



## NORTHEAST INDIANA WORKS BOARD

JUNE 4, 2021

9:00-10:30 AM

VIRTUAL MEETING

MINUTES FINAL

**BOARD MEMBERS PRESENT:** Rich Beck (RCEO), Patrick Buesching, Jordi Disler, Keith Davis, Brooks Fetters, Beth Green, Jane Porter Gresham, Tim Hartigan, Leroy Jackson, Mark Michael, Rebecca Schroeder, Darlene Stanley, Shelly Stearns, Jim Walmsley and Tonya Weaver.

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

**ALSO ATTENDING:**

Fred Payne, Kent Sellers and Alex Corn.

**I. Call to Order**

Board Chair Darlene Stanley called the meeting to order at 9:03 a.m.; a quorum was present. She announced that Alex Corn, who is replacing Kent Sellers as DWD market analyst for Region 3, will be attending the meeting.

**II. Consent Agenda**

The minutes of the April 9, 2021 meeting and financials were provided in the packet of advance materials. The PY 2021-2022 meeting dates were proposed: October 1, 2021; January 7, 2022; April 1, 2022, and June 3, 2022. Mark Michael moved to approve the minutes, financial report and meeting dates. Brooks Fetters seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

**III. PY 2021-22 Proposed Budget – Lori Rice**

Chief Financial Officer Lori Rice announced and explained a proposed PY 2021-2022 budget of \$6,505,414. Responding to questions, President and CEO Edmond O’Neal offered a description of a dislocated worker and efforts to track those individuals, and noted that Northeast Indiana Works anticipates receiving more funds related to COVID-19 expenses. Jordi Disler moved to approve the proposed budget. LeRoy Jackson seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

**IV. Presentation of Officers – Executive Committee**

Executive committee nominations for board officers were announced: Keith Davis, chair; Mark Michael, chair elect, and Alan Duff, secretary/treasurer. Jane Porter Gresham moved to approve the officers. Tonya Weaver seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously. Darlene Stanley later thanked the board for the opportunity to serve as board chair and O’Neal thanked her for her service.

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

Rich Beck, noting a busy board agenda, said he would have no remarks.

**VI. DWD Commissioner Presentation/Open Discussion – Commissioner Fred Payne**

DWD Commissioner Fred Payne reviewed 2020 and talked about the vision of DWD moving forward. He noted dramatic increases regionally and statewide in unemployment claims, average weekly benefits and number of people paid in 2020 during the pandemic compared to 2019 (for the region) and compared to the previous five years statewide. He also addressed a worker shortage in Region 3 and statewide, noting there was a pre-pandemic worker shortage but this one

“feels different.” Contributing factors, he said, are accelerated retirements, reliance on enhanced government benefits, and people living on one income so children can be cared for at home. The overarching challenge: There are not enough people in the region and state to fill open positions and attention needs to be given to recruiting people into the state, retaining college graduates, and promoting quality-of-place initiatives. He announced these three goals of DWD moving forward: Transitioning unemployment insurance from pandemic operations to continued modernization, moving from a program focus to a people focus, and ensuring that data-driven tools and approaches are imbedded in all workforce initiatives. He emphasized making sure people have the opportunity to acquire training for in-demand occupations. He also noted that unemployment insurance fraud continues and he expects a surge in such fraud as benefits wind down. He particularly mentioned fraud through text message links and warned people not to open the links. There was considerable discussion following Payne’s presentation.

**VII. Adjourn**

The meeting adjourned at 9:51 a.m.

(The next meeting of the board is scheduled from 9 a.m. to 10:30 a.m. October 1, 2021 at 200 E. Main St., Suite 910, Fort Wayne.)