

**Workforce Development Board  
 Meeting Notes  
 February 17, 2022**

**CALL TO ORDER:** Workforce Development Board Chair, Frank Tecumseh, called the virtual meeting to order at 9:00 a.m.

Kathy Olsen introduced attendees. Randall Hazelbaker was participating from Branch County Board of Commissioners, Jared Hoffmaster was participating from St. Joseph County Board of Commissioners, and Monteze Morales and Mike Quinn were participating from Kalamazoo County Board of Commissioners.

**WDB Members Present:**

|   |  |  |
|---|--|--|
| Kathi Cain-Babbitt, alt for Willcutt<br>(Labor) | Kris Jenkins (Educ)*<br>Cathy Knapp, alt. for Jill Bland<br>(Econ Dev) | Mike Quinn (PS)<br>Frank Tecumseh (PS)*<br>Elizabeth VanDusen (PS) |
| Dan Dunn (PS)*                                  | Monteze Morales (Educ)   | Ken Willcutt (Labor)   |
| John Fiore (MRS)                                | Jackie Murray (PS)*  | * Exec Committee   |
| Lisa Godfrey (PS)*                              | Brian O'Donnell (Labor)  |  |
| Randall Hazelbaker (PS)*                        | Jose Orozco (CBO)  |  |
| Jared Hoffmaster (PS)                           |  |  |

**WDB Members Absent**

|                            |                       |                       |
|----------------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|
| Richard Anderson (Labor)   | Lisa Johansen (DOC)   | David Sutherland (PS) |
| Dr. Adrien Bennings (Educ) | Derek King (PS)       | Angila Wilson (PS)    |
| Trevor Bidelman (Labor)    | Dave Maurer (PS)*     | * Exec Committee      |
| Karen Doubleday (DHHS)     | Chantel Paxton (PS)   |                       |
| Jessica Eyster (PS)        | Windy Rea (Job Corps) |                       |

**Michigan Works! / Upjohn Institute Staff Present:**

|                     |             |
|---------------------|-------------|
| Jakki Bungart- Bibb | Amy Meyers  |
| Ashley Iovieno      | Kathy Olsen |

**Michigan Works! Services / Program Staff Present:**

|                           |                              |                               |
|---------------------------|------------------------------|-------------------------------|
| Tara Butts (YOU/KRESA)    | Sam Dougherty (WDI)          | Amanda Sutherland (YOU/KRESA) |
| Paige Daniels (YOU/KRESA) | Aly Lipari (YOU/KRESA)       | Mark Waurio (PATH/WEUI)       |
| Dawn DeLuca (YOU/KRESA)   | Sarah Mansberger (YOU/KRESA) | Roger Weekley (YOU/KRESA)     |

**Guests Present:**

|                                   |                                 |                              |
|-----------------------------------|---------------------------------|------------------------------|
| Robert Corder (BCU)               | Katie Higgs (City of Coldwater) | Don Reid (USA Today Network) |
| Emma Frick, for Rep. Julie Rogers | Audrey Tappenden (Coldwater ED) | Charles Rose (Voces)         |

**ANNOUNCEMENT**

Board Chair, Frank Tecumseh, announced that with the meeting being changed to virtual due to the weather forecast, no official business will occur at today's meeting. Instead, today's meeting will be to inform. The Executive Committee will meet next Wednesday to approve plans and policies that require a vote.

**SHINING STAR AWARD (Exhibit A)**

Frank Tecumseh reported that beginning this month, a new item called the Shining Star Award was added to the monthly agenda. This award is to highlight staff accomplishments. Jakki Bungart-Bibb reported the Michigan Works! Association acknowledges a shining star from each Michigan Works! area annually at their fall

conference. The Michigan Works! Southwest Shining Star Award celebrates front line staff who, through dedication and outstanding contributions to workforce development, personify the Michigan Works! mission. Locally, each month, employees can submit nominations for their peers. The Operations Team will select a monthly winner via an electronic poll and the winner will be acknowledged at the next monthly Workforce Development Board meeting. Along with that acknowledgment, the winner will receive a certificate signed by the Board chair, as well as a traveling plaque and trophy. She noted that this is one of the many ways where staff can celebrate frontline staff who work tirelessly to serve our communities. The inaugural winner has been selected and he is in attendance at today's meeting. Roger Weekley is a career navigator who was nominated by his peers because he has exceptional customer service skills, taking time to ensure the customers' needs are met with the greatest care. He is extremely helpful to all those around him and brings a smile and positive attitude not only to the customers but also to his coworkers. Congratulations Roger and thank you for your passion to serve and your commitment to the Michigan Works! mission!

