

Business Liaison and Marketing Committee
Zoom Meeting Minutes
June 1, 2021

The Business Liaison and Marketing Committee Meeting was called to order at 8:02 a.m. by Co-Chair Linda Burt.

MEMBERS PRESENT: Linda Burt, John Spencer, DeAnne White and Emily Legel

OTHERS PRESENT: Dianna Schuler, Randy Freeman

Business Meeting

Approval of Minutes

John Spencer motioned to approve the Minutes from the October 7, 2020 Meeting. Linda Burt seconded the motion. Motion carried with John, Linda and DeAnne voting to approve via roll call vote and with Emily Legel abstaining since she missed the last meeting.

Website Analytics

Dianna reported that when the new website was established that the analytics had not been turned on. She reported that JoAnn has followed up on the oversight and that they will be available at the next meeting for the period beginning June 1, 2021.

Quarterly Newsletter

Dianna let the committee know that for the winter and spring Newsletters she highlights graduates for that semester. She stated that she has a number of them to include again this time. She told the committee that she had sent out a request to the partners for submissions for the newsletter and had yet to receive anything back. She stated that she will send a reminder.

Media Update

Dianna reminded members that the press releases had been included in their meeting packet and that she had an update on one of those releases. She informed the committee that BEST had been invited to partner with the Ottawa Area Chamber (OAC) for a drive thru job fair in May. Dianna reported that they had 138 participants that took a packet or a generic application to return and another 17 that requested electronic copies of the packet (for a total of 155 participants). Dianna went on to inform the committee that she had talked with Jeff Hettrick, OAC Director, about doing another "Job Fair in a Bag" closer to when the additional UI funds are expected to expire. DeAnne requested contact information for the person with Ottawa Chamber of Commerce. Participating in the event were 38 companies with 98 different job descriptions and over 350 openings to fill immediately.

Dianna went on to review the analytics from the NCI Works Facebook account. The largest reach was for the Pay Check Protection plan post on behalf of NCICG. Dianna demonstrated the steps that she has to take in order to even get into the NCI Works Facebook account. Emily Legel suggested hooking it up to my personal account and one other staff member to make it easier to access and update.

Podcast Update

Dianna brought the committee up to speed on a demonstration of the podcasts that she and John had been involved in recently with Workforce 180 and the members of the Illinois Workforce Partnership (IWP). As a result of that demonstration, BEST was able to renew the contract at a reduced rate of \$2,000 (50% off normal renewal). In addition to the renewal for another 12 episodes, BEST purchased an additional 6 episodes with the savings from the discount. For the new contract year BEST will have 18 episodes at a cost of \$3,800 (still \$200 below the normal renewal cost).

Dianna presented an idea for the committee to consider doing with the additional 6 episodes. Since we can now also add video to our podcasts, the thought is to target a specific company for each episode and record them for both the podcast series and to upload the video to YouTube. Since we have been trying to offer more options through digital formats, this would be available for everyone from youth to dislocated workers. Since we haven't done Work in the Real World in all counties for a number of years, this would be a way to provide the information that youth used to receive through that means. (Work in the Real World is still conducted at Sauk Valley Community College, but was postponed last year due to CoVid.) BEST, Inc. is looking at this idea as a value added service.

Dianna stated that since La Salle, Bureau, and Putnam Counties have not done a Work in the Real World for some time, this addition of the videos would give BEST and NCI Works the opportunity to re-brand a couple of things under the umbrella of Getting To Work: the podcast, the videos, and the business briefs that could be updated and attached to the videos. Companies would also be asked if they would be willing to host a tour if a teacher (secondary or post-secondary teacher) requested one. And, depending on what Sauk Valley Community College is able to do this year for Work in the Real World, they would also be available for Sally Hanrahan to share with area schools in the Sauk area. Emily suggested seeing if the companies' marketing teams would have video that could be inserted into the video recording of the podcast to add interest.

Public Comment

Randy Freeman commented that the labor market has one really big competitor right now; unemployment insurance. He added that a lot of people are simply not willing to give up the additional \$300 benefit and that there a lot of job openings just waiting to be filled. He went on to add that these openings are both full time and part time. That they may not all be the most desirable opportunities but right now a job seeker has a lot to choose from. Dianna referenced the number of openings from just the Ottawa Chamber job fair and that those 350 openings were just with the chamber's members, not all Ottawa businesses that are seeking to hire. DeAnne

added that she currently has 22 openings. Dianna also added that she hoped that the positive turnout that the chamber job fair had was about people starting to realize that they need to look now for their next job and not wait. That once the added unemployment benefits expires that the companies will be able to be choosier in their hiring.

John inquired as to if there was a way that the committee could get the message out now about need to be looking for employment and not waiting until September. John suggested press releases and hosting links to openings online. Dianna reminded the committee that the NCI Works website does have a jobs page. Emily suggested adding information about child care opportunities as well. She stated that child care is a big factor in people not being able to fully return to work. Dianna will get with JoAnn to start making appropriate additions.

Linda asked the committee if they were aware of any day camps running this summer. She said she had been getting a lot of requests about day camps and that she was aware that Echo Bluff was running one but wasn't aware of many others. Dianna suggested IVCC's day camp. Randy added that Head Start would be holding one for the age group of 5 and under. Linda asked the committee to think about what role NCI Works could play in introducing younger kids (elementary school age) to occupations sooner than what they are currently experiencing.

Adjournment

With there being no further business Linda motioned to adjourn. Motion was seconded by Emily and carried with all members voting to approve via roll call vote. Meeting adjourned at 8:49 a.m.

Dianna Schuler