



**KENTUCKIANAWORKS BOARD MEETING
GREATER LOUISVILLE WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT BOARD
Thursday, November 16, 2023 – 8:30 a.m. – 10:00 a.m.
East & Westbrook Construction 4808 Fox Run Road, Buckner, KY**

- Members Present:** Tony Georges, Jonathan Westbrook, Eric Friggle (Tony as Proxy), Sarah Davasher-Wisdom, Harold Reynolds, Jeff O'Brien, Kim Blanding, Jennifer Lampton, Monica Collins, David Bizianes, Patricia Williams (Tony as Proxy), Ty Richardson, Rocki Rockingham (Tony as Proxy), Rick Purdy, Cornelius Cotton, Lyndon Pryor, Cortney Burden (Tony as Proxy), John Archer (Tony as Proxy)
- Staff:** Michael Gritton, Alicia Pardo, Patrick Garvey, Sarah Ehresman, Lada Gasparac, Evelyn Woock, Angella Wilson
- Contractors/Guests:** Rodney Cross, Ashley Janicki, Sandy Hamilton, Martha Stephenson, Renee Walters, Denise Perry

Welcome and Greetings – Board Chair Tony Georges

Chairman Tony Georges welcomed everyone to the Board Meeting and thanked them for attending. He appreciated the members coming to Oldham County and thanked Jonathan Westbrook for hosting the board meeting at his new business location for East & Westbrook Construction.

Welcome to Oldham County and Introduction to Economic Development Strategy for the Region – David Bizianes and Jonathan Westbrook

David Bizianes is with the Oldham Chamber and Economic Development, and he spoke on the activity in Oldham County due to the local efforts in growing infrastructure over the past 20 years. He also talked about a few projects that are currently underway.

Welcome New Board Member Lyndon Pryor – Tony Georges

Tony Georges warmly welcomed Lyndon Pryor, the newest Board member. Lyndon was promoted as the Interim President & CEO of the Louisville Urban League in March. Lyndon has been with the League for a total of eight years.

Vote Needed: Review and Approve Minutes from August 2023 and September Special Meeting 2023 – Tony Georges

There was a quorum present, and a motion to accept the August and the September Special meeting minutes was made by Ty Richardson and seconded by Rick Purdy. The motion passed without opposition.

Vote Needed: Review and Approve the Consent Agenda from September 2023 Program Oversight Committee – Michael Gritton and Mike Hesketh

A summary of the consent agenda from the September 2023 Program Oversight Committee was provided to the Board as well as the key voting items. Michael stated that the Program Oversight Committee reviewed every one of these items in detail and passed the votes without opposition. With a quorum present, Mike Hesketh asked if there were any questions or comments, and when there were none, a motion was made to approve the consent agenda by Mike Hesketh and seconded by Jonathan Westbrook. The motion was passed unanimously.



Vote Needed: Nomination of Jonathan Westbrook as the Incoming Chair of the Board – Tony Georges

Chairman Tony Georges talked about the role of the Board Chair, and its requirements to be from an employer. Jonathan Westbrook has been nominated to be the Incoming Chair. Jonathan runs the East & Westbrook construction company. Under his leadership, it went from about 50 employees to over 300 with office locations opening in West Virginia, Tennessee, and Florida. Jonathan has been an active Board member, engaging in RFP reviews, asking many questions, and following up outside the meetings. In addition, he had a meeting with the Speaker of the House to encourage the State of Kentucky to invest in the work Workforce Boards like ours are doing with young adults. Tony pointed out that Jonathan has also filled in as Chair over the last year and has done very well. Based on all these factors, Tony Georges nominated Jonathan Westbrook to be the upcoming Chair of the Board which was seconded by David Bizianes. Jeff O'Brien commented that there were discussions with Mayor Greenberg, and he is fully behind Jonathan Westbrook becoming the Chair of the Board. The motion passed unanimously.

