East Tennessee Local Workforce Board Meeting

Tuesday 14 March 2023

ETHRA office

Knoxville, Tennessee

Present

Sam Alexander

Pete Barile

Jessica Belitz

Joe Daugherty

Cindy Holt

Thomas Payne

Mike Raiford

Tim Richmer

Grant Rosenberg

Julie Simpson

Billy Worsham

Present on WebEx

Gary Human

Jennifer Pace

Angie Respess

Absent

Chris Griffey

Brad Hale

Sean Hensley

Windy Noe

Mark Palmer

Rob Rule

Bryan Shoffner

Brian Vaughn

J.J. Walker

The meeting was called to order at 6:00 p.m. with roll call. E.L. Morton welcomed everyone to the meeting. He asked for any public comments. There were none.

Julie Simpson, Vice Chairwoman opened the meeting with a call for the December 13, 2022 meeting minutes be accepted as written. The motion to accept minutes as written was made by Tim Richmer and seconded by Cindy Holt. Motion passed. Ms. Simpson announced that Cindy Holt was stepping down as the Chairwoman and asked for an election for that role be held. After calling for nominations and discussion, Grant Rosenberg nominated Julie Simpson, and Thomas Payne nominated Sam Alexander.

Sam Alexander, being recognized by the Chair, said that he could not hold the Chairman position due to the rules. Julie Simpson accepted the nomination to Chair and immediately called for nominations for the Vice-Chair position. Grant Rosenberg nominated Jessica Belitz for the Vice Chair position. Sam Alexander asking Ms. Simpson for a point of reference. Granted the point, Mr. Alexander stated that the holder of the chair has to be appointed by their local official and not be a Representative of Labor. He proposed that if Jessica would give up her position on the Executive Committee as Labor Representative, she could hold the Vice Chair. Jessica gave up her position of Labor Representative on the Committee and became the new Vice Chairwoman of the Board.

The next agenda item was up dates from E.L. Morton, Executive Director of Workforce Development. Director Morton discussed the upcoming contractor renewals in June for One Stop Operator and American Job Centers operation. Ms. Simpson asked for documents to review before decisions could be made. Grant Rosenberg asked how long the contractors have been in place. Victor Oakley answered, nine months, with June being the one year mark. Mr. Rosenberg asked if there were any revisions that needed to take place. Victor Oakley stated that deliverables were non-negotiable but how it is delivered is. It was decided that the Executive Committee would look at the renewal first, in April, and bring it before the Board with recommendations for a full vote on 9 May 2023.

Director Morton also discussed the Blount County American Job Center. He asked the Board to trust him that he was working on a nice building in which to move the center to, but was afraid to speak about it until the deal was ready to be closed. He did say that the current location’s six month lease will be up soon and hopes the landlord will continue on a month-to month lease until the move is made. If not Knox County may house the Blount County AJC for a while. He said that the new space he is looking at is larger and better equipped to house the AJC.

The recertification of the AJC sites for clients with mobility and other issues was introduced. The renewal questions are the same from the last renewal and all centers should meet or exceed expectations. Kristy Jansen and Jennifer Eppley talked about the new assessable key boards, monitors and Purple service which will be installed and usage be seamless according to Jennifer Eppley.

The Virtual Reality Career Exploration goggles have been to several high school events, middle schools and different community events in our area and have been received with enthusiasm and great success. Director Morton also said that at each event the Work First and Youth pamphlets have been distributed to everyone who has enjoyed using the goggles. He did express the hope that we can renew our goggle usage for the next fiscal year.

Grant Rosenberg talked about the Youth Committee and updated the Board on paid work experience for youths. He would like to see the information in pamphlet form to help recruit youth participants. He would also like to partner with other community resources to keep the v.r. goggles longer.

Victor Oakley presented the financials for Kathi Hollander, who is attending SETA. Mr. Oakley directed the Board to the financials in the meeting packet. He noted that when a section was highlighted in green that signaled the federal performance indicator was being met. When the section was highlighted in red, the performance indicator was not being met. East is meeting or exceeding goals. He said that our intent is to always spend old money first and newer money last. That our goal is to never send money back to the state. We track our performance on three different systems, Jobs4 tn.gov, Smart Simple, and VOS. Ms. Simpson asked if there were any more questions about performance or financials.

The State Comptroller’s office will be doing two PAR monitoring visits. Mr. Oakley said that in the past two years, East LWDA and ETHRA, has earned good PAR reviews with zero findings. We did have a $5.60 disallowed cost, which was taxes on a hotel bill. Ms. Simpson asked to see the PAR report. Mr. Oakley said that the next review should be sometime in June. ETHRA Director, Gary Holiway, commented that ETHRA has 30 different programs audited and that the review results were always good.

The next agenda item was the ETPL approvals and policy changes. The policy changes were wording clarifications. Mr. Sam Alexander made the motion to adopt policy changes, seconded by Mr. Pete Barille and Mr. Grant Rosenberg. Motion passed. The ETPL changes were reviewed by the Executive Committee and they recommended that the full Board approve the changes. The motion to approve was made by Mr. Grant Rosenberg and seconded by Mr. Pete Barille. Motion passed. Mr. Rosenberg did ask that the modified plan be posted so that the Board could view it.

Ms. Jennifer Eppley reported on American Job Center Activities. She talked about Veteran’s services, Business service teams at each of our three comprehensive centers, meetings being held with area businesses, and Justice Involved programs and activities. She will send out the Business Services Directory to the Board members. She also talked about manufacturing being the number one job leader in 10 of our 16 counties.

Ms. Jessica Belitz gave an overview of Blount County. They are working on increasing the labor participation rate in Blount County. The number one industry in Blount County is manufacturing and healthcare is number two. The Chamber is trying to decrease the occupational gaps for businesses.

Ms. Simpson called for new business from Director Morton. There was no new business to discuss. A motion was made by Mr. Sam Alexander for closure of meeting, seconded by Ms. Jessica Belitz. The motion passed. Meeting was adjourned at 7:35 p.m.