FRESNO REGIONAL WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT BOARD

Executive Committee
July 29, 2026

SPECIAL MEETING

SUMMARY MINUTES

The meeting was called to order at 3:06 p.m.

ROLL CALL: PRESENT – Stephen Avila, Edgar Blunt, Rodney Branch, Dennis Montalbano, Chuck Riojas, Vasili Sotiropulos, and Legal Counsel Craig Armstrong

, ABSENT – Luis Chavez, Tyler Maxwell, and Lydia Zabrycki

AGENDA CHANGES: Blake Konczal, Executive Director, Fresno Regional Workforce Development Board (FRWDB), presented an approval item for emergency addition to the agenda for the High Road Construction Careers Bridge Grant contract award.

SOTIROPULOS/AVILA – APPROVED THE ADDITION OF ITEM 3B HIGH ROAD CONSTRUCTION CAREERS BRIDGE GRANT CONTRACT AWARD. (UNANIMOUS)

ABSTENTIONS/RECUSALS/ DISCLOSURES OF POTENTIAL CONFLICTS OF INTEREST: Riojas – Item 3B

COMMITTEE CHAIR/STAFF COMMENTS: None

PUBLIC COMMENTS: None

Item	Description/Action Taken
1.	**April 15, 2026, Executive Committee Meeting Minutes** Mr. Konczal presented the April 15, 2026, Executive Committee (Committee) meeting minutes for approval, or correction and approval. **RIOJAS/AVILA – APPROVED THE APRIL 15, 2026, EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE MEETING MINUTES. (UNANIMOUS)** Director Branch arrived (3:08 p.m.)
2.	**May 2026 Agency Budget and Expenditures** Cheryl Beierschmitt, Deputy Director Fiscal Services, FRWDB, presented the May 2026 Agency Budget and Expenditures report for the Committee's acceptance. She reminded the Committee that the year-to-date budget was straight-lined.

She noted that Line 55 Staff/Board/Service Provider Development line item had a slight variance, and Line Item 60 Communications was higher than anticipated, but that was due to a project with AT&T, for which FRWDB will be receiving credits from AT&T. There were no questions from the Committee.

RIOJAS/AVILA – ACCEPTED THE MAY 2026 AGENCY BUDGET AND EXPENDITURES. (UNANIMOUS)

3. <u>May 2026 Financial Report</u>

Ms. Beierschmitt presented the May 2026 Financial Report for the Committee's acceptance. She noted that the plan year-to-date expenditures as of May 31, 2026,was $26.8 million. She pointed out that two (2) grants closed June 30, 2026, and were in the process of being closed out. She reported that staff had no concerns with expenditures. There were no questions from the Committee.

AVILA/RIOJAS – ACCEPTED THE FEBRUARY 2026 FINANCIAL REPORT (UNANIMOUS)

3B. <u>High Road to Construction Careers Bridge Grant Contract Award</u>

Martha Espinosa, Deputy Director Marketing, Grants and Business Initiatives, FRWDB, presented for the Committee's approval, the High Road to Construction Careers Bridge Grant from the California Workforce Development Board contract award in the amount of $1,322,756.00 to serve 95 ValleyBuild participants regionally. She shared that FRWDB was awarded this 19-month grant to continue providing workforce development services across the central valley. During this funding period, five (5) cohorts will be implemented drawn from ValleyBuild's 15-county service area. She reviewed each of the contract award recipients, as outlined in the agenda item.

Approval of this award would ensure a timely implementation of these services and support FRWDB's commitment to expanding equitable access to workforce services and career pathways for underserved populations.

Director Avila asked what was included in Supportive Services. Ms. Espinosa shared that it could include childcare, monthly or need-based stipends, as well as mileage reimbursement. She noted that FRWDB would be braiding funding with its Workforce Accelerator Fund grant specifically to help assist with Supportive Services for veterans and tribal members.

AVILA/SOTIROPULOS – APPROVED THE HIGH ROAD TO CONSTRUCTION CAREERS BRIDGE GRANT CONTRACT AWARD. (UNANIMOUS, WITH RECUSAL NOTED ABOVE)

4. <u>Program Year 2026-2027 Agency Budget and Personnel Plan</u>

Ms. Beierschmitt presented for the Committee's recommendation for FRWDB approval, the Program Year (PY) 2026-2027 Agency Budget and Personnel Plan in the amount of $30,742,223. This amount included $18,660,667 in Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act formula funding, $7,724,549 in special grants funding, and an estimated carryover from PY 2025-2026 in the amount of $4,357,007. She noted that the total amount of $30,742,223 was a decrease of $13,794,237 from the PY 2025-2026 available funding.

She directed the Committee's attention to the Staff Schedule, which showed an increase in staff from 57 full-time equivalent (FTE) last PY to 73 FTE for the new PY. This increase in staff was due to onboarding new staff on July 1, 2026, to perform Basic Career Services at the FRWDB's America's Job Centers of California locations.

Chair Blunt asked what FRWDB staff had noticed so far with the Basic Career Services staff being brough in-house. Mr. Konczal noted that since it had only been a month, it was too soon to tell, but that in another month, there should be data to share with the Committee.

