



Benton Franklin Workforce Development Council (BFWDC)

Executive Committee Minutes

September 28, 2021

4:00 p.m.

Zoom

Present

Commissioner McKay
Todd Samuel
Adolfo de Leon
Dennis Williamson
Amanda Jones

Excused

Commissioner Didier
Melanie Olson

Absent

N/A

BFWDC Staff

Tiffany Scott
Jan Warren
David Chavey-Reynaud
Diana Hamilton
Cynthia Garcia
Jamilet Nerell
Jessie Cardwell
DeAnn Bock

Board Member

Jennie Weber

Call to Order

Todd Samuel called the meeting to order at 4:02 p.m. He thanked all for attending the Executive Committee Meeting of the BFWDC and expressed his appreciation for everyone taking time out of their busy schedules.

Roll Call

Tiffany Scott presented a land tribute acknowledging the traditional, ancestral territories of the Cayuse, Walla Walla, and Palouse 1st Nations.

Tiffany reported excused absences and conducted a roll call of the Benton-Franklin County Commissioners, BFWDC Executive Members, Board Members, and BFWDC Staff.

Tiffany welcomed guests and asked that they communicate their name and organization using the Zoom chat feature.

Minutes

Todd Samuel provided the minutes from the August 31, 2021, Executive Committee Meeting for members to review.

De Leon moved to approve August 31, 2021, Executive Committee Meeting Minutes as presented, seconded by McKay. Motion carried.

Finance Reports as of 7/31/21

Jan Warren thanked DeAnn Bock for bringing up the documents. The first report was the balance sheet for the Corporate Entity. There were just some minor changes on the balance sheet. A receivable line is no longer there since the deposit for the accrued vacation has been processed. On the next slide, Jan discussed the year-to-date interest. The interest is for the money market account for July. In the balance sheet for the BFWDC, she created a separate line item for the Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) receivable. It is easier to track when we look at it to separate it from the Employment Security Department (ESD) outstanding grants.

Jan communicated that the slides cover the first month of the program year. The reports are weighted with some one-time expenses, like liability insurance premium, membership dues (Washington Workforce Association (WWA), for example). WWA dues are a significant part of the BFWDC dues and fees expenses. Some of the line items will be a one-time expense paid at the beginning of the year. Then, we'll budget for the current period. Jan can usually tell within a month or two when those are going to take place.

With the reopening of the building, the BFWDC did have some unexpected expenses. It was discovered that the office had a freezing side and a comfortable side. The BFWDC needed to have some HVAC services as a result. Jan mentioned that DeAnn had had some great ideas for streamlining some of our practices and improving efficiencies.

The BFWDC did purchase some software to facilities those changes. Jan drew members' attention to the revenue portion. The BFWDC is just getting started with the CDBG. The miscellaneous and other revenue is a placeholder. Jan reflected a zero there, although the BFWDC did have some expenses. It will be fixed on the following statement. All the totals are correct, it is just the split on the grant revenue, and the other miscellaneous revenue is not what it shows. Overall, there are no surprises with the first month of the year.

The BFWDC salaries are over the budgeted line item. Jan stated that whenever there is turnover in staff, there is a temporary fluctuation in some expenses because the BFWDC pays out the accrued vacation and the salaries, payroll taxes, and benefits. The BFWDC does pay benefits in advance, so there was a refund that was posted in July. The minor variances in the budget were timing issues. Jan called for member questions; none were asked.

Jan moved on to the following report in the member packet. There were the same minimal changes on the balance sheet for the WorkSource account. The activity is consistent, so it stays about the same from month to month. Jan communicated that there was the same situation with the WorkSource building reopening on July 1. One timing issue was that the carpet cleaning was budgeted for June but could not be scheduled. This expenditure will be off for a month. Other WorkSource Columbia Basin (WSCB) purchases were due to the physical center opening and maintenance. Jan asked for member questions. Todd wanted to know what number he should use when answering the question, "what is the number of funds that the BFWDC managers?" Jan replied, \$4,696,929 was reflected in the report title column. Todd thanked Jan for her presentation and commented he would use the amount of just under 5 million.

Chief Executive Officer Items

Tiffany Scott shared a summary of advocacy work that the Washington Workforce Association (WWA) is doing on behalf of local areas.

