



FRESNO REGIONAL WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT BOARD

Workforce Development Board
June 5, 2024 @ 4:00 p.m.

SUMMARY MINUTES

The meeting was called to order at 4:00 p.m.

ROLL CALL: PRESENT – Shayn Anderson, Stephen Avila (arrived at 4:07 p.m.), Lacy Barnes, Edgar Blunt, Rodney Branch, Douglas Dart, Jeff Hensley, Kurt Madden, Wyatt Meadows, Terry Metters, Jr., Scott Miller (arrived at 4:03 p.m.), Dennis Montalbano, Alisha Morgan, Joe Olivares, Sal Quintero, Vasili Sotiropulos, Sandra Vicente, Lydia Zabrycki, Chris Zeitz, and Legal Counsel Ken Price.

ABSENT – Alysia Bonner, Carole Goldsmith, Mike Karbassi, and Chuck Riojas.

COMMENTS BY FRWDB CHAIR
AND/OR EXECUTIVE STAFF:

Blake Konczal, Executive Director, Fresno Regional Workforce Development Board (FRWDB), introduced three (3) new FRWDB staff members: Feleena Sutton, Government Affairs Manager; Sandra Vidrio, Business Services Manager; and Daniel Prado, General Services Manager.

AGENDA CHANGES
REMOVAL OF ITEMS OR
EMERGENCY ADDITIONS:

None

ABSTENTIONS/ DISCLOSURES OF
POTENTIAL CONFLICTS
OF INTEREST/RECUSALS:

None

PUBLIC COMMENTS:

None

Director Miller arrived (4:03 p.m.)

Item Description/Action Taken

6. Committee Reports

Adult Council: In Director Riojas' absence, Director Olivares provided the Adult Council report. Director Olivares shared that the Adult Council (Council) met on May 23rd, at which time they recommended for FRWDB approval, contract modifications for the High Roads Construction Careers Resilient Workforce Fund Grant and the High Roads Training Partnerships Resilient Workforce Fund Grant. He noted that the contract modifications were both subject to state approval, as well. The Council also recommended FRWDB approval of the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) Program Year (PY) 2024-2025 Adult and Dislocated Worker funding recommendations. Director Olivares reported that there was an 8.43% increase in funding over the previous PY, and that there was a three percent (3%) carryover from the previous PY.

Director Avila arrived (4:07 p.m.)

Executive Committee: Director Montalbano reported that the Executive Committee (Committee) met on April 17th, when they reviewed and accepted the February 2024 Financial Report and Agency Budget and Expenditures Reports. The Committee also approved the recapture of WIOA funds for PY 2023-2024. Mr. Konczal provided the Committee with the Director's Quarterly Update, highlighting the areas he focused on during the previous quarter, which included the expansion of the Greater Sierra Forestry Corps program to other central valley community college campuses, Mr. Konczal's participation at the Associated California Loggers Conference in Reno, and a meeting between Mr. Konczal and senior leadership at Fresno State regarding funding of the Center for Climate Resiliency. Mr. Konczal also mentioned exploring the idea of possibly changing the name of the Fresno Area Workforce Investment Corporation (FAWIC). Mr. Konczal clarified that there was no plan to change the name of the FRWDB. The possible name change would be for FAWIC. This idea is being entertained because in addition to employing staff in Fresno, FAWIC is the entity that is contracting throughout the valley for regional grants, so the name change would be to one that is more reflective of the valley, not just Fresno.

Skills Development Council: Director Zabrycki shared that the Skills Development Council (SDC) held their meeting on May 1st. At that time, they recommended for approval the Eligible Training Provider List Training Provider Policy. The SDC was also presented with overviews on several topics: Individual Training Accounts; an overview of special grants training, which included the unveiling of the new ValleyBuild logo; the overview of staff trainings, past and future; and the Discretionary Grants Report.

Youth Council: Director Sotiropulos shared that the Youth Council met on May 23rd, at which time they approved the minutes of the November 16, 2023, and May 18, 2023, meetings. The Youth Council recommended FRWDB ratification of four (4) new Youth Council members: Director Shayn Anderson, Ms. Keda Buttles, Director Kurt Madden, and Ms. Michelle Engel-Silva. The Youth Council also reviewed and recommended the FRWDB approve the PY 2024-2025 WIOA Youth funding recommendations. He noted that the recommendation included a three percent (3%) carryover from the previous PY.

Mr. Konczal added that for both the Adult and Youth Councils, the funding recommendations were based on estimates FRWDB staff received from the state, but he noted that the state's estimates should be close to what is passed down from the federal level.

This was an information item.

