



## NORTHEAST INDIANA WORKS BOARD

JANUARY 8, 2021

9:00-10:30 AM

VIRTUAL MEETING

MINUTES FINAL

**BOARD MEMBERS PRESENT:** Rich Beck (RCEO), Bill Bradley, Patrick Buesching, Jordi Disler, Keith Davis, Alan Duff, Beth Green, Jane Porter Gresham, Tim Hartigan, Leroy Jackson, Jeff Kellam, John Sampson, Rebecca Schroeder, Darlene Stanley, Shelly Stearns, Chris Straw, Jim Walmsley and Tonya Weaver.

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

**ALSO ATTENDING:**

Kent Sellers.

**I. Call to Order**

Board Chair Darlene Stanley called the meeting to order at 9:03 a.m.; a quorum was present. She announced two new appointments: Allen County Commissioner Rich Beck, who replaces Doug Bauman as regional chief elected official, and Brooks Fetters of Pathfinder Services Inc., who replaces John Niederman on the board. Fetters was nominated by the Huntington County United Economic Development Corporation and appointed by Beck.

**II. Special Presentation**

Stanley and newly appointed President and CEO Edmond O’Neal marked the occasion of Kathleen Randolph’s retirement as the leader of Northeast Indiana Works. O’Neal read a proclamation by Fort Wayne Mayor Tom Henry designating January 8, 2021 as “Kathleen Randolph Day” in the city and a letter from Indiana Gov. Eric Holcomb that noted her nearly two decades of leadership in “connecting employers and job seekers to build a powerhouse regional economy.” Stanley added that she had numerous other expressions of good wishes that she would be delivering to Randolph, as well as a special gift. Randolph thanked the board, commended those who had given her the opportunity to lead Northeast Indiana Works, and said her work was not a job but a calling. She said the board “has gone out on a limb for us so many times” and encouraged innovation. “I am forever grateful for this board,” she said, “because our ethic has always been to help the governor fulfill his mission, but do it with the regional nuances necessary for the region.” Randolph concluded with a note of confidence in O’Neal, saying the organization was being left in capable hands.

**III. Consent Agenda**

The minutes of the October 2, 2020 meeting and financials were provided in the packet of advance materials. John Sampson moved to approve the minutes and financial report. Leroy Jackson seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

**IV. Audit Report – Alan Duff**

At-Large Executive Committee Member Alan Duff, who has been nominated to be the board’s treasurer, reported that an audit of Northeast Indiana Works for the years ending June 30, 2020 and 2019 had no findings. The clean audit, performed by the Wisconsin-based national accounting and consulting firm Wipfli LLP, also reported a program efficiency of 94 percent. The organization’s 990 Form is expected to be brought before the board at its next meeting. Keith Davis moved to accept the audit letter from Wipfli. Tim Hartigan seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

**V. Chief Elected Official’s Remarks – Commissioner Rich Beck**

Beck briefly noted he was looking forward to working with the board.

**VI. President and CEO Remarks – Edmond O’Neal**

O’Neal noted that Northeast Indiana Works’ 2020-2024 Local Plan has been posted on the organization’s website and will be presented to the state on January 29; reported that all affiliate WorkOne Northeast centers are closed to customer traffic due to COVID-19 and the three main centers in Auburn, Fort Wayne and Marion are open to customers only for unemployment insurance services; said the organization will endeavor to stop using acronyms in its communications with the board, and said a survey will be sent to the board soon to make sure the board’s scheduled meeting dates and times are suitable.

**VII. United Front Initiative – Iric Headley**

O’Neal introduced Iric Headley, executive director of Fort Wayne United, and David Nicole, both of whom are leading an initiative called United Front that is designed to help employers and their employees embrace diversity, inclusion and equity in workforces. The initiative includes a year-long series of presentations on such subjects as individual bias, organizational bias, the threat of stereotypes, facing the fears of open dialogue, and privilege, power and position. Headley, saying everyone needs to be at the table when addressing race-related challenges, traced the steps that led to the development of the initiative, culminating with a discussion with Dr. Pascal Losambe, dean of students at the Columbus Academy of Ohio and a key partner in the initiative. Losambe spoke at length about a “shared humanity” approach to the challenges, saying “we believe that diversity and inclusion gives organizations life. We have to increase an individual sense of belonging, of inclusion, or worth to unlock people’s full potential.” O’Neal said Northeast Indiana Works supports the initiative and views it as an important component in the region’s effort to develop, attract and retain talent.

**VIII. Board Chair’s Remarks – Darlene Stanley**

Stanley thanked O’Neal for making sure the leadership transition went smoothly. “How blessed we are to have you as our leader,” she said. She wished everyone a happy and safe New Year.

**IX. Adjourn**

The meeting adjourned at 10:26 a.m.

(The next meeting of the board is scheduled from 9 a.m. to 10:30 a.m. April 2, 2021 at 200 E. Main St., Suite 910, Fort Wayne.)