



Benton-Franklin Workforce Development Council

Quarterly Board of Directors Meeting

October 29, 2024, 4:00 p.m. – TC Futures | Virtual Hybrid.

Call to Order

Todd Samuel, Chair, 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 reported excused absences and conducted a roll call of the BFWDC Board Members and BFWDC Staff; a quorum was present as defined in the bylaws. In-person guests were asked to sign in, and virtual guests were asked to use the chat feature to reflect those in attendance in the meeting minutes.

Host, TC Futures Director Melanie Olson provided an update on the construction of TC Futures and the impact on space utilization. Melanie Olson mentioned the enrollment of 145 new students since September 1, highlighting space issues. The board discussed the construction progress of the TC Futures facility, noting that as the walls went up, the space appeared larger than when it was just the open steel structure. The board members who had not yet toured TC Futures were offered the opportunity to do so, with the understanding that the full board could not participate due to time constraints. Melanie was mentioned as someone who could provide tours of the TC Futures facility to interested board members and others. The discussion highlighted the board's interest in understanding the development of the TC Futures space and the opportunity for members to experience it firsthand. There was also a broader discussion about the need for smarter working and the efficient use of space within the TC Futures facility as enrollment and space utilization continue to grow. The board thanked Melanie for offering to host the October Board Meeting.

Consent Agenda

Chair Todd Samuel asked members if they wanted any consent agenda items removed for individual consideration or additional discussion. The response was no.

- Approval of Board Minutes
 - i. To approve the July 30, 2024, Quarterly Board Meeting Minutes as presented
- Program
 - i. Program Year 2024 Subrecipient Monitoring Schedule
- New Board of Directors Member
 - i. Motion to nominate a new Board of Directors member, Representing Business: Amelia Kittson
- Operations
 - i. Motion to approve Occupations in Demand (OID) Committee Recommendations

Todd asked for board members' comments or opposition; there was none.

Todd Samuel called for a motion to approve the consent agenda as presented. Motion moved by Andrew Cook, the second by John Dickson, and unanimously carried to approval.

Fiscal Director Report – DeAnn Bock

The fiscal director, DeAnn Bock, presented changes to the financial statements, including adding a second page to the Statement of Budget to Actual Expenditures to include prior year comparisons. Additionally, incorporating a Statement of Cash Flows showing the movement of funds, particularly the recent grant received from Three Rivers. DeAnn noted that the rent and facilities expenses were slightly over budget due to a final invoice reconciliation from the move to the new lease. Advertising and outreach expenses were higher due to costs for connection site signage. DeAnn offered to answer any questions the board members had about the financial documents or grant funding. The board discussed the importance of the Three Rivers grant, which provides unrestricted funding that

has been a long-standing goal for the organization. Board members were given the chance to ask questions about the budget and financial updates presented by the fiscal director; none was brought forth.

BFWDC Board of Directors Officer Elections

The bylaws indicate that the officer positions, Board Chair, Vice Chair, Secretary, and Treasurer are up for election. If you are currently serving as an officer, we are grateful for your service and the fact that you've offered additional time in the leadership role at the BFWDC.

The nominations presented were:

- Board Chair: Todd Samuel
- Vice Chair: Adolfo
- Treasurer: Amanda Jones
- Secretary: Andrew Cook and Lynn Braswell

Both Andrew Cook and Lynn Braswell were allowed to explain why they would be a good fit for the Secretary role. The board then voted, with Lynn Braswell being elected as the new Board Secretary.

After the individual secretary vote, Todd Samuel called for a motion and second to approve the full slate of nominated candidates.

Board of Directors Chair

- Todd Samuel

Board Vice Chair

- Adolfo de Leon

Board of Directors Treasurer

- Amanda Jones

Board of Directors Secretary

- Lynn Ramos-Braswell

The board unanimously approved the entire roster of nominated candidates.

Todd Samuel called for a motion to approve the Board of Directors Officer Elections as presented. Motion moved by Andrew Cook, the second by Kate McAteer, and unanimously carried to approval.

WorkSource Columbia Basin Annual Certification Progress Update – Crystal Bright

The certification process evaluates the effectiveness, accessibility, and continuous improvement of the WorkSource system. Crystal began by introducing the purpose – evaluation for system effectiveness, customer satisfaction, physical & programmatic accessibility, and continuous improvement. Monitored requirements are completing a full assessment application & certification every 3 years, an Annual Progress Report including best practices, and identified areas of Improvement.

The new certification process uses a checklist and yes/no attestation, rather than the previous complex rating system.

The two guiding priorities are:

1. Creating a voice of the customer culture
2. Reaching customers where they are at, including virtual and community-based services

Highlights of progress:

- Functional integration of front-end services and business solutions teams
- Strong performance and accountability metrics, including clean monitoring results

- Expanded social media outreach and community-based service delivery
- High customer satisfaction rates, with 97% of customers saying they would refer friends/family

Areas of focus for improvement:

- Providing more one-on-one support during workshops
- Expanding access to entrepreneurship resources
- Piloting the provision of food/drinks for customers
- Improving accessibility by adding windows to computer screens

Other Initiatives:

- Prioritized staff training and priority of service for veterans
- Embedded human-centered design principles
- Expanded partnerships, including with AARP, libraries, and World Relief

Crystal opened the floor for questions or comments.

Andrew Cook asked about the instant language assistant tool that was mentioned, wanting more details on how it works.

Crystal explained that it is a translation technology device (Instant Language Assistant {ILA}) used to quickly identify the language a customer speaks and connect them with a translator.

Todd asked about any new ideas or initiatives the front-end service team has been working on.

