



Benton Franklin Workforce Development Council (BFWDC)

Executive Committee Minutes

March 26, 2024, 4:00 p.m., Zoom | WSCB Hybrid

Call to Order & Welcome

Todd Samuel called the meeting to order at 4:03 p.m. Todd welcomed all in attendance and thanked them for taking the time to support the mission and vision of the BFWDC.

Cyndelle Howell conducted a roll call of board members and staff to the board, and a quorum was present.

Cyndelle welcomed virtual guests, asking them to communicate their names and organization using the Zoom chat feature. She reminded those in attendance to have cameras on to capture who was speaking.

Minutes

February 27, 2024, Executive Committee meeting minutes were presented and reviewed for a motion to approve.

Todd Samuel called for a motion to approve the Executive Committee meeting minutes from February 27, 2023.

Amanda Jones committed to within this second quarter calendar year, spend time at the BFWDC learning about the BFWDC financial practices and motioned to approve the February 27, 2024, Executive Committee meeting. Todd Samuel seconded; the motion was carried unanimously to approval.

Motion to award the State EcSA Grant Subrecipient Contractor, Career Path Services, an additional \$10,525.86 bringing the total contract amount to \$506,828.86, effective April 1st, 2024 – Jessie Cardwell
A budget modification memo was presented and discussed. Jessie shared that due to not spending 90% of the quarterly expenditure target for two consecutive quarters, the Employment Security Department recaptured funds to allocate to other areas that had spent 90% or above. After an internal analysis of staffing needs after a reduction in force, BFWDC determined that we would not require as much funding to oversee the State EcSA program. The goal is to ensure that we are at 90% or above on expenditures for the remainder of the contract period and to put the money where it can reach customers in our community and be spent more effectively. Two of the three categories in the State EcSA contract will have funds added:

- Below 200%, FPL will receive \$5,283.44, bringing the total amount to \$285,292.44.
- Above 200%, FPL will receive \$5,242.42, bringing the total amount to \$122,965.42.
- The Business Navigator amount will remain at \$98,571.00.

Additionally, Todd shared that the Adult and Employer Linkage Committee approved the budget modification and is recommended to the Executive Committee for final approval. He asked Jessie how she felt about the budget being approximately 36% spent. She commented that due to turnover in employment within the sub-recipient and the BFWDC, spending has been slower but now that Career Path Services (CPS) is back at full-capacity and onboarded new staff, they anticipate that spending will kick back up and be back on track. Now that they have implemented an incentive policy outlining sub-

recipient guidance in releasing funds to coincide with the funding awarded, CPS has been providing participants with earned incentive payments. Initially, there were many questions from all sides and administration needed to implement policy and procedures with guidance in place before the payments could be released to participants. Now that the guidance and policy has been established, they are doing better than other areas in the state that have had instilled processes in place already. So, where they thought they were behind, weren't. Together, they have exceeded their target for the quarter in the number of payments they need to send for those incentives. Todd asked if this has remedied the immediate need for unrestricted funding streams. The board aims to create corporate entity funds to address case manager needs, but restricted funds are currently unavailable, leading to a discussion on how incentive funds can help meet this need. Jessie Cardwell and Cynthia Garcia discuss the need for unrestricted funds to help customers with employment and training. Jessie stated that these funds aren't restricted in the sense that if participants qualify for state EcSA and are meeting their goals, the payments they receive can be spent on items that aren't covered by WIOA. Cynthia added that the Department of Commerce has not attached policies to EcSA that WIOA program funding requires to have in place with supporting documentation after backup documentation; the Department of Commerce is saying they just need a case management case manager document that the customer is working and making progress toward their employment or training goals. This has not remedied the need for immediate unrestricted funds, but this has helped significantly. Governor Inslee is embracing EcSA and will be working towards solidifying this into permanent law. Jessie Cardwell and Cynthia Garcia discussed the success of incentive funds for case managers in helping clients in need, with one client receiving \$3,000 to escape a domestic violence situation.

Todd Samuel called for a motion to award the State EcSA Grant Subrecipient Contractor, Career Path Services, an additional \$10,525.86 bringing the total contract amount to \$506,828.86, effective April 1st, 2024.

Board Member Lynn Ramos-Braswell motioned to approve the budget modification as presented, Amanda Jones seconded, and the motion was carried unanimously to approval.

Finance Reports – DeAnn Bock

DeAnn presented an updated financial document provided in the meeting binder based on the feedback received from the Executive Committee. She provided financial reports to the board, including current year budget, year-to-date actuals, and two years of comparison. Bock also included quarterly breakdowns of categories such as dues, fees, and subscriptions, and discussed the balance sheet and reimbursement accounts. DeAnn Bock discussed the current budget percentage and compared it to prior years. Amanda discussed the importance of having prior year actuals and a three-year trend to make informed decisions. DeAnn Bock and Cynthia Garcia discussed the cost of various memberships and subscriptions for their organization, including \$40 per month for a new timekeeping system and \$50 per week for the strategic plan public comment advertisement posting through March. The group also discussed the importance of in-person meetings and the value of reaching out to specific chambers for advertising and networking opportunities. Amanda Jones expressed appreciation for receiving the complete financial reports with the board packet. The benchmark data and historical context over current fiscal year and two-prior was provided with the financial reports to understand trends over time better.

