



FRESNO REGIONAL WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT BOARD

Workforce Development Board
June 4, 2025 @ 4:00 p.m.

SUMMARY MINUTES

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

ROLL CALL: PRESENT – Shayn Anderson, Stephen Avila, Lacy Barnes (arrived at 4:04 p.m.), Edgar Blunt, Alysia Bonner (arrived at 4:06 p.m.), Rodney Branch (arrived at 4:09 p.m.), Luis Chavez, Christina Garza, Jeff Hensley, Kurt Madden, Wyatt Meadows, Terry Metters, Jr., Scott Miller, Dennis Montalbano, Alisha Morgan, Joe Olivares, Chuck Riojas, Vasili Sotiropulos, Sandra Vicente (arrived at 4:09 p.m.), Lydia Zabrycki, Chris Zeitz, and Legal Counsel Craig Armstrong.

ABSENT – Douglas Dart, Carole Goldsmith, and Tyler Maxwell.

COMMENTS BY FRWDB CHAIR
AND/OR EXECUTIVE STAFF: None

AGENDA CHANGES
REMOVAL OF ITEMS OR
EMERGENCY ADDITIONS: Blake Konczal, Executive Director, Fresno Regional Workforce Development Board (FRWDB), removed Items A1 and C1 from Consent and added Item 17. He explained that A1 and C1 contained budget recommendations for the new Program Year (PY) based on estimated funding allocations from the state; but since the publishing of the agenda, FRWDB received notice from the state with actual funding allocations. Item 17 contained updated budget recommendations for the Adult and Young Adult programs for PY 2025-2026, and would be presented after Item 12.

ABSTENTIONS/ DISCLOSURES OF
POTENTIAL CONFLICTS
OF INTEREST/RECUSALS: None

PUBLIC COMMENTS: None

Item Description/Action Taken

6. Committee Reports

Adult Council: Director Riojas provided a brief report on the May 22, 2025, Adult Council meeting. He shared about the video highlighting the Union Women's Conference that FRWDB ValleyBuild graduates attended, stating that it was an excellent video and a great opportunity for the women who participated.

Director Barnes arrived (4:04 p.m.)

The Council reviewed and recommended approval of the quarterly reports, and also reviewed and recommended approval of FRWDB's Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) Local and Regional Plans.

Executive Committee: Chair Blunt reported that the Executive Committee (Committee) met on April 3rd, when they reviewed and accepted the May 2025 Financial Report and Agency Budget and Expenditures Reports. He reported that the Committee approved a number of items: An allocation increase for the High Road Construction Careers (HRCC) funding, a Digital Literacy contract award, and a contract award for the HRCC Resilient Workforce Fund.

Skills Development Council: Director Zabrycki shared that the Skills Development Council (SDC) met on May 2nd, at which time they recommended the ratification of Director Lacy Barnes to the SDC.

Director Bonner arrived (4:06 p.m.)

The SDC was presented with the Eligible Training Provider List Monitoring Report for review and recommendation for FRWDB acceptance. They also were presented with several reports as information items: The Individual Training Account report, which covered training activities and expenditures for the period of July 2024 through March 2025; a Special Grants report, which provided an overview of each grant's regional performance progress to date; a Discretionary Grants report, which covered five (5) grants and their progress; and a Staff Training report.

Youth Council: Director Sotiropulos shared that the Youth Council met on May 15th. Proteus, Inc. provided the Council with an overview of the services they provide in the rural east area of Fresno County.

Directors Branch and Vicente arrived (4:09 p.m.)

The Council recommended the approval of the Workforce Accelerator Fund contract awards in the amount of \$500,000. They approved the quarterly reports, but there was a discussion about the Local Performance Results Report data for the rural west area. Director Sotiropulos noted that there had been some improvement due to FRWDB's marketing and outreach efforts on the west side, but the reports were still reflecting lower results than desired. The Council discussed the possibility of traveling to the rural west to attend a marketing event in the future.

This was an information item.

7. **Approval of the March 5, 2025, Meeting Minutes**

RIOJAS/OLIVARES – APPROVED THE MARCH 5, 2025, MEETING MINUTES. (UNANIMOUS)

8. **April 2025 Financial Report**

Mr. Konczal presented the April 2025 Financial Report for the FRWDB's acceptance. He stated that the report covered both formula and discretionary grants the FRWDB had received. He reviewed the grants that were highlighted in the agenda item and asked if there were any questions from the Directors and there were none.

