

NORTHWEST INDIANA WORKFORCE BOARD MINUTES
Center of Workforce Innovations
March 20, 2025

Present:

Audra Peterson, Adrienne Carrol, Lori Tubbs, Liz Negron-Haniford, Martina Tovar, Jim Clarida, Karen Kopka, Chris Beebe, Aco Sikoski, George Douglas

Absent/Proxy: Kevin Comerford, Adam Collins, Justin Mount, Mikie Stogsdill, Debi Baughman, Anna Ortega, Kathy Neary

Staff:

Lisa Daugherty, Erin Sizemore, Tammy Stump, Jen Grabowski, Becky Fry

Guests:

CALL TO ORDER

Karen Kopka called the meeting to order.

Consent Agenda

Ms. Kopka asked the Board Members to review the items on the consent agenda.

Motion: A motion was made by Audra Peterson and seconded by Jim Clarida to accept the consent agenda as presented. All were in favor. **The motion passed.**

1. Board Business

Dashboard/Performance

Ms. Stump provided the overview in Ms. Neary's absence.

Goal #1 Increase skills of current workforce to align with economic development strategies and key industry clusters Collaborated with Goodwill and residents of the Kimbrough Work Release Program to provide employment assistance. Staff came together to support the residents with resume assistance and job leads before their release.

Goal #2 Improve employer access to qualified workers and awareness of training resources: WorkOne Michigan City hosted an apprentice and employer sponsor recruitment event with hands-on tree climbing demonstration in collaboration with Indiana Arborist Registered Apprenticeship.

Goal #3 Ensure Youth in NWI are positioned for continued education/learning and workforce success: Awarded the Justice-Involved Youth Growth Opportunity Grant #5 (GO Grant) that will enable CWI to serve 160 participants, aged 18/24, residing in Gary, East Chicago, Hammond and Michigan City. The focus of the project is to provide job skills, work experience, career counseling, mentoring and violence diversion skills to assist the young adults in transitioning from the justice system to stable employment.

Goal #4- Encourage and support an entrepreneurial spirit: Attended Forum's Legislative event and Tonn & Blank reception in Indianapolis in Indianapolis to connect, educate and nurture relationships with legislators, elected officials, educators and key corporate leaders.

Goal #5 Assure compliance and efficient operations of a workforce development system: Consulted with Indiana Regional Planning Commission to inform Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy's 5-year plan on workforce goal and industry cluster alignment with known economic development projects.

PY24 Monitoring Report

Ms. Fry gave an overview of the Monitoring Report. The meeting packet included the complete report as well as CWI's response to the report. The program and Oversight Compliance team from the Department of Workforce Development were here the week of October 7, 2024 to do the performance monitoring. They reviewed WIOA Title 1 Adult, Dislocated Worker and Youth programs, The Quest grant, the RESEA grant, Next Level Jobs Employer Training Grant, Migrant Seasonal Farm Worker program and the Apprenticeship Building America Grant.

Administrative & Financial Management had no compliance findings

WIOA Title 1 Service Delivery had 4 Compliance findings and no areas of concern.

WIOA Title 1 EO & Nondiscrimination had one compliance finding, 3 areas of concern and 1 noteworthy effort.

Apprenticeship had 1 compliance finding

RESEA had 5 compliance findings.

There were no compliance findings on the Quest Grant, Next Level Jobs and the Migrant and Seasonal Farm Worker program.

Bylaw Change Recommendation

Ms. Daugherty has been communicating with the board regarding the extended terms because many members are expiring. Ms. Daugherty and the nominating committee of Lori Tubbs and Mikie Stogsdill met. The current bylaws written in 2011. Looking at other regions' bylaws, they don't have term limits and such restrictions. Ms. Daugherty asked the board to consider changing the term limit section of the bylaws to read something like region 7. "All Directors shall be appointed for a 3-year term with an option to renew said membership by a recommendation by the Executive Committee and approval by the full Board" If board members are interested in renewing and they are a member in good standing we can continue to work with them.

Motion: A motion was made by Chris Beebe and seconded by Aco Sikoski to accept Bylaw change as presented. All were in favor. **The motion passed**

New Member Nominations

Ms. Daugherty spoke about Karen Kopka, Debi Baughman and Justin Mount terms ending that would be leaving the board. With the members leaving the board Ms. Daugherty has had discussions with Amy Henningfield from the Business sector and Nick Pollack from the Workforce sector. Both have expressed interest in serving on board. Ms. Daugherty asked the board what their thoughts were on identifying individuals that would be willing, understanding what their role and responsibility is to serve on the board. Ms. Daugherty expressed interest in looking for an individual from Jasper or Newton County. Fair Oaks Farm was mentioned; Ms. Daugherty will investigate. With the Term ending for Karen Kopka as chair. Lori Tubbs will move into the chair position, Jim Clarida to the Vice Chair, Kevin Comerford to Treasurer which opens the Secretary position. Ms. Daugherty said that she will send out an email call out for nominations.

2. Old Business

No old business to report on.

3. Reports

Youth Employment Council

Ms. Stump gave the Board an update on the work ethic survey that was created to ask schools participating in work ethic what employers they currently work with or would want to work with. The survey will also be sent to the Business Services Team to distribute to the employers they work with. Also discussed was expanding the regional work ethic initiative beyond in school youth. The Next Gen Expo will be held at the Dean and Barara White Center in Merrillville In. on April 9th.

Ms. Stump spoke about the Regional Career Development Conference that will be hosted at the JW Marriott Hotel in Indianapolis April 24th-26th 2025. Typically, withing our budget, we are able to send 2-3

students. Because the conference is being held in Indianapolis this year DWD would like us to send as many as possible. We are targeting about 10 individual participants. Ms. Stump asked the board if anyone would be interested in becoming a sponsor. The approximate cost would be \$900 per student. Which would include transportation, hotel accommodation and the conference.

President's Report

Ms. Daugherty spoke about the uncertainty of WIOA that has not been reauthorized yet. Also, JAG is in serious jeopardy right now. All board members should have received an email asking to communicate with local legislators about JAG funding and how important it is to not just the state but to Northwest Indiana. What is being proposed is that JAG moves from Department of Workforce Development to Department of Education, which wouldn't be a big deal except the state of DOE right now.

Work Ethic Certificate Presentation

Ms. Stump was looking for volunteers from the board to help present the award. Martina and Audra have already volunteered. Ms. Stump said she would get all the specific information out to anyone that is interested.

Save the Dates

NWIWB meeting May 15, 2025

ADJOURN

Ms. Kopka adjourned the meeting.

Jen Grabowski, Recording Secretary