



CITY OF DETROIT MAYOR'S WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT BOARD

Thursday, December 9, 2021
1-3 p.m.
Location: Virtual Meeting

Proposed Meeting Minutes *Co-Chairs: Dave Meador & Cindy Pasky*

Call to Order

Co-Chair Cindy Pasky called the Mayor's Workforce Development Board Meeting to order.

Roll Call

Board members announced their attendance and city they're calling in from.

Approval of Agenda

Co-Chair Cindy Pasky asked for motion to approve agenda. Moved by Conrad Mallet, supported by Bishop Edgar Vann. Motion approved

Approval of October 6, 2021 Meeting Minutes

Co-Chair Cindy Pasky asked for a motion to approve the Draft Meeting Minutes as presented. Moved by Conrad Mallet, supported by Darienne Hudson. Motion Approved.

REPORTS

Co-Chair's Report – Dave Meador

Co-Chair Dave Meador began with the Resident Employment Update.

Resident Employment Update: Mr. Meador began by pointing out the unique environment we find ourselves in as a workforce board with the great resignation and the struggle for businesses to find workers. He brought attention to the \$5 billion in American Rescue Plan funds coming to the state, the \$3 billion in surplus funds for the state and another \$11 billion in infrastructure funds on the way, noting the enormous opportunity this presents in terms of the number of jobs it will create. He also drew attention to ARPA funds coming to the county, city and DPSCD, citing this as a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity to get people into good-paying jobs and those that are working into better-paying jobs.

He continued by noting the work that Nicole Sherard-Freeman and team have done to increase residential employment by identifying, training and pre-qualifying Detroiters for jobs, citing the work with Stellantis as an example of those efforts. Mr. Meador also encouraged board members to continue to find and share these opportunities with Ms. Sherard-Freeman and team, and to encourage residents to visit Detroit at Work for real, good-paying jobs.

Mr. Meador discussed the focus on small businesses who continue to struggle with the Covid-19 pandemic. He noted the work Detroit Means Business is doing to support local businesses including its participation in Small Business Saturday in November and fundraising efforts that include a grant from the Ralph Wilson foundation.

Nicole Sherard-Freeman added that in addition to the remarkable investment from DTE, Strategic Staffing Solutions and others for Small Business Saturday, Deputy Mayor Conrad Mallet, Ms. Sherard-Freeman and others from the city, DMB and DEGC hosted in-person events in every district as part of Small Business Saturday as a way to support the small business community.

Executive Director's Report - Nicole Sherard-Freeman

Ms. Sherard-Freeman began her presentation with a look at some of the recent staff changes including departures and promotions. Co-chair Cindy Pasky praised the efforts of these folks in helping to shape the workforce work we do today.

Ms. Sherard-Freeman continued her report by recognizing the new faces of City Council noting a series of conversations planned to educate new council on all the good work underway with this board, DEGC and the other operations across the city.

She continued with an update on that morning's AMC announcement, citing this as one of the most exciting economic development investments in the city. She informed that the old AMC plant has been vacant for 10 years, and now, Northpoint (the investor who invested in taking down the old Cadillac Stamping Plant, and recruited Lear to be the new tenant there, giving hiring priority to Detroit at Work customers) has taken on this new project. She noted it's a \$66 million dollar investment, with 150-200 construction jobs expected once work begins, and another 300 or so jobs once a tenant has been identified. She continued by informing that the entire structure will be demolished, and two new structures will be built in its place, totaling over 700k square feet of space. "It's a good, exciting story that will end with opportunities for good-paying jobs, middle-class income careers and we hope will spark small business and other commercial corridor development in district 7."

Ms. Sherard-Freeman highlighted the recent Skills for Life announcement, noting Skills for Life as the 2nd ARPA Investment. It's a \$75 million dollar investment that Council approved in July 2021. Detroiters who enroll in this program will work 3 days a week in the city doing work such as commercial blight removal and learning to operate heavy equipment, while attending school 2 days a week to either work on finishing their high school diploma, GED or securing other post-secondary education credentials, all while being paid 5 days a week. She noted this \$75 million dollar investment will serve up to 2200 Detroiters.

Several board members here along with small business owners and other leaders across the city had an opportunity to sit with lieutenant governor Gilchrist, and Sue Carnell, the head of LEO, to talk about the Governor's MiNew Economy plan and how those investments fit with and

will support the work that this board and DEGC accomplishes. It was a great opportunity to hear firsthand what the governor's plans are and how we can be supportive. More importantly it was a great opportunity to share with lieutenant governor Gilchrist, what's on the minds of Detroiters.