### **CITIZENS' TIME**

No comments.

### **COMMITTEE REPORTS**

**Disability Awareness Resource Team (DART)** – John Fiore reported the DART Committee recently met. At that meeting, staff from Kalamazoo RESA gave a brief presentation on the financial services project that was mentioned at a previous Board meeting. The presentation did result in a couple of community connections that will support the initiative. Committee members also discussed the previously developed desktop training modules. Committee members will be reviewing each module to ensure that they continue to contain the most current and correct information and that the hyperlinks used within each module are correct. Emerging issues discussed at the meeting included accessibility for individuals with disabilities for voting and for attending public meetings, as well as the advocacy work that is taking place to ensure that people with disabilities have the ability to fully participate in their communities. The committee also discussed mobility in West Michigan during the winter months and the ongoing advocacy efforts with local governments to implement snow removal plans that would support and allow individuals with disabilities to access the communities. During the partner updates, members learned that applications for Project SEARCH have increased.

### **NEW BUSINESS**

None.

### **STAFF REPORTS**

#### **Business Services Activities**

Ashley Iovieno provided a PowerPoint presentation highlighting the results of the grant awards for the Going PRO Talent Fund (GPTF) FY22. Awards were reported to be:

- Kalamazoo County - Of 43 applications, 32 employers were awarded a total amount of \$1,557,685.
- Calhoun County – Of 17 applications, 11 (1 pending) employers were awarded a total amount of \$477,425.
- Branch County – Of 6 applications, 2 employers were awarded a total amount of \$51,606.
- St. Joseph County – Of 8 applications, 5 (1 pending) employers were awarded a total amount of \$398,145.
- Other Michigan counties that applied under Michigan Works! Southwest included 8 employer applications of which 7 were awarded a total amount of \$259,173.

Ms. Iovieno also shared data comparing the number of GPTF applications and awards for FY20, FY21 and FY22. There were 57 applications in FY20, 44 applications in FY21 and 82 applications in FY22. There were 57 GPTF awards in FY21 for a total of \$2,700,438 and 82 (2 pending) for a total amount of \$2,744,034 in FY22. For the FY22 awards, local employers are planning to train 1,804 employees, and 1,088 new hires. Of those numbers, plans are to train 238 new apprentices.

Ms. Iovieno also reported that childcare continues to be a difficult issue across the State. Michigan Works! Southwest recently partnered with the State of Michigan, Childcare Resources, West Michigan Works!, and Berrien, Cass, and Van Buren Counties to host a virtual job fair. This event took place yesterday. There were 43 booths of childcare providers from across the West Michigan area. Efforts are being made to recruit individuals for these jobs and to assist with opening additional childcare businesses. Jose Orozco reported Voces is planning to pilot two classrooms for early childhood and if all goes well, they may be looking for applicants in September. Lisa Godfrey noted that she has been on the Workforce Development Board for 30 years and the number one issue 30 years ago was childcare and questioned why this issue cannot be addressed. Ms. Iovieno reported this past year couple of years, childcare was drastically affected by the pandemic and many locations struggled to keep their doors open. Moving forward, it is important to recognize childcare as an industry with professional careers and then put the tools behind that with appropriate quality training. Michigan Works! Southwest has made efforts over the past few years to develop an early childhood development apprenticeship program. When businesses have better trained employees, they will be able to open more classrooms and thus be able to open up additional childcare slots. Another item to be addressed is the high cost of childcare as well as the high cost to operate a childcare center. Jakki Bungart-Bibb reported that in the past, there has not always been the backing of state and federal funding to address this issue because with low wages, these jobs were not considered high-demand, high-wage jobs. Now, these jobs are recognized as high demand and efforts are being made to provide more training and increase wages and staff are hoping to be able to ‘move the needle’. Ms. Iovieno also reported that staff worked with local childcare providers in applying for stabilization grants and quite a few local providers applied and received grants that allowed for them to offer sign-up bonuses. Mike Quinn reported that he and his wife have operated a Montessori preschool for over three decades. The childcare stabilization grant was a huge benefit to them and although the \$1,000 hiring bonus was available, they did not need to hire new employees because they did not lose employees during the pandemic. The grant did allow for awarding bonuses to current employees which really helped with employee retention. Jakki Bungart-Bibb reported Calhoun County was recently approved for the Tri-Share program to support childcare.

