

**KENTUCKIANAWORKS BOARD MEETING
GREATER LOUISVILLE WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT BOARD**

Thursday, April 23, 2020

8:30 A.M. – 10:00 A.M.

Cisco Webex online meeting

Board Members Present: John Archer; Jackie Beard; David Bizianes; Willie Byrd; Jennifer Carman; Sarah Davasher-Wisdom; Eric Friggle; Tami Hatfield; Mike Hesketh; Vincent James; Jenny Lampton; Sean O’Leary; Marty Pollio; Tom Quick; Harold Reynolds; Sadiqa Reynolds; Jonathan Westbrook

Welcome, Greetings, and Basics of the New Format – *Tom Quick*

Mr. Quick opened the meeting by saying he hopes everyone is happy and safe, and thanked everyone for joining the unique meeting. Mr. Quick was acting chair because Tony Georges had UPS meetings all day.

Review and Approve the Minutes from the February 2020 Board Meeting – *Tom Quick*

The minutes were approved following a motion made by (unknown) and a second made by Mr. O’Leary.

Review and Approve Consent Agenda – *Cindy Read*

The Program Oversight Committee met on April 17th, chaired by Christy Ralston of Norton Healthcare. The first consent agenda item involved changing supporting services policies to include funding computers and internet service for participants enrolled in post-secondary training and youth enrolled in specific training activities. Supportive services are largely (though not entirely) funded through WIOA. Last year, the KentuckianaWorks Board approved a change to approve the amount to be \$1,000/participant (it was previously \$600). At that time, there were Board and POC members who asked about computers. It is not expressly prohibited in the regulations, but Ms. Read said “we had never seen an example of another Board allowing it.” As COVID advanced, though, KentuckianaWorks realized having computers/internet was essential, since all trainings are done online now. Examples were eventually found, and the Department of Labor sent out guidance. The POC discussed it thoroughly and suggested allowing both computers and internet services to be included in the supportive services policy. The overall supportive services cap per participant will remain \$1,000, with a cap for computers at \$600.

Another item involved procurement. KentuckianaWorks (like all workforce boards) is required to have competitive bids for its programs. The contract for WIOA youth programs in the regional counties (currently held by Goodwill Industries) is in its final year. An RFP was announced, and there was one proposal: Goodwill Industries, the current contractor. A committee of Board members (Mr. Hesketh, Ms. Lampton, and Mr. Byrd) was assembled, all of whom had experience in the regional counties. The POC felt very good about Goodwill’s proposal and previous accomplishments. It was recommended that KentuckianaWorks enter a contract with Goodwill Industries of Kentucky not to exceed \$400,000 starting July 1, 2020, followed by four renewable one-year terms. Mr. Gritton pointed out that in the past, there have occasionally been some performance issues with contractors where the contract was not renewed. Board Members always have leverage to make sure they’re getting the kind of performance they want.

Ms. Read mentioned the other contracts to be found in the consent agenda:

- Goodwill Industries of Kentucky – TANF program (\$1,017,160)
- Goodwill Industries of Kentucky – SNAP/ENT (\$164,027)
- ResCare Workforce Services – One-Stop Operator (\$165,000) – of note is that a new position focused on immigrants/refugees has been funded through J.P. Morgan Chase
- Louisville Urban League – KentuckianaBuilds (\$377,000)
- ResCare Workforce Services – Adult Career Services (~\$2,300,000)
 - Career services at the various career centers, Code Louisville, and Tech Louisville

One note is there continues to be low job placement through the KY Health Career Center. Ms. Read said we need to continue tapping their expertise, but shifting away from a separate identity for the KHCC.

Finally, there are contracts with economic development entities to review. In Jefferson County, KentuckianaWorks pays for a percentage of an employee's time at Louisville Forward who loops us into economic development deals, attends meetings for us, etc. That contract is not to exceed \$60,000.

Thus concluded the consent agenda items. Mr. Quick asked about the additional monies for laptop and internet access, which is incremental to what has been done in the past; he asked if there were any concerns relative to the overall cost of moving in that direction. Ms. Read said no, "we already budget supportive services at \$1,000/participant, we're not changing that number." In recent years, that number has actually been underspent. It might change the amount used, but it will not change the amount budget.

