

Minutes  
Thursday, June 27, 2024  
Waukegan Park District

---

**Present:** John Castillo, Mary Ross-Cunningham, Josh Fischer, Ed Gallagher, Jennifer Harris, Lisa Johnson, Dr. Darryl Rader, Carla Schroeder, Jennifer Serino, Dr. Tasha Shell, Dr. Lori Suddick, Ken Swanson, Andrew Warrington, Kimberly Wimer, Dr. Carlotta Roman, Troy McIntosh, Ann Maine, Dennis Kessler, and Marcus Jordan, Noelle Kischer-Lepper.

**Absent:** Kevin Considine, Laura Crivlare, Timothy Dempsey, Carrie Espinosa, Yvette Ewing, Christine Hammerlund, Michael Karner, Demetri Katsulis, Kristi Long, Jennifer Robbins, Julie Savitt, and Kathy Nellis.

---

- I. **Call to Order** .....Kim Wimer, Chairwoman
- II. **Public Comment**
- III. **Chairwoman’s Report**.....Kim Wimer
- IV. **Reports**

*The board had a lengthy discussion about concerns regarding the proposed changes to the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) through the reauthorization process. Jennifer Harris provided background on the bills that have passed the House and Senate. Key concerns expressed included:*

- *Both bills allow governors to take 10% of federal workforce funds without designating the purpose, reducing local budgets. This could negatively impact services for those most in need.*
- *Language gives governors power to override local control through consolidation or redesignation of workforce boards against local officials' wishes.*
- *Bills lack flexibility for local boards to address unique community needs, which goes against the philosophy of local control and private sector representation.*

*Board members discussed the importance of advocacy, including outreach to employers to emphasize how the current system works well and flexibility is needed. Data on potential budget and client impacts was suggested. Meeting with legislators was proposed to voice concerns from the local perspective. The discussion highlighted the board's priority of maintaining local decision making and flexibility to effectively serve their region's workforce needs. Concerns were raised that the proposed changes could reduce their ability to be responsive partners.*

*It was determined that Board Coordinator, DJ Newport would draft letters that could be sent to senators from board members, staff and employers.*

## V. Consent Agenda

- May 2024 Lake County Workforce Development Board Minutes
  - *Motion to Approve: Member Roman*
  - *Motion seconded: Member Warrington*
  - *Motion carried unanimously*

## VI. Action Items

- **Approve Budget Strategies**

*Motion to Approve: Member Rader*

*Motion seconded: Member Maine*

*Motion carried unanimously*

- **Approve the Nominating Committee's Recommended Slate of Officers for PY24**

*Motion to Approve: Member Rader*

*Motion seconded: Member Johnson*

*Motion carried unanimously*

- **Approve Grant Plan for PY24**

*Motion to Approve: Member Roman*

*Motion seconded: Member Maine*

*Motion carried unanimously*

## VII. Regular Agenda

- DEI Task Force Sunsetting

*There was a decision to sunset the DEI Task Force and bring in a consultant for the next phase of work. This consultant would focus on integrating equity into board initiatives, strategies, and outcomes. The board recognized the importance of building on the work already completed by the DEI Task Force, led by Carlotta and her committee. The consultant would provide insight into improving current practices within the board and job centers.*

- Committee Chair and Vice Chair Position

*The board discussed the importance of planning for future transitions in leadership, particularly for the chair and co-chair positions. Ensuring that successors are prepared and that leadership transitions are smooth was a priority, especially given the ongoing DEI initiatives.*

*The discussion expanded beyond just the executive level, with a focus on building a pipeline for future leaders across various levels of the organization. This included considering long-term succession planning that ensures the board remains effective and aligned with its goals, even as leadership changes occur.*

*Succession planning was also viewed through a DEI lens, with an emphasis on ensuring diverse representation in future leadership. This approach aimed to ensure that equity and inclusion are central to the board's future direction and leadership*

## VIII. Presentation

- Waukegan Park District – Summer Youth Employment Program

*Highlights of the presentation by Waukegan park District Included:*

- *The **partnership began in 2016** when Jennifer reached out to collaborate with the park district, and they have now completed their **eighth year** of participation.*

- *Over **117 youth** have participated in the program, working in various departments, including the **Parks Department, Field House, summer camps, and the Jack Benny Center.***
- *Many of the youth workers were between **14 and 15 years old** when they started. Several youth workers transitioned into **part-time employment** with the park district, and **two individuals** have progressed into **full-time positions** as a mechanic and a tradesperson.*
- *The park district emphasized how the program has **helped meet employment needs** while providing significant benefits to the youth, including the development of **professional skills** and creating career pathways.*
  - *Youth workers also gained hands-on experience in facilities across the district, including **51 parks.***

#### IX. **Announcements**

- *The Job Center on the Move program has been expanded from four to eight sites, including new locations like Avon Township, Highwood Library, and Community Center, which serve a large immigrant population. This initiative has already seen success, with some individuals walking into the Job Center for further assistance after being connected through these mobile efforts.*
- *Plans for purchasing virtual reality (VR) technology were discussed. The VR headsets will help bring more excitement and career awareness for youth across the county, and Lake County partners are eager to explore this new technology for educational and career exploration purposes.*
- *A report on Opportunity Youth in Lake County revealed an increase in disconnected youth, from approximately 8,000 to 11,000. There will be a large event in August or September to unveil the findings and establish ways to pass funding through community agencies that support these youth*

#### X. **Updates/Other Items**

- Round Lake Job Fair
- Strategic Plan Update

#### XI. **Adjournment**

The meeting was adjourned at 9:42 A.M.