

Northeast Tennessee Local Workforce Development Board
Thursday, April 15, 2021
Zoom Meeting
MINUTES

MEMBERS PRESENT:

Amanda Boyer	David Hutton	Jay Richardson	Lynn Tully
Bethany Bullock	Debbie Fillers	Jeff Frazier	Paul Sajdak
Bob Cantler	Gabrielle Buchanan	Jonathan Van Bremen	Sandra Ray
Brian Decker	Hamblin Wilson	Krystal Holder	
Daronda Patterson	James Osborne	Lottie Ryans	

PROXY VOTES:

None

LEO'S PRESENT:

Mike Taylor, Johnson County Mayor

GUESTS PRESENT:

Brian Vaughn	Tyra Copas	Dana Wilds	Patrick Grandelli
Jacob Bolen	Bo Shadden	Jerry Leger	Cindy Necessary
Tom Miklusicak	Jeff Morris	Jenny Lockmiller	Michael Higgins
Virginia Housley	Robert McKinney	Brandi Christian	Engie Trivett
Amy McKinney	Tammy O'Hare	Cara O'Conner	Crystal Johnson
Amy Edwards	Jodi Polaha	Michelle Bacon	Julia Decker
Treyanna Hughes-Fielding			

BOARD STAFF PRESENT:

Kathy Pierce	Lisa Evans	April Shaffner	Tammy Sluder
Cindy Martin-Hensley			

* **Note:** Before the meeting, all Northeast Tennessee Local Workforce Development Board (NETLWDB) Members receive an electronic packet, by email, of all documents reviewed during this meeting.

Welcome – James Osborne, Chair & Kathy Pierce, Executive Director

James Osborne, as Chair, opened the meeting and welcomed everyone to the Quarterly Meeting of the Northeast Tennessee Local Workforce Development Board (NETLWDB). James asked Kathy to complete a roll call of NETLWDB Members present.

Kathy welcomed everyone to the meeting and completed a roll call of NETLWDB Members. Kathy reported a quorum of NETLWDB members present.

James asked for a volunteer to provide the invocation.

- **Invocation** - Lottie Ryans provided the invocation.

Kathy recognized LEOs and other guests attending the meeting.

Eagle Stories

James asked attendees to please share an Eagle Story, it can be a personal story or a story about the company where they work or a positive story about something going on in our area.

- Kenneth Osborne with Pipefitters Local 538 in Johnson City marked 100 years of apprenticeship training for pipefitters, welders, HVAC, and medical gas apprentices in the Northeast area.

- Bo Shadden shared information about a \$14.3 million state grant that has been made available to local high schools in Tennessee who can apply for up to \$750,000 to 2-million-dollar grants. Dobyms-Bennett High School plans to focus their grant on workforce development. This is a new work program they will implement and will be identifying businesses to work with and designating space for classroom activities. They will recruit from 200 students who will get four hours of on-the-job training internship with a company and four hours of classroom training. The grant will serve approximately 20 students in their Junior and Senior years in high school. They are currently looking for a company they can work with these grant funds.

Approval of Minutes - January 21, 2021 - Vote Required

James Osborne asked for a motion to accept the Minutes of the NETLWDB January 21, 2021, meeting as distributed to NETLWDB members before the meeting.

MOTION – Jay Ricardson made a motion to approve the Minutes of the January 21, 2021, Board Meeting. Second by Kenneth Osborne. Discussion was called for, there was none. Objections were called for, there were none. Motion passed.

OSO Report/Scorecard - Dana Wilds

Dana Wilds reviewed the Northeast TN Local Workforce Development Area (NETLWDA) Report and Score Card of statistical information from partners in the American Job Center. AJCs are still providing services as virtual or on the phone and in the centers by appointment only, but have a targeted reopen date of Monday, May 3. The State has done a great job in offering job seekers and employers the opportunity to connect through the Premier Virtual Job Fair Platform. The Rapid Response Team put together a quick hiring event for Hexpol when they had the fire at their local plant. The AJCs were able to open to individuals who did not have computers or who needed more assistance with the JOBS4TN system. The AJCs have started a new program where they send emails weekly out to new registrants of unemployment to promote the services available at their local AJC. After the email, staff does follow-up to reach out to these individuals by phone Northeast will be participating in the East Regional Career & Technical Education (CTE) hiring event using the virtual platform on May 4.

Premier Virtual Job Fair Platform - Brian Vaughn and Jacob Bolen

Kathy introduced Brian Vaughn, Team Lead in the Johnson City Comprehensive AJC, and Jacob Bolen, Team Lead in the Kingsport Comprehensive AJC, who presented the Premier Virtual Job Fair Platform.

