Business Engagement Committee Meeting

**Date**: July 30, 2020

**Time**: 10am – 11:30am

# Committee Attendees

Tom Hacker (co-chair), Tom Wendorf (co-chair), Colin Cosgrove, Robyn Safron, Einar Forsman, Tinisha Spain, Katie Bata, Jennifer Serino, Charlie Moore, Patrick Campbell, Todd Lowery, Sherry Sparks, Lavon Nelson, Melinda Kelly

# Guest Attendees

Tyler Strom, David Garvey

# Staff Attendees

David Gallagher, Stephanie Veck, Lisa Jones, Aimee Julian

# 1. Introductions, Welcome and Roll Call

Co-chair Tom Wendorf welcomed attendees to the meeting and conducted a roll call. As part of that roll call process, Wendorf asked attendees to take part in a brief “icebreaker” that consisted of asking each participant to briefly discuss their organization and role, and then discuss something about themselves that most people would find surprising.

# 2. June 19, 2020 Meeting Minutes Approval

Approval of the June 19 minutes was moved by Katie Bata, seconded by Colin Cosgrove, and approved unanimously by a roll call vote.

# 3. Co-Chair Comments

Co-chair Tom Wendorf gave brief comments about his thoughts on the committee and its activities. He noted that this is a very accomplished group of people, and that the co-chairs are very, very happy and pleased to have everyone join. He said that he thinks this is going to be a great community committee, and has the possibility of changing the dynamic of workforce development in the state of Illinois.

# 4. Committee Relationships & Vision

# Co-chair Wendorf discussed a slide deck entitled “TAW BEC Meeting 7\_30\_2020.” Notes for this presentation is as follows:

Thank you for attending this Business Engagement Committee meeting. I want to recognize that this plan was a group effort. with contributions by a talented group of people, Tom Hacker, David Gallagher, Mark Burgess, Aimee Julien, Lisa Jones, Stephanie Veek of Maher & Maher and early members of the Business Engagement Committee.

The mission of the Business Engagement Committee will be to provide guidance and direction to help bridge the **gap** between Illinois’ important business sectors and employers, and the Illinois workforce development system.

The KEY word in this statement is GAP. A lot of good work is already being done in the Work Force System. The big problem is SCALE. Illinois has 1,001,185 small businesses. Of those 1,001,185 small businesses in, 280,373 have employees. There are only a hundred or less Business Services people in Illinois. There are over 30,000 businesses in DuPage county and 6 business services people. A big problem is awareness. The work force system is the best kept secret in the State. In focus groups with businesses, only a handful know about workforce system.

What I hear from businesses not currently working with the system is that working with the state is confusing, complicated and not worth the time or effort. It takes too much time to find the information I need. I need a single point of contact.

The BEC committee is the IWIB effort to address the scale problem and improve the business experience with the system.

GUIDING PRINCIPLES are important. They articulate our values and what we will pay attention to while pursuing our goals.

The first principle focuses on **MEMBERSHIP**. We want to ensure that the committee represents all geographic areas and important business sectors. It should also represents all the different stakeholder groups. It should be diverse, and serve all the diverse business communities. Everywhere from the inner city neighborhoods, to the Metro suburbs, downstate communities and agricultural communities. We are limiting the voting membership to no more that 20 people. However, each work group is **free to recruit advisors and others that may be helpful with the work**. That is the best way to get broad representation. Each group can decide on who they would like to invite to help.

The second principle is about our **CUSTOMERS**. Our focus is on **small businesses** with less than 500 employees. We pay special attention to minority owned businesses. We believe these small businesses require the most help and are least aware of the workforce system and the help available.

The final guiding principle focuses on **PROCESS**. The BEC will support and promote integration of the workforce system. Alignment and ultimately integration of the system will **improve business experience**. It will help create a single point of contact within the system. This is the number one request from business people about dealing with the system.

The role of the business members on this committee is critical, because you speak business. This makes it easier to develop trust and build relationships with businesses.