OLIVARES/AVILA – ACCEPTED THE APRIL 2025 FINANCIAL REPORT. (UNANIMOUS)

9. **Board Member Spotlight**

Director Scott Miller thanked the FRWDB for the opportunity to serve on the Board. He shared that he is the Owner and Chief Executive Officer of Gazebo Gardens. They currently employ about 70 people and Gazebo Gardens is 103 years old. Director Miller indicated that about 20 years ago, he started to become civically active, volunteering at the Chamber of Commerce and even running for City Council.

He now served as the President and CEO of the Fresno City and County Chamber of Commerce. He shared that the Chamber was established in 1885 and was the largest local membership-based business organization in Fresno, providing advocacy on behalf of businesses, hosting mixer and connection events such as the State of the City and State of the County; and sponsoring programs such as Leadership Fresno and the San Joaquin Political Academy, a non-partisan program that is a part of the Chamber's Foundation.

This was an information item.

10. In the Community – Marketing Update

Martha Espinosa, Deputy Director Marketing, Grants and Business Initiatives, FRWDB, provided an in-depth overview, via Power Point, of the FRWDB's marketing activities through billboards, advertising, and outreach events that occurred March through May 2025.

FRWDB continued to market its programs and services through various media outlets, including Fox 26, iHeart Radio, B95, La Buena, The Business Journal, and Channels 24 and 47 via streaming on Spotify. Ms. Espinosa stated that as leaders in the community, FRWDB Directors are the best promoters of FRWDB's programs and services. Ms. Espinosa distributed polo shirts with the FRWDB logo to the Directors to wear in the community.

Ms. Espinosa reported on the events the FRWDB attended and held during the previous quarter. She and Ashley Matthews, Senior Special Projects Manager, FRWDB, attended California Workforce Association's Day at the Capitol on March 5th, when they were able to meet with different elected officials and encourage support on a couple of pieces of legislation: SB 275, which eases the reporting burdens of the California Eligible Training Provider List and SB845, which implements key components of the Master Plan for Career Education. They were also able to give Assembly Members Arambula, Soria and Caballero ValleyBuild posters for their offices.

On March 12th, FRWDB held its Annual Achievement Awards breakfast, at which four (4) outstanding youth participants, four (4) outstanding adult participants, four (4) outstanding youth businesses, and four (4) outstanding adult businesses were recognized; and one (1) annual winner was announced for each category. Attendees also received a copy of FRWDB's Annual Snapshot publication. The FRWDB's 43rd ValleyBuild cohort and the 11th Greater Sierra Forestry Corps cohort graduations were held during the quarter and there was a mixer to kick-off the FRWDB's new Emergency Medical Services (EMS) program. The EMS program will train 60 youth to become EMS Technicians and the first class starts in August.

FRWDB participated in the Parlier Parade in April and plans to sponsor and participate in future events in Parlier to reach the community. FRWDB's Govaganza government job fair was a great success, with 524 job seekers attending and 35 employers from government and education participating.

Ms. Espinosa showed a video highlighting the ValleyBuild NOW chartered bus trip to the Union Women Stronger Together Conference in Los Angeles that Director Riojas mentioned in the Adult Council report. Ms. Espinosa shared that 30 ValleyBuild alumni participated in the trip and the charter bus picked up participants in Stockton, Fresno and Bakersfield. One participant, Katie Arredondo, was able to connect with the Operating Engineers and is now in their apprenticeship program due to the connection made at the conference.

FRWDB had four (4) presentations at the CWA WorkCon conference in May. Chair Blunt and Director Madden presented, as well as Mr. Konczal and Cheryl Beierschmitt, FRWDB Deputy Director of Fiscal Services, Ms. Espinosa, and Diane Jensen, FRWDB Marketing Coordinator.

Ms. Espinosa shared that the FRWDB's Executive Committee retreat was held March 21st, when they discussed the pending WIOA Reauthorization and different ways to deal with anticipated budget cuts and set aside mandates. She noted that it was good to know the Executive Committee was looking ahead and planning strategies for different possible scenarios.

FRWDB also hosted the Fresno Workforce Leadership Academy retreat as part of the Aspen Leadership grant they received. At the retreat, they looked at exploring the workforce eco system; discussed how to improve the system, identified challenges, and discussed a possible project for the group to take on. There were 13 Fellows from different Community Based Organizations and other organizations who attended. Holly Kurtz from the Center for the Future of Arizona was the guest speaker. She presented on a case study in Arizona with Lucid Motors and their need for a skills workforce. It was an interesting case study, and Ms. Espinosa related it to the FRWDB's ValleyBuild and Forestry programs, and stated that it affirmed the FRWDB was on the right track and leading the charge in creating really dynamic programs.