Jacob Bolen explained that Premier Virtual is a digital platform designed to facilitate virtual interactions between job seekers and employers. It is customizable, interactive, and uses interactive hiring rooms, live chat and video, and event reporting. Premier Virtual has had this concept for a couple of years but in 2020 they identified a higher demand for this type of software. In 2021, Tennessee identified the Premier Virtual platform as a safer alternative to in-person job fairs. Since the beginning of 2021, Northeast has set up multiple events using different formats to test what might work best for the Northeast area. We have tried industry-specific, a regional event, single employer events, and even workshops for veterans. We continue to experiment to identify new ways that Premier Virtual might be useful to employers.

Premier Virtual offers interactive communication between a company and the job seeker, resumes are retrievable, and an accessibility button is available for those needing additional assistance. The platform allows a company to set up a virtual booth/chat room with the company logo, social media, and other information. There are disability-accessible features in the platform. The job seeker can upload their resume to the company's booth, as well as provide their email address and engage in video chat with the company. Job seekers follow the same process to follow to register and access the platform. Assistance with registering in the digital platform is available to the job seeker at their local AJC.

Kathy mentioned that we are going to be part of a large regional virtual job fair targeting junior and senior high school students from the eight Northeast counties, and the sixteen East counties. This will allow students looking for full-time employment, short-time summer employment, and pre-

apprenticeship opportunities to connect with local employers. The virtual job fair allows students to learn and use this type of platform to search for and obtain employment and gives employers access to a huge pool of job seekers.

Brian Vaughn gave a presentation about the Virtual American Job Center – TNVirtualAJC.com is a new website developed by the Tennessee Department of Labor & Workforce Development (TDLWD) to help job seekers or those searching the internet for American Job Center services. The Virtual American Job Center's focus is Service Matching, which will help job seekers drill down into Job Planning, Education, Skill Sharpening, Youth Services, Work life Support and Help for Trade Impacted Workers. They are prompted to complete a survey which is a five-minute questionnaire of ten questions. Once they complete the survey, they are given a page with a QR code. They can save the code to their phone, email, or print the page and search for an AJC near them and request an appointment with their local AJC. The job seeker can request to meet in person or over a video. The QR code allows staff in the AJC to view the individual's answers on the survey and to provide those services.

Employer Recognition

James turned the meeting over to Kathy to present the Employer Recognition part of the agenda.

Kathy recognized companies AB&T and the Board have partnered with to provide funding opportunities with the CARES Act & the Rural Initiative programs this past year. There were seventeen companies served with \$524,167.07 for their Incumbent Workers: ADPma; Amsee, Ltd.; AO Smith; Artazn, LLC; Ballad Health; Bell Textron; Cerdia Primester; Crown Laboratories; Domtar; Eastman; Flextech Solutions; JA Street & Associates; KPS Global; Leclerc Foods; MiniFibers; Mundet Tennessee; Ntara; Partner Industrial; Seaman Corporation; TN Tennessee, LLC; and Tri-Cities Electrical JATC.

Some of the company representatives shared their gratitude for receiving the funds and how the funds are a great asset to the region, the company and the incumbent workers receiving training. Those sharing were Jonathan Van Bremen, Tri-Cities Electrical JATC; Jeff Frazier, Eastman; Treyana Hughes-Fielding, Domtar; and Michelle Bacon, Partner Industrial.

James Osborne thanked the companies for being a partner in our local workforce system, it helps the entire workforce area and congratulations on being able to do these trainings to build our workforce.

Report from Executive Committee

James turned the meeting over to Kathy to present the work of the Executive Committee at their April 13 meeting. The Executive Committee voted to approve the following items and is submitting these items to the Board for ratification.

➤ **Extension of ETSU Contract**

Kathy reviewed the second-year extension of the ETSU Contract. ETSU provides WIOA Title I services to Adults, Dislocated Workers, and Youth in the Northeast AJCs. James asked for a ratification vote of the Executive Committee recommendation to approve a second-year extension to ETSU Career Services Provider Contract for the Northeast LWDA as presented.

MOTION – Motion made by Brian Decker, to ratify the recommendation of the Executive Committee to approve a second-year extension to the ETSU Career Services Provider Contract as presented. Second by Jeff Frazier. Discussion was called for, there was none. Objections were called for, there were none. Motion passed.

➤ **AJC Certifications**

Kathy reviewed the American Job Center (AJC) Certifications for the new Rogersville and Erwin AJCs. The on-site visit to both AJCs received unanimous votes for approval with some recommendations and it was noted that new signs are needed at both locations. James asked for a motion to ratify the vote of the Executive Committee to accept the Rogersville and Erwin AJC Certifications as presented.

MOTION – Motion made by Jay Richardson, to accept the Rogersville and Erwin AJC Certifications as presented. Second by Daronda Paterson. Discussion was called for, there was none. Objections were called for, there were none. Motion passed.

