

**Employer Engagement Committee  
Meeting Minutes  
June 7, 2022**

The Employer Engagement Committee Meeting was called to order at 2:01 p.m. by Cary Robbins, Committee Chair.

NAME	ABSENT	PRESENT	NAME	ABSENT	PRESENT
Mary Boogemans	X		Cary Robbins		X
Linda Burt	X		Kris Noble		X
Jerry Corcoran		X	Amy Strawn		X
Kevin Lindeman		X	James Weed	X	
Patty Head		X	Deana Jones	X	

**OTHERS PRESENT:** Carrie Folken, Dianna Schuler, and Randy Freeman. Dianna informed the committee that Mike Dean has left the committee but will be asking his HR department if anyone would be interested in joining the committee to replace him.

**Business Meeting**

Approval of Minutes

Jerry Corcoran motioned to approve the meeting minutes from June 1, 2021. Patty Head seconded the motion. Minutes were approved by roll call vote.

Business Services Report

Dianna presented an updated Business Services Report representing only Title 1. She stated that IDES has not provided data since prior to the CoVid pandemic and thought that the committee might be interested in the same report that is provided to the BEST Board. She reviewed the items contained in the report and stated that the Job Order column could be replaced with the number of direct links to the company HR pages instead since we no longer list individual jobs.

Apprenticeship Expansion Grant

Dianna reported that the grant was given an extension to the end of March 2022 and then a second extension to June 30, 2022. She reported that Nikelle is trying to wrap up a program with Label Mills and we hope to have the standards signed by the end of June. This would make 5 out of the 5 project new programs for the grant. If it doesn't get completed by the end of June, BEST staff will continue to work with the company and DOL to see it through. Dianna stated that apprenticeship responsibilities will be taken on by the BEST business services team and that they will continue to work closely with DOL Office of Apprenticeship to serve the 8 counties. Dianna also reported that right now the grant has realized 1 expansion of apprenticeships – projected 3 – but is currently working on some with Martin Engineering so that could also increase. And that a total of 178 entities have been reached with apprenticeship information.

Dianna went on to report that a recent meeting was held with Putnam County High School and Illinois Valley Chamber of Commerce. Putnam Co. High School is interested in working on developing Registered Apprenticeship Programs for all 16 career clusters during the 2022-2023 academic year. She stated that Nikelle and she advised that the school start with one occupation, build it and then do another one. That try to do all 16 clusters would be too much to deal with all at once. She also reported that they advised the school to be having conversations with the area companies that they would want to

work with to get their buy-in. Dianna stated that the companies would have to sign-on as participating employers to offer the OJT related instruction. Kris agreed that talking with the business community is very important because establishing these programs is a lot of work. Patty added that the companies may see these student as feeding into their own apprenticeship programs. Kris also added that the size of the companies will determine the school's placement capacity.

#### Review of LMI

Dianna mentioned the vast amount of LMI that was included in the mailing. She stated that it was being provided to show the committee the types of information that is frequently requested by economic development, city officials, and others that BEST supplies via their subscription to Chmura Analytics' jobseq service. She also mentioned that linkage to other agencies is available based on business needs. Dianna stated that IDES provides veteran and job order assistance and that the colleges have training available through their business training offices. She asked the committee if there was anything else that they could think of that the business community would need moving forward out of the restriction of the pandemic to be successful. She stated that we know that businesses need applicants and need people who show up. However, even with all the drive thru job fairs, we cannot make people apply or show up but we want to know what we can do or help with.

Kris shared that the Sauk Valley Chamber is working with the Sterling Schools Foundation on a Welcome Home Campaign. She said they identified 3 main areas to work on: 1) shortages of people, 2) housing, and 3) child care. The chamber is taking the lead on bringing together the ROE, employers, and workforce to discuss child care. She stated that NCI Works and BEST need to have a seat at the table during discussions. Randy added that government can be a positive or a negative in attracting people to the area. Government provides the infrastructure and our community colleges provide training. He added that government needs to be better at attracting people and opportunities by not placing obstacles in the way. Randy stated that government needs to learn from past successes and repeat them for today's needs. Carrie added that it is important to keep providing services and to be part of the discussion to keep people interested in those services. She said that there is a need to find common ground at taking a step towards better.

#### Other Business

Dianna informed the committee that the next meeting is scheduled for August 2, 2022 at 2:00 p.m. She will include a discussion on steps being taken to address concerns about available child care on that agenda.

#### Public Comment

None

#### Adjournment

It was motioned and seconded to adjourn the meeting. The meeting adjourned at 3:06 p.m.

Dianna Schuler