

**NCI Works Executive Committee
Meeting (via Conference Call) Minutes
March 24, 2020**

The NCI Works Executive Committee meeting was called to order at 5:30 p.m. by Co-Chair Cary Robbins. Roll call was taken.

Name	Present	Absent
Linda Burt	X	
Debbie Clausen		X
Carrie Folken	X	
Patty Head	X	
Vanessa Hoffeditz	X	
Cary Robbins	X	
Amy Soltis-Strawn	X	
Teresa Strum	X	
Gerald Waszkowiak	X	
DeAnne White	X	

OTHERS PRESENT: Abby Farrell, Randy Freeman, Linda Hessenberger, Kevin Lindeman, Day Payette, Pam Furlan, Dianna Schuler, Jo Ann Johnson

Chair Comments

Introduction of New Member

Cary welcomed Abby Farrell as a new member on NCI Works. Pam told members that Abby is the HR Director at Starved Rock Lodge and is very excited to have her on NCI Works.

Industry Brief

Cary informed members that a copy of the Building Trades Industry Brief was included with the NCI Works Meeting materials as an informational item. Pam told members that she logged on to their website and found a lot of good information. Cary commented that the information on the Industry Brief was beneficial for an individual interested in the Building Trade industry.

Business Meeting

Review and Approval of the Financial Reports

Cary referred members to the December 2019 and January 2020 Financial Reports that were included with the meeting materials. Annette informed members that as of the January 2020 Financial Report we are still maintaining above 50% for the Direct Training Expenditure for Adult and Dislocated Worker programs. She also told members that at this point we are

exceeding the 20% restriction for Youth Work Based Learning but said that under the circumstances that will go down. Annette told members that Total WIOA funds obligated/expenditures are 82.4%. Gerald commented that he reviewed the financial reports and found them acceptable. Gerald motioned to approve the December 2019 and January 2020 Financial Reports as presented. Motion was seconded by Teresa Strum and carried.

Review and Approval of Resource Sharing Agreement

Pam informed members that the Executive Committee at their January 26, 2020 Meeting approved the narrative sections of the Memorandum of Understanding (MOU). She reminded members that this document reflects how services by each of the One Stop Partners is delivered to customers. The Resource Sharing Agreement, Pam said is the budget that shows the costs that the Partners will contribute to the One Stop Center for the services. Pam told members that a copy of the Resource Sharing Agreement was included with the meeting materials. She said that Tim Harmon was the independent negotiator and all Partners agreed with the budget that was developed. Pam commented by saying that the process went very smooth. Linda Burt motioned to approve the MOU Resource Sharing Agreement. Motion was seconded by Randy Freeman and carried.

Selection of One Stop Certification Review Team

Pam informed members that 3 years ago a One Stop Certification Team was put together to evaluate the Comprehensive One Stop Center in Ottawa and recommended that it be certified by the State. She said that it is time to do that process again. Pam stated that the Team members should include: one of the Local Board co-chairs and at least 2 other individuals representing LWIB members, board staff and/or local partners with specific expertise service populations with barriers. She said that at least 1 Team member must be an employer. Pam said that Certification Teams may utilize experts from the state level of outside of the Local Area to ensure evaluations are objective. After discussion, the following members volunteered to serve on the One Stop Certification Review Team: Cary Robbins, Abby Farrell, Vanessa Hoffeditz, Amy Soltis-Strawn and Kevin Lindeman. Pam mentioned that the last time Steve Martin, Director of LWIA #15 (Peoria/Pekin/Bloomington areas) was on the Certification Team and asked members if they would like for her to contact him to be a part of this Certification Team. She did say that he has been having some health issues, but he still may be interested. If not, Pam said she could check with our neighboring Workforce Areas in the Quad Cities and Rockford. Members concurred that it would be beneficial to have an individual from one of the other Workforce Areas on the Certification Team. Pam said that she would check and let members know. Linda Burt motioned to approve the Certification Team as follows:

Cary Robbins

Abby Farrell

Vanessa Hoffeditz

Amy Soltis-Strawn

Kevin Lindeman

Director/Representative from one of the Local Workforce Areas (to be named)

Motion was seconded by DeAnne White and carried.

Note: Pam did contact Steve Martin with LWIA #15 and he or one of his staff members are willing and able to serve on the One Stop Center Certification Team.

