

## HUMBOLDT COUNTY WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT BOARD (WDB)



### EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE MEETING

Friday • March 26, 2021 • 12:00 – 2:00 P.M.

Via Zoom Web Conferencing

## MEETING MINUTES

### OPENING

#### Call to Order:

Chair, Dena McCullough, called the meeting to order at 12:02 PM. A quorum was noted to be present.

#### Committee Members Attendance:

- Dena McCullough (Chair) – present
- Supervisor Michelle Bushnell – present
- Daniel Dixon – present
- Cedar Reuben – present
- Mike Newman (Vice Chair) – present
- Dennis Leonardi – present
- Pru Ratliff – present

Staff Present: Allison Tans, Elishia Hayes, Scott Adair, Cris Plocher

Others Present: Emilia Bartolomeu, Veronica Champayne, Madison Flynn, Gregory Gehr, Marie Granberry, Jeff Hunerlach, Cara Owings Lawrence Siler, Susan Seaman, Robyn Stalcup, Connie Stewart, Kerry Venegas, Theresa Vallotin, Connie Stewart, Randy Weaver, Nick Wilde, Wendy Zanotelli, Cara Owings

#### Adjustments to the Agenda

None

#### Board and Executive Director Announcements

- Mike Newman has resigned from WDB but has agreed to stay on until April 2021. A nomination committee will be discussed later in the meeting.
- Allison Tans announced good news that the James Irvine Foundation (Voice of the Customer) awarded Humboldt County team (with Libby Maynard) their application. She also shared that disability training dates coming up with Dept. of Rehabilitation: April 20 (Self Disclosure), May 19 (Hidden Disabilities), June 23 (Reasonable Accommodation). Flyers will be coming out soon.
- Allison Tans clarified a few points from last March 19 WDB Executive Committee meeting regarding the importance of performance negotiations and her work in

negotiating lower performance measures in a number of areas. She mentioned that she followed up Kirsten Cordova with the the California Employment Development Department after SMART expressed concern and Kirsten reported she would have been unwilling to lower the numbers any further. ETD did a substantial amount of performance reporting for WDB in the past due to acknowledgement of staffing shortages at Humboldt County WDB. Having additional staff for WDB would enable this reporting on monthly or quarterly basis for WDB.

- Allison Tans noted that the California Workforce Association advises Workforce Development Boards should budget for no more than 50% of their funding from their WIOA funds and the rest should come from grants. In her role as Regional Organizer, Allison Tans has pursued grants successfully and is commended by the state and others. She has covered multiple positions for WDB due to staffing shortages for a period of time (July 2018 to May 2019 and again July 2020 to February 2021) filling positions as Regional Organizer and Regional Training Coordinator (hired for this position), Interim Executive Director for WDB and various other roles.
- Scott Adair thanked staff for working with Auditor/Controller Office to make Smart weekly payments successfully on a weekly basis. Also, Scott Adair and Allison Tans met with state regional advisor, Veronica Champayne, to talk about our local area and regional plans, which will be shared later in the meeting and commends Allison Tans for her work on the plans.

### **Public Comment**

- Greg Gehr with NCIDC would like to discuss edits to be made to the local/regional plans, which will be brought up later in the meeting.
- Cara Owings, speaking as citizen of Humboldt County, provided an edit to Attachment A (Board of Supervisors Recommendation for future of Workforce Development in Humboldt County) regarding the Title by making Workforce one word not two words as in Work Force).

Cara Owings provided comment on the draft recommendations for section 2a, where as a public citizen she does not support the dissolving of the Humboldt County WDB to merge with another region as this would eliminate \$817,000 in direct employment training and career service funding to our county and it will structurally limit the amount of money the county will have access to for competitive grants from the state, such as the program developed by Allison Tans and awarded \$1.6. million for Opioid Crisis Response. She mentioned, if decided to merge, a stronger option would be to emulate Workforce Alliance of North Bay (WANBY) which consists similar industries/activities (including cannabis industry) that Humboldt County WDB has expressed direction in following.