➤ **PAR Monitoring Report**

Kathy reviewed the Tennessee Department of Labor & Workforce Development (TDLWD) Program Accountability Review (PAR) Monitoring Report. Kathy noted that there were no findings of noncompliance reported. James asked for a motion to ratify the vote of the Executive Committee to accept the Report as presented.

MOTION – Motion made by Amanda Boyer, to accept the PAR Monitoring Report as presented. Second by Jay Richardson. Discussion was called for, there was none. Objections were called for, there were none. Motion passed.

➤ **Blackburn, Childers & Steagall Audit Report**

Kathy reviewed the Blackburn, Childers & Steagall Audit Report. The audit has been completed and there were no findings reported. No vote is required.

➤ **FY 2021 Funding Availability/Expenditures**

Kathy reviewed the Fiscal Year 2021 Funding Availability/Expenditures Report. This report shows the financial standing of AB&T as of February 2021. No vote is required.

➤ **FY 2022 Funding Allocation**

Kathy reviewed the Fiscal Year 2022 Funding Allocations Report. There will be a decrease in funds available in the amount of \$409,680.35. That is a significant amount for our local workforce area, and we plan to have conversations with Nashville to see what additional availability of funds that there may be for our area. The budget will be presented once we have all information on funding. No vote is required.

➤ **CARES Act Reports**

Kathy reviewed the CARES Act Report. The Reemployment Grant – expended all funds by the end of December 2020. The Consolidated Business Grant (CBG) – expended all but \$7,793.24 of the funds received, the grant end date has been extended through 4/30/2021. James asked for a motion to ratify the vote of the Executive Committee to accept the CARES Act Reports as presented.

MOTION – Motion made by Jeff Frazier, to accept the CARES Act Reports as presented. Second by Debbie Fillers. Discussion was called for, there was none. Objections were called for, there were none. Motion passed.

➤ **Policies for Approval**

Kathy reviewed the Priority of Service for Adults, Veterans, and Eligible Spouses Policy, the Purchase Supplies or Equipment Policy, and the Allowable & Unallowable Costs Policy.

The purpose of the Priority of Service Policy for Adults, Veterans, and Eligible Spouses Policy is to communicate the requirements for providing priority of services to all covered persons and identified populations. The guidance differentiates the requirements based on a participant's "point of entry" and their enrollment into a program to receive employment and/or training services. The Policy establishes a range of service for priority populations between 51% and 75% of the Adult stream that must be spent on Priority of Service eligibility. We are currently at 69%, will meet with ETSU, the Northeast Career Services Provider.

The Allowable & Unallowable Costs Policy mirrors the State Workforce Board Policy.

The purpose of the policy explains the criteria to consider an expense allowable or disallowed, in addition to establishing criteria to determine if an expense is necessary and reasonable. The policy also addresses the purchase of food and beverages using public funds.

The Purchase Supplies & Equipment Policy mirrors the State Workforce Board Policy. The policy defines what is considered supplies versus equipment. The purpose of the Policy is to provide

guidance for the purchase of laptops and tablets to support participants in the completion of employment and training services.

James asked for a motion to ratify the vote of the Executive Committee to accept the three policies as presented.

MOTION – Motion made by Daronda Patterson, to accept the Priority of Service for Adults, Veterans, and Eligible Spouses Policy, the Purchase Supplies or Equipment Policy and the Allowable & Unallowable Costs Policy as presented. Second by Kenneth Osborne. Discussion was called for, there was none. Objections were called for, there were none. Motion passed.

Board Member Orientation Schedule

James asked Kathy to give information about the Board Member Orientation. The Board Member Orientation is scheduled for a ZOOM Meeting on May 12 at 10:00 a.m. Notebooks are to be delivered to each member. Attendance will be recorded.

Other Business/ Adjourn

- Jay Richardson commended Kathy and her staff for the great job they are doing. Kathy thanked Jay for his recognition.
- Kathy thanked the Board Members and guests for attending; thanked the County Mayors for their service and work with the Board and our area; AJC Staff-Dana Wilds, Jenny Lockmiller, Brandi Christian, Brian Vaughn, Jacob Bolen, Patrick Grandelli, Brian Decker and Tom Miklusicak. Kathy also complimented the Board Staff; the Fiscal Staff who have been evaluated by two outside agencies with no findings reported.
- Kathy thanked James as Chair of the NETLWDB and the Executive Committee.
- **Next Meeting** – Thursday, July 15, 2021 (Virtual Meeting)
- **Adjourn** – James Osborne thanked everyone for taking the time to attend the meeting and helping our region with its workforce. He also recognized Kathy and her staff for the valuable work they do for the area.