7. Board Member Spotlight

Director Edgar Blunt, Chief Executive Officer, IMAGO, shared a PowerPoint presentation providing an overview of IMAGO, the company he founded in 2013. He stated that at IMAGO, they are a group of lifelong learners and creators, and they understand the importance of soft skills and infusing soft skills across all learning experiences. He shared that seven (7) out of ten (10) hiring authorities would prefer hiring someone with more soft skills than hard skills.

He shared about the current workplace skills gap and identified employers' most desired skills for employees. He asked FRWDB Directors to break into small groups for an activity about skills gaps, and then the groups shared the reasons they thought there were still skills gaps in the workplace. Director Blunt stated that IMAGO helped develop soft skills in individuals through a digital platform, through custom content, and through professional learning. He noted that the FRWDB was IMAGO's first digital platform client, in which they delivered curricula to teach soft skills to workforce participants.

Since the start of IMAGO in 2013, they have provided services in 20 states, to a half a million people, and have impacted over 5 million people.

Director Madden asked if WIOA funding could be used for delivering soft skills training to participants. Mr. Konczal stated that the US Department of Labor is open to funding soft skills training when it is related to employment.

Director Hensley asked how many FRWDB participants receive IMAGO's training annually. Phyllis Stogbauer, Senior Deputy Director, FRWDB, indicated that it was about 2,500.

This was an information item.

8. In the Community – Marketing Update

Martha Espinosa, Marketing and Grants Manager, FRWDB, provided highlights of recent marketing activities and events, focusing on the Fourth Quarter (Q4) of PY 2023-2024.

Ms. Espinosa shared that on April 17th, the FRWDB hosted its Annual Achievement Awards Breakfast, where individuals and businesses were recognized for their outstanding achievement.

On April 30th, the FRWDB hosted the Govaganza Government Job Fair at Chukchansi Park. 32 employers participated in the event from all levels of government (city, county, state and federal), as well as education. In response to feedback from employers from last year's Govaganza, indicating that attendees were not well prepared to meet with employers, FRWDB hosted Ready, Set, Hired – Your Ultimate Guide to Landing a Job, one (1) week prior to this year's Govaganza. At this event, attendees were given tips and advice on how to dress for success, how to create a resume, about asking questions of potential employers, and doing research on companies before an interview. It was a very successful event and was also shared on the FRWDB's social media. Individuals who could not attend in person were still able to access the information shared.

At Govaganza this year, there was a resume review station, where attendees could have their resume reviewed and receive feedback instantly. There were "matchmakers", who reviewed attendees' resumes and let them know which agencies/organizations were hiring in their field of experience. The DigiBus was also onsite that gave attendees the opportunity to make changes to their resume. Institute of Technology was at the event and provided typing tests and certificates, which normally would cost an individual \$10. There was a Dress for Success station and a station where attendees could have a professional headshot taken and immediately update their social media accounts. In total, 525 job seekers attended this year's event and of those, 71.7% were not enrolled with Workforce Connection; however, they did learn about Workforce Connection and the services they provide. Of the attendees, 79.5% were interested in career training opportunities.

On May 15th, Directors Blunt and Madden conducted an online webinar with the City of Fresno through their Transform Fresno program. The webinar, Preparing for Tomorrow: The Impact of AI on your Workforce, provided participants with information about how much can be done with AI and how much AI is going to impact and transform the workplace.

On May 17th, the FRWDB held the Greater Sierra Forestry Corps graduation ceremony, where 16 individuals were celebrated for completing the program.

On May 22nd, the FRWDB held its first All Staff Conference, where FRWDB and provider staff came together for an all-day conference. Ron Williams was the keynote speaker, and he delivered a very inspirational message to the group. There were 138 individuals who attended. At the conference, Mr. Konczal provided an overview of the state of the FRWDB and shared the bigger picture and vision of what is in store for the future. Mr. Konczal noted that attendees were assigned seating, and were

placed at a table with people who had similar functions from different organizations. He stated that this led to some really good conversations. The theme of the conference was “One Picture, Many Pieces”, and teamwork, innovation and empowerment were the focus. The next All Staff Conference is already being planned and will have a more outward focus of how does Fresno fit into the state and national economy, what are the trends, and how can staff be better informed about how they function in their task and how that task fits into the bigger picture.

Ms. Espinosa shared that also in May, FRWDB participated in the California Workforce Association’s WorkCon conference in Palm Desert. The FRWDB had eight (8) presentations at the conference and hosted two (2) mixer events. The FRWDB brought three (3) former participants to the conference to present and share their experience going through the pre-apprentice program. Chair Montalbano also attended the conference and shared that all the FRWDB’s presentations were well attended. Director Anderson also attended the conference and indicated that he has a statewide presence and knows that conference attendees are very interested in what the FRWDB is doing.

