

Cumberlands Workforce Development Board  
Meeting Minutes  
October 17, 2023

The Cumberlands Workforce Development Board (CWDB) met in-person or via zoom on October 17, 2023 at the Lake Cumberland Area Development office in Russell Springs. Vice-Chairman Mr. Wendell Emerson called the meeting to order.

Ms Jana Shell called the roll. There were eighteen (18) of the twenty-nine (29) member's present in-person or via zoom, thus constituting a quorum of the Board. Fourteen (14) members in-person or via zoom were Business and Workforce representatives which met the requirement of 51% of members present being a combination of Business and Workforce representatives.

Mr. Wendell Emerson, Vice-Chair, welcomed special guests attending, Nathan Nevels, Deputy Judge Executive from McCreary County and Judge Larry Bryant from Adair County and called the meeting to order.

Copies of the August 15, 2023 Meeting Minutes were sent to all of the members. Questions/corrections were asked for; there being none, motion made by Mr. Wendell Emerson to approve the minutes as presented. Mr. Scott Pierce made the motion and Ms. Tina Cook seconded the motion. Motion carried.

Mr Wendell Emerson made the appointment to the One- Stop Committee of Sydney Johnson, representing Kentucky Farmworkers Program, Steven Garcia, representing Veterans Services and BJ Wilkerson, representing the SITE program. Motion was made to approve by Mr. Scott Pierce. Tina Cook seconded the motion. Motion carried.

Ms. Vickie Wells gave the budget report stating our total budget is \$2,350,681.93 and for the first quarter 7/1/23 to 9/29/23 we have expended \$366,751.52 which is 18.02% of the budget. Ms Wells noted in the top section we moved \$27,333.34 to the One Stop Operator from Career Services. Ms. Wells noted that page 2 was the broken out expenditures by grant area. Mr Wendell Emerson asked for a motion to approve the finance report, Scott Pierce made the motion, it was seconded by Amanda Roy. Motion passed.

Ms. Karen Miller, One Stop Operator, gave an update on the customer count & activity at the 11 Career Centers. The numbers were included in everyone's packet. Ms Miller shared that a representative from Commonwealth Coders has been setting up a table at the Somerset Career Centers on Tuesdays during the RESEA classes. A staff member from Vocational Rehabilitation also speaks to every class, and employers are invited as well. Ms Miller commented that in the Somerset Center they are seeing an increase in job search. She shared that they are actively looking for a new location for the Somerset Career Center. The new space must accommodate 40 staff, all on 1 level, and must be ADA compliant. They will require a space of 15,000 to 18,000 square feet.

Ms. Lisa Gosser, Business Services Coordinator for the Cumberland Workforce reported on the activities of the three Business Service Liaisons that serve the entire area. Since the last WIB meeting they have attended a Steering Committee for the Perkins Grant at the Technology Center, weekly Rotary Meetings, Chamber Board and regular meetings, The SPEDA breakfast, and Tourism Meetings. They were honored to speak to the McCreary County Industrial Authority about WIOA services, thanks to Larry King for arranging that, it was a great opportunity. We are happy to come out and talk to anyone in any county about the services that we provide and how we can help. They also attended the Community Relations & Industrial Council at the Pine Knot Job Corp. They participated in a Resource Fair hosted by Somerset Community College. They hold weekly Business Service Team Meetings, and also attended the Ky Association of Manufacturing Meeting at SCC. At this meeting Ms Gosser was honored to participate on a panel and provide information about our partner agencies. The Business Services Team(BST) continues to promote our Kentucky Labor Exchange and post all job openings in the 13 county area on our Facebook page. Ms Gosser encouraged everyone to go to Kentucky Career Center Cumberland to view and like our Facebook page. Please let us know if you have a job opening or an event you want us to post for you. The Business Liaison's have provided a lot of labor information for several projects last month and have visited many employers and elected officials passing out the new 2024 planners. Ms Gosser assisted in scheduling local employers to participate in "Mock Interviews" with local high school students and assisted a local business with their open house by lending them some items they needed from our Lending\ Borrowing Equipment list.