This map shows the geographic distribution of the private business members. The Northeast Region EDR 4, has 6 business executives. Each is on a different local workforce board. This LWIA affiliation creates a communication bridge to other businesses and business groups in that LWIA. These 6 business members represent Cook, DuPage, Lake and Kane counties.

Outside Chicago Metro are four business members. They lead either Chambers of Commerce, Economic Development groups or both. They have working relationship with their local LWIA. They have business connections in 4 different EDRs.

This membership and structure are meant to promote and facilitate stakeholder relationships. We want to build a culture of communication that will build trust. This structure creates a communication link to the more important economic regions of Illinois. To be successful we should be advocates for the Workforce System. We should be networkers and communicators of important, reliable and useful information to the business community. From those businesses we can be a messenger to the Workforce system. With this structure and these goals, we hope to overcome the business mistrust of government. Relationship and trust will build business participation in the workforce system. This is the goal of business engagement.

This graphic shows the structure of the BEC. It is made up of both the 10 private members in yellow and the 5 public mandated state agency members Blue.

Look at the 5 public committee members in blue. They are from DCEO, ICCB, IDES DRS the 4 mandated partners in the system. We are also fortunate to have Jennifer from Lake County and the Illinois Workforce Partnership representative. These public members provide a link to the public agency stakeholders and their statewide business services people. The IWP member links the committee with all 24 local AJC directors and their business services efforts.

The gap that needs to be addressed is the one between the business services people in the field and the business community. The Business Services people are the "boots on the ground" of the system and do that actual work of bringing services to business. They are the employees of the job centers and the four mandated partners.

On the private side each business member has existing relationship with many business stakeholders in their region, local businesses, trade associations, suppliers, chambers of commerce as well as community relationships. These private members also have a relationship with the public side of the workforce system. These relationships potentially provide a powerful communication channel. Activating this communication channel is a key strategy of the Business Engagement Committee.

This structure and strategy recognize that business engagement is a local effort of the American Job Centers, the 4 partner agencies. Representatives. Ideally the AJC and their partner agencies work together to engage businesses. Now, some areas work better together than others. BEC hopes to be a catalyst to pull businesses and sectors together with the business services people and their agencies. I believe we must build relationships and pass these relationship along to the business services people in their local areas.

This business engagement is a process of relationship building. Expanding the number of relationships with the business community is business engagement. We are asking you to be advocates for the workforce system. This might happen at Chamber meetings, association meetings, local business groups, with a supplier, at church or whatever. If you hear pain, suggest engagement with the system.

We will work out what tactics are needed for this process as we learn and do. In DuPage County, I am on both the DuPage County Workforce Board and the Illinois Workforce Innovation Board. I act as a liason between the state and the county. I communicate in both directions. I am developing relationship with the 17 Chambers of Commerce in DuPage County. I email what I believe would be useful information for the Chamber members to have. For instance, I emailed the Virtual Job Fair information that you will hear about later. That is how I'm beginning broader relationship with the local business community. Other tactics might be to convene a local business sector for a discussion of sector problems. This work requires imagination, creativity and commitment over time to see what works best. The goal is to create a space for businesses and the local business services people to develop a working relationship.

**ENGAGEMENT** IS THE FIRST PRIORITY of this committee. The goals of engagement are to:

* IDENTIFY and TARGET the most important business sectors locally and statewide.
* INCREASE AWARENESS of and support business sectors
* IDENTIFY AND SUPPORT new sector growth
* EFFECTIVELY COMMUNICATE with and promote local relationships between the stakeholder of the system.

**COMMUNICATION** BETWEEN EMPLOYERS AND WF SYSTEM is a key part of our strategy. There are 5 goals. They are:

* Expand employer knowledge of the workforce development system
* Engage employers to identify and communicate their needs
* Support development of an employer information database tool like BIZHUB.
* Support ongoing employer engagement by facilitating and promoting relationship building between American Job Centers, mandated state agencies and the business community
* Advocate for common brand usage and messaging to promote clear understanding of the workforce system by the public and business partners in the system. We all must speak the same language consistently.