### **Labor Market Information**

**Michigan’s Labor Market News** – Jakki Bungart-Bibb reported Michigan’s [February edition of Labor Market News](#) will be sent out following the meeting. This edition focuses on inflation trends in Michigan. Using data from the Consumer Price Index, the feature article highlights key indicators, wage trends, and the cost of goods and services in Michigan. The map of the month visualizes national housing price trends relative to Michigan. The industry focus in this edition is focused on food and beverage stores which have been heavily impacted by inflation. In this edition, the Michigan unemployment rate was reported to be at 5.6%, the national rate was reported to be at 3.9%, and the four counties in the Michigan Works! Southwest service area ranges from 3.7% to 5.3%.

**Job Demand Dashboard** - Ms. Bibb reported 2021 was a record year for online job postings, with over one million total. This past reporting month, the [Job Demand Dashboard](#) showed a significant decrease, close to 20% in comparison to the prior month. The top occupations on the list remain the same as previous months - Registered Nurses, retail sales workers, and frontline supervisors of retail sales workers. Following the meeting, the link to the Job Demand Dashboard for Region 8 and the link to the Upjohn Institute publications were emailed to members and guests.

**Burning Glass Analytics and Real Time Jobs Data** - In addition to the verbal report, the website link to the labor market reports generated from Burning Glass Analytics and Real Time Jobs Data that identified top detailed occupations, skills greatest in demand, and employers with the most job openings in Prosperity Region 8, Michigan Works! Southwest, and each of the four counties in the MW! Southwest Area for the period December 1, 2021 through January 31, 2022 was included in the meeting notice.

### **Operations Update**

Ms. Bibb reported the Michigan Works! Southwest Service Centers continue to be open to the public, offering both virtual and in-person services. Two of the service centers did transition to virtual services for a short period of time at the end of January due to illnesses and staffing shortages. All centers went back to in-person services as of February 1, 2022. Staff are seeing an increase in the number of individuals registering for work statewide; however, the number

of customers visiting the centers continues to be well below pre-pandemic levels. Locally, 579 individuals registered for work in January. Lastly, Ms. Bibb reported that there will be an expungement fair on February 23, 2022 from 10:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m. in Calhoun County at the Kellogg Arena.

### **Director's Report (Exhibit B)**

Jakki Bungart- Bibb reported on highlights of the Director's Report (Exhibit B) that was emailed to members prior to the meeting.

*Federal Update* – Ms. Bibb reported a third FY 2022 continuing resolution (CR) was passed by the house earlier this month. This CR will extend funding through March 11, 2022. The Senate must also pass the measure before it is sent to the president. The current CR expires Feb 18, 2022; thus, an update is anticipated either today or tomorrow.

*State Update* – Ms. Bibb reported a brief summary of workforce related items in the Governor's proposed budget for 2023 was listed on the Director's Report that was sent to members prior to the meeting. A few of these items are in alignment with the Michigan Works! legislative priorities shared at the previous Workforce Development Board meeting. She highlighted \$15 million for barrier removal and employment supports, \$15 million in youth programming, and proposed funding for pre-apprenticeships and innovative childcare programs. A [hyperlink to a media release](#) that provides greater detail about the proposed budget was included on the report.

### **PROGRAM – ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT UPDATES**

Frank Tecumseh introduced the presenters for the program. They included Audrey Tappenden, Economic Development Coordinator for Coldwater Area Economic Development; Robert Corder, Vice President, Attraction for Battle Creek Unlimited and Cathy Knapp, Partner at Southwest Michigan First.

