

FOOTHILL WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT BOARD (FWDB) MEETING
MINUTES OF FEBRUARY 14, 2024 FWDB MEETING

INTRODUCTION AND ROLL CALL

Chair Dan Lien welcomed everyone and Raymond Delgado conducted the roll call. A quorum was established at 9:24 a.m.

Present - FWDB

Dan J. Lien, Chair, DJL Professional Services
Gene Hurd, President, UAW Local 509
Keshia Darden, Owner, Simply Divine
Shomari Davis, Business Representative, IBEW Local 11
Rachelle Arizmendi, Government Industry Advisor, Avenu Insight & Analytics
Denise McKnight, District Administrator, California Department of Rehabilitation
Soyinka Allen Program Director, Hospital Association of Southern California
Adrianna Rios, Employment Program Manager II, Los Angeles/Coastal, EDD-Workforce Services
Tashera Taylor, Chief Executive Officer, Foothill Unity Center Inc

Absent - FWDB

Tom Selinske, Vice Chair, Owner, Selinske and Associates Consulting
K-Rahn Vallatine, CEO, Inner Sun Consulting
Laurie Wheeler, President/CEO, South Pasadena Chamber of Commerce
Flint Fertig, Director of Adult Education, Monrovia Unified School District
Noel Tony De Trinidad, Business Representative, Painters & Allied Trades DC 36
Hector Delgado, Vice President, Teamsters Local 986
Salvatrice Cummo, Executive Director – Economic & Workforce Dev., Pasadena City College
Elia Evans, Fiscal Operations Specialist, Success Education Colleges

Staff Present

Dianne Russell-Carter - FWDB Executive Director, Stephen Leung, Paul Enge, Raymond Delgado, David Eder, Alma Estevez, Sarah Mendoza, Debrorah Membreno

Staff Present

David Baquerizo, Propath

PUBLIC COMMENTS

No public comments.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

The minutes of the November 15, 2023, FWDB meeting were approved.
Motion: Gene Hurd Seconded: Adriana Rios
Roll call vote: Ayes- Unanimous
Nays – 0; Abstentions – 1: Laurie Wheeler

CHAIR'S REPORT

Chair Dan J. Lien spoke about the challenges people are facing with the current interest rates, how the increase in minimum wage is affecting businesses, and inflation. Chair Dan J. Lien provided an example of McDonalds having to raise the minimum wage to twenty dollars an hour, and the cause and effect will be adjusting their prices accordingly. Chair Dan J. Lien commented about positive movements in our local economy and attributing part of it to the metro line connectivity and the flexibility the local employers have been in allowing remote jobs. Chair Dan J. Lien added that based on conversations he has had with Executive Director Dianne Russell-Carter, he believes the board is doing a fantastic job and are in a good position.

FWDB EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR'S REPORT

Executive Director Dianne Russell-Carter welcomed everyone and commented on the WIOA reauthorization. Executive Director Dianne Russell-Carter explained how WIOA was supposed to be reauthorized four years ago but there was no agreement. She further explained about a new act in place, Stronger Workforce for America, but that the government is still working out details. One of the examples she provided was about a letter that was written to the State by Chair Fox and ranking member Scott. Executive Director Dianne Russell-Carter references page 15 in the agenda packet for a copy of the letter. She explained the letter outlines how Workforce Development Boards across the nation feel about the "Stronger Workforce for America Act" as it stands. Executive Director Dianne Russell-Carter referenced part of the letter where they outline how the new act proposes to take away the local areas ability to carve and create programs that are beneficial to local markets and local populations (the act as it stands is giving the federal government more power on decisions on how workforce development should operate). Executive Dianne Russell-Carter added that the act does not identify local control and does not acknowledge the importance of support services.

Chair Dan J. Lien commented that he was confused about the approach the State was taking and did not understand how they were providing additional funding but taking away the ability to have local control of the programs.

Shomari Davis asked if the 30% training requirement is being met and what is the reasoning behind them raising the training requirement to 50%. Executive Dianne Russell-Carter believes it has to do with control.

David Eder asked if the bill was partisan or if it had bipartisan support. David Eder added that this bill may still be in the early stages and this is the time for boards and people to write letters or make comments.

Executive Director Dianne Russell-Carter explained that there were some favorable additions in the new act such as improved flexibility use of virtual services, affiliated sites to deliver one-stop services, boards to serve as one-stop operators under certain circumstances, clear emphasis on skills-based hiring initiatives, strategies to clear the path for job seekers and

employers to expand the definition for foundational skills needed to include digital literacy, and formally defining co-enrollment as a better way to promote strategy as a system-wide priority to help more individuals access and receive the services they need.

Chair Dan J. Lien agrees that there are a lot of positives in the Stronger Workforce for America Act, but does not agree how they want the programming to be operated since every local area is different.

Rachelle Arizmendi asked if there are any state or regional associations and groups that are also working on this effort (she believes this will take a unified voice). Executive Director Dianne Russell-Carter explained that it is only the California Workforce Association – 45 executive directors and two of the largest boards in the nation.

Tashera Taylor asked if it would be possible to request more information and for the State/Federal government to share examples of their ideas. Executive Director Dianne Russell-Carter explained that there will be a conference in Washington D.C. and that a lot of those types of conversations will take place.

Chair Dan J. Lien commented about working in collaboration with the local and federal governments instead of one side having sole control.

Shomari Davis commented that he does not believe they will pass the act as it stands but instead, they are using it as a starting point to get a conversation going.

Chair Dan J. Lien believes it goes deeper than the delivery of the services. Chair Dan J. Lien provided an example of a time they were at a conference, Holden and Chu were in attendance, and they had no idea of some of the companies that were laying off three to four hundred employees – Ex: Air Hamilton.

