

Sonoma County Workforce Investment Board

Minutes of January 8, 2020

- Members Present:** Ananda Sweet, Robert Austin for Ed Barr, Robin Bartholow, Ethan Brown, Kristyn Byrne, Erin Carlson*, Judy Coffey, Susan Cooper, Eric Markson for Sara Cummings, Keith Dias, Paul Duranczyk, Nancy Emanuele*, Brandy Evans, Steve Herrington, Steve Herron, Kristina Holloway, Eddie Gilbert for Roy Hurd Stephen Jackson, Scott Kincaid, , Kai Harris for Anita Maldonado, George Steffensen, Pedro Toledo*, David Wayte, and Audra Verrier*
- Absent:** Anita Maldonado, Ed Barr, Sara Cummings, Paul Duranczyk, Roy Hurd, Chris Knerr, Michael Pickens and David Tam
- Additional Proxys:** Joseph Harrington, Mary Watts, Brian Ling, Dan Blake
- Staff:** Katie Greaves, Patricia Andrews, Jessica Taylor, Shaydra Ennis, Sharona Elfus-Schatzkin, Manuel Benitez, Lupe Castañeda, Pedro Guevara, Michelle Revecho, Judy Oates, Min Hee Cho, and Anthony Hakim

***Attendees with asterisks arrived late or departed early.**

I. Introductions and Public Comment

None.

II. Approve Minutes of November 13, 2019

Motion to approve the November 13, 2019 minutes: Scott Kincaid /s/ Brandy Evans.

All approved (Ananda Sweet, Robert Austin for Ed Barr, Robin Bartholow, Ethan Brown, , Judy Coffey, Susan Cooper, Eric Markson for Sarah Cummings Keith Dias, Paul Duranczyk, , Brandy Evans, Steve Herrington, Steve Herron, Kristina Holloway, Eddie Gilbert for Roy Hurd Stephen Jackson, Scott Kincaid, Kai Harris for Anita Maldonado, George Steffensen, and David Wayte). There were no “nay” votes. Kristyn Byrne abstained. The motion carried.

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III. Announcements

None.

Arrived: Erin Carlson, Nancy Emanuele, Pedro Toledo, and Audria Verrier

IV. Networking / Member Update

Members were asked to break into groups of two or three to discuss the challenges they are facing or trends they are seeing, and if there are items they would like to be discussed at future WIB meetings and then report out the highlights of their conversations. The items reported included the following.

General / Affecting All Industries

- Different counties and municipalities have different minimum wages. This affects companies being able to keep staff due to wage changes.
- There have been more lay off notices, but people are finding jobs that are similar in wage.
- The Department of Rehabilitation is finding jobs for clients more easily with the low unemployment rate.
- The Economic Development Board is staffing up for more business and retention candidates.
- We have 2% unemployment, but that is making it hard to find and recruit new good employees.
- Rents may start to stabilize now that insurances have paid from the fires.
- 75% of Coffey Park is rebuilt so far.
- There are people in Windsor affected by the last fire that need community support.
- Home insurance rates are going up.
- Workforce housing has been an issue for all areas of jobs for recruitment.
- We should start preparing for a recession. This is the longest uptick we have ever had, and it will turn at some point.

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Construction

- Construction is strong right now and that is helping Hospitality as workers are staying in the local hotels. There is still a shortage of construction workers. Some of the people who would like to get into construction are not legal to work.
- The Santa Rosa Junior College was awarded \$7.1M for a construction training facility at the Petaluma campus.

Hospitality

- Hospitality was affected by the power issues in 2019 during the tourist season. People do not want to chance not having power at an event.
- Please encourage people to dine out and have visitors that stay in the hotels to support Hospitality. When Restaurant Week begins on February 21, please go out to eat and support your local restaurants.

Non-Profits

- Non-Profit budgets are suffering with the new minimum wage. Federal funding remains flat while wages and cost of living is rising. This also affects attracting and retaining staffing.
- Robert Austin is working with a start up in San Francisco for transitional housing with housing groups using housing units manufactured in Sonoma. They are non-profit and for the public benefit.

Education

- There is a shortage of special education teachers in the area. These positions are hard to recruit for as they require an additional three years of education. Pay and affordable house are also issues.

V. WIB Business

A. One-Stop Operator

Patti introduced Sharona Elfus-Schatzkin, the contracted One-Stop Operator (OSO) for Job Link who officially assumed the role on January 2. We are fortunate to have

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someone with her experience joining us as Sharona is not new to Job Link. She previously worked here as a workshop facilitator and extra help counselor.

Sharona shared that she first was introduced to Job Link as a client back in 2001 and has always been impressed with the work done there. To enhance what is already offered she is looking to make a few additions that will include the following.

- Add career development workshops to what is currently offered. Subjects will include interview skills, resumes, and dealing with change.
- She plans to start a “Job Club” where job searchers come together to talk about their experiences and participate in mini job skill lessons on a regular basis.
- Bring more career books into the library for those who prefer researching through books rather than on-line about potential careers.
- Reinstate the Job Link Steering Committee.

B. State of the County

The Economic Development Board is coordinating the next State of the County on January 31. Economist Dr. Jerry Nickelsburg, Director of the UCLA Anderson Forecast will be presenting the keynote address on the economic prospects for Sonoma County and California for the coming year. There will be seats available at the WIB table.

Action: WIB members should email Judy Oates if they are interested in attending the State of the County on January 31 and being seated at the WIB table.