Ms. Espinosa shared that the FRWDB continued to share information on social media, including Scholarship Award presentations, and provider staff spotlights. Director Madden was also highlighted for receiving the Key to the City.

Upcoming events Ms. Espinosa shared about were the Father Fest Car Show on June 8th, which would include a resource and job fair, with seven (7) employers participating. Director Vicente would be there representing BMO. The purpose of the event was to highlight the FRWDB’s Fatherhood program. Director Quintero suggested the FRWDB have a police officer with a police car at the event, noting that kids love to take a picture sitting in the police car. Also coming up was the Construction and Ag Career Expo in Bakersfield, where the FRWDB will have a booth representing the ValleyBuild program.

Ms. Espinosa concluded her update by sharing that in Q4, the FRWDB held and/or participated in 53 community outreach events throughout Fresno County.

This was an information item.

9. **Approval of the March 6, Meeting Minutes**

MADDEN/OLIVARES – APPROVED THE MARCH 6, 2024, MEETING MINUTES. (UNANIMOUS)

10. **April 2024 Financial Report**

Mr. Konczal presented the April 2024 Financial Report for the FRWDB’s acceptance. He reviewed the grants that were highlighted in the agenda item and pointed out that the FRWDB received extensions on three (3) grants: The WIOA Rapid Response grant extended to September 30, 2024; CalFIRE Round 1 grant extended to March 1, 2025; and the City of Fresno -One Youth Job Corps grant, extended to June 30, 2024. Mr. Konczal stated that FRWDB staff had no concerns with grant expenditures. There were no questions from the FRWDB.

BLUNT/MEADOWS – ACCEPTED THE APRIL 2024 FINANCIAL REPORT. (UNANIMOUS)

11. **Government Update**

Feleena Sutton, Government Affairs Manager, FRWDB, provided an update on some of the legislation she had been following, but she first shared that she had created a Stakeholder Engagement Plan. She explained that the Stakeholder Engagement Plan was a growing document that will live between her and Mr. Konczal and would include documentation of all her conversations, phone calls, and correspondence on the various projects on which Ms. Sutton was working.

AB 2873 Breaking Barriers to Employment: Currently, if an organization is applying for the Breaking Barriers grant, they must have a workforce partner identified before applying. This legislation is attempting to change that requirement so that an organization can still apply for the grant without having a workforce partner and once the grant award is made, they can then seek the workforce partner.

AB 2019 Early and Middle College High Schools and Programs: This bill has gone through the Assembly and is now in the Senate. The state currently is not monitoring the outcome of students who participate in early and middle college high school programs who go on to get college credit. This bill is seeking to put that into place, starting with a pilot program. This bill is set for the Assembly Education Committee on June 12th and is expected to pass.

SB480 Portantino Tech Career Pipeline: Through this bill, Senator Portantino is trying to bring a pilot program to high schools based on the Korean Meister High School program, which is professional vocational high school program to prepare students for the workforce. The bill would allow for three (3) school districts to implement the pilot program.

HR 6655 A Stronger Workforce for America Act: This proposed reauthorization of the WIOA has gone through the House and was currently in the Senate, awaiting Markup. The primary area of concern was that the proposed reauthorization would mandate a new 50% training requirement for Workforce Development Boards (WDBs), whereas WDBs are accustomed to setting aside 30% for training. Ms. Sutton noted that a 50% training set aside would be really onerous to a lot of small WDBs. She added that she will continue to closely follow this legislation.

This was an information item.

12. **Consent Items (A1 – C2)**

OLIVARES/BLUNT – APPROVED THE CONSENT ITEMS A1 – C2. (UNANIMOUS)

13. **Recognition of Board Anniversaries**

Chair Montalbano recognized Directors for their years of service on the FRWDB with a presentation of certificates. He recognized Directors whose anniversaries occurred in the months of April through June: Douglas Dart – one (1) year; Lacy Barnes – ten (10) years; and Lydia Zabrycki – 18 years.

This was an information item.

14. **Information Sharing**

This was a discussion item.

15. **Agenda Items for September 4, 2024, Meeting**

Chair Montalbano shared that he and other WDB Chairs from the valley were invited to attend the Central California Workforce Collaborative meeting. He shared that it was a good day and he was impressed with the quality of people who are dedicated to the valley's workforce. He said he appreciated being invited to participate.

This was a discussion item.

16. Meeting Feedback

No meeting feedback was provided.

The meeting was adjourned at 5:25 p.m.