Ms. Tappenden reported on the top employers in Branch County and noted that the county is looking forward to seeing how three possible expansions will play out in the next year. Information was provided on five housing developments that included the Thompson Boulevard neighborhood; a second MISHDA MOD house; a 310-unit apartment complex; 5 units at 8 South Monroe funded with a CRP award; and a 7-unit project applying for CRP, which is pending. An update was provided regarding a 1,500-acre project with 150-megawatt potential that Apex Clean Energy & esaSolar are working on. She further reported that the Children's Museum of Branch County is working on relocation and expansion in partnership with Coldwater Downtown Development Authority (DDA) which includes a \$350,000 renovation at a DDA-owned building. Talent development initiatives included a focus on the Young Professionals organization planned by the county's Chamber of Commerce, and the Coldwater Township Sunrise Rotary PROMISE Project for allied health and industrial trade programs. Lastly, an update was provided regarding efforts for Main Street and redevelopment ready communities. This included a CEDAM fellow working towards RRC certification for the City of Coldwater; and the selection of Coldwater DDA to serve as a Main Street organization for which a baseline assessment is in process.

Mr. Corder reported on industrial investments and expansions, as well as multiple community development projects that included the McCamly Hotel redevelopment, the BC TRAIN relocation support, the Washington Heights Entrepreneurial Fund, the Tiger Room food accelerator, the Real Estate Improvement Fund, and housing initiatives. Information was also provided on Calhoun County MEGA sites and the work that is being done in partnership with MEDC and community partners regarding several prospects. Information pertaining to the possibility of a BTL Drone Park that would include drone manufacturing, drone operations, drone repair and maintenance, drone training, and Urban Air Mobility (UAM) was shared. Mr. Corder reported BCU plans to restart in-person business retention visits and outreach in 2022 which were halted in 2020 due to COVID-19. The housing shortage in the Battle Creek area is critical and new housing at all levels is needed to grow the regional economy. The 2022 outlook included a hopeful lessening effect of COVID-19, supply chain disruptions that are leading to higher costs, the acceleration of electric vehicles (EV), labor challenges, accelerating downtown efforts, housing, a focus on EV/Battery technology, and drones, adding BCU staff for marketing and development roles, and a focus on domestic travel only.

Ms. Knapp reported on total investment and jobs data regarding 2021 expansion/attraction project announcements. Attraction efforts for Southwest Michigan First in 2021 was focused on key markets with high concentrations of site selectors that included over 128 site consultant impact visits. Many talent initiatives/collaborations were focused on Career Technical Education (CTE) in St. Joseph and Kalamazoo Counties and included work with the CTE Steering Committee in Kalamazoo on the design of the new center and development of the redesigned curriculum. Southwest Michigan First also worked with local colleges on the development of strong internship and apprenticeship programs. In 2021 more than 280 acres of industrial land was sold to developers and Southwest Michigan First is working with local investors and municipalities to extend infrastructure and create additional shovel-ready parcels in several areas of the counties. A total of 380 company consultations were conducted in 2021, offering solutions surrounding multiple workplace issues. Additional initiatives reported on included facilitating First Path, a nine-week entrepreneurship course; orchestrating MIX to bring together local creators and innovators; monthly Business First virtual events to share resources to help businesses with trending issues; and administering a USEPA Brownfield Assessment Grant for the St. Joseph County Brownfield Authority. Lastly, Ms. Knapp shared four work pillars that Southwest Michigan First will be focused on in 2022 under the leadership of their new CEO, Jonas Peterson.

### OLD BUSINESS

None.

### CITIZENS' TIME

No comments.

### MEMBERS' TIME

No comments.

### UPCOMING MEETINGS

- The WDB Executive Committee meeting will be meeting next week. Kathy Olsen reported the meeting will most likely be on Wednesday, February 23, 2022 from 9:00-10:00 a.m. Once a meeting location is confirmed, a meeting notice and agenda packet will be sent out. The Executive Committee will also meet on March 17, 2022 from 9:00-10:30 a.m.
- The next meeting of the full WDB is scheduled for Thursday, May 19, 2022 from 9:00 – 10:30 a.m. at Southwest Michigan First.

Other upcoming committee meetings were listed on the agenda. They included:

- The Career Educational Advisory Council (CEAC) meeting is scheduled for Monday, March 21, 2022 from 1:00-3:00 p.m.
- The Monitoring and Evaluation Committee meeting is scheduled for Tuesday, March 22, 2022 from 3:30 – 5:00 p.m.
- The Disability Awareness Resource Team (DART) Committee is scheduled for Tuesday, April 12, 2022 from 2:00-4:00 p.m.

### ADJOURNMENT

There being no other reports or business for the Board, the meeting was adjourned at 10:12 a.m.

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Kathy Olsen

Date

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Frank Tecumseh

Date