Ms. Marsha Wells, WIOA Program Manager, shared that the performance report in everyone packet was for quarter ending Sept 2023; Youth - all measures increased except credentials which stayed the same, the Adult program - all measures increased, and on Dislocated Workers all measures increased except credentials which decreased 6%. Total enrollments for this grant year are 89. We have enrolled 41 Youth, 47 Adults and 1 Dislocated Worker. Closing call for PY 2021 monitoring was last week and, aside from some problematic data entry issues, there were no financial findings. We will be responding back next week.

BJ Wilkerson with the SITE Program reported that they added 44 new clients in September and was happy that they added a couple in Cumberland County. They have served a total of 1108 clients; 62% in Pulaski County, 22% in Russell County, 4% in Wayne County and 3% in both Taylor and Adair. We currently have 595 clients employed, we have given 312 referrals, provided 104 training and 85 presentations given during 2023. They participated in a Job Fair hosted by the United Way at the Somerset Mall, gave presentations at several recovery centers, and have spoken at Drug Court and partnered with Putting Kentuckians First in Pre Release classes.

Alana Reynolds with Putting Kentuckians First (PKF) provided the current metrics for the program. They have 350 referrals and this number is growing daily. The employment retention rate is 68.87%. They attend Drug court and the Judges are working very well with them. The Judges are giving some individuals probation with the requirement that they must work with PKF. Ms Reynolds said they work closely with other workforce partners and thanked them for all they do. Joe Stephens with CDO has been instrumental in helping with finding jobs for their clients. In

May, when Aaron Poynter transitioned to the state PKF served 7 counties, and now has expanded to 11 counties. Big Sandy Regional Prison has reached out to work with PKF. They just launched at Casey County Detention Center and plan to launch in November at the Laurel County Detention Center. PKF is currently meeting with partners in Whitley and Knox county. The Judicial system has been very involved and they appreciate the county attorneys who are working with them. PKF is piloting a program for Juvenile referrals and is anxious to see how that goes. Staff have participated in a Recovery Rally, Opportunity Fairs, the Community Village meeting for our Veterans with Virginia Dial which was a very informative meeting.

Ms. Myra Wilson, Director of Cumberland Workforce Development Board, gave an update on the Strategic Plan. The first point was concerning active participation with employers and stakeholders to increase workforce opportunity across the region and to increase new entrance into the workforce. Ms Wilson called on Executive Director Waylon Wright to provide some information. Mr Wright shared information concerning a grant funding request they completed a month ago. The opportunity is through EDA, a department within the Dept of Commerce. They required that a plan be put together on how to reach the population ages 25 to 54. It is a 2 step process, and they worked with Aaron, Myra and inhouse staff and put together some proposals and a plan on how to use Putting Kentuckians First and other partners. We relayed how we could do the case management and provide training using SCC to get these individuals into the workforce. If approved, we will be eligible to apply for actual money. We had to provide a list of completed projects, our case management and training which are key pieces of the project. We mentioned construction of a new career center in Somerset, if the opportunity arises. It is a very competitive national competition and we gave it our best shot. We should know something in 1 to 2 months. Mr. Wright continued, we are talking inhouse on what we can do for High School youth to make sure they get a work ethic and they come out ready to enter the workforce and stay in our region. We will keep everyone in the loop as we continue to look for new opportunities.

Ms Wilson shared that the state has funding from the National Dislocated Worker Quest grant and there is an opportunity for us to apply for funding for the Heavy Equipment Operator class at SCC. Ms Wilson called on Ms Alesa Johnson, Vice President of Workforce Solutions at SCC to provide additional information. Ms Johnson shared with the group that they have been working together with other partners to find a way to fund the tuition for the Heavy Equipment Operator training that will be starting soon at SCC. The employers they have met with are extremely interested and they have 7 employers who are committed to interviewing and hiring these individuals as they go through the program. SCC also has a great partnership with Brandeis who is going to loan brand new, state of the art equipment to SCC for the training. They are very thankful to all the partners who are willing to donate and provide for this class. This grant would help to pay for the tuition for the Heavy Equipment Operator, because this is a non-credit program that was designed by the 7 individual companies I was speaking of previously who are on the advisory board. They talked us through and provided the skills they are looking for and the exact equipment they want us to train for. We have developed that program and the demand is extremely high for individuals with these skills and these are high paying positions. These

