



Meeting URL: <https://sowib-org.zoom.us/j/81927714815?pwd=N2JEQTNkcHN1amF0MkxhOjE9K3J2Zz09>

Meeting ID: 819 2771 4815
Passcode: 499820

MINUTES

1. Call to Order and Confirmation of Quorum

	Dr. Gray (B)		Jason Traylor (B)	X	Andy Owens (B)
X	Robert Westerman	X	Ben Messner (B)		Mike Hicks
X	Joe Benetti (B)	X	Debbie Sargent		Brian Prawitz
	Dave Sanders (B)		Ali Mageehon	X	Susan Ray (B)
X	Rhonda Amer (B)		Amy Kincaid		Chris Guastaferrero (B)
	Anna Martin - TBD	X	Marie Simonds (B)		Rachel Pokrandt
X	Laura McKeane (B)				

The meeting was called to order at 12:04 pm by Joe Benetti. 9 of the 19 members (excluding vacancies) were present, making up 51% of the total members. Of the 51%, 55% represent Businesses.

2. INTRODUCTION OF NEW BOARD MEMBERS

No new board members currently. Rod Sprinkle may fill this position, waiting for more information for the Labor seat.

3. PUBLIC COMMENT SESSION: Members of the public may now comment on any matter posted on this Agenda, which is before this Board for consideration and action today. Please clearly state and spell your name and state your address for the record. Each public comment will be limited to three (3) minutes.

No public comment was presented.

BOARD ACTION ITEMS

4. DISCUSSION AND POSSIBLE ACTION: Consent Agenda (Approved with One Motion)

- Meeting Minutes – November 16th, 2023

Motion to approve minutes and consent agenda made by Mike Hicks and seconded by Marie Simonds. The motion carried unanimously.

5. DISCUSSION AND POSSIBLE ACTION: SOWIB Staff

- 2024 – 2028 Strategic Plan

The board discussed the strategic plan, acknowledging the importance of adhering to deadlines for public comments and subsequent submission to the HECC. The need for board approval before public posting was stressed, with Rena Langston confirming the return of all partner agreements except from the HECC and a local DHS office in Douglas. The approval for the strategic plan was moved by Debbie Sargent and seconded by Andy Owens. The motion to approve the strategic plan for 2024 to 2028 was carried out without any objections noted. Adjustments for post-public comment are anticipated, with assurances given for timely communication to the board.

- WRQBOX

The discussion around WRQBOX highlighted that while approved, the project was not yet operational. Delays were attributed to other priorities, with a promise of a detailed operational and financial update in the next meeting.

SOWIB Projects

6. INFORMATION: Operations; SOWIB Staff

- New Staff

The board welcomed Ben Crawford (Recruit HIPPO; YEA Douglas County) and Christina Foltz (PLUM HR; Seattle, WA) to the team, emphasizing the strategic importance of their roles in enhancing service delivery and organizational goals.

PLUM HR Contract: The engagement of PLUM HR for front-loaded services including pay equity and risk assessments was reviewed, with a plan for future services as needed.

Along with discussing the HR and coaching aspects, Joe Benetti also mentioned the broader context for hiring the HR firm, PLUM. He explained the need for an HR firm arose after the previous HR firm departed due to issues within their own operation. Initially, the organization managed with a temporary solution focusing only on onboarding. The decision to engage PLUM HR and a coach for Kyle was part of an effort to strengthen the executive management and HR functions, ensuring stability and comprehensive support within the organization.

7. INFORMATION: SOWIB Staff

- Program Update/Performance

- WIOA

Rena Langston: Opened the discussion by expressing the challenge of presenting complex performance data in an understandable manner. She emphasized the age of the data used in reporting and its lack of real-time relevance. Notably, Rena pointed out the success in exceeding enrollment targets for adult dislocated workers, with current figures standing at 172 against a target of 155. However, she highlighted ongoing challenges in engaging the youth demographic, with only 52 new enrollees against a target of 120.

Rena also discussed efforts to improve real-time data accessibility via the I Track system, which currently retrieves outdated data from past performance years. She stressed the importance of transitioning to real-time data to better monitor and respond to program needs effectively. Rena's remarks underscored the complexities of managing workforce development programs and the critical need for timely and accurate data to drive decision-making and resource allocation.

Rena continued by detailing specific challenges and updates regarding the WIOA program, particularly focusing on the stark contrast in engagement levels between adults and youth.

The discussion transitioned into an interactive session with board members expressing interest in more detailed explanations of the data and its implications for program strategies and outcomes. Rena proposed an in-depth pre-meeting workshop to further educate board members on data interpretation,

aiming to enhance their understanding of strategic metrics such as credentials and measurable skills gains.

