

**Meeting of Montgomery County Workforce Development Board\***  
**November 2, 2022**  
**8:30 AM**

\*A full recording of this meeting can be accessed via [Teams](#).

**Board Attendees:** Jewru Bandeh, Sonya Bruton, Raymond Crowel, Mark Drury, Barbara Ebel, Wyatt Genser, Chris Gordon, Steve Greenfield, Yamil Hernandez, Amelia Kalant, Mahesh Kalva, Mary Lang, Beth Lash, Omar Lazo, Nagender Madavaram, Roxana Mejia, Yomi Ntewo, Sharon Strauss, Christa Tichy, Diego Uriburu

**Non-Board Attendees:** John Sparico, Strategic Workforce Engagement Manager & Sarah Trujillo, Strategic Media & Communications Manager, MCEDC

**Staff:** Anthony Featherstone, Executive Director; Cristina Escobar, Executive Assistant; Nate' Gordon; Deputy Director of Administrative Services; John Hattery, Deputy Director of Workforce Services; Sarah Van De Weert, Director of Government & Board Relations

**Chairperson Welcome**

- Mr. Drury welcomed all board members and new members present. Motion to approve July minutes w/ no opposition.

**Intro to the New By-Laws**

- Mr. Drury raised the topic of the board's absence of bylaws in the past. The bylaws were standardized, Mr. Featherstone remarked during this conversation. He outlined a few changes, one of which was the new committee structure, which will supplant the programs committee with a business and community committee, and the recovery committee to an updated structure that will include our executive committee.
- The youth committee will address the challenges young individuals are facing, opportunities, and how to fill in the gaps for the youth. There will be three industry committees that each member can tap into their expertise.
- Mr. Featherstone mentioned that this new major shift, it will call for new officers, committee chairs, etc. which will need to be tackled if the by-laws are passed. Motion to approve by-laws by all board members with no opposition.

**New Chair Nomination**

- Mr. Drury stated that he had served as chairman for two years. Mr. Drury declared that Omar Lazo, owner of Los Chorros, would step up as WDB chairman. Mr. Lazo is accepting the challenge.
- Mr. Drury extended his appreciation to Barbara Ebel and the other members of the board for educating him on everything there was to know about the Workforce Board. Members of the board agreed to nominate Mr. Lazo as chairman. Omar Lazo provided the board with a quick introduction, noting that he worked closely with MCPS and served on the Montgomery College board. The principal focus is accountability and the board moving in the right direction.

### **Individual Training Account (ITA) Policy**

- The WDB was asked for approval to implement an updated ITA and cohort training policy by Nate Gordon, the Deputy Director of Administrative Services for WorkSource Montgomery. For those who qualify, WIOA offers funding for occupational skill training that can be used to pay for tuition at training centers on the Department of Labor's list (ETPL).
- Since 2018, \$4,000 has been the maximum participant funding allocation. The price of tuition has increased to nearly \$5000 after considering the market rate. WSM is proposing a \$1,000 increase to align itself with regional partners including Frederick County, Prince George, and D.C.
- Today, the maximum fee per participant for these partners is \$5,000. The amount of \$5,000 will take effect as of November 14, 2022, if approved by the board.
- This new modification will be communicated to participants via a variety of platforms such as WSM prime. Mr. Featherstone announced that WSM will select a web design company to develop the WSM website and make it more user-friendly so that all policies can be accessed more easily by the board as well as the general public. A motion to approve the ITA funding increase by board members with no opposition.

### **Executive Director's Report**

- Mr. Featherstone briefly discussed the organization's achievements. In phase one, WSM established the community impact department, which consists of two full-time employees who are responsible for finding community partners and educating the existing community about WSM services. Creating connections within the community was the first stage. WSM will establish a community advisory committee for the following phase to improve our services and get feedback from the group. When these meetings are scheduled, the board will be informed.
- Mr. Featherstone gave a status report on the mobile unit. The delivery date for the mobile unit is November 22, 2022. Upon arrival, WSM will invite the board and staff to tour the mobile unit. There will be a soft launch where the mobile unit will be shown to the county council members and the county executive's office. The community will be given access to a mobile job center through a mobile van. The rear of the mobility van, which will be wheelchair accessible, will be available.
- Mr. Featherstone provided a quick update on the Blueprint. There will be career advisors working closely with MCPS starting from Middle school to High school students.
- **PY '21 Data Validation Report** – The audited files for enrollments with the new providers demonstrated an increase from a year prior and were 100% complete.
- **Dual Track Reentry** – For the special coding of our way home program for returning citizens, WSM received additional funds. Dual-track reentry is a new division developed by WSM with one manager, and two employees, including business services consultants and career advisors. In addition to providing us with several computers for use once inmates are released, the county provides computers to all Montgomery County citizens. Since Mr. Featherstone and

Montgomery College are collaborating closely, returning citizens will soon have access to IT-related careers or training in the field.

- **WRN Update** – The county granted ARPA funding for allocation or special purposes, which allowed WSM to increase the Workforce Recovery. Twenty different vendors or organizations submitted proposals to us. The evaluation process is currently ongoing. The executive committee will be provided with the completed evaluation for approval when it has been concluded. For FY'25, WSM anticipates continuing this. The board will remain updated.

### **Industry Data Report**

- John Sparico and Sarah Trujillo from MCEDC are currently working on creating a template Workforce development report for both WSM and MCEDC specifically for client-facing positions.
- These reports will be an initial touch point as we continue to build alliances with clients and different industry partners.
- These reports are offered as free services to Montgomery County companies and as tools to develop partnerships with real-time data. Additionally, it opens the potential for alignment with HR departments. Relationships are being formed to take advantage of career fair opportunities. Every quarter, John has participated in roundtable meetings with the state and its analyst to determine what data points individuals in each business are requesting. The industry data report is a very valuable resource.
- Sarah Trujillo talked about the reports and the data points they currently have. The reports are made to provide the user with either external or internal information. SOC codes make it easier to collect data from many businesses. She has been consulting with companies whose products customers frequently seek for.

### **Recruitment/Nomination Committee**

- The board members received some updates from Sarah Van De Weert. After the bylaws have been approved, she will contact every board member to see if they would want to join a new committee. The forum will be available for the following two weeks.
- The county executive office has provided several applications for job vacancies, which will allow WSM to assemble the nomination committee.
- The new council may give those applicants approval by the conclusion of the current calendar year. For individuals who are interested in attending the conference in March 2023, Sarah will send a form for a NAWB forum.

### **ADJOURNMENT**

Motion to adjourn at 9:51 AM.

The next meeting will take place via Zoom on January 4, 2023, at 8:30 AM.