



NEMO WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT BOARD

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NEMO Workforce Development Board (WDB) Employer Engagement Committee Meeting January 13, 2021

Members Present

Jim Kolve
Julie Rodgers
Annette Sweet

WDB Staff Present

Diane Simbro
Sharon Hillard

Members Absent

Steven Garner
Glenn Eagan
Lesa Barber
Darin Arnsmeier
Donny Carroll
Mac Wilt
Dennis Gill
Michael Purol
Shyla Brauch
Erin Dennis

Guests Present

Dana Keller
Don Smith
Shari Schenewerk
Mandy McClanahan
Brian Trappe
Janet Hickey
Kim Cull
Erica Davis
Jeremiah Beamer
Sherri Henderson

CALL MEETING TO ORDER

Jim Kolve called the NEMO WDB Employer Engagement Committee Meeting to order at approximately 10:11 am. The meeting was conducted electronically through Zoom.

ROLL CALL

Roll call was taken. Three Committee members were present and a quorum was established. Fifteen people were in attendance.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES AND AGENDA

Annette Sweet moved to approve the Agenda and the November 9, 2020 Meeting Minutes. Julie Rogers seconded the motion and the motion was approved.

ST. LOUIS COUNTY ECONOMIC RESCUE TEAM REPORT 2020

Jim said he shared the St. Louis County Economic Rescue Team Report 2020 because it contained a lot of good information. He said multiple issues were defined in the report and said they were trying to put

together action items to address those issues. He said the report also addressed putting more funding into the Healthcare industry to address the needs there due to COVID.

WORKFORCE 2030 REPORT FROM THE MO CHAMBER OF COMMERCE

Jim said the Workforce 2031 Report from the Missouri Chamber of Commerce put together by RCGA was another good report. Their major issue last year was working with the business climate. This year their major issue is working to improve workforce development. The report addresses the lack of skilled workers and workers with miss-matched skills. Only 44% of businesses are satisfied with the availability of skilled workers. Only 15% of the businesses believe the high schools are preparing students for the workforce. They felt that the number one issue was to upskill current workers. Their number two issue was to right-skill workers entering the workforce. They want MO to have 100% of their communities Certified Work Ready. Jim also noted that the WIOA MO Annual report from the MO Department of Higher Education Workforce Development also contained a lot of valuable information.

ROUNDTABLE DISCUSSION – ALL ATTENDEES INVITED TO SHARE EVENTS, ETC.

Diane said in the Hannibal Economic Development Committee was working on a project to be used around the region. They are developing a video of area job opportunities to be used in classrooms for outreach to students. They have received videos from area employers and she is in the process of putting together a Request for Proposal to hire someone to put all those videos together. They would like to add a piece to the video where a student will get to interview an employer. Some of the things they hope to be able to share are the various job opportunities within a company such as opportunities for advancement and the skills and education needed for employment in a particular career.

Diane said she is a member of the Missouri Northeast Partnership and they are doing some studies on the issues of childcare, transportation and housing in the employment sectors to see what might be done to help resolve some of those issues. Diane said Corey, Chad and Allie were at Jeff City today to meet with legislatures to discuss some of these NE Missouri issues. She hoped to get an update on their meetings soon. She said she is also working with a team from the State to address work-based learning and she may be calling on some of the committee members for assistance. She said the NE Region currently has an Incumbent Worker Training going on with Hannibal Crane and she is hoping to put out some press releases to stir interest in the Incumbent Worker Training Program. She also reminded everyone that the region has Youth and Dislocated Worker funds it needs to spend and she asked for referrals to be sent to the Job Centers.

Don Smith said last year before COVID, they spent some time near Kansas City working with Harley Davidson where over 1800 individuals were involved. He said another employer has come in and picked up the site. Shari said thanks to our Workforce Development Boards and our Job Centers they were able to put together a very competitive package to market the site, the employees and the community. She said it was very exciting to see that happen. The company that moved in is Melaleuca and they are going to use the site and some of the workers. There will be over 200 good-paying jobs. Shari said a lot of those other Harley employees were able to find other employment in the area.

Don said Applebee's was in need of employees for their 20 locations in the Northeast Region. So their response team put together a virtual hiring event for them scheduled for January 21. He said he would send the flyer to Diane.