Washington State Chief of Staff Correspondence

On September 20, WWA sent a letter to Governor Inslee's Chief of Staff, Jamila Thomas, requesting a conversation regarding the failure of the Employment Security Department (ESD) to provide a statewide workforce development data management and labor exchange system that works. WWA felt obligated to escalate concerns due to the negative impacts a failed system has on local areas. In addition, with a replacement pending, ESD cannot have another severe misstep. In the letter, WWA is asking for:

- Policy & Financial support for the State Workforce Training and Education Coordinating Board (WTECB) to take an active role in providing oversight and accountability for large-scale projects that affect the entire workforce development system, a key role spelled out in the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act.
- Recognition that replacement is not just about the technology. People and Processes precede the technology component. Without precise attention and improvements to the first two components, the technology effort will fail again.
- Consensus building among key stakeholders on what is in scope and out of range for the project.
- Transparent accounting of financial investment with tracking of dollars and time spent. A role we expect the Office of the Chief Information Office will play.

Tiffany Communicated that out of respect for partnership; the WWA Executive Leadership met with ESD Commissioner Cami Feek and her executive team as a professional courtesy before sending this letter to Jamila Thomas.

WIOA Funding Letter to Senators

Tiffany reported that on September 22, WWA sent a letter to Senator Murray and Senator Cantwell urging support for the workforce funding levels proposed by the House Labor and Education Committee in the Build Back Better Act. This is a critical bi-partisan issue that has local impacts on businesses in our community. WWA understands that the House bill includes \$78 billion for workforce programs, and the Senate is recommending a much lower level of funding, possibly as low as \$14 billion. The increased

funding is needed for critical programs offered in WIOA, Apprenticeship, Adult Education and Literacy, Sector Partnerships, and Reentry.

Miscellaneous Business Happenings

Economic Development Association - Build Back Better Application with Business Oregon

Regional Challenge Grants. Business Oregon has approached us to join the Inland Northwest Coalition for Agriculture and Technology. The project is still being flushed, but we know it will focus on robotics and drones in Morrow, Umatilla, Benton, Franklin, and Walla Counties. The Benton Franklin Council of Governments has also expressed interest in joining the coalition. Since this is nationally funded, the competition is massive. Business Oregon will be asking for initial phase 1 funding of \$500,000, leading into a more significant phase 2 ask still to be determined.

State of WA Department of Commerce - Outreach to Historically Disadvantaged Communities

We will be responding to a Request for Proposal released by the Department of Commerce for Outreach to Historically Disadvantaged Communities. The RFP is due October 15, and a specific budget request has not yet been finalized. There is a possibility that the BFWDC will have the business need to tap into the BFWDC Cooperated Entity Account to pay for minimal staff grant writing time.

ESD Supplemental Decision Packages (Office of Financial Management, Governor's Office, State Legislature)

Tiffany shared that ESD has submitted four decision packages to the Office of Financial Management. They will be reviewed, sent to the Governor's Office then on to the State Legislature. The packages included 48.8 million for a Federal Fund Adjustment, 18.1 million for WorkSource Integrated Technology (WIT) replacement, 4.7 million for Full-Time Equivalent replacement, and 6.2 million for Economic Security for All.

Tri-Cities (TC) Futures Director Announcement and BFWDC Board Resignation

The recruitment and interview process has been completed for the TC Futures Director. Our partner, Educational Service District (ESD) 123, has offered their top candidate, and they have accepted. This Thursday, the ESD123 Board of Directors will hire Melanie Olson, who will begin her tenure on October 1. Due to her new role in our local Workforce Development System, she will be resigning her BFWDC Board Member seat. Melanie will be joining our Quarterly Board meeting on October 26 in her new capacity. We are looking forward to working with Melanie.

The Next Executive Committee Meeting

The start time of the next Executive Committee Meeting will be moved from 3:15 p.m. to 3:00 p.m. to allow for the Clifton Larson Allen Audit Presentation. The BFWDC Quarterly Full Board Meeting will begin after that at 4:00 p.m.

August 2021 Liaison Report

David Chavey – Reynaud commented that when peeking back through the previous liaison reports, he liked the red and green colors showing the change month over month. He will continue to add commentary year over year with each report. Under the WorkSource section, some of the changes are reflected. Benton-Franklin is evening out in terms of where our numbers were pre-pandemic. Our counties are still down 9% in total job seekers and 2% in services to job seekers against 2019. David recalled that from previous months, the gap has steadily been getting closer and closer. Benton-Franklin is up 135% and 219%, respectfully, compared to last year because that was the height of the pandemic.

