

**Meeting of Montgomery County Workforce Development Board (WDB)
December 2, 2020
8:30 AM**

A full recording of this meeting can be accessed [via Zoom](#) using passcode **b@?J5rA1**

Attendees: Melissa Boone, John Cain, Mark Drury, Gordon Ellis, Barbara Ebel, Ryan Gandy, Wyatt Genser, Steve Greenfield, Jennifer Hester, Mary Lang, Omar Lazo, Lesley MacDonald, Roxana Mejia, Yomi Ntewo, Derek Turner, Mahesh Kalva, Michelle Bell Smith, Diego Uriburu, Ben Wu

Staff: Sarah Van De Weert, Communications & Marketing Manager

WELCOME

Mr. Drury, Board Chair, welcomed those in attendance.

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR SEARCH UPDATE

Mr. Drury updated the Board on the current search. The field of candidates has been narrowed to four and will further narrow to one or two in the coming days. The County Executive and Councilmembers will be invited to meet the final candidate(s).

COMMITTEE REPORTS

Employment Recovery Committee: Ms. Ntewo provided a brief update. Activity has been sparse due to vacant Executive Director position. Expected to ramp up activity once a new Director is on board.

Program Committee: Ms. Hester provided an update. The group is keeping the contract with Grant Associates in mind. Additional conversations with Workforce Montgomery Board and Staff are on hold until an Executive Director is hired.

Business and Community Engagement Committee: Mr. Turner provided an update. Discussions have included how to better brand the Board's role. Consolidating information on the WorkSource Montgomery website and County's website is important so that the community understands where to go for resources.

Mr. Drury mentioned that WorkSource Staff is working on updating the current website, including the LWDB and Board of Directors sections.

CHANGING EMPLOYMENT LANDSCAPE

Mr. Drury discussed how important it is to understand that workforce needs are changing due to the pandemic. For example, for those that may have advanced degrees jobs in their preferred field may no longer be an option – how do we prepare them for a career change?

NEW 4-YEAR LOCAL PLAN

Mr. Drury: The new 4-year plan draft is currently being put together. The first draft could be ready for review in the next week. The input of the incoming Executive Director is

valuable so we would like to get an extension from the Department of Labor on the due date.

BOARD MEMBERSHIP & ANNOUNCEMENTS

Mr. Drury: We currently have 23 members and are required to have a minimum of 25. The Executive Committee discussed having each member forward a member recommendation to Mr. Drury, with an emphasis on the business community. Members will have access to an introduction letter that members can send out to potential new board members which would include the Board's role, duties, expected outcomes, and relationship with other entities throughout the County.

OPEN DISCUSSION

Mr. Drury and Mr. Lazo talked about how challenging the pandemic has been for small businesses. Some are barely surviving at this point and landlords are not always cooperative. Grants are available through the County, but there have been no updates on the status of the grant applications. The Latino community reaches out to Mr. Lazo directly with frustration on where to go for relief aid.

Mr. Wu: EDC is managing the restaurant relief fund (RRF). We intend to turn around those grant applications within the next 10 days to two weeks. Other economic recovery efforts are managed through the County. The RRF is intended to provide support for restaurants going through the winter months. With the current pandemic surge there is a possibility that the County may have to reenter Phase 1.

Ms. Smith: We should be bringing the small and large businesses in the county together. Contracting opportunities with large businesses exist and small businesses can support them during this time.

Mr. Greenfield: Camille McKenzie reached out to Montgomery College (MC) to partner on a dislocated workers program. WSM is working on recruiting people that are eligible for training at MC. This is a good first step in getting people back to work.

Mr. Wu: Working on a the BioTech Bootcamp in partnership with USG, WSM, and MC.

Mr. Uriburu: What do we do with our lowest skilled workers? We need to think about our role in the county and make sure that we are keeping those people in mind. How do we identify them and guide them to pipelines that they can benefit from?

Mr. Greenfield: We're starting people from the very beginning with these programs, including people who have no background or skills in the field. Are there any literacy programs that WSM offers?

Mr. Drury: There are businesses, specifically in the health and manufacturing industry, that must be in need of employees that can clean their facilities and equipment.

Mr. Greenfield: It's important to offer pathways, even for those in entry-level positions. It's important to think about their immediate and future employment and financial needs.

Mr. Drury closed the conversation by explaining how Shapiro & Duncan approaches career pathways from start to finish.

Meeting adjourned at 9:28 AM.

Next LWDB Meeting – January 6, 2021 @ 8:30 AM