Presentation and Discussion: Current Performance Outcomes for Kentucky Career Center Activities in the Six Regional Counties and Ideas for Improvements in Future Years – Michael Gritton and Angella Wilson

Michael gave a summary of the data on the current performance of workforce efforts in the regional counties. A memo was given to the members before and during the meeting. He further explained the current efforts in the regional counties. KentuckianaWorks currently has staff in three physical career centers: Buckman Street Center in Bullitt County, the Stratton Center in Shelby County, and the Hope Center in Henry County. The staff also offers regular office hours at the public libraries in all six counties. Michael reminded the committee that over the years the federal funding has decreased from \$7.5 million to 5 million, and the unemployment rate is the lowest it has been in 50 years, which clearly influences the number of customers we expect to serve through our efforts. KentuckianaWorks is in a partnership with Southern IndianaWorks to utilize a new grant from the National Fund for Workforce Solutions to use a human-centered design framework to hear from customers in our rural counties about the best way to serve them.

In 2024, KentuckianaWorks will be required to bid out our WIOA Career Center services through a competitive RFP process. In the past, we've always issued one RFP for the entire region, but internally, we've been in conversation about having one RFP for the core physical Career Center in Louisville that will be relocating to the new Goodwill Opportunity Center at 28th and Broadway, and a second one to cover the very different needs in the six regional counties. Michael pointed out that in the coming weeks, we will solicit the Board's feedback on the current services and ideas for change given the shrinking in federal funding and changing economic conditions. He then turned it over to the members for discussion and questions.

Ty Richardson asked for more details on the human-centered design work from the perspective of the target population, understanding that there may be a big difference between customers who come to a physical career center versus those who are more interested in accessing services virtually. He also asked if the data from the study would be completed by the beginning of the RFP process to ensure there is an understanding of the behavioral pattern of the target population.



Angella Wilson explained that in the third week of January 2024, a meeting will be held with various stakeholders, and then throughout the next few days, the consultant will be walking through the process. The culmination of activities and research findings will be used as a tool to help KentuckianaWorks write the RFP. Southern IndianaWorks knows about the RFP deadline and how important it is to have the data from the human-centered design process before we begin. Ty Richardson strongly believed that the more information and research we can gather from that process, the better our recommendations can be about the RFP possibilities.

Jonathan Westbrook pointed out that Sarah Ehresman has a tremendous amount of data that could be shared as a part of the RFP, and the proposer of the RFP could create strategies for outreach that would better serve the needs of the targeted population. Tony Georges agreed and added that looking back five years ago to the present labor market, today's economy is nearly unrecognizable from five years ago, and that amount of change may be applicable to the next five years as well.

Rick Purdy spoke on the barriers of transportation in the underserved areas of Louisville, and Lyndon Pryor agreed that it is the largest barrier they are facing and it is not being discussed. He pointed out that although the unemployment rate is low, the workforce participation rate in Kentucky is not where it needs to be, and having an outreach approach to find out more information about the cause of the individuals who are not actively seeking employment would be a starting point. Michael explained that in many areas with strong job growth like Shelby and Oldham County, there is no public transportation available. In Louisville, TARC is struggling with a shrinking budget and increased demand for services, which is a real challenge for many of our Career Center customers.

Michael introduced Denise Perry, the Deputy County Judge for Henry County. Denise added that having feedback from personnel who are physically at the career center involved in the RFP process could be beneficial. Michael reminded the members that Denise is highlighting the challenge that Angella Wilson, Rodney Cross, and the staff face in the work because there is not enough foot traffic to justify having a physical staff member available full-time at the career center.

Mike Hesketh mentioned that staffing the career center in Shelby County part-time has not been the greatest option either due to word of mouth and the perception that there is no career center available. He also talked about the 12 million square feet of new construction in progress that will be creating seven to 10,000 new jobs in Shelby County, and KentuckianaWorks is looking for a solution to see if the physical center is needed. He talked about how Goodwill has incredible experiences such as the Cars to Work program that provides transportation and other programs to get people in the door to the workforce. Angella Wilson talked about her partnership with the Bingham Fellows Group, and they created a project known as 502 Commute which will take off in the Spring of 2024. This project will help those in the C4 Ministries and several employers such as GE Appliances provide transportation for their employees. Michael suggested that Angella and Mike have discussions on how Shelby County can benefit from this as well.



Michael Gritton thanked everyone for their feedback and pledged that the staff will continue to discuss more ideas and research in future board meetings. Ty Richardson pointed out that leveraging the RFP process to drive more innovation through the human-centered design research should give a crisp articulation of the problem. He noted that the main focus in deciding to do a split and/or joint RFP process would be to offer more funding for those vendors who can best solve the issues highlighted through that research.

