

**Employer Engagement Committee
Meeting Minutes
October 3, 2017**

The Employer Engagement Committee Meeting was called to order at 5:31 p.m. by Cary Robbins.

MEMBERS PRESENT:

IVCC: Mary Boogemans

STERLING: Cary Robbins, Vicki Carlson, Patty Head

MEMBERS ABSENT: Linda Burt, Debbie Clausen, Jim Andreoni, Deana Jones, Kevin Lindeman, Barbara Majeski, Dave Mennie, James Weed

OTHERS PRESENT (IVCC): Dianna Schuler, Joel Torbeck

OTHERS PRESENT (Sterling): Pam Furlan, Ken Skoff

Approval of Minutes

Without a majority of a quorum no action was taken to approve the minutes from August 1, 2017.

Business Meeting

Healthcare Summit

Dianna reported that the first follow up to the healthcare summit is being held on October 11th from 7:30am to 9:00am at IVCC in room CTC 124. She stated that Paige Fritz and Anita Carney were planning to attend so that it can be reproduced at SVCC.

Pam asked Joel if he had anything specific on healthcare apprenticeships. Joel indicated that he is working with Jennifer Scheri from IVCC and they are looking at the grant that the Peoria workforce area received for healthcare apprenticeships.

Business Services Reports

Dianna reported that the reports in the meeting packet did not include IDES information broken down by county. IDES informed Dianna that they have experienced an IT issue. The individual that would have been able to provide the data by county had their contract end and this person had not yet been replaced. For now, the information is being reported by the 2 offices IDES offices within the workforce area. That data is report in the county information for LaSalle and Whiteside Counties. Tory is trying to find a solution for future reports.

Cary inquired about the job listings on the NCI Works website. Dianna stated that originally actual openings were listed but that BLM had made the decision to revamp the site and go with direct links to HR pages at the participating companies' websites. She added that Mary has been working hard to increase the number of companies from the Jo Daviess area represented on the site. Dianna informed members that the originally format was taking a great deal of time to maintain and in order to keep the site more current the change was made to direct linkage.

Pam asked the committee if they believed that this report was going to provide them the information they want when it comes to business services. Members confirmed that they believed that the report was providing the information they want.

New Fee For Services Outlines

Dianna reported that the outlines that were included in the mailing were originally compiled by Mary Katos and Theresia Charley and reminded members that the new material were for hiring managers and supervisors. The new additions include new hire orientation, employee relations, and performance management. She stated that these could be full or multiple day workshops. Dianna went on to inform the members that the business relations representatives have found a curriculum designed using a grant from the US Dept. of Labor. She stated that there is no cost to use the material since it was developed using TRADE funds. The material includes everything that BEST will need to cover the topics outlined in the handout. She said the material can be found at www.skillscommons.org.

Cary asked if this material would be delivered in person or if it would be an online program. Dianna stated that this would be part of our regular fee for service program and delivered in person. Pam asked how long each of the sections would be. Dianna indicated that the outlines show that they are full 8 hours in length and can be broken done into smaller increments over several days as well.

Pam asked members what they thought of the material as presented. Vicki asked if we would set the fee for delivering the material. Pam stated that we only charge for staff time and travel. Dianna added that we give the company the option to print the material themselves, otherwise we also charge for any hard copies of workbooks. We no longer charge a marketing fee. Dianna also stated that Kathy Day is the individual that does the cost quote for the company when we do our fee for service. Dianna added that once staff gets done reviewing the material that she may ask for volunteers from the committee to also look it over. Patty Head thought it was a good idea and was solicited to review the material. Dianna will also ask Bob White since he worked with the Business Relations Representatives on expanding the fee for service to include the topics in the handout.

Committee Initiatives

Pam began the discussion by stating that retention and other issues previously discussed in the committee or highlighted by the State of the Workforce Report were included in the list of committee initiatives included in the members' packet. She also stated that these items were just suggestions and that there might be others the committee wants to add. As for the list of initiatives she suggested drilling them down some more and deciding what the committee wants to do and prioritize. Pam reviewed the list as follows:

Healthcare Summit Follow-Up – Identify the top 3 issues/challenges and how to address them. Pam stated that it needs to be taken beyond just the committee and get other stakeholders and direct service personnel that can contribute to the topic.

