

Meeting of Montgomery County Workforce Development Board (WDB)*
March 3, 2021
8:30 AM

*A full recording of this meeting can be accessed [via Zoom](#) using passcode **O.&fMN9B**

Attendees: Melissa Boone, John Cain, Mark Drury, Barbara Ebel, Gordon Ellis, Jerome Fletcher, Ryan Gandy, Steve Greenfield, Jeff Guido, Courtney Hall, Jennifer Hester, Mahesh Kalva, Mary Lang, Beth Lash, Omar Lazo, Ken Lemberg, Lesley MacDonald, Roxana Mejia, Yomi Ntewo, Michelle Bell Smith, Sharon Strauss, Derek Turner, Diego Uriburu, Ben Wu, unidentified phone attendees include 240-444-7000 and 301-252-1502

Staff: Anthony Featherstone, Executive Director; Sarah Van De Weert, Communications & Marketing Manager

CHAIRPERSON WELCOME

Mr. Drury welcomed all members.

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR REPORT

Mr. Featherstone provided the Executive Director Report accompanied by a presentation (attached) including:

- Budget Overview – provided an update on the current County Budget process. See presentation and zoom recording for specific FY 21 and FY 22 figures.
- Strategic Targets – Programs & Performance, Funding, Local Plan, Procurement, Infrastructure, WSM Personnel Growth. See attached slides for specific details and timelines for each target. Mr. Uriburu emphasized the need for programs that cater to the most vulnerable population in the County and suggested a workgroup be formed of Board Members to address the need. Several other Members agreed. Mr. Featherstone explained that WSM is looking to implement training programs that provide entry-level pathways. Conversation continued for several minutes about the need for IT career pathway programs.
- Workforce Plan/Hiring Schedule – 73% of new staff will be devoted to providing services and implementing programs. Plan for a total of 33 WSM staff onboarded by July 2021.
- Special Initiatives – brief overview of American Job Center activities including March Into Employment
- Legislative Updates – tracking (in support of) Maryland General Assembly bill SB0894, Post Crisis Job Act of 2021. The next reading date is scheduled for March. New bill introduced by County Councilmember Friedson that would transfer the drafting of the County's Economic Development Strategic Plan from the Executive's office to Montgomery County Economic Development Corporation (MCEDC). Public hearing is scheduled for March 25th. Mr. Wu provided a more detailed update, stating that MCEDC would work in concert with WSM to develop policy, particularly workforce development strategies.

MEETING MINUTE APPROVAL

Mr. Uriburu motioned to approve the February meeting minutes, Ms. Ebel seconded the motion. The minutes were approved by all Board Members.

BOARD STRUCTURE DISCUSSION

Mr. Fletcher provided an update on the state of the WSM Board and WDB. At some point in the past, the Boards were combined. County leadership has been attempting to untangle the Boards so that WDB has more autonomy as the strategic leader of workforce development in the County.

Mr. Uriburu requested a breakdown or graphic that clearly explains the responsibilities of each Board.

Mr. Fletcher stated that the onboarding package for new Board Members should include that explanation. The Boards are still currently combined. The Governor's Workforce Board must approve a separation.

The discussion continued for several more minutes with other Members agreeing with Mr. Uriburu that a clear description of Board responsibilities is needed. Mr. Kalva expressed concern for needed two Boards and wanted to be clear on what each Board should be doing.

COMMITTEE REPORTS

Employment Recovery Committee: Ms. Nweto was unavailable to provide an update.

Program Committee: Michelle Bell Smith is the new Program Committee Chair. She announced that it's important to look at who the big employers in the county are and mentioned several industries that are actively hiring,

Business and Community Engagement Committee: Mr. Turner provided a brief update on how the Committee could work with other groups in the county aiming to accomplish similar workforce goals.

NEW BOARD MEMBER WELCOME

Mr. Drury welcomed Sharon Strauss as a new member.

GREEN JOBS BILL

Mr. Drury provided an updated on this legislation that was passed in 2018. The bill provides big opportunity to offer construction training programs that focus on green initiatives within the industry, Mr. Guido stated that the legislation requires green job specifications have to be built into RFPs for public works.

OFFICE OF LEGISLATIVE AFFAIRS

Mr. Drury stated that 2-page workforce analysis was released recently. The entire report should be posted soon.

ADJOURNMENT

The meeting adjourned at 9:43 AM.

The next meeting will take place on April 7 at 8:30 AM.