Questions and comments from board members ensued

Ms. Sherard-Freeman closed with a callout to DESC President Terri Weems, noting that the only way we have the confidence of the federal government, and keep the confidence of the state government, and earn the confidence of our new council, is by running a tight fiscal and administrative agency. She noted the remarkable job Terri has done leading finance and operations, specifically calling out the recent Department of Labor System Audit that evaluated workforce agencies across the country, like ours, in their ability to deliver against Covid-19 recovery goals.

PRESENTATIONS

Workforce-Related SOS Initiatives - Heaster Wheeler, Assistant Secretary of State & Melissa Smiley, Chief of Staff

Heaster Wheeler began his presentation with an update on the Returning Citizens Project, noting every person that leaves a Michigan prison from this day forward will have either a driver's license or a state identification. This is a result of the work being done in partnership with the Michigan Department of Corrections. He continued with an update on the Driver Responsibility Fees, a program that for many years kept residents (many from Detroit) from being licensed. He indicated that the legislature eliminated those fees as of 2018, highlighting the work done between MDOS, the Treasury and DTMB to close out those suspensions. He closed by indicating that removal of barriers and impediments for CDLs is at the top of their radar.

Melissa Smiley provided an update on Project Clean Slate, noting the work done to review driver records and remove infractions and because of those actions over 150,000 Michigan residents were notified of their eligibility to have a license again. She also noted that an additional 200,000 had various infractions removed but still have barriers to holding a license. She continued with an update on SOS services noting 158 new self-service stations, including 14 in Detroit, a mobile branch, more services offered online, and a 20-minute average wait time for folks with an appointment.

Questions and comments from board members ensued

Follow up: Detroit Economic Forecast 2021-2024 – Gabriel Ehrlich, Ph.D., Director, Research Seminar in Quantitative Economics, University of Michigan

Gabriel Ehrlich, returned to briefly recap the key points from his presentation at the October 2021 board meeting that looked at employment and unemployment numbers by the Bureau of Labor Statistics and to answer any questions from the board.

Questions and comments from board members ensued

Workers: Where are they Now? – Mark Gaffney, President Emeritus, MI AFL-CIO and WSU Board of Directors

Mr. Gaffney began his presentation noting that he will expand on the conversation from the October 2021 meeting which looked at the current state of the workforce. He discussed the record number of folks resigning from jobs and the effect it has on the labor market. He noted that in September 2021, 74% of employers reported staff shortages and you see that playing out in Detroit. He reported that in August of 2021 there were 11 million open jobs in the USA and it continues to teeter around that number. He cited the impact of stimulus checks, tax rebates, enhanced unemployment benefits, rental assistance, low wages and costs associated with being employed such as gas, meals, clothing, and childcare, as contributing factors to the rise in resignations. Mr. Gaffney closed by citing the pandemic as the reason people are reassessing their lives, and that employers will have to adapt by offering things such as increased wages and remote or hybrid work environments to entice workers back into the workforce.

Questions and comments from board members ensued

Public Comment

Co-Chair Cindy Pasky asked for public comment. No hands were raised.

Adjournment

Co-Chair Cindy Pasky called for a motion to adjourn. Moved by Alice Thompson. Supported by Faye Nelson. Meeting adjourned at 3 p.m.

Attendees

Sandro DiNello, Scott Thiele, Mike McLauchlan, Rick Blocker, Nicole Sherard-Freeman, Dave Meador, Bishop Edgar Vann, Alice Thompson, Cal Sharp, Conrad Mallett, Mark Gaffney, Michael Haller, Alycia Meriweather, Andra Rush, Angelique Power, Bruce Dall, Carla Walker-Miller, Cindy Pasky, Colleen Allen, Curtis Ivery, Darienne Driver-Hudson, Faye Nelson, Heaster Wheeler, Jan Harrington-Davis, Jeff Donofrio, John Matton, Kofi Bonner, Michelle Sourie-Robinson, Mike Aaron, Christopher Samp, Darshelle Pierce, Emily Thompson, Greg Anderson, Katie Gandy, Kevin Naud, Kumar Raj, Lori Wingerter, Robin Johnston, Robert Shimkoski, Spencer Lucker, Rachel May, Dana Williams, Chioke Mose-Telesford, Diana Prosi, Gabriel Ehlich, Michelle Rafferty, Patrick Cooney, , Stephanie Nixon, Susan Reinke, Terri Weems