

Governor's Council for Workforce and Economic Development

MINUTES OF REGULAR MEETING

Date: July 28, 2023

Time: 9:00 A.M.

Place: Oklahoma State University-Oklahoma City, 900 N. Portland Ave., Oklahoma City, OK 73107 - Student Center, Third Floor, North & South Conference Rooms.

Call to Order/Welcome

Chair Chuck Gray called the meeting to order and determined there was a quorum. He welcomed the group and reviewed the agenda.

Approval of January 27, 2023 Minutes

A motion to approve the January 27, 2023 minutes as presented was made by Marcie Mack and seconded by Michelle Choquette. No further discussion. The motion carried unanimously.

Summary of Informational Items Discussed on April 28, 2023 Convening of the Governor's Council

Due to not having a quorum for the April 28 Council meeting, a summary of items discussed or presented was provided to Council members. Any items up for a vote was tabled.

Consent Agenda

A motion was made by Jenna Morey to approve the Consent Agenda as presented. The motion was seconded by Jimmy Curry. No further discussion. The motion carried unanimously.

Broadband Workforce – Mike Sanders, Executive Director, Oklahoma Broadband Office

Mike Sanders stated that the Oklahoma Broadband Office (OBO) is responsible for implementing the State Broadband Plan which includes making reliable, affordable, high-speed internet service available throughout the state. The OBO, with oversight from the Broadband Governing Board, creates and administers grant program funding to achieve Oklahoma's aggressive broadband internet goal by June 2028. The office will award some \$1.3 billion in state and federal funds to internet service providers to perform the work for broadband infrastructure and accessibility. Sanders said that 80-82% of Oklahomans have high-speed internet access. The most need is in rural Oklahoma. The Broadband office's number one priority is for the unserved or underserved areas. To serve these areas, they need a workforce of trained technicians and engineers. There have been three classes trained so far – two classes by OSU-IT and one class by the Cheyenne and Arapaho Tribes in Concho. The CareerTech system has also invested in training. If we capitalize in infrastructure, it will change Oklahoma and people's perception of Oklahoma, and we will have the ability to connect globally. Their mission at the Broadband office is to administer the programs and connect about 750,000 Oklahomans with high-speed internet. It will take a lot of work and a lot of people over the next five years to implement this. They will be transparent in all they do and will deliver on time.

Muskogee Bridges Out of Poverty – Treasure McKenzie, Director, Bridges Out of Poverty and Christi Porter, Director, Green Country Workforce Development Board

Christi Porter introduced Treasure McKenzie and explained that Bridges Out of Poverty is an Impact Partnership Grant (IPG) with the Green Country Workforce Development Board, Oklahoma Office of

Workforce Development, Muskogee Chamber, and Bridges Out of Poverty program. It's a wonderful program to help people get out of poverty and become self-sufficient and successful.

Treasure McKenzie said that she was a product of generational poverty when growing up. She was from a poor family and was the first in her family to graduate from college. She began her career at the Muskogee Chamber of Commerce as a program director and worked her way up to President and CEO from 2012-2016. When she heard about the Bridges Out of Poverty program, she volunteered for two years before being named director in July of 2016. Soon after, Muskogee Bridges Out of Poverty was named Bridges Out of Poverty's National Community of the Year.

Highlights from Treasure's presentation on Bridges Out of Poverty:

- What We Do
 - 50% empower those in poverty to become self-sufficient
 - 50% is to educate the middle class and business community about the complexities of poverty
- Treasure recommended two books to read
 - A Framework for Understanding Poverty by Dr. Ruby Payne, for teachers to understand student's behavior, and
 - Bridges Out of Poverty by Dr. Ruby Payne and Phil DeVol
 - Phil DeVol was running a drug/alcohol treatment center and used the Framework book to help his staff and to rewrite their client intake orientation. Together they wrote Bridges Out of Poverty for communities and launched aha! Process publishing.
- How Do You Define Poverty?
 - If you work harder, budget better, and make better choices, you can dig your way out.
 - We tend to judge people who ask for help. Needy, weak, deficient, lazy, not to be trusted. This is not always the case.
- Poverty is Not a Money Issue – It's a relationship and resource issue
 - If you ask someone in poverty what will solve their problems, they will tell you money and luck. But they need a mindset change. The real problem is stress.
- What's the Solution?
 - Success is going from unstable to stable. It is so much easier to make changes if your life is stable, you have more control over things. Knowledge is power.
- Getting Ahead Classes – Investigators investigate the barriers that are keeping them in poverty.
 - What do they learn in Getting Ahead classes?
 - Importance and value of stability in daily life
 - Discovering what shape they are in and what THEY are going to do about it.
 - Analyzing and addressing causes of poverty
 - Value of learning
 - Finding resources in the community
 - Building a network
 - Making smart goals
 - Identifying and avoiding financial predators
 - Contributing to community solutions – taking a seat at the planning and decision-making tables
- Staying Ahead Program – is designed according to the needs of the graduates and local community
 - Money Matters 101 – Basic financial literacy and Financial Peace University
 - Parent University – Raising highly capable kids
 - Boundaries – Focuses on healthy relationships

- ESL – English as a Second Language
- 519 Graduates (266-English, 199-Spanish, 54-Felon Re-Entry)
 - 85% increase income
 - 88% decreased debt
 - 81% increased education
 - 76% opened checking or savings account
 - 73% are now Self-Sufficient

For the full presentation, go to link for the July 28, 2023 Governor’s Council meeting:
<https://oklahomaworks.gov/stateworkforceboard/governors-council-quarterly-meetings/>.

Roundtable Discussion-Strategic Planning

Susannah Gravley said that the OOWD office is planning to have a strategic planning convening for the Governor’s Council sometime in January or early February. She has been looking at various vendors for facilitating the strategic planning plus some pre- and post-work. Due to the scope of work, it will have to go out for an RFP. Hopefully, the Workforce Commission will be in place and can engage with us. The Governor’s Council is not required by WIOA to have a strategic plan, but it is a good idea to have goals and objectives for the Council that can tie into the WIOA State Plan which is required. The Core Partners are required to help write the State Plan. The next State Plan is due Spring 2024, so the strategic plan will be timely.

Susannah would like to get input from the Governor’s Council as to their expectations. Comments from Council members include, what does success look like and where are the wins? What’s our role and scope? Are we an oversight body, an advisory body to the governor? The Council needs to be more engaged as a board. The Committee work needs more engagement. How do we tie in with the Core Partners and other agencies? The Council needs to come up with 3-4 initiatives and prioritize them.

Susannah said the strategic planning convening will be one and one-half days long and will be held at the Embassy Suites Hotel-Downtown/Medical Center, OKC. There will be a block of rooms for out-of-town Council members and partners. We can cover the cost of the rooms. There will be a facilitator as well as program staff will be available for program information if needed. Susannah may send out a questionnaire or a survey to the Council to get additional feedback.

Career Pathways Committee Update

Marcie Mack, Co-chair of the Career Pathways Committee gave the following update:

- The Career Pathways committee meets quarterly and in between meetings, the subcommittees meet. There are 39 volunteer members on the Career Pathways committee.
- There are three subcommittees
 - Adult Education and Family Literacy (AEFL)/Reducing High School Dropouts – Lance Allee and Shawna Nord, co-chairs
 - Employer Engagement – Local Workforce Boards
 - Postsecondary Completion – Sarah Wyatt, chair
- Key Components/Strategy Map
 - Transition Services
 - Apprenticeship Expansion
 - Reducing Barriers
 - Continuing Education/Career Exploration
 - Early College and Career Readiness

- The AEFL subcommittee is working on early intervention strategies, reducing counselor caseloads and a roadmap for transition services
 - There are 461 AEFL classes across the state
- The Employer Engagement Subcommittee is working with the Local Workforce Boards
 - Central Oklahoma Workforce Board (COWIB)
 - COWIB received a P3 grant – a 3-year pilot with the U.S. Dept. of Labor providing certain flexibilities and waivers
 - Summer Bridge Pilot with State Dept. of Education
 - Northeast Workforce Board
 - The Healthcare Advisory Council is working on healthcare pathways and work-based learning
 - Created a roadmap and toolkit
 - Southern Workforce Board
 - A healthcare coordinator is connecting with 4th graders and career fairs
 - Teacher and counselor externships in area healthcare facilities
 - The Postsecondary Completion subcommittee is working on
 - Tuition Assistance Benefits (TAB) resource
 - Oklahoma Money Matters, UCanGo2
 - UpSkillOK
 - The next meeting of the Career Pathways Committee is September 22 at 10:00 a.m.

