

Cumberlands Workforce Development Board
Meeting Minutes
12/12/ 2023

The Cumberlands Workforce Development Board (CWDB) met in-person and via zoom on December 12, 2023 at the Lake Cumberland Area Development office in Russell Springs. Chairman Sam Brown called the meeting to order.

Ms Jana Shell called the roll. There were nineteen (19) 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.

Copies of the October 17, 2023 Meeting Minutes were sent to all of the members. Questions/corrections were asked for; there being none, motion made by Chairman Brown to approve the minutes as presented. Mr. Scott Pierce made the motion to accept the minutes and Mr. Larry King seconded the motion. Motion carried.

Ms. Vickie Wells, Treasurer gave the budget report stating our total budget for the year is \$2,350,681.93. As of November 17, 2023, we have expended \$563,584.13 which is 27.69% of the budget. Ms. Wells noted that page 2 was the broken out expenditures by grant area. Mr. Brown asked for a motion to approve the finance report, Mr. Wendell Emerson made the motion, it was seconded by Mr. Kevin Shearer. Motion passed.

Ms. Karen Miller, One Stop Operator, gave an update on the customer count and activity at the 11 Career Centers. The numbers were included in everyone's packet. She shared that they are still 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 Cumberlands Workforce reported on the activities of the four Business Service Liaisons (BSL) that serve the entire area. Since the last WIB meeting they have attended a Steering Committee for the Perkins Grant at the Technology Center. Lisa attends weekly Rotary Meetings and the Chamber Board meeting, all four of the business services team attend Chamber meetings as well as other related meetings. The Business Services team along with Workforce board members attended a Regional Technology Fair held at the Center for Rural Development in Somerset on October 25, 2023. This impressive Technology Showcase highlighted the intelligence and creativity of high school students in our region. The BSL also assisted Russell and Wayne County students with Mock Interviews. The BSL holds weekly Business Service Team Meetings and continues to provide labor exchange information to regional businesses. The team hosted a hiring event for Taylor Wholesale Hardware which produced 30 qualified applicants. It was very successful and the employer was grateful for the help. The Somerset staff assisted the County Attorney's office in Pulaski County by pre-screening all job

applicants, with a successful outcome of two individuals being hired. The Business Services team will be doing a Rapid Response meeting on 12/14/23 in Clinton County at Cowboy Charcoal due to a layoff. Ms. Gosser reported that 13 of the 28 laid off have already found employment elsewhere.

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 Adults: all measures increased, and Dislocated Workers: all measures increased except credentials which decreased 6%. Total enrollments for this grant year are 188. We have enrolled 90 Youth, 94 Adults and 4 Dislocated Worker. We are finalizing the results for the 2021 monitoring and have 30 days to respond. Marsha shared that we had been awarded the \$200,000 Quest Grant that we applied for allowing us to assist several Adults from our waiting list.

Ms. BJ Wilkerson with the SITE Program reported that they have served a total of 1209 clients. Pulaski County is the most served area at 63%, Russell County runs second and Wayne County is the third. They currently have 685 clients employed, and have given 412 referrals, provided 109 training and 135 presentations in 2023. EKCEP is back as their parent company and they are funded annually by Van Ingram's cabinet.

Ms. Alana Reynolds with Putting Kentuckians First (PKF) provided the current metrics for the program. They have provided 411 referrals in the Cumberland region. The employment retention rate statewide is 56.1% and in the Cumberland employment retention rate is 47.5%. They are currently working with the Drug Courts in Russell, Wayne, Casey, Adair, Clinton and Cumberland Counties.

Ms. Myra Wilson, Director of Cumberland Workforce Development Board, gave an update on the 26 million dollars that has been requested to serve youth. If awarded, it would go to the 10 state workforce boards and would impact about 4,000 students. Myra and two other workforce directors met with Senator Chris McDaniels with the Appropriations and Revenue committee to share this information and provide additional information requested. Currently the Federal House committee has it on the table to eliminate all youth funding. Legislators and others are trying to gain support for this \$26 million line item to be added to the State budget. Myra shared a new one pager with information provided by The University of Louisville which she will share with legislators and elected officials. Ms. Wilson brought attention to a letter in the board packet from Lorane Wilber with DCBS who informed Myra of a program they are starting for Foster Youth. The new program will pay 100% of the work wages for a period of 15 weeks for qualified youth to work 15 to 40 hours a week in a job. Some students may be able to extend the work time to the end of the school year. Orientation is in May 2024 if you know of any employers who may be willing to employ any of these youth please let them know. This program is through DCBS. The KWIB invited the members of the Executive Committee to attend the December board meeting which was well received. The board had the opportunity to voice their concerns. Chairman Sam Brown shared his concern about how antiquated the formula is being used to

calculate the Unemployment Rate. This unfairly hampers the dollars coming down and hurts all of us. The formula is set at a federal level. Ms. Wilson was grateful for the \$200,000 Quest grant received and is checking to see if we can apply for other workforce board's money if they are not going to request it

County Judge Executive Holbrook and his staff met with an employer who is looking into coming to Mt Vernon. This would bring 400 jobs in the next 4 years paying extremely good wages. They hope to know more after the first of the year. Jeff Vanhook will provide an update at the February board meeting.

Chairman Sam Brown asked the board to look closely at the customer count numbers provided by Ms. Millerand to pay attention to the activities and objectives to see how this reflects on the needs in these counties. He also mentioned how impressed he was when attending the Technology Fair at the Center for Rural Development last month. These students are so impressive and forward thinking. They had students working with AI, 3D printing, hydroponics, robotics, electronics, drones and more. He felt that more focus and money should go into things like this in schools. He commented that youth like these are the ones who could likely find a cure for cancer.

Chairman Brown let the group know that he had asked Santa for a new Career Center in Somerset, and wrapped up the meeting with a quote from Winston Churchill; "Individually we can never have the party that we want, but together we can have the party we need."

The adjournment motions was made by Mr. Larry King.

Sam Brown, Chairman

Vickie Wells, Secretary/Treasurer