BFWDC Performance Expectations and Goals Update - BFWDC Staff

Cynthia provided an update on staff goal one: Engage partners and stakeholders in completing the BFWDC Strategic Plan 2024-2028, which is required and essential for securing program funding, guiding multi-agency initiatives, and measuring progress and effectiveness. She provided the strategic plan

timeline for context. Their team has been working closely with leaders from WorkSource Columbia Basin, TC Futures, Community Partners, and Board members to ensure that this four-year plan goes hand in hand with the mission and vision of our workforce system and reflects the needs of the community. They have been receiving great feedback from community partners outside of WSCB and TC Futures. Currently, the draft plan is out for public comment until March 31 and is due to the state by April 10, 2024. Cynthia Garcia and Jessie Cardwell discuss their strategic plan progress made with community partners, including Goodwill and Columbia Industries, to receive feedback and implement grant opportunities. The plan will be updated and shared with the state, and Cynthia Garcia highlighted the importance of teamwork and connections made with community partners.

Jessie Cardwell presented the progress made on goal two: executing the State EcSA Community Reinvestment Grant with the state in the amount of \$1,258,323 and executing the contract with our Subrecipient, Career Path Services. This work includes establishing the terms, conditions, requirements, and responsibilities of the subrecipient to support a successful Community Reinvestment Contract, which addresses the racial, economic, and social disparities in Washington communities disproportionately harmed by the historical design and enforcement of state and federal criminal laws and penalties for drug possession (the war on drugs). The contract was executed on December 12, 2023, and is already touching the lives of many participants. Jessie Cardwell highlighted the success of the Washington State cannabis sales community reinvestment program, which has provided \$1.3 million in funds to communities across the state. The program has been effective in providing incentives to participants, with over \$80,000 paid out in recent months, resulting in participants' excitement and gratitude – one participant receiving incentives to uplift herself and her children from a domestic violence situation with safe housing.

DeAnn Bock provided an update on staff goal three: Update financial reports provided to the board – either by updating Abila (fiscal software) to include the budgeting module and/or establishing updated reports that include more detailed information on a monthly/quarterly basis. DeAnn reiterated that the WDC will not be moving forward with the Abila budgeting module as it has been determined not to be the best option. She shared that Cynthia, Amanda and she met to discuss the financial reports and landed on a format that she has presented for approval and will continue with this format moving forward.

Cyndelle Howell provided an update on the board goals: Complete the Board Composition Skills and Health Assessment. The board skills matrix aims to ensure that the board has diverse skills and experiences relevant to the BFWDC's organizational strategic objectives and that there are no significant gaps in its collective expertise or diversity. As there are several openings on the board, this will guide the recruitment of new board members to diversify and strengthen the board. As a board member, it's essential to regularly assess the board's performance to ensure good governance practices are utilized. A board health self-assessment is a great tool to check the board's vital signs and implement strategies for a healthy and energized board. By assessing performance, board members can better understand their duties and work together to ensure the organization is successful. As recent changes have occurred within the organization, getting a pulse on the BFWDC is essential. Cyndelle incorporated the feedback received from the Executive Committee with the assessment and skills inventory being released to board members March 25, 2024. The results and findings will be discussed at the April Board meeting.

WorkSource Columbia Basin Certification 2024-2027 Update- Jessie/Certification Team

Jessie Cardwell and a team of partners are working on certification for WorkSource Columbia Basin as required every three years. They have met several times to discuss the process and gather feedback, with a focus on customer satisfaction and continuous improvement. Jessie Cardwell and Todd Samuel discuss the certification process for WorkSource, with Jessie expressing concerns about the lack of

communication and the need for more hands-on learning, longer tour and potential presentations on programs. A connection site is much less involved than a comprehensive site like WorkSource Columbia Basin. This year, it was even different than years prior. Historically, it was a narrative application. This year, it was more of a checkbox and whether you're doing it or not. Todd shared a personal experience of going through the certification process and learning the importance of having subject matter experts available for presentation and questions. Todd learned about WorkSource services through certification process, found it to be a positive learning experience. The next step is to write a formal letter informing the WorkSource system that they have been certified for an additional three years.

BFWDC Updates - Cynthia N. Garcia/All

Updated BFWDC Organizational Chart

Cynthia Garcia and others discuss updates for BFWDC, including organizational charts. Cynthia updated attendees that Jessie Cardwell will be taking over the Youth Contract responsibilities. She will bring fresh perspectives and contribute significantly to the team's success and the conversations at the Youth Programming Meetings. Please add Jessie to your distribution list for all youth program-related items moving forward.