For the full presentation, go to link for the July 28, 2023 Governor’s Council meeting:
<https://oklahomaworks.gov/stateworkforceboard/governors-council-quarterly-meetings/>.

Healthcare Workforce Committee Update

Co-chair Teresa Huggins could not attend and give the update, so OOWD staff, Brittane Grant, gave the update for the Healthcare Workforce committee.

- The Healthcare Workforce Committee has engaged with partners such as HRSA once the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) announced the award of nearly \$245 million in Bipartisan Safer Communities Act funding – \$185.7 million from the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA) and nearly \$60 million from the Health Resources and Services Administration (HRSA) – to support youth mental health, help the health care workforce address mental health needs, and fund other critical mental health supports.
- The committee has also engaged with Michael Widell, Vice President of Operations for OSU-OKC, and McKenna Garrison, Senior Director of Community Engagement, along with Kristen Rowan from their office. The committee discussed training needs for tribal and other entities to improve citizen health outcomes and to maximize care reimbursement dollars. The federal government is pushing outcome-based programs across healthcare which are centered on Patient Centered Medical Home (PCMH). They have been in discussions on PCMH and the committee has been in conversations to develop training across the tribal entities and are working to assess the need in Oklahoma.
- The committee is also planning a hands-on exploration for the fall/spring of 2023/2024 to engage and encourage students to pursue careers in any facet of healthcare and health sciences. They have connected with the State of Illinois and using some of their models and best practices to plan their event.

Core Partners WIOA Titles Update

- Title IV – OK Department of Rehabilitation Services – Melinda Freundt, Executive Director, reported the following update:
 - Summer Employment Programs for Youth with Disabilities
 - Oklahoma Department of Rehabilitation Services’ Transition program and OU National Center for Disability Education and Training’s Pre-Employment Transition Services offered BEST STEP for students with disabilities free of charge in 27 cities across the state in June and July. BEST STEP is an acronym for Building Employment Skills Today and Summer Transition Employment Program. Partners include COWIB, SWB, OU Pre-ETS, Central Technology Center, Tech-Now Inc., DRS Counselors, techs, PM’s, Program Field Reps, and Transition Coordinator to support those students on the job during the STEP portion.
 - Oklahoma Rehabilitation Services Celebrates 30 Years
 - OKDRS marked 30 years of being an independent agency on July 1. Legislation established the independent Department of Rehabilitation Services and transferred all present-day programs from the Oklahoma Department of Human Services. For 30 years, DRS has been carrying on with that mandate by educating students who are blind or deaf, helping adults with disabilities find employment and determining medical eligibility for qualified Oklahomans to receive Social Security disability benefits. Melinda is proud of the work we do and that the mission has not been forgotten through these years. DRS plans to recognize the anniversary on October 17, 2023. The celebration and homecoming will include a fall festival and food trucks. The 30th anniversary is more than just a celebration of our accomplishments as an agency, but it is also a celebration of those who have made it happen. The theme is, [*Come Home to DRS - Celebrating 30 Years of Extraordinary People.*](#)
 - Celebration for Americans with Disabilities
 - July marks the 50th anniversary of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, which prohibits discrimination on the basis of disability in programs conducted by federal agencies, in programs receiving federal financial assistance, in federal employment and in the employment practices of federal contractors. The standards for determining employment discrimination under the Rehab Act are the same as those used in Title I of the ADA; both protect “qualified individuals with disabilities.” An individual with a disability is a person who has a physical or mental impairment that substantially limits one or more major life activities, has a record of such impairment, or is regarded as having such an impairment.
 - July is also Disability Pride Month. Over one billion people comprise the global disability community, making it the most expansive and diverse minority group globally. People with disabilities are represented by all ages, ethnicities, genders, sexual orientations, religions, and socio-economic brackets.
 - RSA Monitoring and Technical Assistance (RSA) Update
 - DRS concluded the onsite monitoring review with the Rehabilitation Services Administration the week of May 8-11 and will have the exit call with RSA staff on July 31, 2023.
 - Partnership and Collaboration with Core Partners