Employee Retention – Pam stated that this is important especially in the entry level positions. She asked if the committee wants to focus on just one industry, or focus on retention, especially at the entry level, in just any industry. She also asked how the committee would like to address the issue, sector forums or general employer forums. She stated that a goal would need to be identified. Would it be a workshop for businesses, collect best practices, etc.

Tourism Trail – Pam stated that this was identified through the workforce report and the public forums. Pam stated that Lisa McCarthy and Starved Rock were supportive of this. Additional partners would need to be brought onboard. Some of which had been at the public forums.

Research Sector-based Initiatives in Agriculture and IT – Pam mentioned that these sectors were mentioned in the local plan. Asked if this is something the committee wants to take on. Asked if we wanted to do any type of summit(s)/forums.

Research the Brain Drain Challenge – Pam stated that this is something we have been trying to address for a number of years and that it was identified in the State of the Workforce Report as a challenge in all 8 counties. She went on to say that this is especially a problem for anyone trying to do succession planning to fill vacancies. Pam asked Mary Boogemans how the aging workforce is affecting logistics. Mary stated that a lot of the older workers are opting to go into part time positions. Mary went on to say that many are able to retain their benefits, but that they cannot get Medicare until 65 so are not taking early retirement at 62.

Pam stated that she would recommend looking at 1 or 2 to focus on and plan. She went on to say that staff and partners would do the majority of the work. She also stated that she would want the committee to be a part of any forums that would be organized.

Cary asked Vicki if the Dixon Chamber has talked about any of these issues. Vicki replied that they don't really see tourism as the kind of issue that the committee focuses on. She did say that retention has been discussed. Vicki also stated that she likes the Healthcare and Retention items on the list. Patty added that the tourism trail could be a duplication of effort. That maybe we could partner with what exists but maybe not lead the charge. Patty also stated that she believed that agriculture and IT were underserved in efforts and maybe we should look at researching those.

Cary stated that he wasn't certain what our role would be in some of the topics. Pam stated that we wouldn't need to be the lead. If there was something already going on we may just need to tap into what exists and link it with the rest of the area and what is taking place. Pam stated that with tourism those are great jobs for first time employees or for those that want to be part time. Pam also stated that focusing on healthcare and retention would be great since we've already gotten a start with healthcare.

Pam asked Mary what her thoughts were. Mary stated that retention is a broad subject especially with the younger employees. Businesses are having trouble adapting and end up with a huge gap. Patty stated that retention issues will always be changing. Mary stated on exit interviews they say they are moving on to a better job and then end up asking for their jobs back in 6 months. She stated that there really isn't any loyalty to the business and increasing pay isn't always the answer. She stated that they've even tried being more flexible with schedules. Pam asked how we get into the issues. Cary recommended gathering as much data as possible. Vicki suggested a survey. Pam directed Dianna to ask the business services team to come up with questions. Pam also asked Vicki if the chambers would assist in sending the survey out. Mary recommended that the SHRM groups may also assist. Dianna indicated that BEST could also use their current and previous business services reports to send out a survey monkey. Pam suggested we all look at our contacts and ask them to assist in getting the survey out, including groups like Rotary. Cary suggested the list that was used for the State of the Workforce Report could also be used for this. Pam stated that we could probably work with IDES to gather information from the job seekers on why the leave employment. Dianna will ask if IDES would be able/willing to do an eblast with the survey.

Other Business

Youth Retention Webinar Series

Pam stated that the handout, *5 Strategies for Attracting and Retaining Youth in Rural Communities* is a series of webinars that addresses some of the things just talked about. She said she plans to contact the U of I to see if they still do these webinars and maybe it could be something to bring into one of the workforce board meetings.

December Meeting

Dianna informed the committee that the next meeting would normally be December 5th. In the past the committee has chosen not to meet in the month of December and Dianna inquired as to if they wanted to continue with that trend. Pam said that staff could put together plans for the 2 initiatives and email them out if they decide not to meet. The members present decided not to meet in December.

Public Comments

None

Adjournment

Meeting adjourned at 6:37pm.

Dianna Schuler