Cara Owings also commented on section 2b, establishing a local labor force committee in lieu of the WDB. She is curious how this would impact state and county relationships, employment/workforce services and technical assistance.

Cara Owings commented on section 2c, where she appreciates reviewing the staffing agreement and proposes a compensation study be done for workforce staff also comparing similar regions for this study.

Cara Owings also commented on section 2e as being the best option for a transitioning WDB to Dept. of Health and Human Services (DHHS), which has history of running Employment Training Division. This would eliminate need for contracted service provider to administer these services. She is interested in knowing the level of involvement of DHHS Director in these discussions.

Finally, Cara Owings mentioned she was not sure why the full WDB was not notified of staffing title change on February 26<sup>th</sup> where county made decision to no longer acknowledge the title of Executive Director to WDB and change to Workforce Development Coordinator as these changes were made on February 23<sup>rd</sup>.

- Dena McCullough requested Cara Owings to put her comments and questions in writing and submit it to the WDB so that WDB can address her comments WDB discussions.

#### **Board of Supervisors (BOS) Recommendation for the future of Workforce Development in Humboldt County (Attachment A)**

- Scott Adair, Director of Humboldt County Office Economic Development, walked through the options identified in Attachment A that will be presented to BOS on April 6<sup>th</sup>. This is not full or comprehensive list of options. The intent is to gather additional insight and feedback with regard to what all the options could look like for presenting to BOS for assessing and making needed improvements to workforce development related activities. These options are not a recommendation for BOS to make a decision, but to give staff direction and guidance to explore options, which will then involve further solicitation of feedback from stakeholder and WDB on the assessment of Workforce Development structure, programs and operations for improvements that may be needed. Then finally actual recommendations can be brought back to the BOS for review.
- These options are in response to the need for WDB to be prepared when SMART ceases to provide workforce development related services as of June 30, 2021 and to address WDB staffing needs. Scott encourages the public and WDB (within Brown Act guidelines) to express their ideas and suggestions to the BOS on this matter, as well.
- Dan Dixon asked how would section 2d option (of Attachment A) that identifies exploring the separation of the WDB from the County of Humboldt to become an independent non-profit (501c3) entity how would it affect funding of WDB and would it impact role/responsibilities of the WDB. Scott Adair said Ms. Champayne may have more feedback on this question. Scott Adair did mention that some other WDBs in the state have this structure and receive workforce funding, but to the extent of the impact on funding it is not certain at this time and would have to be assessed as part of the exploring of options. Mike Newman would also like to see how staffing/benefits would be impacted by having a

non-profit (501c3) structure. Adair mentioned all the options identified so far would have to look at how it would impact staffing, which would be included in the analysis.

- Mike Newman and Pru Ratliff both asked about section 5 in how it would speed things up. Scott mentioned the layers of review would be reduced by eliminating approval levels of County Administrative Office and designating fiscal agent authority to Office of Economic Development, which would speed up approval process of submitting documents to the state. There still will remain a level of checks and balances.
- Pru Ratliff asked for more information on section 2e (of Attachment A) with regard to what the WDB structure would look like with the transitioning of staff and supportive services from Office of Economic Development to DHHS. Scott Adair said, currently, department oversight of workforce development activities is the County Administrative Office, whereas if it were moved to DHHS, then DHHS would have department oversight. Pru Ratliff suggested inviting DHHS, Workforce Alliance of the North BayWANB, and Northern Rural Training and Employment Consortium (NoRTEC) representatives to present to the WDB and discuss their structure and perceived advantages and disadvantages. She is concerned that NoRTEC already has 11 counties as members and is concerned that focus of funding on Humboldt County would be reduced, especially regarding cannabis industry due to some NoRTEC cannabis restrictions. Committee member Ratliff also noted that seeking 501c3 status is an expensive and heavy regulatory endeavor.
- Cedar Reuben mentioned he has multiple concerns about the proposal to BOS and that this proposal has not been brought up to the WDB or Executive Committee in a timely manner. He noted that the reason why WDB coincides currently with Office of Economic Development is because of its powerful combination having similar goals and objectives. This proposal seems to be trying to eliminate this important partnership. The only proposal that has some validity is section 2c for a comprehensive staffing and service agreement to be conducted.
- Mike Newman agrees with Cedar Reuben. He also agrees that WDB needs to be its own entity but fine tuned and address understaffing issue with the staffing/services agreement. Pru Ratliff concurs.
- Dennis Leonardi mentioned regionalizing will not benefit Humboldt County. He is in favor of keeping workforce development activities local so as not to lose services.
- Connie Stewart with HSU noted that 10% administrative cost allowed by most grants is insufficient. She mentioned HSU wants to be part of solution and supports the partnership with WDB and to reach out to HSU if needing assistance with grant writing and staff support activities.
- Madison Flynn with Northern California Indian Development Council (NCIDC) commented that Randy Weaver is an important resource for support to their WIOA program and would not like to see this resource be eliminated if WDB would no longer existed as a local entity.
- Dan Dixon asked what was the catalyst that is perceived to suddenly bring about the proposal to BOS. Scott Adair responded that the catalyst was the October 2020 letter from