- Monthly meetings with OESC, Career Tech, and Oklahoma Office of Workforce Development.
 - Partner in planning the 2023 Oklahoma Works Partners Conference on October 4-6. DRS will have sessions on ADA compliance and reasonable accommodations, benefits planning and participate in a partner resource panel with core partners.
 - 20 workforce board and service provider staff are participating in free Mental Health First Aid training offered by DRS in August. The training equips staff with the tools to identify when someone may be experiencing a mental health crisis.
 - Disability demographic and prevalence data provided for regional plans.
 - Renewed agreements for DRS staff located in the American Job Centers.
 - Ongoing physical accessibility assessments conducted by the DRS ADA Coordinator for American Job Centers and individual requests from partners.
 - Business Services Team Highlights
 - “Facts and Snacks: Critical Occupations” continued to be offered in partnership with Oklahoma employers. These sessions are aligned with critical occupations in Oklahoma and focus on employment opportunities available in specific industry.
- Title III – OK Employment Security Commission – Trae Rahill, Executive Director, gave the following update:
 - USPS Pilot Program
 - OESC partners with the United States Postal Service (USPS) for Identity Verification
 - Launched July 20, 2023
 - Claimants can now verify at 283 USPS locations across Oklahoma
 - Funded by USDOL – no state dollars used
 - Oklahoma is the second state in the country to implement this program
 - Community Outreach Service Model (COSM)
 - OESC’s new outreach program has staff strategically stationed throughout the state in 17 rural communities where no OESC offices exist.
 - Technology Modernization
 - Claim Data Look-up Tool
 - Launched July 20, 2023
 - Simplified user interface
 - Easier for staff to find claim information
 - Better customer service and experience
 - Employer Portal Update
 - Employee Separations
 - SIDES E-Response
 - Launched June 6, 2023
 - Employers can now respond electronically to employee separations through OESC’s Employer Portal. In the Employer Portal’s initial launch, employers could only receive electronic notifications for employee separations but still had to respond through mail.
- Title II – OK Career and Technology Education – Brent Haken, State Director
 - WIOA – gaps – partner with the others to fill in the gaps. The Core Partners have been meeting to discuss issues, gaps, etc. The Core Partners include CareerTech, Employment Security Commission, Office of Workforce Development/Commerce, Dept. of Rehabilitation

Services. At CareerTech we thrive off of what employers need and that's why we're at the table with the Governor's Council because WIOA focuses on what gaps there are.

- This year CareerTech was able to add 175 K-12 programs into their schools across the state.
- They are looking at how to do work-based learning with USIC (US Infrastructure Company) underground utility work. Students will get instruction as a high school senior, then they can start at 18 years old and will have a company vehicle and receive pay in their second semester as an internship model.
- AEFL (Adult Education and Family Literacy) – They struggle with how they can help them with other needs. They are looking at ways to do this and they want to engage the business community too.
- Title I – Oklahoma Office of Workforce Development – Susannah Gravley, Interim Director
 - Lt. Gov. Matt Pinnell is also now the Secretary of Workforce Development. Susannah met with him briefly and has a call scheduled with him.
 - Oklahoma received a cut in WIOA funding, approximately 8.5%, or about \$1-2M.
 - OOWD is currently sending funds out to the Local Boards.
 - OOWD and OESC is getting a new case management system. OKJobMatch will have a new name. They are in the testing phase now.

Next Meeting

The next meeting of the Governor's Council will be on October 27, 2023, at 9:00 a.m. at Oklahoma State University-Oklahoma, 900 N. Portland Ave., Oklahoma City, OK.

Adjournment

The meeting adjourned at approximately 11:26 a.m.

*Respectfully submitted,
Linda Emrich*