

MINUTES

NORTHWEST WISCONSIN WORKFORCE INVESTMENT BOARD, INC. MEETING December 12, 2024



Attendees:

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| ☐ Judy Aspling | ☐ Dale Kelm | ☐ PC Rasmussen |
| ☐ Andrea Chartier | ☐ Kelly Klein - excused | ☐ Cindy Rouzer |
| ☐ Brad Gast | ☐ Mary McPhetridge | ☐ Jennifer Shearer |
| ☐ Thomas Draghi - excused | ☐ Ashley Moore | ☐ Mary (MJ) Sills |
| ☐ Edward Gruhl | ☐ Skyler Dural-Eder | ☐ Kerri Trubachik |
| ☐ Brent Harju - excused | ☐ Elaine Ogilvie | ☐ Tami Follet |
| ☐ Gene Stanchfield | ☐ Bambi Pattermann | ☒ Crystal Rohde |
| ☐ Michelle Johnson | ☐ Kristine Porter | ☒ Carl Svendsen |
| | | ☐ Dr. Russell Swagger |

Staff & Guests Present: Ryce Davis, Matthew Filipek, Mari Kay-Nabozny Kay-Nabozny, Dawn Knapp, Bella Potack-Rettler, Melissa Rabska, Eric Faber, Jay Seppanen and Lisa West(?).

☐ Thomas Michels

Call to Order - Roll Call

The meeting was called to order at 10:00 AM. Bella Potack-Rettler conducted the roll call.

Report of Public Meeting Notice

Bella Potack-Rettler reported that the public meeting notice was published on the NWWIB social media, website, and distributed to the regional library systems and Class A newspapers within the WDA.

Pledge of Allegiance

Kelly Klein led the NWWIB Board into the Pledge of Allegiance.

Welcome/Introduction of Guests - New Board Member Carl Svendsen

Judy Aspling led introductions of the NWWIB Board and NWWIB staff members, guests and new board member Carl Svendsen from Halvor Lines. Judy Aspling chaired the meeting in Kelly Klein's excused absence.

Approval of the September 26, 2024, Meeting Minutes

Motion to approve meeting minutes as presented: Gene Stanchfield
2nd: Crystal Rhode

Board vote is unanimous, motion carries.

Consent Agenda (NWWIB, Inc. Sub-Committee Reports)

NWWIB Executive Committee – Kelly Klein, Chair

Judy Aspling reported that the NWWIB Executive Committee met in November. Everything discussed in the NWWIB Executive Committee will be discussed in the meeting

NWWIB Strategic Directions & Development Committee Report – Judy Aspling, Chair

Judy Aspling shared a meeting in August. No meeting in November. Postponed till financial situation stabilized.

There were no further questions or comments.

NWWIB OSO Committee Report – Brad Gast, Chair

Mari Kay-Nabozny reported on OSO. Met in August. Will be meeting in January.

There were no further questions or comments.

NWWIB Youth Committee – Mary McPhetridge, Chair

Mary McPhetridge shared that the Youth Committee met in August. Mary McPhetridge shared that she was not there. Discussion from the NWWIB Youth Committee be shared in the meeting.

Motion to approve Consent Agenda: Dale Kelm
2nd: Brad Gast

Board vote is unanimous, motion carries.

NWWIB Election of Officers

a) Chairperson

Kelly Klein is the current NWWIB Chairperson. Judy Aspling nominated Kelly Klein to be NWWIB Chairperson for 2025. Mari Kay-Nabozny did share that Kelly Klein emailed he would accept if nominated. No other nominations.

b) Vice Chairperson

Judy Aspling is the current NWWIB Vice Chairperson. Skyler Dural-Eder nominated Judy Aspling for 2025. Dale Kelm nominated Judy Aspling as well.

c) Secretary Treasurer

The NWWIB Secretary Treasurer is an open position. Judy Aspling nominated Dale Kelm.

The NWWIB Board voted on the new board position nominations for the 2025 year.

**Motion to approve the vote: Skyler Dural-Eder
2nd: Bambi Patterman**

Board vote is unanimous, motion carries.

Organizational Updates and Compliance (10:15 AM)- Mari Kay-Nabozny

a. Staffing Update

Mari Kay-Nabozny shared that four new staff have been hired for the NWWIB and that one staff member left. She let new staff members introduce themselves: Ana Minski, Eric Faber, Lisa Westberg and Jay Seppanen. Mari Kay-Nabozny updated the NWWIB Board that the staff member who left was Layne Brackeen.

b. Funding Update

i. C.L.I.C.K. Grant: Connecting Lives through Internet & Community Knowledge:

Mari Kay-Nabozny shared that the Digital Navigators will share more about this later.

ii. NTIA Digital Equity Competitive Grant

Mari Kay-Nabozny shared that the NWWIB will hear about the NTIA grant any day. This grant will be \$7.5 million to the NWWIB to be shared with multiple workforce board partners. Crystal Rhode asked if the NWWIB was the lead on this grant. Mari Kay-Nabozny shared that the NWWIB is.

iii. Essentia Community Grant

Mari Kay-Nabozny shared that the NWWIB got a \$1,000 grant through Essentia. Mari Kay-Nabozny thanked Andrea Chartier for this grant. This grant is only for transportation supports to clients who may not be eligible for other programs.

