

**Meeting of Montgomery County Workforce Development Board (WDB)
February 3, 2021
8:30 AM**

A full recording of this meeting can be accessed [via Zoom](#) using passcode **g5pgFP?x**

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

Staff: Anthony Featherstone, Executive Director; Sarah Van De Weert, Communications & Marketing Manager

WELCOME

Mr. Drury, Board Chair, welcomed those in attendance. Welcome to Anthony Featherstone who started as Executive Director on January 19th.

COMMITTEE REPORTS

Employment Recovery Committee: Ms. Ntewo provided a brief update. The full committee was unable to meet in January. Three members did meet and discussed the presentation items from WSM Board Chair, Gordon Ellis, on January 13th. The Committee reached out to Mr. Ellis for additional information and are awaiting his response.

Mr. Uriburu mentioned that the Committee wants to make recommendations for programs that can help get people back into the workforce quickly.

Ms. Smith asked if there was any update on the workforce re-entry program. Mr. Featherstone said that WSM staff had a conversation with Angela Talley at the Montgomery County Correctional Facility. He will provide more information on the funding and the plans for the program in upcoming Board meetings.

Program Committee: Ms. Hester provided an update. Due to a recent promotion, Ms. Hester will no longer chair the Program Committee. She will still be an active board member. A new chair is needed.

Business and Community Engagement Committee: No meeting took place in December.

INTRODUCTION OF NEW EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

Mr. Featherstone shared a brief PowerPoint Presentation. He stated that he's been on the job for two weeks, but it feels like longer than that and there's a lot of work to be done. Using his presentation he then provided an update on upcoming deliverables and a 30-day timeline:

- **Progress Report:** Support, Connect, Establish, Educate, and Evaluate (see attached presentation for more detail).

- **Financial Overview:** WIOA expenditures and program information provided (see attached presentation for chart and additional details). One item not reflected is that WSM is working with DOL to secure additional funding for dislocated worker programs. In addition to WIOA funding, there is 40K uncommitted at this time that the County initially intended for Unemployment Insurance outreach. Meetings with County personnel are taking place to determine how to repurpose those funds.
 - Mr. Drury: We have 5 months left in the fiscal year and almost 80% of our funding available for use. We need to focus on apprenticeship programs. Congress is working on a package right now to encourage program development. WSM should consider infusing that work-based education model in various industries.
 - Mr. Featherstone: There is a lot of programmatic funding left, but there is also a lot of need. We will be looking to build work-based learning too. The Kirwan Commission could facilitate that if the Act is passed.
- **Deliverables:** Over the next 30 days (see attached).
 - Mr. Uriburu: Which programs would we bring in-house? And why?
 - Mr. Featherstone: Adult, dislocated worker, and youth programs. Economically, it makes sense. We spend a lot on the administration of programming and this would allow us to shift funding over more directly to programming. There have been programmatic struggles too and it would be advisable to no longer have certain services contracted out. Setting the tone, culture, and streamlining processes will be much more achievable.
 - Ms. MacDonald: How many different entities hold contracts with WSM? How does it affect nonprofit partners?
 - Mr. Featherstone: Grant Associates is the only one that has a contract for those 3 programs. Eliminating their contract will not negatively impact relationships with community-based organizations. There's opportunity to work with CBOs as we build out the workforce system in the county.
- **Local Plan Process:** See attached for details on drafting the Local Plan. The Local Plan is currently due on April 1, 2021 and WSM will ask for an extension of that deadline from the State.

OPEN DISCUSSION

Several Board Members discussed the possibility of contracting with a nonprofit for the youth program. This conversation continued for several minutes, including establishing a committee to oversee the process of procuring new contractors.

BOARD MEMBERSHIP

Mr. Drury announced that Courtney Hall, CEO of Interfaith Works, will be joining the Board as the newest member.

The meeting adjourned at 9:26 AM.

The next meeting will take place on March 3, at 8:30 AM.