

NORTHEAST MN OFFICE OF JOB TRAINING

LOCAL ELECTED OFFICIAL BOARD

Thursday November 15, 2018

Virginia Workforce Center

1:00- 3:00 p.m.

Chair Adee called a regularly scheduled meeting of the Elected Official Board to order at 1:02 p.m. with the following in attendance:

Pete Walsh

Myron Bursheim

Burl Ives

Kevin Adee

Tom Proulx

Excused: Don Niemi, Tom Rukavina

Staff: Teri Dudley, Thor Bergland, Rita Olness, Randy Lampton, Michelle Ufford,
Jolene Goodman

Motion was made by Ives, supported by Walsh to approve the November 15, 2018 agenda as written; with no additions or corrections; motion carried unanimously.

Motion was made by Walsh, supported by Bursheim to approve the June 14, 2018 minutes as written; with no additions or revisions; motion carried unanimously.

Handout #1 – September 2018 Funding Summary was reviewed. All current grants and expenditures are in place. All county grants are set to be spent out by December 2018.

St Louis County MFIP Contract

St Louis County took on additional employment and training providers starting 2019. AEOA, NEMOJT, and City of Duluth are the existing providers and the county will be adding three new providers: Human Development Center, Community Action Duluth, and SOAR Solutions, all based in Duluth. This change represents a loss of \$11,000 for NEMOJT; other agencies lost more funding. The county does not have a plan going forward for distributing MFIP referrals to the new providers. NEMOJT will likely gain more clients in the Virginia and Hibbing offices as the Duluth caseload is distributed among more providers in the south.

Northeast MN Office of Job Training Staff Presentations – Lake, Cook, and Itasca Counties

Rita Olness, Career Counselor in Duluth, discussed what she does when she meets with students at schools in Lake County including working with local employers to find permanent jobs for the students who are currently participating in Work Experience programs. She also discussed a new initiative in development to educate students and parents about options after high school, including training programs that are alternative to a 4-year degree. This initiative includes partnerships with the Chamber of Commerce and the local student DECA (Distributive Education Clubs of America) Chapter. The goal of the initiative is to develop and deliver events to inform students and parents about career opportunities in the region. Question asked by Ives on whether schools still have cooking, welding, shop, and automotive classes. This prompted a brief discussion and the career counselors reported that the schools they go to do still have these programs available to students.

Teri Dudley, Career Counselor in Cloquet, presented on services in Cook County including employment of at-risk students, similar to the activities mentioned by Rita. She works with four counselors at Cook County High School and students in special education classes through the Pre ETS program. She reported that the students participate greatly.

She has 3 youth on Work Experience contracts at the Cook County recycling center. She has ten others who attend PRE-ETS classes. She reported on a couple success stories from 2 of her Work Experience students.

Thor Bergland, Career Counselor in Grand Rapids, discussed his background working with at risk youth. To Ives earlier comment, he stated that the shop classes in the schools that he serves are impeccable. He also addressed the perceived lack of work ethic in today's youth as a misperception and that in his experience, kids with academic challenges (our 'at risk' population) often are the best workers as they need to acquire resources for themselves and their families. Most of his work has been in the Pre ETS program, reaching about 100-110 students through several districts in Itasca county. He stated that most kids with disabilities have a negative taste for the current system in the schools and so he tries to connect with them to create a more positive experience. He provided a handout with information about IEPs (individual education plans).

Michelle discussed how they were contacted by Blandin stating that there was grant money available that our agency should apply for. Michelle and Thor have been working with the school counselors in Deer River to develop a program to deliver a progressive set of experiential learning opportunities to students to expose them to career opportunities. Activities may include classroom speakers from the business community, business tours, job shadowing, work experience and internships. The initiative would likely include hiring an individual to reach out to employers to identify who is willing to connect with students and in what capacity, creating a database of employers willing to participate, and developing resources to help both employers and students make the most of their time together.

Workforce Development Board Update

The Northeast Equity & Diversity Committee has joined with the Duluth Equity and Diversity Committee to work with Equity Alliance MN to complete the Intercultural Development Inventory assessment to determine professional development needs of the regional system around cultural competency. This will start in December 2018 with the leadership cohort consisting of Workforce Center partner management (NEMOJT, AEOA, and DEED), equity and diversity committee members, and the executive committees from both workforce development boards.

Ufford shared an update of the Healthcare and Skilled Trades regional sector initiatives. The 218 Trades campaign (the new name of the skilled trades marketing campaign) is in development by Art Unlimited under the direction of the Skilled Trades Career Pathway committee to promote careers in the skilled trades. A second health care summit was held last week with over 45 healthcare organizations participating to discuss common workforce issues and develop an employer-lead approach to addressing these issues in collaboration with each other. Several categories of engagement for ongoing task forces were identified including enhancing the reputation of healthcare careers, legislative/policy issues, and healthcare career pathways. A strategy for moving this initiative forward will be developed in collaboration between NEMOJT, DEED, and the City of Duluth.

Business Services Plan in Development

To address current employer struggles with recruitment and retention, NEMOJT is exploring developing a suite of business services. We have staff with unique skills that could be valuable in developing and delivering services to employers on-site, potentially on a fee for service basis. An effort to gather feedback from the employer community is underway in the form of an online survey and focus groups to help discern the appetite for these services and to help focus development on areas with the highest need. More to come as this unfolds.

Motion was made by Ives, supported by Proulx to adjourn at 2:44 p.m.; motion carried unanimously.