Mari Kay-Nabozny shared that the NWWIB is going to be a round up partner for the Chequamegon Co-Op. This is flexible income that the NWWIB can use to help with other supportive services.

c. DWD Comprehensive Governance Review and Annual WIOA Monitoring

i. Liaison Committee

Mari Kay-Nabozny shared that the NWWIB had the liaison committee. She shared that the Liaison Committee did meet in October. She shared that the NWWIB worked with the Chief Elected Officials to figure out what the NWWIB WIOA budget should be. Mari Kay-Nabozny shared that a motion was made to fund the NWWIB at 6.5% per year at a flat percentage. The liaison committee moved and approved this level of funding for PY24 then PY25 at 9% and

PY26 and subsequent years at 10%. She shared that the committee did a great job working together. The motion from Liaison committee was as follows:

A motion was made by Dale Kelm to allocate 6.5% of the Program Year 24 WIOA funds to the NWWIB. For Program Year 25 it will be a 9% allocation and then for Program Year 26 and future program years it will be a 10% allocation. Motion seconded by Bob Olsgard. Motion carried unanimously.

ii. Governance Review Update

Mari Kay-Nabozny shared that the NWWIB and CEP continue to be under a governance review. She shared that DWD wants to know exactly the fund flow between the two organizations. In October the NWWIB had its annual monitoring with the state; nine program findings; two equal opportunity findings; case note not marked confidential which may or may not identify if an individual has a disability. The NWWIB also had \$266 of questionable costs. Mari Kay-Nabozny reassured the board that these findings are currently being fixed by CEP and anything that may fall to EO for the NWWIB is also addressed. NWWIB has 45 days to respond to monitoring.

9. Regional Data Review (10:35 AM)

a. WIOA Dashboard - Mari Kay-Nabozny

i. Quarter 1 WIOA Contracted Performance

Mari Kay-Nabozny reminded the NWWIB Board that WIOA performance measures that are mandatory and reviewed quarterly when DWD sends them. She shared the WIOA Quarter 1 measures that were included in the NWWIB Board packet. She shared that the WIOA Quarter 2 measures start at the beginning of next month. With only one quarter in to the program year it is not anything that can be taken into account yet.

Skyler Dural-Eder shared that budgets/funding was able to be built into internal systems at CEP. This is the first time in three years.

iii. Current WIOA Enrollment

b. WDA 7 Regional Employment - Thomas Michels

Thomas Michels shared that the ten counties are still trying to come back from COVID with the labor force. He shared the year-to-year change. Price and Rusk counties saw a huge increase in their numbers, while the rest of the counties saw a decrease. Rusk County had an increase in labor and employment numbers. He shared that employment gains couldn't catch up with people in labor force. Thomas Michels shared that Price County decreased in both, and he is trying to figure out why. He also reported that manufacturing and healthcare jobs overall are down in the northwest region. Thomas Michels concluded his report.

10. Financial Review (10:55 AM)

a. July - September Financial Statement Review - Mari Kay-Nabozny

Mari Kay-Nabozny received the NWWIB October Finances yesterday. She shared this report with the board in the meeting packet. Mari Kay-Nabozny had a couple of notes, cash remains extremely tight. Accounts receivable are lower than it used to be and she gave a summary of how the board got to a financially challenging situation through using WIPFLI accounting services. Mari Kay-Nabozny reminded the NWWIB Board that the NWWIB is now using Morris Verdonk Accounting Firm for accounting services. Mari Kay-Nabozny shared that NWWIB staff and Emily Verdonk were able to find multiple errors from WIPFLI, for example, \$39k in PTO never got allocated to a grant and 371 hours of Amanda Soltau's time never got booked to the appropriate grant.

Judy Aspling commented that the way WIPFLI handled reporting for the NWWIB and CEP was a total breach of contract.

Mari Kay-Nabozny shared that the NWWIB has \$79k in outstanding reimbursements with the PSC grants. Mari Kay-Nabozny also shared that the PSC does not reimburse until 30 days after. She shared that there are lots of nuances with this PSC reporting structure. It has put the organization in crisis mode for needing to front large amounts of cash early in the grant. She shared that the NWWIB is a sub awardee with Bayfield County for the PSC grant and payment from the County is much more timely.

Carl Svendsen asked what WIPFLI office that the NWWIB was working with. Mari Kay-Nabozny shared the WIPFLI representatives that the NWWIB and CEP worked with and that the accounting firm was not local to the area.

Judy Aspling shared that she has spoken with three individuals with three other organizations that have had similar bad experiences with WIPFLI so the NWWIB is not alone.

Mari Kay-Nabozny concluded her report

b. Action Item: PY24 Budget - Mari Kay-Nabozny

Mari Kay-Nabozny shared the budget for the NWWIB PY24. She reminded the NWWIB Board that budget changes as grants come and go for the NWWIB.

