Local Elected Official (LEO)

Board Meeting Minutes

Date: January 28, 2026
Time: 10:00 a.m.
Location: Virtual via Microsoft Teams; In-person attendance at Virginia CareerForce, 820 N 9th St., Suite 240, Virginia, MN 55792
Facilitator: Travis Leiviska

I. Call to Order

The meeting was called to order by Chair Travis Leiviska at 10 a.m.

II. Roll Call

Present:
Commissioners: Travis Leiviska (Chair), Ricky Roche (Vice Chair), Rick Goutermont, Larry Hopkins, Paul McDonald
Staff: Marie Domiano, Ashlee LeNoie, Randy Lampton

Excused:
Commissioners: Tom Proulx (Secretary), Garry Gamble

III. Approval of Agenda Items

Motion: Commissioner McDonald
Second: Commissioner Roche
Action: Agenda approved as presented.

IV. Approval of Minutes

November 26, 2025 Meeting Minutes
Motion: Commissioner Roche
Second: Commissioner McDonald
Action: Minutes approved.

V. Discussion / Action Items

a. Personnel Policies Ratification

Motion: Commissioner Goutermont
Second: Commissioner Roche
Action: Approved by roll call vote.

b. CareerForce Location Updates

- JET and AEOA are operating with lean staffing levels; AEOA leadership is working with JET on strategic planning related to CareerForce service delivery requirements.
- Discussion held regarding partner contributions under IFAs and MOUs, and ensuring grant funds are used as intended for enrolled participant services.
- Hibbing CareerForce, the region's comprehensive site, continues to pose challenges due to regulatory requirements, partner infrastructure contributions, and upcoming lease renewal.
- DEED is reviewing its ability to contribute to infrastructure and build-out costs. Outcomes may determine whether JET and AEOA remain in the current Hibbing location.
- Alternative options discussed include relocating to existing AEOA office space or consolidating staff in Virginia and Grand Rapids, though not ideal.
- Carlton County location remains temporary; potential new space in Cloquet is under review.

c. Staffing Updates

- A probationary employee in Virginia was released following performance concerns.
- JET is not backfilling positions at this time due to grant funding considerations and fiscal strategy.
- Transition toward more part-time staffing continues to ensure sustainability and budget management.
- One Grand Rapids staff member accepted a position with HRA; position will not be backfilled at this time.

d. Management Contract Negotiations Update

- Negotiations are nearing completion; wage-related information has been provided.
- Executive Committee meeting anticipated in the coming months to finalize discussions.

e. Election of Officers

Current slate reviewed:

- Chair: Commissioner Leiviska
- Vice Chair: Commissioner Roche
- Secretary: Commissioner Proulx

Motion: Commissioner McDonald
Second: Commissioner Goutermont
Action: Approved by roll call vote.

f. Approval of JET Personnel Committee Appointment

Appointment of Bobbie Danielson to the JET Personnel Committee.

Motion: Commissioner Roche
Second: Commissioner Goutermont
Action: Approved by roll call vote.

VI. Financial Reports

Financial reports were reviewed. All county grants for the period ending December 31, 2025 are fully expensed and required reports have been submitted. State FSRs are current and on track.

VII. County Workforce Updates

Lake County:

- Staffing shortages continue, largely due to housing availability.
- Approval secured for a 75-unit apartment complex in Two Harbors; construction expected to begin soon.

St. Louis County:

- Staffing shortages noted in public works and remote locations.
- Progress reported on a 32-unit apartment complex in Ely.
- Snowmobiling season positively impacting local businesses.

Koochiching County:

- County largely fully staffed with one public health vacancy.
- New jail opening rescheduled to March 11, 2026.
- Progress continues on establishing an ambulance taxing district; public hearing scheduled for February 24, 2026.

Itasca County Updates:

- Multiple housing developments underway, including large-scale apartment projects and four-plex units.
- Anticipated opening of an Amazon facility expected to create new jobs.

Aitkin County Update:

- Talon Metals acquisition of the Eagle Mine discussed as a positive development for regional mining and workforce stability.
- Ambulance service funding challenges and potential taxing districts discussed.
- Workforce housing projects progressing, including apartments and potential tiny home developments.

IX. Adjournment

Motion: Commissioner Goutermont
Second: Commissioner Roche
Vote: Motion carried unanimously.

The meeting adjourned at 10:42 a.m.

VIII. Next Meeting

February 25, 2026 – Virginia CareerForce and virtual via Microsoft Teams

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