**RECRUITMENT** for participation in the system with either LWIA or IWIB board membership.

* Advocate for participation by businesspeople. We will ask them to help us by joining the local and state workforce boards. Promote this as being good for their business, good for their community and good for the local economy.
* Enhance communication between IWIB and LWIB to create a consistent vision and alignment within the system. The goal to get and keep everyone on the same page.

I tried to cover the development of the BEC, it's membership, Roles and Responsibilities and basic strategy for proceeding. Like I said at the beginning, this is all new ground. We don't really know for sure what will work or not in these difficult times. One important message we can deliver to the business community is one of HOPE. We are all in this together. The best way to get thru it is by helping each other. We can help with your workforce issues.

The Work Group spreadsheet you each have is divided into the 5 focus areas. Most of the first focus is completed or will be completed when the Chairs of the workgroups are selected and the process begins. You see that there are boxes after each line. When an item is completed, dealt with or deleted, it should be noted in that box with a color code, shown at the bottom. The dates at the top represent the quarterly IWIB meetings, which will relate to the regular full BEC meeting of all members. The completed form should be tracked by the chair and forwarded to Dave Gallagher with the meeting minutes for report to the whole BEC committee and at the IWIB meeting by Hacker and myself. That is the timeline and accountability piece that documents the progess you are making on the goals of the committee.

# Committee Work Groups

Dave Gallagher discussed the results of a survey of committee members regarding their preferences for the three identified workgroups: Engagement, Communication and Recruitment. Based on those results, and conversation during the meeting, the following initial committee rosters were developed:

Engagement

Katie Bata

Patrick Campbell

Colin Consgrove

John Keller

Charlie Moore

Communication

Einar Forsman

Melinda Kelly

Lavon Nelson

Sherry Sparks

Tom Wendorf

Board Recruitment

Todd Lowery

Robyn Safron

Jennifer Serino

Tinisha Spain

# Committee and Work Group Plans & Timelines

Discussion followed regarding the initial work of the Work Groups. Tom Wendorf asked for each Work Group to meet during the following week or two in order to select a chair, develop a meeting schedule, and begin prioritizing their individual work plans. Discussion also included the need to settle on a titling nomenclature, settling on the Work Group titles shown in the above rosters.

# Illinois workNet BizHub and Virtual Job Fairs

David Garvey, from Illinois workNet, joined the meeting to provide a short presentation regarding the content and use of workNet’s BizHub site and its Virtual Job Fair functionality. David described how, in response to the pandemic and everyone connecting virtually, they created a Job Fair tool for employers to share that they're hiring and the types of positions that are open, and to allow job seekers to access this information. David described how employers can access the site and utilize its capabilities to develop, publicize, and carry out an event to meet and interview job seekers as potential hires.

David then described the content and usage of the Illinois workNet BizHub. This is a landing area for employers that will link to existing state and federal sites and other information focused on serving businesses. This is designed to be a centralized location for all employer related content, to increase information flow and co-ordination between employers and workforce partners. It does not attempt to replace or duplicate any existing data, but rather creates a reference point so that employers can quickly find the information they need.

The landing page is built around “storyboards,” which are different topics of potential interest to employers, based on their particular needs. These currently include recruiting & training, Covid-19 resources, entrepreneurship & small business, data, layoff assistance, unemployment taxes & reporting, international trade, safety & health, large business and work-based learning & apprenticeship.

Questions followed the presentation, generally regarding different ways to access, search and utilize both of these sites, and also how to utilize the site to find access to local workforce development staff for specific assistance.

# Other Business

There was no other business.

# Public Comment

There was no public comment.

# Adjourn

Motion to adjourn by Tom Hacker, seconded by Robyn Safron, passed by a unanimous voice vote.