First: Dale Kelm

Second: Gene Stanchfield

Unanimous approval

11. Initiatives & Project Review (11:10 AM)

a. NWWIB By the Numbers - Mari Kay-Nabozny

Mari Kay-Nabozny shared the NWWIB by the Numbers in the packet. Noted that the NWWIB is overachieving in all grant program metrics.

Dale Kelm asked when a grant ends, where do the residuals go? Mari Kay-Nabozny shared that they intentionally end services slight early to make sure that individuals don't get left behind with services and refer to other supports and resources.

b. Social Media and Outreach Report- Bella Potack-Rettler

Bella Potack-Rettler shared with the NWWIB Board the Social Media and Outreach Report in their packets. She highlighted that the NWWIB has 1,335 follower audience, which 160 more followers than the previous year. Bella Potack-Rettler concluded her report.

c. Public Relations Report - Melissa Rabska

Melissa Rabska shared the PR Report. She highlighted the NWWIB's recent AI event and Judy Aspling shared that she learned a lot from it. Thomas Michels shared that he enjoyed the realistic approach of AI too.

d. Corporate Sponsorship Program - Mari Kay-Nabozny

Mari Kay-Nabozny shared that this is a new revenue stream to the NWWIB this year. She thanked current NWWIB Corporate Sponsors who are also on the NWWIB Board. Mari Kay-Nabozny reported that the NWWIB will continue pushing out the corporate sponsorship program to businesses.

e. CLICK and Bayfield County Digital Navigators Update - *Eric Faber, Jay Seppanen, Lisa Westberg*

The NWWIB Digital Navigators reintroduced themselves to the NWWIB Board and gave a presentation on what the CLICK program is doing. They shared the goal is to get digital literacy out to the community and through digital means and bridge the digital divide. The Digital Navigators reported that they are currently doing outreach, but plan to host digital literacy classes and that these classes are listed in the December Board Meeting packet. Judy Aspling asked Digital Navigators if they will be tracking inventory? Jay Seppanen shared that Digital Navigators have a tracking program through Microsoft.

Judy Aspling asked if the laptops are going to be granted/gifted to individuals in this program? Eric Faber responded that the laptops will be lent out in a two-week period. If participants want it longer, then they can work 1-on-1 with Digital Navigators to solve this problem for a longer check out period.

12. Board Discussion (11:35 AM)

"As technology continues to reshape the workforce, what emerging skills or technological proficiencies do you think will be most critical for workers in Northwest Wisconsin to thrive, and how can we as a board ensure equitable access to the resources and training needed to develop those skills?"

Mari Kay-Nabozny opened this question to the board.

Skyler Dural-Eder shared that she thinks that CLICK is a great program to help individuals that will be walking into the workforce job centers and helping individuals get past their technology fear when applying to jobs. Crystal Rohde commented that the opportunity for marketing and messaging of getting individuals to start thinking themselves. Marketing and messaging are a skill that they have already that can be transferable to shift the mindset. Skyler Dural-Eder agreed that marketing in paper, bars and laundry mats to get those individuals that are fearful of tech and getting them in their safe environments there.

Mary McPhetridge commented on tourism and it's popularity in the region. She shared that building up and/or offering customer service skills training to individuals would be a good idea.

NWWIB Board members began discussing the future barrier of utilizing so much technology, will lead to a need for more soft skills training and with social/communication skills.

Carl Svendsen shared the construction project happening at the Blatnik Bridge and the effect on Halvor Lines. He mentioned that if the NWWIB has anything to help with the workforce in the project, that it might be worthwhile. Board members shared that they have been hearing the frustrations from individuals involved with this project with Wisconsin's lack of help on these projects, agreeing with Carl Svendsen's comments.

Crystal Rohde asked Mari Kay-Nabozny if the NWWIB ever surveys clients to get a climate check on workforce issues.

Gene Stanchfield shared that there is an emphasis/need with at a company and high school level, soft skills are so important. Judy Aspling shared that it might be good to start getting involved with the educational side (middle/high school) level to get this going. Funds available to target educational staff to teach soft skills.

This concluded with the NWWIB Board Discussion portion of the meeting.

13. State & Federal Updates (12:00 PM)

a. *FORWD Grant (coming soon)*

Mari Kay-Nabozny gave an update on the FORWD grant program. She shared that the NWWIB submitted it yesterday. The premise of the grant is to not only train individuals impacted by the opioid crisis but to put individuals in Disaster Relief unemployment. Mari Kay-Nabozny shared that the NWWIB is partnering up with counterparts in Wausau (NCWWDB). There is a little over 900k for this submitted grant.

14. Comments & Announcements

a. 2025 Meeting and Committee Calendar

Mari Kay-Nabozny shared the new 2025 Meeting and Committee Calendar dates.

Next Meeting Date & Location - March or at the call of the Chair. Location TBD

14. Comments & Announcements

Adjourned: 12:05 pm

15. Next Meeting Date & Location

Adjournment & Lunch to Follow.

The Board requests the presence of Mari Kay-Nabozny, Melissa Rabska, Dawn Knapp, Ryce Davis, Matthew Filipek, Eric Faber, Lisa Westberg, Jay Seppanen, Bella Potack-Rettler and Mary Lois Bolka.