- **Future Ready (ARPA)**

Rena Langston: Detailed the transition of the Prosperity 10,000 funds into ARPA funds, noting that the former were fully expended by June 30th. These funds now contribute to the broader pool of ARPA money, which is anticipated to be fully utilized by the end of December 2024. Rena provided insights into the strategic allocation and expected depletion of these funds ahead of their expiration date in June 2026. Rena elaborated on ongoing initiatives supported by ARPA funds:

UCC (Umpqua Community College) and SWOCC (Southwestern Oregon Community College):

Utilizing the funds for graduation support services tailored specifically for nursing students, aiming to enhance their academic success and professional readiness.

South Coast Business: *Focused on delivering transportation-related training and support, targeting essential skills required in the transportation sector.*

Partnership with Adapt: *A newly initiated project supporting the training of certified alcohol and drug counselors. This program involves four individuals undergoing a comprehensive training process, which includes a year of on-the-job training and education, culminating in 1,000 hours of practical experience. ARPA funds are being strategically used to subsidize their wages as they balance work commitments with educational advancements.*

Additionally, ARPA funds are allocated to support apprenticeships managed by Laura and the Driving Prosperity initiative led by Rachel. These collaborations are geared towards amplifying the impact of job training programs and enhancing employment opportunities within the community.

- **Recruit HIPPO**

Natasha Garrison discussed the Recruit HIPPO program, highlighting that despite a staffing shortfall in Douglas County, the program nearly reached 500 student engagements with over 1,200 meetings conducted. The reinstatement of Ben Crawford as the youth employment advisor has allowed for an increased capacity to meet with students. The program aims to fully utilize its funding by summer, anticipating full expenditure for the ongoing Oregon Youth Employment program which targets 186 students by 2025.

- **Apprenticeships MA & ECE**

Laura Pumphrey provided an update on the apprenticeship programs for Medical Assistants (MA) and Early Childhood Education (ECE). Interest remains high with 28 new applications received, mainly from Linn and Benton counties. The programs continue to attract participants through employer referrals and local work source offices. Additionally, a new grant from Boli's Future Ready Oregon initiative will support increased outreach efforts to engage more employers across the state.

- **Driving Prosperity**

Rachael Larson outlined the success of the Driving Prosperity program, a CDL training initiative funded by a federal grant. As of January, the program had successfully trained 253 drivers, with a goal to train 325 by June 2024. Efforts to place graduates into employment are ongoing, with a current placement rate of 70%. The program also utilizes simulators as training tools, which have been well received by both participants and training providers.

- **THW Project-OHA**

Tina Carpenter shared an update on the ongoing efforts and progress of the THW (Traditional Health Workers) project, which includes multiple training initiatives such as PSS-SUD (Peer Support Specialist – Substance Use Disorder) and PSS-MH (Peer Support Specialist - Mental Health). Tina reported that the training goal for PSS-SUD has been achieved, and due to market saturation in certain job areas, no further training seats will be added for now, pending a reassessment of job placement opportunities. She highlighted that the PSS-MH segment is currently waitlisted, showing strong demand and near completion of its training capacity. Community Health Worker (CHW) training is set to commence in May, with high enrollment rates indicating robust interest. Efforts are underway to increase the capacity for this and other training, including Doula training, where

numbers have been boosted from 6 to 9 seats. Tina emphasized the challenge of finding appropriate work experience placements for PSS-YSS (Peer Support Specialist - Youth Support Specialist), a critical step for meaningful employment after training. She also mentioned innovative solutions being developed to enhance job search capabilities and resource navigation for THWs, such as hands-on training in job application processes and a new module for navigating online resources for continuing education. Finally, information on sustainability efforts, highlighting strategic partnerships with CCOs (Coordinated Care Organizations) and other providers to ensure the continuation and expansion of THW training opportunities. These partnerships aim to pilot new approaches to workforce development in response to local labor market research, identifying high-demand areas that can benefit from trained THWs.

- **Youth Built Projects**

Kyle Stevens provided an update on Youth Built Projects, expressing great enthusiasm for high school build projects, particularly the mini jet boats being constructed in various schools. These projects not only engage students in practical learning but also aim to create a pathway to skills that are in demand in the workforce. Currently, mini jet boats are being built at Marshfield, Myrtle Point, and Gold Beach high schools, with plans to expand to other schools. The initiative has seen significant interest and is poised to expand as additional kits are distributed and more schools participate. The ultimate goal is to sell the completed projects to fund further educational initiatives, demonstrating a sustainable model that reinvests in the program.

- **Workforce Benefits Navigator**

Kyle Stevens shared information on the implementation of the Workforce Benefits Navigator, funded by a \$1 million grant as part of the Future Ready Oregon initiative. He outlined the strategic deployment of "quiet meeting rooms" or advanced technological booths in community locations such as libraries and DHS offices. These facilities will reduce travel requirements and increase accessibility, featuring capabilities like live language translation and sign language support. The initiative also includes staffing to assist with scheduling and queries during and beyond regular business hours. This approach is designed to make the workforce system more accessible and efficient, with a low ongoing operational cost to ensure sustainability beyond the initial funding period.