She distributed a flyer showing upcoming events through the end of 2025. She noted that the Father Fest Resource Fair location was still to be determined.

Director Bonner shared that she was happy that the 30 ValleyBuild NOW participants were able to attend the Union Women's conference in Los Angeles and hoped next year, the FRWDB will take two (2) buses.

This was an information item.

11. Government Update

Mr. Konczal distributed a page from the President's Fiscal Year 2026 Discretionary Budget Request, which showed estimated funding for Programs and Financing for Fiscal Years 2025 and 2026. He explained that there are two (2) types of spending at the federal level: Mandatory, which is spending for Medicare, Social Security, Veterans benefits, defense, etc.; and Discretionary spending, under which Workforce Development falls. The Department of Government Efficiency came up with a list of cuts. Some of the cuts were in Mandatory spending, but a lot of the cuts were in Discretionary. Mr. Konczal stated that if the President's version of Discretionary funding was adopted (referring to the distributed page), spending for Workforce would be cut by 50%. It would take 11 programs that were currently administered by the Employment and Training Administration and give that funding as block grants to the states. This would eliminate the necessity to have a Workforce Board in order to draw down the money, as the state would decide how to distribute funding in its own boundaries. If the President's budget request is approved as is, FRWDB would not be impacted until July 2026.

Mr. Konczal shared that at their retreat, the FRWDB Executive Committee discussed possible scenarios and how the FRWDB would respond, noting that being governed by a Joint Powers Authority allowed the FRWDB to be more nimble in how it responds to the changes. The FRWDB also altered its organizational structure so that FRWDB's Senior Deputy Director could focus on planning for the upcoming changes. He shared that the FRWDB is planning for whatever change happens and will adapt, and that change is not a threat if you plan for it.

Director Madden asked if Mr. Konczal knew when the final budget information would be available. Mr. Konczal stated that he thought it would be some time after the August recess.

This was an information item.

12. **Consent Items (A1 – C6)**

MADDEN/ZABRYCKI – APPROVED CONSENT ITEMS, WITH THE EXCEPTION OF ITEMS A1 AND C1, WHICH WERE PULLED FROM CONSENT. (UNANIMOUS)

17. **Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act Youth, Adult and Dislocated Worker Provider Funding Recommendations for Program Year 2025-2026**

Mr. Konczal presented for FRWDB approval, the WIOA Youth, Adult and Dislocated Worker provider funding allocations for PY 2025-2026. He explained that at their quarterly meetings, the Adult and Youth Councils recommended funding allocations based on estimated funding from the state. Since those meetings, FRWDB received its PY 2025-2026 funding allocations from the State of California Employment Development Department's Workforce Services Division, which reflected an overall increase in the amount of \$1,841,243 compared to last year's allocation. Allocations to providers would remain the same as last PY.

He indicated that FRWDB staff anticipated projected carryover amounts for the WIOA Youth, Adult and Dislocated Worker programs to be reconciled by September 30, 2025.

RIOJAS/MEADOWS – APPROVED THE WIOA YOUTH, ADULT AND DISLOCATED WORKER PROVIDER FUNDING RECOMMENDATIONS FOR PY 2025-2026. (UNANIMOUS)

13. **Recognition of Board Anniversaries**

Chair Blunt recognized and presented certificates to Directors whose anniversaries occurred in the months of April through June: Douglas Dart - two (2) years; Lacy Barnes – 11 years; and Lydia Zabrycki – 19 years.

Chair Blunt announced that Director Shayn Anderson had been promoted to Deputy Director at the Department of Rehabilitation in Sacramento and that this would be his last meeting of the FRWDB. Director Anderson stated that it was a pleasure to serve on the FRWDB.

The Chair also presented Mr. Konczal with a certificate recognizing 23 years with the FRWDB.

This was an information item.

14. **Information Sharing**

None.

15. **Agenda Items for September 10, 2025, Meeting**

No items were suggested for the September 10, 2025, FRWDB meeting agenda.

16. **Meeting Feedback**

There was no meeting feedback

This was an information item.

The meeting was adjourned at 5:09 p.m.