



# Benton Franklin Workforce Development Council (BFWDC)

## Executive Committee Minutes

**February 25, 2025, 4:00 p.m., WorkSource Columbia Basin | Zoom**

### Executive Committee Members

#### Chief Local Elected Officials

Commissioner Clint Didier  
Commissioner Will McKay

#### Staff to the Board (Non-Voting)

Cynthia N. Garcia  
Cyndelle Howell  
DeAnn Bock  
Gabby Torres  
Jessie Cardwell  
Raul Ochoa

#### Board Members

Todd Samuel  
Amanda Jones  
Andrew Cook  
Lynn Ramos-Braswell  
Megan McCary  
Adolfo de Leon

### Call to Order & Welcome

Todd Samuel called the meeting to order at 4:00 p.m. Todd welcomed all in attendance and thanked them for taking the time to support the mission and vision of the BFWDC.

Cyndelle conducted a call of board members and staff to the board, and a quorum was present. Todd and Cyndelle welcomed virtual guests, asking them to communicate their names and organization using the Zoom chat feature. Todd reminded those in attendance to have cameras on, to capture who was speaking.

### Minutes

January 28, 2025, 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 the Committee meeting on January 28, 2025.*

*Lynn Ramos-Braswell motioned to approve; Andrew Cook seconded and unanimously approved.*

### BFWDC Budget Updates – DeAnn Bock

DeAnn Bock, the fiscal director, provided an update on the BFWDC's financial status. The main item she mentioned was a \$250 fee that had to be paid for the donated van that BFWDC recently acquired. However, they have now received the title for the van in BFWDC's name. DeAnn and Board Members Amanda Jones and Todd Samuel discussed the utilization of the van and whether it could potentially be sold, with the funds going to unrestricted use. The group acknowledged the need to have policies and procedures in place to properly utilize the donated van. Regarding the overall financials, DeAnn noted they are keeping a close eye on some of the office supply expenses for the WSCB partner, as they seem a bit higher than normal. They want to ensure they have enough cash flow if needed. Overall, the financials were reported to be on track, with no major concerns identified by DeAnn or the board members present.

### CliftonLarsonAllen Audit Report of BFWDC



Emily McCann from CLA presented the results of the audit. CLA issued an unmodified audit opinion, which is the highest audit opinion. They tested one major program, the WIOA cluster, and also issued an unmodified opinion on the federal award side with no compliance findings. There were no material weaknesses or significant deficiencies noted in the financial statements or the federal award side. The governance communication letter noted the adoption of a new accounting standard related to credit allowance, but there were no other significant issues identified. The audit procedures focused on areas like internal controls, revenue recognition, and management override controls. The financial statement highlights showed an increase in total assets to nearly \$2 million, largely due to the right-of-use asset from the lease extension. Expenses decreased correspondingly with the decrease in total revenue.

The cash flow statement showed that the majority of changes were through operating activities. Overall, the audit results were very positive, demonstrating BFWDC's strong financial management and compliance.

### **Program Performance – Jessie Cardwell**

Jessie provided a comprehensive update on the performance and key initiatives across the Adult and Dislocated Worker, Youth, QUEST, and EcSA programs, highlighting both successes and challenges. The Adult and Dislocated Worker exits remain a concern, as they are falling short of their goals. Jessie mentioned that they have implemented a case management overhaul to prioritize this issue. They anticipate that the incentive payments will end in December, so they are particularly focused on helping participants secure exits into quality, self-sufficient jobs. Jessie noted that the median wage for adult Dislocated Worker exits is \$5 higher than the goal, which is a positive sign. She emphasized the need for more data on recidivism and the importance of assessing long-term impact. Jessie provided an update on a specific program participant, who has completed his QuickBooks training and continues to progress through the program to build skills for his handyman business. Jessie and others discussed the significance of apprenticeships, internships, and on-the-job training. On the youth side, Jessie shared that there are currently 47 youths in progress working on their GEDs, which is an exceptionally high number for them.

### **Occupations in Demand List – Gabby Torres**

Gabby Torres presented the mid-year occupations in demand list, including hairdressers, barbers, and drivers. Discussion about the qualifications for these occupations and the need for more data.

Committee members discussed the importance of having a diverse and informed committee for making these recommendations. They noted the need for more data and partner input to ensure the list accurately reflects the workforce needs in the region.

The group acknowledged that some occupations, like those related to self-employment or informal work, may not be well-captured in the standard data sources used to develop the list.

The board recognized the value of having the occupations in demand list, but also the need to continually evaluate and improve the process for compiling it with robust data and stakeholder engagement.

Staff are requesting a motion be brought forth to approve the occupations in demand list as presented.