Grants Submitted/Received

Information on recent grants submitted and received, including updates on funding statuses.

- **Presentations/Events/Upcoming Events**

Re-entry Program with the Department of Corrections: A grant was awarded to the Eastern Oregon Workforce Partnership to implement workforce services directly within prisons across the state. Although there are no prisons in the local area, the region received funding to coordinate with incarcerated individuals for post-release planning. This initiative allows inmates to engage with the workforce system before their release, facilitating a smoother transition back into the community.

Hospitality and Leisure Sector Partnership: The Lane Workforce Partnership was awarded a job grant to establish a coast-wide partnership in the hospitality and leisure sectors. This project involves collaboration with various regional workforce boards and aims to subcontract some of the work to the Oregon Restaurant & Lodging Association (ORLA). The recent hiring of a sector strategist, Rebecca Donnelly, marks a significant step forward in this initiative.

Upcoming Events and Strategic Meetings: Natasha highlighted the importance of connecting local employers with regional workforce programs. An upcoming event on the Southern Oregon Coast will focus on how various organizations can assist businesses from inception to success. The conference aims to facilitate networking and promote local businesses, particularly in the hospitality sector.

Transition to In-Person and Hybrid Meetings: There is a push to resume in-person board meetings to enhance engagement and connectivity among members, with flexibility for remote participation. This hybrid model is seen as a way to maintain involvement from various counties while addressing the logistical challenges of gathering in rural areas.

STANDING REPORTS

8. INFORMATION: Sector Partnerships Updates; SOWIB Staff

Sector Updates from Kyle Stevens:

Construction: The sector is currently inactive with ongoing searches for potential projects due to resource constraints.

Manufacturing: John Whitely is leading with active involvement, particularly with the operational pre-apprenticeship program in Douglas County. Efforts to integrate Certified Production Technician (CPT) certifications into school curriculums are underway.

Childcare: Although not detailed, there are significant ongoing efforts led by Sarah and her team.

Transportation: Plans are being made to unify the three regional transportation sector groups (including Rogue Valley and Lane) for better collaboration.

Hospitality and Tourism: There is growing interest and development in forming a coast-wide partnership. This sector is involved in substantial organizational collaborations and strategic development.

Healthcare: The sector is seeing a resurgence, with impending funding through the healthcare industry consortium which will support new program development and capacity expansion. There's progress in medical lab technician apprenticeships and increasing nursing capacity, initially focusing on public institutions with potential expansion to private schools.

Maritime: Boosted by funding through House Bill 310, the sector is actively seeking to invest \$434,202 in maritime projects over the next year and a half, using educational initiatives like mini-jet boat builds as practical training tools.

9. INFORMATION: One-Stop Operator Update; Kendall Lenhares

Kendall Lenhares discussed the ongoing improvements and changes in the work source centers, highlighting the positive customer feedback and the strategies being implemented to enhance service delivery. This includes training programs to address staff turnover and service continuity.

10. INFORMATION: Finance Update; Yolanda Brumfield

Yolanda Brumfield provided a financial overview, noting that operating cash was healthy, and receivables were being managed efficiently. She pointed out the challenges and discrepancies in budget reporting versus actual revenues and expenses, emphasizing efforts to refine financial reporting processes to provide more accurate and meaningful data. During the finance update presented by Yolanda Brumfield, significant financial details and budgetary concerns were discussed. Yolanda highlighted key financial figures as of December 31, 2023, including:

Operating Cash: \$521,000

Accounts Receivable: \$1.6 million, derived from issued or accrued invoices.

Accounts Payable: \$351,000

Yolanda pointed out the total revenue for the period was \$3.2 million, with expenditures of \$3 million. The discussion touched on a misunderstanding regarding the budget presentation; it seems the revenue forecast included total grant amounts, which misrepresented the actual funds expected for the year, skewing budgetary tracking and management.

Yolanda mentioned plans to revise future budgets to more accurately reflect annual financial activity, ensuring that only the amounts expected to be spent within the year are reported. This adjustment aims to provide a clearer financial picture and improve budget management.

She also noted that the expenditure budget of \$8 million is accurate, with 41% of it spent as of the report date. A shortfall in revenue versus expenses was initially concerning, but Yolanda clarified that beginning net assets from the previous year covered the deficit, adjusting the apparent overspending.

The financial session concluded with a discussion on the need to refine financial reporting methods to ensure

clarity and accuracy, aiding in better financial oversight and decision-making.

11. ADJOURNMENT

The meeting concluded with Joe Benetti facilitating the transition into an executive session. Kyle Stevens organized the transition, requesting that board members remain, and all staff and guests disconnect from the Zoom session to maintain confidentiality. Tina Carpenter managed the meeting controls to ensure a smooth transition and confirmed the end of the recording. Joe Benetti officially adjourned the meeting at approximately 1:23 PM PST.

Meeting Calendar Available at www.SOWIB.ORG