

**Youth Committee Conference Call
Meeting Minutes
February 9, 2021**

The NCI Works Youth Committee Zoom Meeting was called to order at 4:06 p.m. by Chair Teresa Strum. Roll call was taken.

Name	Present	Absent	Name	Present	Absent
Tera Armstrong		X	Beth Hubbard	X	
Jim Carlson		X	Aurora Medina		X
Emlee Dooley	X		Sarah McFarlane	X	
Abby Farrell		X	Kris Noble	X	
Jill Guynn	X		Teresa Strum	X	
Sally Hanrahan	X		Justin Wiggins		X

Others Present: Carrie Folken, Jo Ann Johnson

Approval of Meeting Minutes

Sally Hanrahan motioned to approve the October 13, 2020 Meeting Minutes. Motion was seconded by Teresa Strum. Roll Call vote was taken.

Name	Yes	No	Name	Yes	No
Tera Armstrong			Beth Hubbard	X	
Jim Carlson			Aurora Medina		
Emlee Dooley	X		Sarah McFarlane	X	
Abby Farrell			Kris Noble	X	
Jill Guynn	X		Teresa Strum	X	
Sally Hanrahan	X		Justin Wiggins		

Motion carried.

Business Meeting

Teresa started out the meeting by asking members what they would like to see accomplished this year and what do area youth need from the system as a whole. Carrie commented that since the Youth Committee is part of the Local Workforce Board, we would like the input from members as to what the system can accomplish for local youth.

Teresa asked members to provide information from their local areas regarding schools returning to face-to-face learning. Randy Freeman informed members that in the Lostant area, students have returned to in-school sessions. However, the weather has now forced them back to remote learning. On a personal level, Randy said that he has seen students struggling with remote learning and have even given up and dropped from school. He said that encouragement is being given to return for their High School Equivalency but that is down the road. Randy told members that he believes that students not only need the day-to-day teaching but also the social outlet to be with their friends and participate in sports and extra-curricular activities. He

continued by saying that not all students are made to continue their education at the college level. That is why, Randy said, he would like to see students get into the trades programs. Randy said that a family member is a laborer and they are in need of workers. He commented that trade programs are good for students who do not want the traditional college career. Randy said that trades still provides for training and education, so the student is still learning towards a career.

Sally told members that she participated in a meeting earlier today where a representative from Sauk Valley Community College did a survey of what the students (youth and adult) wanted for fall semester. She reported that the overwhelming majority wants to return to the classroom. Sally said that students have realized the importance of social connections and were thrilled to return to the classroom. Sally also told members that she met with 2 of the contracted youth providers and both said that there will be a significant number of students drop due to frustrations in the **learning** method. ~~She told members that during this time of year, BEST, Inc. would be enrolling students in all of the youth programs, but this year is an exception.~~

Randy commented that the structure for the students is not there. He said that the students are smart enough to realize that they need the structure to get the work done.

Sally echoed Randy's comment about getting the students involved in the Trades industry.

Randy suggested that Trades representatives be invited to a meeting to share their information to the Youth Committee of what is expected and then promote the industry to the youth.

Sarah shared with member's information about the Virtual Job Fairs being hosted by Sauk Valley Community College. Although they do not have a lot of trade programs, Sarah said that students that attend the GED program are encouraged to consider a certificate program to at least get their foot in the door of an employer. Sarah said that if the students' gets into an occupation that they are interested in they are encouraged to continue with their education. Sarah also agreed that virtual learning may not be the best thing, but she is glad that it is an option even though SVCC is not seeing completions at the rate that they would like them too. Sarah commented that too many barriers, such as child care, transportation, etc. is limiting students.

Teresa noted that high schools are holding on to support the students as best they can to get through this rough time. She asked members what the Youth Committee can do in anticipation of the increased numbers for students needing their High School Equivalency.

Emlee suggested to offer some type of hybrid program that would give the student a structure of remote learning and some level of support. Emlee shared with members some of successes that she has had in her classroom regarding students with remote learning. She also noted that during remote learning, soft skills such as talking with other students, direct eye contact, etc. is not being reinforced since they are at home. Emlee also shared with members how she uses Zoom to interact with her students and operates a virtual classroom.

Teresa asked if local Libraries have reopened. Sally noted that Libraries have opened but at different levels.

Sarah told members that SVCC is always reaching out to students in some form. She said that if the students do not show up for classes, whether in-person or virtual, they get a phone call to see if there is an issue that her staff can help them with. Sarah said that her office has constant contact with their students.

Sally said in order to help students transition is to let them know that there is hope and start talking about opportunities in ~~trades~~ **careers** to spark interests. She said that the key is to get them looking **ahead** so that they will have a better opportunity to succeed. ~~Sally said that some of her students to not see any positive changes from this pandemic. She said that they are seeing employers not hiring and they give up. Sally said that she and Beth have talked about this because it directly affects their students.~~

Beth commented that the students feel that they are treading water. She said that her staff keep constant contact with the students enrolled in her program but the lack of jobs is a real frustration for her students.

Teresa told members that she has “seats” available in the Virtual Job Shadow Platform is anyone is interested. She told members that it’s an online platform that was purchased since they were not able to get out into the community to discuss possible careers. Teresa said that the Trade Industry is included in this platform.