Crystal mentioned the city-based workshops that are being partnered with business and education to help inform and connect customers.

Todd Samuel thanked Crystal and the team for their excellent work, particularly in highlighting the success stories and impact on state legislators during the recent EcSA visit.

WorkSource Columbia Basin Community Connections Site – Cynthia Garcia

- Prosser – Mid Columbia Libraries (**Needs a vote**)
 - i. Andrew Cook & Amanda Jones
- Grace Kitchen - Amanda/Satara Impact Presentation – tabled to January.

Todd Samuel emphasized that the connection sites are a long-standing board goal (over 7 years) to increase the reach and impact of workforce services in the region. He clarified that the connection sites are not intended to take away from the main WorkSource Columbia Basin location, but rather to meet people where they are and serve those who may not be able to access the main office. The board unanimously voted to support moving forward with the establishment of the connection sites, based on the information provided. Todd Samuel emphasized the importance of the connection sites in increasing the board's overall reach and impact in the community, which has been a long-standing goal.

WorkSource Columbia Basin Memorandum of Understanding | Infrastructure Agreement Modification – Cynthia N. Garcia

Cynthia provided an update on the status of the WorkSource Columbia Basin Memorandum of Understanding and IFA. She shared that it is taking a little longer than expected to get all the signatures (missing 2-3 signatures) before it can go to the county commissioners for final approval. The goal is to get the Benton County Commissioner's signature on November 4th or 5th, and then follow up with Franklin County. Cynthia mentioned that they have updated the goals and effective dates in the IFA and have also added AARP as a new partner. Todd Samuel emphasized the importance of getting the final signatures so the IFA can be approved by the county commissioners in a timely manner. Cynthia reiterated the need for the board members to sign the IFA document as soon as possible, as any delays could push the approval process out by another week.

State of the Industries Presentation – Ajsa Suljic, Regional Labor Economist

Ajsa Suljic provided a data-driven overview of the current state of the regional and state labor markets, highlighting both areas of growth and potential challenges going forward. Statewide, the labor force has been growing, but at a slower rate than job growth, leading to a labor shortage.

Labor Market Growth: The statewide labor force has been growing, although at a slower rate compared to job growth, resulting in a labor shortage.

Industry Highlights: The construction industry has experienced significant growth, with rates exceeding 30% in the past year. Sectors such as healthcare and education have also shown considerable expansion.

Sustainability Concerns: Ajsa raised concerns regarding the sustainability of the current labor force growth, noting that it is primarily driven by immigration rather than natural population increases.

Demographic Changes: There has been a noticeable shift in the demographics of the labor force, with an increase in the percentage of jobs held by individuals with less than a college degree, while the growth of jobs requiring a bachelor's degree has decelerated.

Certain industries like construction have seen very high growth rates, over 30% in the past year. Other sectors like healthcare and education have also seen significant expansion. However, there are concerns about the sustainability of the current labor force growth, as it is being driven more by immigration than natural population increases. Ajsa discussed the changing demographics of the labor force, with increases in the percentage of jobs held by those with less than a college degree, while jobs requiring a bachelor's degree have grown at a slower pace. Crystal Bright inquired about Ajsa's perspective on the factors influencing these labor force changes, including caregiving responsibilities and retirement trends. Ajsa acknowledged the complexity of the factors at play and emphasized the need for further research and analysis to fully understand the underlying causes of these dynamics.

Ajsa offered to provide the full slide deck to the board members if they wanted to review the data and information in more detail. Cyndelle to disburse the provided slide deck to those in attendance to review the information in further detail.

Member Updates & Business Engagement

The board expresses support for ongoing efforts to support workers and businesses in the region. The meeting concluded with a commitment to continue working together to address workforce development challenges and opportunities.

Jessie Cardwell and Crystal Bright provided an update on the situation at the Connell potato factory closure. The closure has presented some unique challenges, as the worker group is mostly Spanish-speaking, and the workers are dispersed across different locations rather than all being at the factory site. The ESD team has been doing extensive outreach through various channels, including TV, and text messages, and working with the union shop stewards, to try to reach as many affected workers as possible. They are also considering the use of a "peer outreach worker" model, where a worker who has been laid off is hired specifically to connect their former colleagues to the workforce services and support available. The goal is to get as many of the affected 300-350 workers connected to the workforce system and the services they need, while also gathering data on what happened to the workers after the closure. Todd Samuel and the board expressed appreciation for the ESD team's efforts to support the workers during this challenging situation, recognizing the importance of providing crisis response and assistance.

Next Meeting

Quarterly Board Meeting – Tuesday, January 28, 2025, at 4:00 p.m. at TCRC Bechtel Room | Hybrid Zoom

Adjournment

With no further good of the order business, Todd adjourned the meeting at 5:03 p.m.

Board - Present

Commissioner Will McKay
Commissioner Clint Didier
Bob Legard
Amanda Jones
Andrew Cook
Geoff Arends
John Dickson
Jason Jansky
Karl Dye
Lynn Ramos-Braswell
Todd Samuel
Alicia Perches
Kate McAteer
Michael Lee
Jessica Rusch
Sheila Erickson
Lori Mattson

Board - Excused

Adolfo DeLeon

Absent

BFWDC Staff

DeAnn Bock
Cynthia Garcia
Jessie Cardwell
Cyndelle Howell

Guests

Israel Delamore
Rebecca Williamson

Signed by:

Todd Samuel, BFWDC Board Chairman

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Todd Samuel, Board Chair Date

Signed by:

Lynn Ramos-Braswell, Board Secretary

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Lynn Ramos-Braswell, Secretary Date