



**Benton Franklin Workforce Development Council (BFWDC)
Executive Committee Minutes**

February 27, 2024, 4:00 p.m., Zoom | WSCB Hybrid

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. Todd reminded those in attendance to have cameras on to capture who was speaking.

Cyndelle Howell conducted a roll call of board members and staff to the board, and a quorum was present.

Cyndelle welcomed virtual guests, asking them to communicate their names and organization using the Zoom chat feature.

Cynthia N. Garcia expressed gratitude to those in attendance and wanted to inform members that staff are implementing a new approach as they are presenting information to the board. Subject matter experts (SMEs) will report on their areas of expertise, and meetings will not be held in a showcase format. Cynthia would like those SMEs to be comfortable speaking up and having a voice, providing their opinion and expertise during crucial conversations.

Jessie Cardwell added that it is essential to ask questions about the work, whether programmatic, fiscal, or administrative. If the answer isn't available during the meeting, the team will follow up with pending items as soon as possible.

Minutes

November 28, 2023, Executive Committee meeting minutes were presented for a motion to approve.

Todd Samuel called for a motion to approve the Executive Committee meeting minutes from November 28, 2023.

Amanda Jones motioned to approve the November 28, 2023, Executive Committee meeting. Commissioner Will McKay seconded; the motion was carried unanimously to approval.

Motion to award the QUEST National Dislocated Worker Grant Subrecipient Contractor, Career Path Services, an additional \$202,393, bringing the total contract amount to \$546,036, effective February 08, 2024 – Jessie Cardwell

A budget modification memo was presented and discussed. Jessie shared that after internal analysis, the BFWDC determined they had additional QUEST funds that could be given to their subrecipient, Career Path Services. The extra funds became available due to staff layoffs on the BFWDC side, where budgeted staff time for the grant was not fully utilized, including one whose salary was primarily paid by the QUEST grant. The funds are intended to allow Career Path Services to continue serving the doubled number of participants they have enrolled, as well as take on additional business services work that was previously done by laid-off BFWDC staff.

The Adult and Employer Linkage Committee approved the budget modification and is recommended to the Executive Committee for final approval.

Todd Samuel called for a motion to approve the QUEST National Dislocated Worker Grant Subrecipient Contractor, Career Path Services, an additional \$202,393, bringing the total contract amount to \$546,036, effective February 08, 2024.

Commissioner Will McKay motioned to approve the budget modification as presented, Amanda Jones seconded, and the motion was carried unanimously to approval.

Finance Reports – DeAnn Bock

DeAnn provided an update on the fiscal documents provided in the meeting binder. She provided an overview of the annual grant funding balances across all funding sources, current balances, and percentages remaining as of 12/31/2023. DeAnn Bock presented a cash flow summary for the WDC and WSCB, highlighting budget variances and upcoming expenses budgeted in the future and forecast. She explained that adjustments to vacation approvals impacted December salaries, causing skewed spending. Additionally, there were expenses with the HVAC unit replacement. DeAnn Bock is working on a graph to show the difference between expenses and budgeted amounts, with some January invoices still pending.

Amanda Jones mentioned not receiving the complete financial reports with the board packets, particularly the budget report, which has been an issue since last July when there were negative results. She was concerned about not getting the financial reports ahead of board meetings. Amanda Jones also requested that benchmarking data and historical context be provided with the financial reports to understand trends over time better. Todd Samuel agreed on the need for benchmarking data and historical context with financial reports.

DeAnn Bock acknowledged there were some gaps in financial reporting and tracking due to the transitions and staffing capacity issues. DeAnn discussed missing invoices and expenses between departments and not being correctly tracked after staffing changes. For example, invoices came in after the OHDC grant was closed. She mentioned they were working to improve the processes.

Amanda Jones emphasized proper financial auditing and reporting to demonstrate service delivery and justify grant funding.

Cynthia Garcia, the new Executive Director, said she would focus on improving financial processes and reporting as a priority area.

They are working on providing visuals like graphs to better showcase budget vs. actual spending.

There was general agreement from committee members that there need to be improvements in financial reporting and tracking to address these concerns.

BFWDC Performance Expectations and Goals Update- BFWDC Staff

Cynthia provided an update on staff goal one: Engage partners and stakeholders in completing the BFWDC Strategic Plan 2024-2028. The second draft of the four-year plan has gone out to all stakeholders, with the final draft going out for public comment on February 29, 2024. Cynthia provided the strategic plan timeline for context.