Potential Policy Waiver(s) for Students during the emergency situation

Pam explained to members that BEST, Inc. currently has some policies/procedures that may need to be waived during this COVID-19 crisis that we are in. As an example, Pam said the currently policy at BEST, Inc. is that if a student fails a course that they need for their certificate or degree, we will not pay for that class a second time. The situation, she said, is that students are doing their courses online and there could be circumstances beyond their control that we may want to rethink the policy. Pam said that maybe the student does not have computer and/or internet access; maybe it is not conducive for them to work from home for whatever reason; with the libraries and colleges closed they may not have access to equipment and/or reliable internet. Pam said that in some cases where BEST, Inc. would have a policy that would be detrimental to our students, she would like to have the authority to waive the policy/procedure. As a means for approval, Pam suggested that authority could be given to the "committee of 3" that approves the training providers or it could be submitted to the Executive Committee for their approval. Most instances, Pam said, timing could be limited on these waivers and asked for the members input. Pam told members that this is an unusual request, but it is being done to help the students during an emergency situation. DeAnne commented that the request for the waiver seems reasonable as many people are making decisions that they would not normally make. After discussion, Gerald Waszkowiak motioned for Pam to establish a set of procedures to waive any current policies/procedures for students during the emergency situation and report the information to the Executive Committee/NCI Works at their next scheduled meeting. Motion was seconded by Vanessa Hoffeditz and carried.

BEST, Inc. Preparedness Plan

Pam informed members that BEST, Inc., with approval from the BEST, Inc. Board of Directors, has implemented a Preparedness Plan during this COVID-19 Crisis. She told members that all of the BEST, Inc. Offices are closed to the public and for the most part, staff are working remotely. Pam said that staff have been instructed to provide a tasks list of what they will be doing working remotely. She noted that one of the regulations under WIOA is that staff cannot be paid if they are not working, even if it is from a remote location. Pam stated that staff will also submit documentation of tasks that they did along with their timesheet so that the fiscal department has the information to include with their records. Pam also informed members that she is suspecting that a Stimulus Package will be approved and needs to keep the experienced staff safe and healthy. She said that the Preparedness Plan was put together with the intention to keep the operations of BEST, Inc. moving forward for both employers and participants. When the crisis has past, Pam said that operations will return back to normal. Pam commented that Randy Freeman and Kevin Lindeman are members of the BEST, Inc. Board of Directors and asked them if they had any comments regarding the Preparedness Plan. Kevin stated that he thought it was good and was planning to use some of the ideas that were incorporated in the Plan. DeAnne suggested that Pam send the BEST, Inc. Preparedness Plan to all members noting that many may be working on a similar plan and may find it beneficial. Pam said she would get it out to everyone in the morning.

Next Meeting

Cary noted that the next NCI Works meeting is scheduled for May 26, 2020.

Other Business

Pam informed members that because some of our worksites are closed and our customers are not being able to work that BEST, Inc. will not be spending the money like originally planned. She said that this is a statewide issue and not just in our area. Pam told members that States across the country are putting together a White Paper asking the Department of Labor to waive some of the restrictions on the compliance percentages. Reiterating Annette's comments, she said that right now we look good but we do not know how long this crisis will continue. Pam said that the Department of Labor appear to be open to considering this issue and she will continue to keep members information.

Pam also thanked Kevin Lindeman (North Central IL Council of Governments) and Mike Kirchhoff (North Central Illinois Economic Development Corporation) for their help in obtaining information for on area business needs during this stay-at-home order. Pam said that Kevin, Mike and Gina Czubachowski did an outstanding job in helping us gather this information on a very short time frame. Pam also recognized Dianna Schuler for coordinating this effort to put the information together. Kevin asked what the information would be used for. Pam told members that there is going to be a National Emergency Grant available for the States from the Department of Labor. Similar to the Opioid Grant that BEST, Inc. applied for and received, we provided them with information on different projects that could be used for local businesses that are affected by the COVID-19 crisis. Pam noted that this is going to be a competitive grant that the state will apply for and then disburse to the local areas if awarded.

Linda Burt publically thanked Pam for her years of service in workforce development. Linda noted that Pam would be retiring from BEST, Inc./NCI Works May 1 and congratulated her on her future endeavors. Linda pointed out that Pam has been a champion of workforce development and she will be missed. Members echoed Linda's sentiments and thanked everyone for their kind words. Pam did tell members that members of the BEST, Inc. Board will be conducting interviews on April 1. Pam thanked members for their continued involvement noting that she will miss the Local Workforce board.

Adjournment

With there being no further business, Linda Burt motioned to adjourn. Motion was seconded by Kevin Lindeman and carried. Meeting adjourned at 6:02 p.m.

Jo Ann Johnson

Approved by:

Patty Head
Secretary