SMART to Supervisor Bohn and Supervisor Bass. Staff tried to schedule meetings with WDB Executive Committee members on a one-on-one basis (within Brown Act guidelines), however WDB Executive Committee decided not to pursue one-on-one meetings and instead address it as a full committee. Further time elapsed with changing supervisor representation on WDB from Supervisor Bass to Supervisor Bushnell. Also, further time involved with staff working with County Counsel for guidance.

- Dena McCullough mentioned that she thought only section 2c would be brought to BOS as an option to pursue to address immediate needs. She also mentioned that she would be in favor of items 3, 4, and 5 to be part of proposal to BOS. The other items 1 and 2a, 2b, and 2d require more time to explore. Chair McCullough's recommendation is to propose items 2c and items 3-5 as options to BOS. Cedar Reuben supports Chair McCullough's recommendations.
- Nick Wilde with Dream Quest has worked with youth in Eastern Humboldt for almost a decade. He does not see any benefit in turning oversight of WDB to another entity. Having a local WDB entity enables good communication and technical support on workforce activities.
- Allison Tans clarified that her position is fully grant funded and is separate from the 10% administrative allocation. She mentioned Yolanda Castro from southern California and with SELACO WDB operates as a 501c3 and could be invited to discuss her WDB 501c3 status and experiences. She also mentioned other WDB Directors have signatory authority to speed up processes. She noted DHHS-ETD had been separate from DHHS prior to the time that DHHS became an integrated agency, and at that time became part of Social Services. When integration happened, Economic Development took over the administrative and fiscal side and DHHS-ETD continued with the program side of WIA and then WIOA.
- Theresa Vallotin seconded everything Nick Wilde mentioned. She works in southern Humboldt which is unique and has particular needs. It's important to have local staff that is supportive and has invested interests in the local communities. Allison Tans provides great support.
- Dennis Leonardi supports Chair McCullough's recommendations. The rest of the items need to have further robust conversations when the board and committee can meet in person.
- Scott Adair clarified that the proposal to the BOS is made under the direction of BOS members (Supervisors Bohn and Bass), County Administrator and County leadership, not from direction of the WDB. However, any motions/decisions made by the WDB Executive Committee can be memorialized and shared in the report to the BOS. There will be not decisions made by BOS to pursue any one option, but just to authorize staff to work with WDB and stakeholders to explore options and to culminate recommendations based on feedback received to the BOS in the future.
- Elishia Hayes further stressed the urgency of the proposal to BOS is in response to SMART notification that their services will no longer be provided as of June 30, 2021. The county

needs to address this issue and make preparations to develop a plan as a team on how to move forward and continue to provide vital workforce related services to the county.