Jeff O'Brien stated that the feedback from the other counties is leaning toward the importance of human connection, and providing a Kiosk in a library may be creating a barrier rather than eliminating one. He also suggested the Kentuckiana Regional Planning and Development Agency (KIPDA) vanpool program for transportation needs. Transportation specifically in the state of Indiana by formula gives TARC \$1.5 million every year, and they run about three routes in Southern Indiana. The state of Kentucky gives zero dollars because there is a constitutional ban on highway funds used to pay for public transit.

Tony Georges thanked everyone for their feedback and strongly believes that a solution is somewhere in the data that Sarah Ehresman provides for KentuckianaWorks.

Vote Needed: Review and Approve New Mission Vision and Values for the Organization – Michael Gritton

Michael reminded the board that at the previous meeting, Aleece Smith had presented a modification to KentuckianaWorks' mission statement. With Dr. Ty Handy and the members' suggestions, she ultimately presented two options for the board to consider:

(Dr. Handy) 1. Engaging employers, educators, and job seekers with resources to build a stronger community through the dignity of work in employment – an experience that meets individuals' current needs and gives them hope for a brighter future.

OR

(Staff Option) 2. Engaging employers, educators, and job seekers with resources to build a stronger community through the dignity of work that satisfies needs, creates value, and inspires hope.

Michael sent the above options to the board for consideration on October 11. In the following weeks, he received feedback from some board members generally in favor of the changes in the staff option. KentuckianaWorks asked the board to approve Option 2. A motion was made by Sarah Davasher-Wisdom and seconded by Mike Hesketh. The motion was passed without opposition.

Executive Director's Report – Michael Gritton

Michael began his report by announcing the departure and farewell of Lada Gasparac, Senior Program Director for The Spot. Lada is leaving KentuckianaWorks in December, and Michael acknowledged and thanked her for her amazing work. She will truly be missed.

He mentioned the article from a reporter who works for The Courier-Journal regarding a couple of SummerWorks participants who came from high-income families. The Mayor's office is making changes to the way they are going to hire interns next year. Mayor Greenberg is fully engaged and continues to be very supportive of SummerWorks' mission.



KentuckianaWorks had been in partnership with the Eastern Kentucky non-profit known as SOAR (Saving Our Appalachian Region) to help secure two grants to extend our Code Kentucky work in Eastern Kentucky for the next three years. They just got a \$500,000 grant from the Truist Foundation and \$1.5 million from the Department of Labor.

Michael and his WIB colleagues are in conversation with people in the state legislature about potential state funding to help all 10 WIBs serve more high school seniors and young adults in their region. With that being said, he turned it to Jonathan Westbrook to provide an update about the meeting with Speaker Osborne. Jonathan Westbrook reminded the members of the legislative hearing that Michael and two of his colleagues presented to the Joint Committee on Economic Development and Workforce Investment. Because Speaker Osborne was unable to attend that meeting, he was kind enough to host a meeting with Jonathan Westbrook, Sandy Hamilton, and David Bizianes.

Jonathan presented him with a pitch asking for \$26 million over the next two years to solve the issues discussed with the Joint Committee. Representative Osborne needed no convincing that this was a problem worth solving. Jonathan mentioned the work being done at The Spot and how it has helped about 400 youth each year. The funding proposed will help KentuckianaWorks and the other 9 WIBs impact over 4,000 youth over a two-year period. The funding would need to be included in the budget, and there is an opportunity to meet with A&R to present the proposal in December. He also encouraged them to seek out private support in addition to state support and to provide private testimonials from employers who have hired through the program. Michael added that he is meeting with the WIB Directors the following day to help collect all the information needed to make it happen.

Tony Georges highlighted that this is the first time all ten workforce development boards have gotten together in the Commonwealth united at the Joint Committee. Michael stated that he would send out the 2-page flyer to the board members so that they can use it as talking points if they have any interactions with members of the state legislature.

With no further discussion, Chairman Tony Georges then adjourned the meeting. The next meeting was scheduled for Thursday, January 18, 2024, at 8:30 a.m.