



NORTHEAST INDIANA WORKS BOARD

JUNE 5, 2020

9:00-10:30 AM

VIRTUAL MEETING

MINUTES

BOARD MEMBERS PRESENT: Darlene Stanley, Keith Davis, Bill Bradley, Patrick Buesching, Jordi Disler, Alan Duff, Beth Green, Jane Porter Gresham, Tim Hartigan, Leroy Jackson, Jeff Kellam, Mark Michael, John Niederman, James Phillips, John Sampson, Corey Schoon, Rebecca Schroeder, Shelly Stearns, Chris Straw, Jim Walmsley and Tonya Weaver.

STAFF PRESENT: Andrea Bolinger, Rick Farrant, Karen Green, Anne Meyer, Edmond O’Neal, Kathleen Randolph, Kim Tempel and Lori Rice.

ALSO ATTENDING:

Lance Halsey, Kent Sellers.

I. Call to Order

Board Chair Darlene Stanley called the meeting to order at 8:59 a.m. A quorum was present.

II. Consent Agenda: Board Minutes, Financial Report

The minutes of the Jan. 10, 2020 meeting and financials were provided in the packet of advance materials. Jane Porter Gresham moved to approve the minutes and financial report. Leroy Jackson seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

III. Proposed 2020-21 PY Budget – Lori Rice

Chief Financial Officer Lori Rice presented a proposed 2020-21 PY Budget of \$4,897,560 and noted that it represented a reduction from the previous year that stemmed in part from declines in Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) funding and a reduction in adult education funding. Rice said the Indiana Department of Workforce Development helped close the gap in WIOA funding. The adult education decline, meanwhile, is due to adult education providers choosing to seek funding on their own rather than going through Northeast Indiana Works, which collected \$75,000 for administrative costs. The budget document also notes that Northeast Indiana Works has received \$131,500 in Disaster Recovery Grant (DRG) funding (to be used to add staff at the centers) and is seeking \$2 million in Employment Recovery Grant (ERG) funding (to largely be used for training programs). In response to questions from Mark Michael, President Edmond O’Neal said Northeast Indiana Works will continue to convene the adult education providers monthly to make sure adult education in the region aligns with WIOA requirements. O’Neal and CEO Kathleen Randolph said there could be gaps in service if the adult education providers don’t get the amount of money they request. John Niederman moved to approve the budget. Keith Davis seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

IV. Indiana Department of Workforce Development – Commissioner Fred Payne

Payne noted how proud he was of how the regions have rallied to make sure there are no gaps in services during the coronavirus pandemic and how DWD is trying to direct as much money as it can to the regions to provide those services. He said initial unemployment claims have been dropping along with the number of people collecting unemployment, but are still much higher than normal. The fact that fewer people are collecting unemployment means, he said, that people are beginning to return to work. He said DWD has relied on technology and hired additional staff to man the call center and dramatically improve resolution of the record number of claims. The department has also reduced the call wait time by 75

to 80 percent. He said DWD is working with the Governor’s Workforce Cabinet and nonprofit entities on a rapid recovery plan to make sure training can be accelerated for people who are out of work or who want to transition to another job or career. He said the governor would be announcing more funding for training programs (a \$50-million CARES Act infusion was announced by the governor later in the day). In response to several questions from board members, Payne said the department is working to identify budget reductions in response to the state’s plans to reduce appropriations by 15 percent in FY 2021. He said DWD staff members haven’t forwarded a recommendation to him, but he said it’s possible budget cuts could impact the employer training grant program and Jobs for America’s Graduates (JAG). At the conclusion of his remarks, Randolph expressed appreciation for Payne and his staff in supporting the needs of Region 3.

V. Coronavirus Relief Funding Update – John Sampson

Sampson, president and CEO of the Northeast Indiana Regional Partnership, unveiled a partnership-developed recovery assessment of the COVID-19-related economic impact on northeast Indiana’s counties, cities and towns. The estimated total impact: \$397.5 million. The intent, Sampson said, is to submit the assessment to the state via the Mayors’ and Commissioners’ Caucus in the hopes of receiving some of the \$2.6 billion in coronavirus relief funds awarded the state by the federal government. The assessment includes medical expenses; payroll expenses; public health expenses; expenses related to compliance with COVID-19 precautionary measures; economic support expenses, including small business grants and unreimbursed unemployment compensation; and other expenses, such as Personal Protection Equipment (PPE) storage and mental health costs. Sampson said the projection has the approval of the caucus, the partnership board, the Regional Chamber of Northeast Indiana board, the LEDO Council, and a majority of northeast Indiana legislators. Tucked into the projection are expenses for expanding the region’s broadband capacity, given the pandemic-related reliance on telework, telehealth and e-learning and the likelihood such reliance will continue to some degree beyond the pandemic. Discussion followed, including an examination of the pandemic’s effect on the agricultural supply chain. Sampson moved that the Northeast Indiana Works board support the northeast Indiana relief funding proposal. Davis seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

VI. WorkOne Operations Report – Edmond O’Neal

O’Neal summarized the operations of Northeast Indiana Works and WorkOne Northeast during the coronavirus pandemic, including mentioning the April Region 3 unemployment rate of 20.5 percent; the transition of staff to telework; the projected June 8 reopening of the region’s 11 WorkOne Northeast career centers by appointment only; and the precautionary measures put in place for the centers and the receipt of \$120,000 from DWD to assist with teleworking and PPE. He and Randolph noted that five center employees contracted COVID-19, but the workers didn’t have to be sent home because the centers had already been closed. O’Neal also elaborated on the DRG and ERG funding opportunities.

VII. Board Chair’s Remarks – Darlene Stanley

Stanley applauded O’Neal for being appointed to the Federal Reserve Bank of Chicago Advisory Council on Agriculture, Small Business and Labor and congratulated the Northeast Indiana Works staff for its hard work during the coronavirus pandemic.

VIII. Adjourn

The meeting adjourned at 10:37 a.m.

(The next meeting of the board will be from 9 a.m. to 10:30 a.m. Oct. 2, 2020 at 200 E. Main St., Suite 910, Fort Wayne.)