Mr. Gritton provided one other detail on the consent agenda: since one of the contracts is with the Urban League, the vote needs to break off the KentuckianaBuilds part so that Ms. Reynolds can abstain. A motion to approve the consent agenda with exception of item 3.4 (related to the LUL/KentuckianaBuilds contract) was made by Ms. Reynolds and seconded by Mr. Reynolds. That motion passed unanimously. A motion to approve item 3.4 of the consent agenda was then made by Mr. James and seconded by Ms. Davasher-Wisdom. The motion passed unanimously, with Ms. Reynolds abstaining.

Executive Director's Report – *Michael Gritton*

Mr. Gritton thanked everyone for joining the call. First up was a banking document from Fifth Third Bank, who now requires an official Board motion on allowing KentuckianaWorks to conduct business with them. Mr. Quick asked why Mr. Gritton's name was listed at the top rather than KentuckianaWorks; Mr. Gritton clarified the name at the top of the page says Greater Louisville Workforce Development Board. Mr. Gritton explained that KentuckianaWorks is its own fiscal agent; in other words, "We do have a bank account, but we don't have a checkbook." The motion to approve Fifth Third as the banking agent was made by Ms. Reynolds and seconded by Mr. Archer. The motion passed unanimously.

Mr. Gritton turned to Mr. James to discuss the Opportunity Youth issue. Mayor Fischer wants to make an investment and was expected to make an announcement during his budget speech later in the day focused on opportunity youth (e.g., 16-24 year olds who out of school and out of work). The announcement involves establishing the Louisville Reengagement Center for education and career plans, working with several partner agencies (such as UofL). It will be housed in the Office of Community & Resilience Services. Mr. Gritton commended Mr. James for being a great partner on this issue.

Mr. Gritton said Mr. Hesketh emailed him earlier in the morning about the spreadsheet showing the amount of customers the KentuckianaWorks contractors have been serving weekly during the work-from-home era. There were over 1,900 customers served last week alone! Kudos to all the contractors.

Mr. Gritton officially welcomed Ms. Davasher-Wisdom to the Board. He mentioned appreciation for the emails GLI sends out, an example of how community partnerships prove to be really helpful.

Mr. Gritton complimented Ms. Reynolds and Ms. Thompson at the Louisville Urban League, referencing how KentuckianaBuilds classes were shifted fully online. He also commended an inspiring KentuckianaWorks graduation featuring Lt. Gov. Coleman that was held on Facebook Live last week.

Mr. Gritton mentioned how 10-12 years ago, the KentuckianaWorks Board chair was Kim Maffett, a workforce leader from Norton Healthcare. She was one of the earliest COVID-10 cases in Louisville, and even on ventilator for a few days. He was happy to report she was at home and doing well.

Finally, Mr. Gritton told Board Members to watch the way Congress moves and the conversations they have, especially when workforce topics come up. WIOA typically has about a \$3 billion funding stream, but Mr. Gritton was hopeful that amount will be increased this year. Senators McConnell and Paul & Representatives Yarmuth and Guthrie are all influential in D.C., and Mr. Gritton asked the Board Members to describe to those officials what they see and what they know about workforce issues. For context, during the recession of 2009, Congress doubled the amount of workforce funding and gave workforce boards 18 months to spend it. There were no scandals and everyone met performance.

Discussion: How has COVID-19 Affected Your Business and Industry Sector? – Tom Quick

Mr. Friggle began by saying Computershare is a stock transfer agency, so they have been affected greatly. Day-to-day business has been lost, revenue lost. The Federal Reserve reducing interest rates hurt. On the positive side, over 90% of his company's staff were able to start working from home almost instantly. They were working on coming up with a moving forward plan – maybe changing recruitment, starting to look for people who are willing/able to work from home 50% of the time, offering adjusted hours, etc.

