. RWP staff also see the need/opportunity to take next steps to expand our "Earn & Learn" strategy that could create real pathways out of poverty and into greater self-sufficiency. Jill is taking point working with RCC and other partners to create these bite-sized career "appetizer" experiences, "on-ramp" trainings, and "Earn & Learn" pathways.

Shawn indicated that he is interested to see what the bite-sized courses look like and the incentives it could provide for companies to get people back into school and training.

Caregiver's Recruitment, Training and Job On-Boarding - The Caregiver's recruitment infographic was reviewed with the group and it was suggested that we talk more about this at the next Workforce Board meeting.

Child Care / Early Learning Workers - Early Learning partners have told us that the region's has lost 50% of its child care capacity due to COVID-19. RWP staff are currently meeting with organizations to see where we can help, as well as looking at enhancing job recruitment / on-boarding and career pathways for these needed workers.

Reimagining Higher Education - This work was recently launched with the RCC and SOU Presidents, and our region's leading K-12 Superintendents, and is in strong alignment with RWP's Strategic Roadmap and priorities. An update will be given at the next Workforce Board meeting.

5) Endowment Fund Update at 11/30/2020

The RWP - Corporate Directors were asked to review the document provided in the agenda prior to the meeting. Sherri Emitte reported that the Endowment Fund is beginning to recover over the last five months. Regarding the investment policy approved in 2018, Sherri asked if anyone had any questions, recommendations, or discussion prior to reaffirming the policy.

Sherri pointed out that RWP will not be doing a Careers in Gear event this year due to high costs of the online platform; but, instead will be using the Oregon Connections platform (more classroom based) that the state has already invested in to provide some opportunities for youth. We hope to get back to more in-person events again in the near future.

Suggestions for use of the funds included:

Marketing and Outreach - Medford School District reached out to RWP and offered to partner with some Measure 98 funds for the new Rogue Careers website and related communications and outreach campaign.

- Mike Donnelly indicated that it is vital to get this information out and feels it is a good use of funds.
- Shawn Hogan agreed and feels the leverage we can get to boost availability to bring more funds in is important.
- Jessica Gomez also agreed saying that it is a good use of funds and investment in moving forward.
- Nikki Jones feels this is a great idea and is the piece that has been missing. "Our outreach needs to be much bigger," Nikki stated; "We have so much more to offer people now and they need to know about it."

A motion was made by Robert Begg to affirm the endowment fund policies and PY 2020 investment strategy. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Strosser. The motion passed unanimously.

The motion was made by Mike Donnelly to authorize RWP to spend up to \$25,000 for communications and outreach in the coming calendar year. The motion was seconded by Nikki Jones. No further discussion. The motion passed unanimously.

6) Objectives and Key Results

Next Steps Refinement Draft

Jim shared that RWP staff have been working with Board Member Norm Kester to streamline a new [Strategic Roadmap Infographic](#) and have been finding great value in being able to drill down to the work at a team level. The new Strategic Roadmap had two primary objectives:

1. Sector businesses grow through a workforce aligned to meet their needs, and
2. The Rogue Valley will be a leader in the reduction of poverty in the state and nation.

Underneath those two overarching objectives are the following key strategies and buckets of work:

- Targeted Industry Sectors Drive the Work
- Reimagine Higher Education
- Reimagine WorkSource Rogue Valley
- Big Data / Predictive Analytics
- Equity & Holistic Focus

Jim presented the latest version of the OKR's spreadsheet and walked through it with the group. This will be brought forward for review to the full Workforce Board at their January meeting.

No formal action was needed; however, the Corporate Directors indicated their approval in moving this item forward to the full Workforce Board in January.

7) WIOA Local Plan for 2020 to 2024

[Local Planning Guidance Letter](#) and [WIOA Local Plan Template](#).

Every four years we are required by federal law to submit a Local Plan to the state that rolls up into a state plan to the federal government. The local plan is a detailed compliance document that must be brought to a public meeting and also allow for public comments. RWP staff will have this plan ready, in draft form, to bring to the January Workforce Board meeting, at which time we will have time on the agenda for public comments. The document will remain available on the [RWP website](#) for 30 days to allow for any additional public comment.

The Corporate Directors suggested having a summary document available, as well as an infographic to share with the Workforce Board.

No formal action was needed; however, the Corporate Directors indicated their approval in bringing this item forward to the full Workforce Board in January.

8) State and Federal Coordination

- [Oregon's Proposed "COVID Recovery & Workforce Modernization Act of 2021"](#) – The Oregon Workforce Partnership (the state association of Workforce Boards) has been working with a few key state legislators, who want to introduce legislation to address the gaps and fault lines in the state's public workforce system, especially to address the pressing needs of low-wage, low-skilled workers impacted by COVID-19. Draft legislation is expected to be introduced soon.

A suggestion was made to include direction focused on reopening our schools. "If we could get kids back to school, people could get back to work." Jim indicated that when it is time for legislative testimony, we could include this topic, as well as topics such as housing, childcare, etc.

- **Advocacy for Workforce Funding in next Federal Stimulus Bill and upcoming WIOA & TANF Reauthorization Advocacy** - Building upon prior work that Jessica and Jim did last year, Jim has been working with the United States Workforce Association - a national association of state association of Workforce Boards – to advocate for the much needed increased in federal workforce funding. We need to make-up for many years of dramatically reduced federal funding, and address the pressing needs of COVID-19 and wildfire impacted workers. There is more work to be done to make our voices heard on what is needed.

RWP-Corporate Directors and other Workforce Board members can expect to get on-going requests for help and support in these on-going legislative advocacy efforts.

9) Agenda Prep for January Workforce Board Meeting

Jim recommended that we carry forward much of what was on today’s agenda to the full Workforce Board meeting in January.

- Reimagining Higher Education
- Strategic Roadmap & OKR’s
- Local Plan
- Update on recalibration, communications and outreach
- State initiatives
- Labor Market Update

Jim indicated there is value to the larger group in hearing what we are doing and asking for their input to point out any gaps / fault lines they might see. The group agreed. Jim and Jessica will talk offline about how to structure the agenda.

10) Adjourn

With no further business, the RWP Corporate Directors and Rogue Valley Workforce Consortium meetings were adjourned at 1:01 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted,

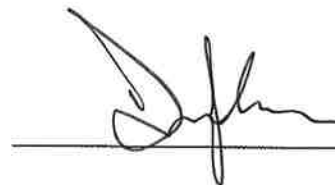
Tami Allison
Senior Project Manager

 03-11-21

Date

Approved
Jessica Gomez, RWP Chair

Mike Donnelly - Vice Chair
for Jessica Gomez

 3.12.21

Date

Approved
Commissioner Darin Fowler, RVWC Chair