employers are very open to Second Chance employment, background does not matter to them. Ms Wilson said if funding is approved Ms Johnson wants to start a pilot of 8 to 10 people in order for her to tweak it before going further. They can request more funding at a later date if awarded the grant. Ms Johnson asked if there were any questions and Mr. Jeff Vanhook asked if an "End Loader Operator" was one of the pieces of equipment that individuals would be training on? Ms Johnson said at this time the list of equipment they would be trained on will be: Backhoe, Dozer, Excavator, and Skid Steer. They will also receive OSHA 10 certification, NCCER level 1 certificate, First Aid and CPR training and fork lift operator certification. Mr Vanhook emphasized the need for End Loader operators at quarries and on road construction. Alesa invited Mr. Vanhook to participate on the advisory board and said she would take his recommendation back to the advisory board and see what they had to say.

Ms Myra Wilson discussed strategic goal number 4 on "Resources" and what they are doing to get more resources. She thanked the group for their participation in the Planning Session for the State Plan. She informed everyone that Alisher Burikhanov, Executive Director of the KWIB shared with her that so far we have had the largest group to participate in the Planning Session for the State Plan. We had 38 in person and 20 online.

Myra also shared that on September 28th she and two of her peers presented to the Economic Development Workforce Investment Interim Joint Committee in Frankfort. A special thank you to Representative Josh Branscum for helping them get there. She also thanked Senator Max Wise, Senator Rick Girdler, Senator Brandon Storm and Representative Shane Baker for all of their help and support. They discussed the cuts in WIOA funding and how it has declined over the years and what we can do to continue to help the youth. Myra and the other workforce directors also met with Representative Brandon Reed and they requested 26 million dollars across the 10 state workforce boards that would impact about 4,000 students. The Cumberland area requested \$500,000 a year. This money, if awarded, would not have WIOA parameters around it and would help more youth to reach their goal. If awarded the grant there would be a cap on the amount spent per student. Tomorrow Myra and 2 other workforce directors will meet with Senator Chris McDaniels with the Appropriations and Revenue committee to share this same information. Currently the House committee has it on the table to eliminate all youth funding. Legislators and others are trying to gain support for the \$26 million line item to be added to the budget. Myra shared a one pager with the information being shared in Frankfort that was provided by U of L and the discussion can be viewed on KET. Ms Wilson shared that statistics show the middle class usually ends up with the most college debt, and they explained the taxpayers burden per year if we don't get students to work. We all need to continue to contact our legislators and do all we can do to get this funding approved.

Ms Wilson announced that those on the Executive Committee have been invited to an In Person meeting in Frankfort at the Paul Sawyer Public Library on November 2nd at 9:00 am Central, 10:00 Eastern. Kim Menke KWIB Board Chair has invited all Board Chairs, Directors, and Executive committee's across the state to meet in one place, have lunch then attend the KWIB meeting that afternoon. If you plan to attend please let Myra know.

Ms Wilson reported that she, Marsha and Waylon have submitted our Annual Narrative to DOL. They had a lot of great pictures and success stories that were submitted along with our dollar amount and the number of individuals we helped throughout the year

Vice-Chairman Wendell Emerson asked for a motion to change the next WIB meeting date to December 12th due to the Christmas Holiday. Scott Pierce made the motion, Rhonda Thomas second. Motion passed.

Scott Pierce let everyone know that the KWIB is strongly encouraging and supporting the 26 million dollar line item funding for the youth. This is a very important initiative and we need to get on the program when they do the budget revenue session. Our representatives and senators have got to get on board with this because it will help the entire state of Ky. This money will help a group of individuals who are severely underserved, our youth. If you are concerned about filling the multiple job openings then you need to get behind this effort. We had a great turnout for the state plan meeting, and for the first time the staff of the KWIB is meeting with each ADD in the state to see what everyone has to say and they are listening. Alisier and Debbie are willing to facilitate these meetings as well.

Ms Wilson shared again how much she appreciated all of the cooperation of our State Representatives and Senators. Jeff Vanhook said he feels we have the best coordinated effort there has ever been to get this done.

Motion to adjourn by Scott Pierce.

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Wendell Emerson Co-Chairman

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Vickie Wells, Secretary/Treasurer