Ms. Reynolds thanked Mr. Gritton for his encouraging comments about the recent KentuckianaBuilds graduation. The Urban League realizes “we’ll never do business the same again.” Some folks were hit in ways they were not anticipating (citing not just comorbidities, but also lack of infrastructure). People's budgets have been impacted. There are new challenges of trying to manage kids who are suddenly at home. With lots of stress overall, LUL was hoping to help connect people with mental healthcare. Ms. Reynolds added it was important to note the high number of people of color serving in essential roles that do not allow them to work from home. She hoped for deeper conversations about what “normal” needs to be, instead of just what we have always had before. Mr. Quick thanked her for the fantastic update. Mr. Gritton pointed out Ms. Ehresman recently put out a report just this week showing people of color are disproportionately involved in these types of roles, confirming what Ms. Reynolds described.

Mr. Quick said data has shown the use of appliances has gone up tremendously since more people are at home, and GEA has been deemed as essential. About 90% of GEA's salaried employees and 100% of GEA's call center folks were able to start working from home almost immediately. The productivity is even better now! He went back to Mr. Friggle's point – what changes will happen when things get back to “normal”? GEA has 24/7 temperature checks, has moved to mandatory facemasks, has social distancing requirements, dramatically increased the number of hand sanitizing stations, and increased schedules of bathroom cleaning. GEA leadership communicates frequently with employees about what is going on.

Mr. Byrd said Options Unlimited works with folks with disabilities, helping them find jobs and training programs. The best news is the vast majority of people they were supporting pre-COVID are still working. A lot of them are at UPS WorldPort, helping make packages move. There are also a lot at Kroger. Mr. Byrd said they are tracking the people who are off work now, whether self-isolating out of medical conditions or fear of exposure, and more than 90% of anyone not working intends to go back. Additional good news is that all of his staff are working virtually, with no full-time staff laid off. He was talking with Ms. Lampton yesterday about potential of virtual job fairs as a recruiting technique; they had one last week with a financial institution, and it went well. Finally, Mr. Byrd said they have been discussing the shift to work-from-home positions, and how there should be opportunities for some of the folks who have disabilities who are particularly interested in this. They are putting together a roundtable discussion for employers, voc-rehab, and service providers about what new opportunities will be available for folks with disabilities, and he advised any interested Board Members to contact him offline.

Mr. Westbrook said East and Westbrook Construction has been able to keep going for the most part, with the focus now being on how to keep everyone safe while still having the ability to make money.

Discussion: How do you think COVID-19 will affect the region's economy over the next 12-24 months? – Tom Quick

Mr. Bizianes of the Oldham Chamber appreciated the question because right before COVID hit, they were experiencing some exciting activity: lots of road projects, widening of I-71, companies expanding/relocating, etc. He hoped the local business community gets up and running. Mr. Quick asked Mr. Bizianes if he saw this as a pause or something that will take longer; Mr. Bizianes said it will take longer. He would love to see it get back to where it was, but it will take a while. He mentioned one local employer who has asked some employees to come back, but they did not feel comfortable to do so yet.

Discussion: What Should We as the Workforce Board be Thinking and Doing in Response to this Unprecedented Situation? – Tom Quick

Mr. Gritton gave some perspective for the board: unemployment insurance (UI) is something only state merit employers have been allowed to do since the 1930s. Six weeks ago, there were 2,000 folks per week filing for UI with 12 people answering the phones; it then went to 48,000 claims in one week, then 100,000 the next. Staff are now taking 80,000 phone calls a day, and they just were not ready for it. Josh Benton and his team at the state have moved really quickly to get hundreds of state employees ready, they have worked with call center operations to get ready, and now – for the first time ever – they have contractor staff able to answer questions. Staff from Goodwill, ResCare, and JCPS Adult Ed are connected with the Amazon Connect phone system. That said, there are still frustrations. One concern from employers is many workers are making more now than what they were in their old job, especially given the additional \$600 federal payment. Trying to deal with this issue is what every workforce board is doing now. Also, questions exist about what comes back, when, and in what capacity? If you take out half the tables at restaurants, you do not need as many cooks, wait staff, etc., so KentuckianaWorks is worried about the jobs being eliminated in the short-term that may not be coming back, or at least any time soon.