C. Regional Initiatives

Raising the Bar Workforce Conference

The “Raising the Bar” conference will be held February 4, 2020 from 9:00 am to 4:00 pm at the DoubleTree Hotel in Rohnert Park. The event is being hosted by the North Bay Employment Connection (NBEC), a collaboration of six counties including Sonoma, Marin, Lake, Mendocino, Solano, and Napa. Participants will include WIB members and proxies, Job Link, partner staff, and others involved in workforce development from all six counties. One of the presentations will be on how to be an

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impactful WIB Board. WIB Members and their proxies are strongly encouraged to attend.

Action: Staff will send out the registration link for the Raising the Bar Conference.

Prison To Employment (P2E)

Patti reported on the \$300K NBEC regional funding grant to assist justice involved youth and adults. The program is working with clients who are going into construction job pathways. She shared a success story of a youth involved in a gang that turned his life around after prison by entering the program and receiving a job that will allow him to support himself and help his family. The people coming through this program will make good employees when hired.

Regional Plan Implementation 3.0

North Bay Employment Connection (NBEC) applied for this regional funding grant that will allow each of the regions to invest in actions to support clients outlined in their regional plan. For Sonoma County we requested funds for the following.

- 1) Purchase "loaner" laptops for clients who do not own computers to check out.
- 2) Assistance with marketing.
- 3) Soft skill assessment program.
- 4) Continual training of our staff to better serve clients

Grant awards will be announced in February. If we are selected funds will be received in April.

Senate Bill 1 (SB1)

The High Roads Construction Careers grant aims to advance the pathway to construction careers. Funding is part of the \$25M infrastructure tax that will be awarded to five recipients in increments of \$5M for each of five years. Frank Cuneo is taking the lead in this partnership with business, trade, and transportation councils to apply for this funding. Applications are due January 20. Sonoma County is asking for \$500K to apply to the Trades Introduction Program program as it is a

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good pipeline to get people into construction type jobs and can be supplemented with in-kind funding.

VI. Portrait of a Graduate

Dan Blake of Sonoma County Office of Education gave a presentation on the collection of skills and attributes necessary for high school graduates to succeed in our rapidly changing world. These skills are: curiosity, empathy, communication, collaboration, ethics and initiative. This information was gathered through input from individuals and groups representing a wide range of industries and perspectives. Posters were provided and all were encouraged to take them back to their office or home as a reminder to work with young people on these goals. Parents were encouraged to talk to their children about the skills listed, and reach out to their local school board to let them know you would like your child's education to align with these skills. Employers were asked to include these skills in their job descriptions and interview questions. Youth-servicing organizations were asked to have staff members connect to youth using activities related to these skills, and work the skills into the organizational goals. Schools were asked to connect assignments and find opportunities for students to develop and demonstrate these skills.

Please reach out to Dan if you have suggestions or questions about how to use the handouts and posters to help youth or share this message. He can also arrange for a presentation for your group or industry panel, and provide handouts and posters.

Website: SONOMAPOG.ORG

Email: dblake@scoe.org

Telephone Number: 707 524 2780

VII. WIB Initiatives

A. Training Cohorts

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Michelle of Business Services and Training shared the next cohort will begin in February working with Hire Hands to do 12-week, 20 hour per week on-the-job training to become Home Care Professionals.

On-the-Job trainings reimburse employers for training wages. The program encourages a partnership between the employers and the new staff while increase staff capacity by acquiring skills and reducing training costs. Employers retain the staff after the training as regular employees. If you know of someone looking for this type of opportunity please have them contact Michelle at mrevecho@schsd.org or (707) 565-5557.

If you have questions or need information please call our Business Services Hotline at (707) 565-8079 or email us at joblinkbusinessgroup@schsd.org.

B. Industry Council

Business Services and Training is looking for individuals to participate in an Industry Council. This group would be a “brain trust” that staff can reach out to when gathering information about new types of training and what businesses need from the positions in their industry. Currently we are recruiting for contacts at St. Joseph and Sutter. Ethan, Erin, Eric shared they would be interested in participating.

Action: Staff will resend the mail asking for members, proxies, and interested parties to join the Industry Council.

C. Minimum Wage Increase

Katie started a conversation on the benefits, concerns, and challenges of the minimum wage increase. The most impacted industries will be retail, food services, health care aids, accommodation, farm workers, and non-profits. Research on impact analysis shows that these funds are often absorbed by price increases and reduced employee turnover. Areas that have low wages, less educated workers, and high poverty are more impacted. It was noted that these wage changes sometimes

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affect benefits as employer offset the cost by reducing what they offer in other areas.

Brandy of Goodwill shared that for their business a \$1 minimum wage increase costs them \$1M per year in salaries. They have recently started paying wages by jurisdiction due to the different wage rates in cities and this is making it much harder for them to budget and plan. It is hard in the current economy to recruit and retain talent. Goodwill has downsized over the last few years and now have 270 employees, down from 450.

Ananda shared the Santa Rosa Metro Chamber is seeing effects on the non-profit and restaurant businesses.

Kristina shared having minimum wages defined by city it is affecting everyone. How can Healdsburg with a \$12 minimum wage compete with Santa Rosa having a \$15 minimum wage for staff? They are looking at raising wages in their lower level positions just to compete for staff.

Eric shared that those who live in Santa Rosa and work in nearby cities with lower minimum wage are looking to find ways to increase their incomes.

Katie asked everyone to think about the minimum wage issues and the expected outcome so this can be further discussed at the next WIB meeting.

Action: Katie will email WIB members her presentation and links to the articles she referenced regarding minimum wage.

IX. Adjourn 5:00 pm

Next meeting: **March 11, 2020**

Location: **Santa Rosa Room**

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