- Supervisor Bushnell mentioned the process of drafting a proposal to authorize staff to work on this issue needs to come to the BOS to begin discussions and review.
- Discussion involved concerns from WDB Executive Committee members about the process being used where the WDB Executive Committee was not involved earlier in the process. The process seems to be driven by a service provider not by customary procedure.
- Robyn Stalcup is concerned about the inconsistency in the process when there are changes in service providers and leadership. RFPs need to be done whenever a service provider notifies termination of services. She would like to hear more discussion about the impact on services and the people being served in the community. Full analysis should have been done on all the options prior to drafting the proposal to the BOS.
- **Board of Supervisors Draft Recommendations on Future of Humboldt County Workforce Development (Attachment A):** Chair McCullough moved to make recommendation to BOS that the WDB Executive Committee recommends to pursue immediately only certain items from the draft recommendations (in Attachment A) of the Board of Supervisors regarding the future of Workforce Development in Humboldt County, and the rest of the items to be held off to a later time in order to allow sufficient time to explore and review. The WDB Executive Committee recommends only the following item numbers to be pursued as immediate need:

- 2c: Explore the creation of a comprehensive staffing and services agreement between the county and the HC-WDB to better define staff roles, responsibilities and staff services provided to the HC-WDB by the County;*
- 3: Direct staff to release a Request for Proposals (RFP) and to collect bids for services presently being performed by SMART, a County workforce vendor, to replace SMART as a Workforce Investment Opportunity Act (WIOA) service provider if or should SMART cancel services with the County of Humboldt.*
- 4: Authorize and memorialize the agreement between the CAO's Office of Economic Development and the County of Humboldt Auditor Controller to process SMART invoices weekly until and through the end of SMART's contract term.*
- 5: Authorize the Economic Development Division Director and the BOS appointed representative to the HC-WDB, to sign and execute programmatic level State forms and documents specific to WIOA funded workforce programs and to the County of Humboldt's Local Workforce Area.*

Pru Ratliff seconded the motion. Roll call was made and motion passed unanimously.

Results from the April 6<sup>th</sup> BOS meeting on this topic will be reported back by staff to the WDB Executive Committee.

### **Local Area Redesignation (Attachment B)**

- Scott Adair mentioned he and Allison Tans met with the county's regional advisor, Veronica Champayne, regarding whether Local Area Redesignation application would be adversely impacted if there were workforce development related changes in the future and the regional advisor said to continue with recertification and that amendments can always be made in the future which can be addressed at that time, which is a lengthy process.
- **Local Area Redesignation (Attachment B) Vote:** Cedar moved to accept the Local Area Redesignation application. Seconded by Dan Dixon. Motion passed unanimously.

### **Local Plan (Attachment C)**

- Gregory Gehr with NCIDC noted some corrective edits to be made to Local Plan. Allison Tans will confer with Gregory Gehr on making these edits.
- **Local Area Plan (Attachment C) Vote:** Cedar moved to accept Local Area Plan and seconded by Daniel Dixon, with noted corrections made by Gregory Gehr. Motion passed unanimously.

### **Regional Plan (Attachment D)**

- **Regional Plan (Attachment D) Vote:** Vice Chair Newman moved to accept Regional Plan and seconded by Daniel Dixon. Motion passed unanimously.

### **Executive Committee Labor Member Seat Nomination and Bylaw Modification**

- Chair McCullough proposed to form two AdHoc Committees to work on the next two items on the agenda, including Bylaw Modification and Executive Committee Labor Member Seat Nomination. The Bylaw AdHoc Committee will meet first then the Nomination AdHoc Committee. Staff will send out email to full WDB to seek volunteers for the Bylaw Committee (to be filled first) and for the Executive Committee Labor Member Seat Nomination.

### **Adjourn**

Chair, Dena McCullough, adjourned the meeting at 2:05 PM.

**Next Executive Committee Meeting Date:** April 15, 2021, 1:30 to 3:30 p.m..

*WDB Agendas and Minutes can be found at  
<http://humboldt.gov/1709/Workforce-Investment-Board/>  
or by contacting Economic Development at (707)445-7745.*