BFWDC Job Opportunities

Staff Accountant & Compliance Coordinator

They currently have two open positions and have been reviewing resumes and cover letters from potential candidates, looking for relevant experience and skills. First, is an entry-level staff accountant position who will be responsible for overseeing and participating in full-cycle accounts receivable and accounts payable, posting & reviewing the General Ledger, managing monthly credit card statements, and performing other general accounting duties. They will report to and assist the Fiscal Director with cash management, financial reporting, monthly financial statements, and other staff members with overall accounting support. The second, being the Compliance Coordinator, who will be working closely with Jessie and Cynthia with programs and equal opportunity responsibilities. They also discussed workforce development strategies and challenges, including the importance of transferable skills, checks and balances in financial aspects, and finding qualified candidates. Please help BFWDC staff spread the word and share this information within your network.

Adult and Employer Linkage Committee Plan Forward

After carefully reviewing the structure of our current advisory committees (Youth and Adult and Employer Linkage Committee) and hearing feedback from members we strongly believe it is time to restructure these committees.

The Staff of the board, want to take the time to work with board members individually for the rest of the program year and build a new committee with a stronger focus on the workforce needs and its solution-oriented to help our workforce system. We request your support in suspending Youth Committee Meetings for the rest of the program year (until June 30th). We want to build an engaged committee that advocates for programs related to workforce development and supports the expansion of the workforce. Cynthia Garcia suggests restructuring by creating new committees, including a Finance Committee and a Priority Populations Committee, to better serve the community. They plan to identify new Advisory Committee(s) by the beginning of our next program year (July 1).

Finally, speakers discussed ways to enhance community connectivity through public computing, including the importance of having a process in place for selecting connection sites and a committee to review applications from businesses wanting to become connection sites. Grace Kitchen is a Nonprofit that

provides job skills training for women in recovery, including pasta-making and catering. WorkSource Columbia Basin & Benton Franklin Workforce Development Council plan to provide training and certification for Grace Kitchen as a Connection Site. Cynthia Garcia and DeAnn Bock discuss connecting rural areas to the internet through community centers. Cynthia Garcia suggests creating an RFP for funding to involve more entities and think outside the box. Todd emphasized the importance of diversifying funding sources to avoid reliance on a single source and mitigate financial risk. Cynthia Garcia and DeAnn Bock discuss board composition and connections, with a focus on supporting each other and being at the table when others write proposals. Jessie Cardwell expressed interest in the Finance Committee and suggested sending out surveys to gather ideas for the new committees. Committee structure should be more advisory in nature, with a focus on adding value and solving challenges. Committee members discuss potential changes to committee structure and roles, seeking input from the full board.

Round Table

The Ben-Franklin transit general manager Rochelle Glazier is resigning due to family issues. The conversation centered around various challenges faced by Ben-Franklin Transit, including the resignation of the general manager, Michelle Glazer, due to family issues, and the increasing competition from a subcontracted service that provides similar transportation services.

Adjournment

Todd Samuel adjourned the executive committee meeting at 5:12 p.m.

Action Items

- Draft a formal letter informing the WorkSource system that the WorkSource Columbia Basin site has been certified for recertification.
- Include a list of all acronyms related to BFWDC in the strategic plan.
- Present a recap of the areas of oversight responsibility and intended purpose that the Youth and Adult Linkage committees historically covered at the next quarterly board meeting.
- Add the Grace Kitchen connection site to the WorkSource MOU. Get the site WorkSource certified.
- Set up the 3 laptops purchased with OHDC funds at the Mid-Columbia Library connection site.
- Develop an application process for potential new connection sites. Form a committee to review applications.
- Schedule a visit for interested board members to tour the Grace Kitchen connection site once it is set up.
- Fill the open BFWDC staff accountant and compliance coordinator positions. Extend job listing deadline if needed to get qualified applicants.
- Provide quarterly full financial reports to the board rather than monthly summary reports.
- Add columns for year-to-date budget and percentage columns to the monthly financial report.
- Complete the board composition skills matrix and board health matrix surveys.

Next Meeting

Executive Committee Meeting – Tuesday, April 30, 2024, 3:15 p.m. WSCB Room 7 | Zoom Hybrid

Quarterly Board Meeting – Tuesday, April 30, 2024, at 4:00 p.m. WSCB Room 8 | Zoom Hybrid

Attendance

Chief Local Elected Officials	Board Members	Staff to the Board	Guests	Excused
	Todd Samuel	Cynthia Garcia DeAnn Bock	Jan Warren	Will McKay Clint Didier
	Lynn Ramos-Braswell Amanda Jones	Cyndelle Howell Jessie Cardwell		Adolfo de Leon

Respectfully Submitted:

Todd J. Samuel

5/2/2024

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Todd Samuel, Board Chair

Date

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Lynn Ramos-Braswell, Board Secretary

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Lynn Ramos-Braswell, Board Secretary

Date