To summarize, Carrie told members that she is hoping to attract some new contractors for next year. She said the discussion gave some direction to go as far as the youth population. Carrie told members that she is hoping that BEST, Inc. can open up and have a good summer program this year.

Update on Career Preparation/Life Skills Programs

Sally informed members that staff prepared a video on how to complete job applications that was presented to the students at the Safe School. She said that staff are preparing to develop a video on welding. Sally said that Jennifer, with the Safe School is continuing to work with her students to get them career and life skills information.

Update on Current Youth Providers

Sally informed members that the Current Youth Provider update was included with the meeting materials. She said that all providers are continuing to work with their students but we are not seeing an increased amount of new students. Sally reported that 2 of the providers have received an increase in call inquiring about the program during the past few weeks. Beth commented that students are getting a positive feeling now that schools have opened back up. Surprisingly, she said, that virtual learning was not well received by the majority of the students. A few students with anxiety issues are working well with virtual learning.

Sally reported that BEST, Inc. has hired Alex Nelson as the Youth Job Developer that will serve students in Lee, Ogle and Whiteside Counties.

Sally informed members that she is putting together a summer jobs program that will serve about 15-20 in-school youth between the ages of 16-19. The program, Sally said, will consist of work readiness and work experience. A small youth program is also being planned for students in Carroll County, Sally said.

Youth Work-Based Learning Expenditure

Carrie reminded members that 20% of grant funds for youth must be spend on Work Based Learning Activities. She told members that the Youth Grant ending June 30, 2021 has an expenditure rate of 22.8%. The Youth Grant ending June 30, 2022 has an expenditure rate of 16%, but only a projection of 8%. Carrie commented that the youth programs that Sally was referring to will have a definite impact to increase these percentages.

Member Updates

Teresa informed members that AHEC continues to reach out to area high schools promoting the Virtual Job Shadow information. She said that 9 high schools are using it along with Sauk Valley Community College. Teresa said that KSB Hospital added some additional nursing students so that they could get their clinical rotations completed. Teresa said that they are getting hands on experience and doing well. Teresa said that recruitment in the scholars program with AHEC continues.

Sarah informed members that SVCC started the Health Care Bridge Program for adults who are interested in pursuing a heath career. Sarah commented that the Virtual Job Shadow program that Teresa mentioned is very good and was thankful that her students could try it. Sarah announced that ICCB has suspended the requirement for the GED enrollee to complete the Constitution through the end of 2021. She said this decision was not made due to issues with the testing sites and COVID. Sarah said that she is sure that the requirement for completing the Constitution will come back in 2022, but for now, this is one less hurdle the HSE students will not need to deal with.

Beth commented that she was calling her students to encourage them to take the HSE since the requirement for the Constitution was suspended. She said that some students are terrified of the Constitution test.

Kris told members that the Sauk Valley Chamber is partnering with BEST, Inc. and Sauk Valley Community College to connect with educators that were involved with Work in the Real World. She said that Workplace Wednesday will virtually connect employers with the classrooms in discussing careers that are of interest to the students. She said that a networking meeting regarding this venture was held earlier today where attendees discussed workforce issues. Kris said that this group meets on the 2nd Tuesday of the month and invited Youth Committee members to attend if they were interested.

The other topic that Kris mentioned was HB 353 that proposed increasing the minimum wage to \$20.00/hour for essential workers through COVID. She said that essential worker is not defined in this HB but it mandates employers to pay employees \$20.00/hour through COVID with no end

date. Kris said that she has been informing the Chamber membership about this HB and expressed concern for small businesses. Members held a brief discussion regarding this commenting that \$20.00/hour is a lot of money for what could be an individuals' first job. Some concerns were also expressed how that significant amount of increase could paralyze small businesses.

Jill informed members that 4-H Fairs will be held in person in Henry, Princeton and Ottawa this year. She said that 4-H Fairs are an opportunity to students to show off their project work and be judged. Jill also told members that the University of Illinois Extension has a variety of programs available to help teachers supplement their learning systems. She said that they have STEM and STEAM offerings for families, libraries and schools. Jill said that the SNAP-Ed education continues with programs for eligible schools and food pantries.

Randy informed members that he serves on the LaSalle County Board and is a representative on the BEST, Inc. Board of Director's and NCI Works. He said that he is interested in becoming more involved in the workings of the various committees and boards.

Other Business

PY 21 Youth Request for Proposals

Carrie informed members that PY 21 Youth Requests for Proposals will be issued this week. She said that staff are hoping to get some new programs. Carrie noted that the RFPs will be due on March 11 and will be presented to the Youth Committee at their April meeting. Carrie also noted that the 3 current youth programs will be given the opportunity to extend their current contract for another Program Year. Carrie stated that readers will be needed for both the Contract Extensions and any new projects that will be submitted. Kris offered to forward the RFP to groups in her area. Jo Ann stated that she would send the RFP to members to forward on as appropriate. Teresa and Sarah both volunteered to read the RFPs.

Public Comments

None

Adjournment

With there being no further business, Sarah McFarlane motioned to adjourn. Motion was seconded by Emlee Dooley and carried. Meeting adjourned at 5:16 p.m.

Jo Ann Johnson