RIOJAS/SOTIROPULOS – RECOMMENDED THAT THE FRWDB APPROVE THE PY 2026-2027 AGENCY BUDGET AND PERSONNEL PLAN. (UNANIMOUS)

5. Fresno Regional Workforce Development Board Bylaws Revision

Mr. Konczal presented a proposed revision to the FRWDB Bylaws for the Committee's recommendation for FRWDB approval. He explained that the current Bylaws provide for the immediate past Chair of the FRWDB to serve on the Executive Committee for two (2) years following their term as Chair. The proposed revision would allow any past FRWDB Chair to serve on the Executive Committee, if they wish to do so, and as long as they were a Board member in good standing. Mr. Konczal noted that Chairs gain valuable knowledge and experience during their tenure, and having that experience represented on the Executive Committee would benefit the FRWDB.

SOTIROPULOS/RIOJAS – APPROVED THE FRESNO REGIONAL WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT BOARD BYLAWS REVISION. (UNANIMOUS)

6. Fresno Regional Workforce Development Board Bylaws Revision Regarding Officer Continuity and Re-Election

Mr. Konczal presented for the Committee's recommendation for FRWDB approval, a revision to the FRWDB Bylaws to permit the re-election of incumbent officers when no other qualified FRWDB member has been nominated for or seeks election to an office, and to authorize continued service in a holdover capacity until a successor is elected or appointed. He noted that the FRWDB would continue to poll members to see if there was any interest in running for one of the seats. If no other qualified member is interested, the incumbent officer could continue to serve in a holdover capacity until a successor is elected or appointed.

RIOJAS/AVILA – RECOMMENDED THAT THE FRWDB APPROVE BYLAWS REVISION REGARDING OFFICER CONTINUITY AND RE-ELECTION. (UNANIMOUS)

7. Summary of Fresno Regional Workforce Development Board Staff AI Usage

Ryan McAlister, Senior Client Training Coordinator, FRWBD, shared that at the last meeting, when the Executive Committee reviewed and recommended the FRWDB's AI Usage Policy, members requested a usage report on FRWDB staff's AI usage. Mr. McAlister shared a PowerPoint presentation that showed the results of a survey conducted of FRWDB and provider staff at the end of June 2026, when 67 employees were surveyed. Results showed that 39% of staff use AI daily, 30% use it once or twice a week, six percent (6%) use it a couple times a month, 16% reported they tried it and never went back to using it, and nine percent (9%) said they never use AI. Although nine percent (9%) of staff indicated they never use AI, Mr. McAlister noted that they may be using it unaware.

When surveyed about which AI platforms staff was using, ChatGPT was at 44%, Microsoft Co-Pilot was at 21%, Google Gemini was 14%, Canva was seven percent (7%), and other entities made up 14%. Sixty-seven percent (67%) of employees use a free version of AI.

When asking how comfortable staff are with using AI, 39% are pretty comfortable, 21% somewhat comfortable, 20% very comfortable, 11% slightly comfortable, and nine percent (9%) not comfortable at all. When asked what staff were using AI for, writing and editing documents was 20%, research was 18%, writing emails 17%, brainstorming ideas 16%, and helping with presentations eight percent (8%).

Chair Blunt expressed interest in learning whether the use of AI has increased staff productivity. Director Avila asked how the FRWDB identifies grant opportunities for which to apply. Kyle Hamilton, Research Analyst, FRWDB, indicated that FRWDB usually goes to grants.gov, which is a state website that he looks at every day.

This was an information item.

8. Closed Session: Executive Director Performance Evaluation

There was no action to report out of closed session.

9. Director's Quarterly Update

Mr. Konczal distributed a summary of his activities as Executive Director for the period of April through June 2026. He briefly summarized his key activities during the reporting period, which included reviewing all Fresno Area Workforce Investment Corporation staff performance evaluations, and tracking Assembly Bill 1534, which would eliminate the current 30% training set aside, but would create a 50% training enrollment requirement. Chair Blunt asked what was the FRWDB's current training enrollment percentage and Mr. Konczal indicated that he would get that number for the Chair.

He spent considerable time working on the Bylaws revisions presented at today's meeting, overseeing the hiring and implementation of the new AJCC staff, and preparing for and participating in the all-staff training day in May, which featured Dr. Ruby Payne as the keynote speaker. He noted that he serves as an elected trustee on the U.S. Conference of Mayors Workforce Development Council Board of Trustees, which required travel to Philadelphia for a meeting. He also serves on the California Workforce Association's Executive Committee and the CART Board of Trustees, both of which require time for meetings. He also noted that the FRWDB applied for a YouthBuild grant from the US Department of Labor and were just notified that they were not awarded that grant. FRWDB also applied for a CalFIRE grant and were still waiting for notification about approval.

This was an information item.

10. Referral of Agenda Items to Other Committees

There were no items referred to other committees.

11. Information Sharing

Director Montalbano shared that he was looking for a permanent home for an American Bulldog that was about two (2) years old that he had been fostering. He asked anyone who was interested to speak with him after the meeting.

This was an information item.

12. October 21, 2026, Agenda Items

There were no items recommended for the October 21, 2026, agenda.

13. Meeting Feedback

Ms. Espinosa shared with the Committee, next month's FRWDB-sponsored events : The Young Adult Job Fair on August 12th, Fresno Chamber of Commerce Mixer on August 20th, and the EMS Corps graduation on August 28th.

Director Montalbano reported that State Farm Insurance had recently terminated the contracts of numerous agents, which also resulted in the elimination of office staff positions. Mr. Konczal indicated that FRWDB would promote its services through social media to reach individuals affected by the terminations.

Meeting adjourned at 4:32 p.m.