CompTIA was discussed and it was stated that there is a big push to get people enrolled into the program. Diane said the issue we are having getting people enrolled into those trainings is that the test is very difficult and the State is aware of the issue. Amada agreed that the test was very hard and she expressed concern about losing the individuals that fail. The members discussed the possibility of some sort of college prep course for the class. Amanda said she would discuss the possibility with other staff to see if they had any ideas. Youth funding/enrollments and the need to increase enrollments was discussed. Amanda said she may have some ideas on how to help the region recruit more youth and spend more of their Youth funding. It was decided that Amanda, Janet and Diane will meet to discuss some ideas. Amanda said they are continuing to enroll individuals with many options for learning. They are trying as much as possible to get back to classroom learning. Enrollment numbers are down. Amanda said their bond passed last fall and they are in the process of doing the branding and gaining some input on the workforce and technical facility that will be created as a component of that. The bond also included some expansions for their science lab.

Shari Schenewerk said she now works for Project Management who works with new businesses. They realize that there are still workforce issues and the sooner they can get the partners together and address those issues the better their progress will be. As a part of the *Best of the Midwest* and *Talent for Tomorrow*, MO had already identified that we don't have a very consistent message and we don't do a good job of telling our story. Part of this came about when Amazon was looking for a location for their headquarters. She said it was incredible that both St. Louis and Kansas City were in the top 50 locations for consideration. Shari said MO has a lot to offer. She said MO Partnership is our marketing tool for businesses and they are working on creating local and regional branding. Their tag line is *Redefining Rural*. The idea is that each region will have an identity. Along with that, economic development, tourism etc. is going to have a consistent message and they are going to try to do a better job of telling our story. Shari talked about tourism and said Viking River Cruises is going to be traveling the Mississippi River and will be stopping in St. Louis and Hannibal. She noted that there are opportunities for other locations as well. She said the cruise line is fully booked for 2021. Shari said they realize that if they are going to be as competitive as they want to be, they have to do some internal fixes and one of those is their messaging.

Sherry Henderson said she is working on a process to clean up the employer data base. They will begin sending emails to the Warren, Lincoln, and Montgomery area beginning in February. She said they are allowing the employers to send flyers regarding their job opportunities and they are partnering with local food pantries to get the information out to people. They are also sending out manual applications and asking employers to take those if that is how they get the response because there are many computer challenges for people right now. They planned to stay in touch with the employers either by phone or email at least once a quarter moving forward in order to remain actively engaged. Sherry mentioned the possibility of getting some bullet points in regard to what individuals will have learned through the CompTIA certifications and using that to discuss with employers the possibility of apprenticeships.

Annette Sweet provided an update regarding the wind turbines. She said Ameren purchased the wind farm and there is still some construction going on. She said KREDI helped Adair County and MACC to apply

for a grant to purchase equipment so now MACC is supposed to start offering Wind Turbine Technician Certification and also a 2-year mechatronics degree. She thought they had 20 Wind Technicians and that several of those individuals relocated back to the area. She said there will probably be some solar projects coming to the area as well. Some will be private and some will be Ameren.

Brian Trappe provided an update for the Veteran staff in the region. He said Jeremiah Beamer is back at Kirksville Job Center serving in the LVER/DVOP position. Brian said this will give them a little more employer and veteran coverage. He said they lost Randy Lane at Hannibal and now have John Zerbonia in the LVER/DVOP position. They are getting back up to full speed but are struggling with veteran outreach due to COVID.

COMMITTEE CHAIRMAN REPORT

Jim provided information regarding MO unemployment numbers for 2018 through 2020 and said we still have a lot of work to do. He said if unemployment is defined as a person who is looking for a full time job that pays a living wage but can't find one, the UI rate would be 26.1%. If it is defined as anyone who is 16 years old and is not earning a living wage, the rate would be 54.6%. Jim said broadband is still our biggest issue. COVID relief provided over 7 billion dollars for broadband but we have 50 states competing for those funds. Jim said he is currently researching a training project in California called Cell-Ed which is directed toward basic education. He felt this may be useful for the English as a Second Language individuals in our area.

UPDATE ON DEPARTMENT OF ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

Shari Schenewerk update was provided earlier in the meeting.

BUILDING A STRATEGY FOR EMPLOYER ENGAGEMENT

- Step 1 – Define Strength/Weaknesses (Completed)
- Step 2 – Define the Skills Gap for Local Employers (Completed)
- Step 3 – Define the Training Needs of Employers and Who Will Deliver the Training

Diane said Steps 1 and 2 had been completed and Step 3, *Defining the Training Needs of Employers and Who Will Deliver the Training*, would be a continuous discussion we would all be working toward.

NEXT MEETING DATE AND LOCATION

The next Employer Engagement Committee meeting was scheduled for March 29, 2021 at 10:00 am.

ADJOURN

Annette Sweet moved that the meeting be adjourned and the meeting at approximately 11:53 am.