Mr. Gritton has asked Ms. Ehresman to find some data. She thanked the Board, saying hearing from employers was now more important than ever. Any kind of recovery will be filled with a lot of uncertainty. 500,000 Kentuckians filed for UI in the past five weeks; hearing from employers is important as we prepare the workforce for what comes next. Economic recovery could take a while. The pandemic is expected to stimulate the trends that were seen before – increased STEM jobs (e.g., food and public health are all being designed to have increased tech/automation). Workers need to be technologically advanced. Another trend seen before was an increased demand for healthcare jobs, which traditionally are recession-proof; demand for healthcare might be deferred for now, but it will not be destroyed. Another point is that investment from the federal government for jobs/workforce is much needed. One reason the recovery from the 2008-09 recession was slow is that it took a while for the private sector to replace the jobs that were lost, and a lot of the created jobs were lower-paying, lower-benefit, etc. Mr. Quick thanked Ms. Ehresman for the updates. Mr. Gritton said if the current level of federal investment into workforce boards stays flat, “we will be hard-pressed to facilitate the recovery in ways we are hoping.” There are a lot of folks without wifi and/or computers who cannot file electronically without human help; imagine trying to hire someone like that! Those people have to get at least entry-level tech skills. Healthcare is a stable sector, but it usually requires at least 1-2 years of training, which costs money. Ms. Ehresman pointed out that 500,000 means 19% of Kentucky’s workforce have filed for UI. Mr. Quick said workers are going to start wondering “should I be doing something different?” Mr. Gritton referenced Mr. Friggle said, adding that public money may be needed to help people on-ramp to jobs like that.

Mr. Gritton saw Dr. Pollio had joined the meeting and asked if he had any news from JCPS to provide. Dr. Pollio gave an update on non-traditional instruction (NTI), saying it has been quite the challenge to build it. NTI was never meant to be long-term, especially for a school district like JCPS. He was proud of the progress that had occurred, such as giving out 20,000 Chromebook laptops. Especially relevant for KentuckianaWorks was the question of what moving forward will look like. It will be tough to replicate the kind of work the JCPS Academies do with distance-learning. Additionally, the pandemic kind of put a

stop on transition readiness and certifications. One positive thing, though, was JCPS will get some significant stimulus money (like every district) to break down digital divides. JCPS can be innovative in its approach for supporting kids from here on out. Dr. Pollio said forward-thinking school districts have the opportunity to come out the pandemic better than they were before, *if* they are willing to be innovative. Still, the impact of kids being out of school from March until at least August will be monumental. There is also concern of a fall spike, of the virus surging again. Overall, there are some challenges, but Dr. Pollio was confident JCPS can come out of it better as a district in the long term.

Mr. Quick thanked Dr. Pollio and his team at JCPS for what they were doing, adding “we hear it from our own employers, trying to figure out how they can support their kids learning at home, what summer looks like,” etc. There were a lot of unknowns and no one ever anticipated this before. Dr. Pollio thanked anyone on the call who was a parent and helping JCPS by teaching their kids. He said he hopes another good thing that will come out of this is that people will have more respect for teachers than ever before.

Mr. Quick asked if any Board Members had anything else to add. Ms. Reynolds said she and Dr. Pollio were doing a Facebook Live the next week to talk about distance learning and some of its challenges.

Mr. Quick thanked Mr. Gritton and Mr. Williamson for helping the Board figure out how to do the meeting virtually. He hoped everyone on the call stays safe, and thanked them again for their leadership.

Mr. Gritton closed the meeting by saying he appreciated everyone getting on board this way, and that he would keep everyone posted about whatever comes next.

The meeting adjourned at 9:48am.

KentuckianaWorks Staff:

Michael Gritton
Liz Davis
Jaime Disney
Sarah Ehresman
Barbara Ferrell
Patrick Garvey
Lori Hiser
Chris Locke
Brian Luerman
Joi McAtee
Regina Phillips
Bailey Preston
Mary Rosenthal
Cindy Read
Stacy Roderick
Rider Rodriguez
Aleece Smith
Tobin Williamson
Angella Wilson

Contractors / Guests:

Marsha Berry
Monica Collins
Sara Dodeci
Deb Giordano
Kathryn Griseto
Deana Karem
Charlotte Kerns
Joshua McKee
Abby Piper
Zakiyyah Raymore
Jessie Schook
Rena Sharpe
Violet Skinner
Tiffany Stout
Demitra Suazo
Lisa Thompson
Regan Wann
Jennifer Welch
Angela Wells-Vereb
Kristen Wingfeld
Renee Walters
Josh Williams