Executive Director Dianne Russell-Carter asked Sarah Mendoza if there were any updates in the Youth Program.

Sarah Medoza wanted to comment on a thank you letter received from a former participant, Carla Martinez, who recently got hired by the City of Sierra Madre.

Sarah Mendoza commented about the CWA Youth Conference, Foothill was the plenary session with 5 former youth. Sarah Mendoza explained how the conference was a success. She mentioned the current occupations of those former youth: one owns a tattoo shop, one is a psychiatrist, another is a DACA recipient working for LA County Department of Water, one works for LA County and has their own tax firm, and the other participant is now an owner/operator of a Chic-Fil-A.

Sarah Mendoza commented about recently having a youth audit review and Foothill passed 100% with no findings.

Executive Director Dianne Russell-Carter referred to the Close of Audit Report – City of Pasadena handout that was provided. Executive Director Dianne Russell-Carter explained that the report was the final report presented to the city council. She added that Tashera Taylor will Chair the Ad Hoc Operations Committee as some of those findings are resolved.

Executive Director Dianne Russell-Carter referred to page 22 of the agenda packet, an incident report for an allegation of possible conflict of interest violations and misappropriation of funds related to COVID may have occurred at Foothill. Executive Director Dianne Russell-Carter explained that the report found no conflict of interest and no violation was committed.

Business Services Discussion

Chair Dan J. Lien introduced the item and introduced Alma Estevez to elaborate.

Alma Estevez referred to a handout and provided information on some recent events. Alma Esteves spoke about the successful job fairs, workshops, and meetings they have recently attended. Alma Esteves commented about hopefully having a job fair in Arcadia in April. Alma Estevez explained that Duarte has a higher demand for job seekers and that the Chamber of Commerce is still struggling to find a director.

Chair Dan J. Lien added that Duarte has a lot of big corporations and that he felt that there has always been some type of disconnect between the board and the city.

Executive Director Dianne Russell-Carter commented about the positive conversations she has had with Vinh Troung, policy board member City of Duarte, and how Alma Estevez will be a representative for the board in the San Gabriel Valley Economic Partnership.

Tashera Taylor asked what type of career paths are we seeing from the job seekers from Duarte and if the City of Duarte has openings for the job seekers. Alma Estevez explained that there is a disconnection and that the City of Duarte has businesses geared more toward food and retail.

Alma Estevez provided information about the Rapid Response Services in the last 6 months, Italian restaurant, Il Fornaio in Pasadena laid off 65 employees and Pizza Hut laid off 841 in the LA Coastal Region. Alma Estevez explained that the Pizza Hut layoffs were a collaboration of the LA County Board, City of LA Board, Ventura Board, and Foothill Board.

Chair Dan J. Lien believes that the reason the Italian restaurant closed was due to the renewal of the lease, from what he has heard the lease increased 27%. Chair Dan J. Lien also noted that a current issue in the State of California is the significant rise in premiums for liability, hazard, and workers comp insurance are skyrocketing.

Alma Estevez also commented that JPL may be laying off people soon.

Alma Estevez added that the unemployment rate in November was 4.9 and in December it was 5.1 in California, LA county currently stands at 5.0 and has been increasing. Alma Estevez anticipates the rate to increase.

Tashera Taylor asked if we are connected with other employers when these layoffs occur. Alma Estevez explained that they do try to place the workers to other employers where their skills match.

David Baquerizo referred to page 34 of the Agenda packet about an apprenticeship program provided by SBWIB.

Discussion Regarding Recommended New FWDB Membership Application

David Eder introduced the item and provided information about the potential candidate, John Frala. David Eder explained that John Frala is now retired and was former board member in the education sector, he was a professor at Rio Hondo College. David Eder added that John Frala has now started his own consulting business in the clean fuel transportation industry. David Eder reminded the board that John Frala had a great attendance record and was always providing positive feedback for the board. David Eder explained that John Frala would fall under the Private/Business sector of the board membership categories.

IX. A. APPROVE NEW FWDB MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION JOHN FRALA TO FILL A BUSINESS CATEGORY VACANCY

Motion: Dan J. Lien Seconded: Gene Hurd

Roll call vote: Ayes- Unanimous

Nays – 0

VII. A. RAISING THE WIOA SUPPORT SERVICES THRESHOLD FROM \$1,000 TO \$2,000

Executive Director Dianne Russell-Carter introduced the item and explained that the item has been approved by the Executive Committee, approval of raising support services assistance from \$1,000 to \$2,000 per participant. Executive Director Dianne Russell-Carter explained that data was provided for the type of assistance support services provided, the majority assistance of support services is going to housing. Executive Director Dianne Russell-Carter explained that currently there are no training vouchers due to funding running out (she explained that the board was not aggressive in obtaining ancillary grants due to insufficient staffing, unemployment rate low – not as much money received). Executive Director Dianne Russell-Carter added that currently, the focus is assisting individuals with their resumes, counseling, workshops, and one-on-one case management. Executive Director Dianne Russell-Carter suggested if this action item is passed, there could be a limit of \$1,000 (transportation, work clothing) for support services until the end of June.

VII. A. RAISING THE WIOA SUPPORT SERVICES THRESHOLD FROM \$1,000 TO \$2,000 STARTING JULY 1ST 2024

Motion: Dan J. Lien Seconded: Shomari Davis

Roll call vote: Ayes- Unanimous

Nays – 0

X. ROUNDTABLE

Executive Director Dianne Russell-Carter wanted to inform the board that a new case manager has been hired and another one will start on February 22nd, the MA II list has been established, and the Career Services Coordinator recruitment has closed with 66 applications received.

Chair Dan J. Lien thanked everyone for their time and the meeting was adjourned at 10:57 a.m.