Jessie Cardwell presented the progress made on goal two: executing the State EcSA Community Reinvestment Grant with the state in the amount of \$1,258,323 and executing the contract with our Subrecipient, Career Path Services. This work includes establishing the terms, conditions, requirements, and responsibilities of the subrecipient to support a successful Community Reinvestment Contract, which addresses the racial, economic, and social disparities in Washington communities disproportionately harmed by the historical design and enforcement of state and federal criminal laws and penalties for drug possession (the war on drugs). The contract was executed on December 12, 2023, and is already touching the lives of many participants. Jessie Cardwell highlighted the success of the Washington State cannabis sales community reinvestment program, which has provided \$1.3 million in funds to communities across the state. The program has been effective in providing incentives to participants, with over \$36,000 paid out in recent months, resulting in participants' excitement and gratitude.

DeAnn Bock provided an update on staff goal three: Update financial reports provided to the board – either by updating Abila (fiscal software) to include the budgeting module and/or establishing updated reports that include more detailed information on a monthly/quarterly basis. DeAnn shared that after doing additional research and speaking with other areas, the WDC will not be moving forward with the Abila budgeting module as it has been determined not to be the best option. Updated financial reports are in draft form and are awaiting board comments. She will continue to update them as they are working documents.

Cyndelle Howell provided an update on the board goals: Complete the Board Composition Skills and Health Assessment. The board skills matrix aims to ensure that the board has diverse skills and experiences relevant to the BFWDC's organizational strategic objectives and that there are no significant gaps in its collective expertise or diversity. As there are several openings on the board, this will guide the recruitment of new board members to diversify and strengthen the board. The skills matrix is in draft form and awaiting approval to be disbursed. As a board member, it's essential to regularly assess the board's performance to ensure good governance practices are utilized. A board health self-assessment is a great tool to check the board's vital signs and implement strategies for a healthy and energized board. By assessing performance, board members can better understand their duties and work together to ensure the organization is successful. As recent changes have occurred within the organization, getting a pulse on the BFWDC is essential. The draft is completed and awaiting approval for release from the Executive Committee. Cyndelle has asked the Executive Committee to review the corresponding documents in the meeting binder and provide feedback by March 14, 2024, with release to board members the week of March 18, 2024.

Quarterly Newsletter Discussion and Feedback – Cynthia N. Garcia

Cynthia Garcia and Todd Samuel discussed the proposed quarterly newsletter to replace the monthly liaison report, with input from Amanda Jones and Jessie Cardwell on the content they would like to see (the unemployment figures benchmarked against the same period in prior years for several years back, labor market information, etc.). The group discussed including highlights from various reports into one consolidated quarterly newsletter rather than separate monthly reports. They emphasized wanting to compile relevant information from different sources into a single publication. Specific suggestions included key news, upcoming events, work highlights, and financial data. Cynthia Garcia suggested including a board member spotlight in the quarterly newsletter to highlight connections and motivate others. As this would replace the monthly liaison report, releasing the publication in April would allow time to gather content from various sources. The committee agreed that the newsletter would be published quarterly to replace the monthly report.

Round Table

Jessie shared that staff visited the Sheet Metal Training Center with board member Andrew Cook. They built birdhouses with the apprentices at the facility and got to tour the center. Jessie enjoyed interacting with the apprentices and learning about Andrew's passion for what he does. She felt it helped build relationships and get to know him better. She encouraged board members to reach out if they have an interest in staff learning more about their profession or vice versa.

Adjournment

Todd Samuel adjourned the executive committee meeting at 4:47 p.m. to those not on the Executive Committee for a closed session.

Action Items

- Give board members one week to review and provide feedback on the board composition skills matrix and health assessment documents.
- Post board composition skills matrix and board health assessment in the board portal once feedback is incorporated.
- Include benchmarked unemployment data in the newsletter.
- Release complete board packet materials one week in advance of the next meeting.
- Consider bringing on additional fiscal support through contractors or part-time staff.
- Amanda will spend time at the WDC office learning about financial processes.

Next Meeting

Executive Committee Meeting – Tuesday, March 26, 2024, 4:00 p.m. WSCB Room 7 | Zoom Hybrid
Quarterly Board Meeting – Tuesday, April 30, 2024, at 4:00 p.m. WSCB Room 8 | Zoom Hybrid

Attendance

Chief Local Elected Officials	Board Members	Staff to the Board	Guests	Absent
Will McKay	Todd Samuel	Cynthia Garcia	Jan Warren	
Clint Didier	Adolfo de Leon	DeAnn Bock		
	Lynn Ramos-Braswell	Cyndelle Howell		
	Amanda Jones	Jessie Cardwell		

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 Respectfully Submitted:
Todd J. Samuel 5/15/2024
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Todd Samuel, Board Chair Date

DocuSigned by:
Lynn Ramos-Braswell, Board Secretary 5/16/2024
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Lynn Ramos-Braswell, Board Secretary Date