The WSCB Business Services Team (BST) has broken records and is hitting it out of the park. BST is up 300% on both the unique number of businesses served and staff-provided business services. BST is up 200%, 259%, and 224% compared to pre-pandemic levels in 2019. David expressed that over the past year that the WSCB BST has shown success every single month. There is a virtual job fair on the Brazen platform that regularly gets positive feedback from both job seekers and businesses that participate. David communicated that just this morning; he received correspondence from a physician at Lourdes Hospital that he has been able to fill a couple of positions and get some referrals from the BST. Gratitude was expressed.

Todd asked who the primary contact for WSCB BST is. David responded that there is a directory with each of the points of business sector contracts. The document is posted on social media and can be shared. David conveyed his appreciation for the WSCB BST and WSCB Leadership. Todd expressed how impressive the numbers are, and he likes how the BST has raised their game. They are very professional, and their performance is remarkable. He went on to express what an outstanding job the entire workforce system is doing. David echoed Todd's feedback and spoke about the excellent job WSCB is doing in narrowing the gap between job seekers and employers. Todd mentioned that he was pleased to see the partnership between WSCB and Goodwill Industries for the Walmart hiring event.

David continued to summarize the report. He pointed out that there are some numbers for Economic Security for All (EcSA) and a place holder for CDBG. The BFWDC still does not have any numbers there, and it might be a month or two because of CDBG target areas like the BFWDC National Dislocated Worker Grants (NDWG). With those two grants ending in March, the BFWDC is under more of a crunch to spend down those dollars. David stated that Program Managers Jamilet Nerell and Diana Hamilton are doing a great job creating action plans. David indicated that unemployment continues to drop. Benton county is down 0.3%, and Franklin County is down 0.5% against last month. Our area has lower unemployment rates now than pre-pandemic. It was 5.2% and 5.8%, respectively, in 2019.

David pointed to the bottom of the report and discussed COVID-19 recovery. Last month he reported a 108% recovery. However, that was a preliminary number. ESD reported a final number of 98%. It is seasonal and very typical for this time of year and it does look like we should be back to 100% recovery by the time the next cycle completes.

WSCB had another virtual job fair on August 31. Sixty-two people attended the event, and 44 of those customers received a direct referral from WSCB staff. Thirty employers attended and hosted booths. There has been a new appointment tool implemented at WSCB called QTRAC that is receiving positive feedback. David conveyed to Todd that yes, the monthly liaison report is uploaded to the BFWDC website and the BFWDC Facebook page following the Executive Committee Meeting.

Todd asked guest Crystal Bright from WSCB if she had anything to share about the One-Stop Operator (OSO) monthly report transmitted in the member packet. She expressed that the numbers reflected do not come lightly. The WSCB Team is working diligently to network in the community to share upcoming events. She is super proud of the numerous activities and results, including the stellar 75% attendance rate. Anything over 50% is excellent. Crystal also commented that Public Service Announcements (PSA's) and content on the WSCB Facebook page drive the customer to the facility.

Cynthia Garcia shared some updates regarding Tri-Cities (TC) Futures. She highlighted that the year-over-year numbers served have doubled. Cynthia recognized the fantastic work of those providing business services at TC Futures. She recommended members follow the Facebook Page for up-to-date activity. Cynthia stated that there are 28 GED's in progress at the center.

Executive Member Round Table

Dennis Williamson shared that he had a meeting at TC Futures to share the benefits of apprenticeships with the team. He mentioned that a youth who attended a previously hosted workshop had been hired as a materials handler with the electricians. Opportunities such as these give youth exposure to the construction world and understand what it is like to work in construction occupations.

Commissioner Will McKay shared that the Benton County Commissioner has completed the final interviews for the Benton County Sheriff. They had three strong candidates. He stated that they have appointed Tom Croskrey to the positing and will begin his tenure on Monday, October 4.

Todd Samuel reflected that Pacific Northwest National Laboratory (PNNL) had a fantastic year. The lab is now at 5,300 staff and has a \$1.1 billion budget. He is looking forward to bringing on an additional 500 team members.

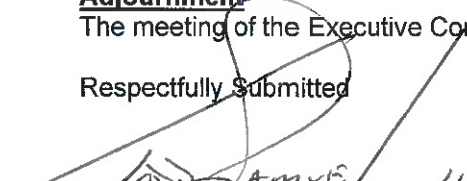
Next Meeting

Executive Committee Meeting – Tuesday, October 26, 2021, at 3:00 p.m. – Zoom
Quarterly Full Board Meeting – Tuesday, October 26, 2021, at 4:00 p.m. – Zoom

Adjournment

The meeting of the Executive Committee adjourned at 5:00 p.m.


Respectfully Submitted



Todd Samuel, Board Chair

11/9/2021

Date



Tiffany Scott, CEO

10/26/21

Date