*Todd Samuel called for a motion to approve the occupations in demand list as presented.*

*Lynn Ramos-Braswell motioned to approve; Andrew Cook seconded and unanimously approved.*

### **Executive Director Updates – Cynthia N. Garcia**



#### Board Retreat:

Cynthia mentioned they are planning the upcoming board retreat which is scheduled for March 12<sup>th</sup>, 2025. Cynthia emphasized the importance of board member participation in the retreat. The purpose of a board retreat is to engage in focused discussions about the organization's strategic direction, goals, and challenges. This retreat will offer an opportunity to build stronger relationships among board members, align on the vision and mission, and work through important issues in a collaborative and reflective setting.

#### WIOA Training for Board Members

Cynthia shared that there is a WIOA training being held virtually tomorrow, led by Gary K. from the state workforce board. This training will cover WIOA board responsibilities and provide additional official guidance. The purpose of this training is to ensure the BFWDC board members have a solid understanding of their responsibilities under WIOA, as well as receive any updated guidance from the state workforce board. Providing this training virtually allows more accessibility for the board members to participate.

#### Workforce Solutions Committee

Cynthia emphasized the importance of establishing a Workforce Solutions Committee to address workforce needs, engage more employers, and tackle sector-specific challenges. She noted that while workforce-related discussions are taking place within the community, the Benton-Franklin Workforce Development Council (BFWDC) is not currently leading those efforts. Cynthia expressed her desire to take a more proactive role in spearheading these workforce development initiatives. At the upcoming board retreat, she plans to seek input and recommendations from board members on how to elevate BFWDC as the primary organization driving workforce development in the region.

#### One-Stop Operator RFP Committee

The **One-Stop Operator RFP** contract expires on June 30, 2025. The RFP is on track to be released as planned. In the coming week, board members will be reached out to form an OSO RFP Committee, where relevant details and next steps will be reviewed. Board engagement and input will be crucial as BFWDC staff move forward with this process. If interested in participating, please reach out to Cyndelle. Todd Samuel reminded As a reminder, this committee will be tasked with evaluating and interviewing proposals submitted for the One-Stop Operator role. This process ensures that the most qualified and suitable candidates are selected to manage and coordinate the services provided at the WorkSource centers. Additionally, Todd Samuel expressed the importance of consortium attendance for OSO RFP interviews. The interviews and proposal reviews will be scheduled if the RFP Evaluation Committee decides they are needed after the initial proposal scoring. All bidders will be notified via email with specific details and timing if an interview is required

#### Full Reporting Meeting Format

Cynthia Garcia proposed extending the quarterly full reporting meeting from 1 hour to 1.5 hours. She explained that they had received feedback from several board members that the 1-hour format was too rushed and didn't allow enough time to properly cover everything. Cynthia also suggested having the committee chair meetings be 20-25 minutes before the full board meeting. The idea was that this would allow any necessary actions or approvals to be taken care of before the full board meeting.

There was an open discussion around the pros and cons of this proposal. Board member Adolfo de Leon stated he felt that the longer meeting time was necessary to ensure critical information and presentations could be covered adequately. Board member Amanda Jones raised concerns about the time commitment required from board members, especially with recently recruited new members. The committee agreed to revisit this proposal at the next meeting, after having more time to consider the best approach to restructure the meeting format



and agendas. The key goal is finding a balance between providing enough time to cover important information while also being respectful of the board members' time and schedules.

### Round Table

#### Workforce Solutions and Apprenticeships/Internships

Committee members and BFWDC staff discussed the importance of On-the-Job Training (OJT) and apprenticeships, noting the need for better messaging and training for staff.

Board members Andrew Cook and Todd Samuel shared their perspectives on the barriers and best practices around these types of workforce development initiatives.

### Hill Climb Event | Olympia

Board Chair Todd Samuel shared his previous experiences, and Board member Andrew Cook provided additional information about the recent hill-climbing event, emphasizing the importance of maintaining visibility with legislators. Cynthia gave a summary of the request from legislators and continued support for workforce development funding.

### Adjournment

Todd Samuel adjourned the Executive Committee meeting at 4:59 p.m.

### Next Meeting

Executive Committee Meeting – Tuesday, March 25, 4:00 p.m. WSCB | Zoom Hybrid

Quarterly Board Meeting – Tuesday, April 29, 2025, at 4:00 p.m. WSCB | Zoom Hybrid

### Attendance

Chief Local Elected Officials	Board Members	Staff to the Board	Guests	Excused
	Adolfo de Leon	Jessie Cardwell		Clint Didier
	Amanda Jones	Cynthia Garcia		Will McKay
	Andrew Cook	Raul Ochoa		
	Lynn Ramos-Braswell	Gabby Torres		
	Megan McCary	Cyndelle Howell		
	Todd Samuel	DeAnn Bock		

Respectfully Submitted:

*Todd Samuel, BFWDC Board Chairman* 5/8/2025

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Todd Samuel, Board Chair

Date

Signed by:

*Lynn Ramos-Braswell, Board Secretary* 5/8/2025

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Lynn Ramos-Braswell, Board Secretary

Date