



**Wyoming Workforce Development Council
Quarterly Meeting – On-Site and Zoom
Evanston, Wyoming
May 15-16, 2024**

May 15, 2024

Council Members Present

Representative Ryan Berger	Jim Engel	Ron Wild
Acting Chair Eric Trowbridge	Larry Fodor	Michael Kercher
Bria Hammock	Nathan Williams	Phillip Cornella
Brenda Morgan	Daniel Burau	Charles Wilson
Nicky Harper	Mayor Matt Hall	Korin Schmidt
Katie Hogarty	Travis Lawrence	Ron Gullberg for Josh Dorell
Director Elizabeth Gagen	Laurel Ballard for Ben Moritz	
Dr. Michelle Aldrich for Superintendent Degenfelder	Sara DiRienzo for Governor Gordon	

Council Members Absent

Dick Smith	Senator Fred Baldwin	Tony Cross
Chairman Fabian Lobera	Tina Conley	Tamsin Johnson

DWS Staff Present

Jennifer Wilch	Ivy Castleberry	Tyler Stockton
Holly Simoni	Christina West	Deanna Crofts
Kristy Tyrney	Michael Moore	Robin Martin
Daniel Anderson	Shaye Moon	Jeff Schulz
Trevor Mansfield	Amy Souza	Stephen Palladino
Denise Rodriguez	Tom Saprorny	Nikki Baures
Amy Peterson	Brittany Huffman	David Welling
Della McJunkin	Gilbert Servantez	Jaclyn Steinbach
Jason Wolfe	Kavan Johnston	Kelsey Keegan
Lynda Dean	Noemi Arellano	Steve Miller
Nikki Flowers	Peggy Banks	Shannon Gage
Mark Waltrup	Kelsee Ficker	



Others Present

Josh Law
Shelby Powell

Amy Murphy
Dana Miller

Rocco O’Neill

May 15, 2024

I. Call to Order & Welcome Presenter: Acting Chair Eric Trowbridge

Acting Chair Eric Trowbridge called the meeting to order at 1:00 pm and welcomed all in attendance.

A. Roll Call/Introductions Presenter: Jennifer Wilch

Jennifer Wilch took roll call and noted we have a quorum.

B. Approval of Agenda Presenter: Acting Chair Eric Trowbridge

Ron Wild moved to approve the agenda as written; Nikki Harper seconded. The motion carried.

C. Approval of January Minutes Presenter: Acting Chair Eric Trowbridge

Ron Wild moved to approve the agenda as written; Ryan Berger seconded. The motion carried.

II. Message from the Chairman Presenter: Acting Chair Eric Trowbridge

Chairman Eric Trowbridge provided an overview of the meeting agenda and welcomed Elizabeth Gagen to her new position as Workforce Services Director.

III. Department of Workforce Services Update Presenter: Director Elizabeth Gagen

Director Elizabeth Gagen introduced herself as the newly appointed Director of Workforce Services on March 17, 2024. Her background includes deputy director for Workforce Services since February of 2020, and over 20 years at the Attorney General’s Office representing state agencies on employment law issues. The Agency, Next Generation Sector Partnerships (NextGen), and the Workforce Innovation Partnership (WIP) have helped to provide a clear focus and path forward to further enhance collaboration between the workforce agency, industry, higher education, and K12. Since the Pandemic there has been an increase in grants. Currently, Wyoming is working on a grant application with the state of Idaho to build a Nuclear Corridor in Wyoming and Idaho that includes the Nuclear plant being located in Kemmerer and Idaho National Labs. Wyoming is also collaborating with Colorado on a grant application with the National Science Foundation with a focus on Climate Resilience. Climate resilience encompasses better capability in predicting the weather, soil carbon capture, and better ways



to predict and work with wildfires and drought, while simultaneously working to conserve water. Work is being done to define the climate resilience workforce sector that will provide opportunities for internships and apprenticeships involving engineering and computing in addition to the education sectors. The grant to support climate resilience is a 10-year grant; years 1 and 2 have been funded and resubmissions will provide grant funding for future years. UW has reached out to support a grant aimed at reskilling coal power plant employees to be employable in the up-and-coming nuclear plants. Idaho, Montana, and Wyoming have been in conversation to support the workforce field of Quantum Computing.

IV. Workforce Programs Update Presenter: Holly McKamey Simoni

Holly Simoni provided an update on the new unemployment insurance and Wy Relocate. Senate File 58 passed through the legislature with a focus on investment of the State Unemployment Insurance Trust Fund and moving funds into a pool to obtain a higher return rate for training fund programs. Training fund programs support Wyoming Employers with a skilled workforce, the legislation was effective immediately upon being passed. Senate file 59 was legislation that created an adjustment and reallocation of some funds deposited into the required Federal Unemployment Compensation Trust Fund to provide more training dollars and services to improve the workforce.

V. One-Stop Operations Update Presenter: Christina West

Christina provided updates on One Stop Centers and highlighted some of the current challenges of transition from Wyoming at Work to HireWyo. There was a short period of time with no system online and manual strategies were implemented to continue to support business and Wyoming Citizens. WIOA requires a lot of case management and remains under construction in the present, in the meantime assessments and all funded activities are being completed manually. Updates for Wagner Peyser include ten career fairs, individual employer hiring events, rapid response support, and Premier Virtual. Premier Virtual is a job fair platform that is utilized throughout the agency and provides an alternative hybrid option to an in-person booth to serve employer's needs. Wagner Peyser provides support to job seekers through pre-hire classes, and two additional classes preparing individuals for a job fair and interviewing. There has been an increase in collaboration with core partners that include Title I (Adult, Dislocated Worker, Youth), Title II (Adult Education), Title III (Wagner Peyser), and Title IV (DVR). Title I youth and Title II adult education have risen 252% in co-enrollments.

VI. Evanston Team Workforce Center Update Presenter: Tom Saprorny

Employment Services Workforce Center Manager Tom Saprorny provided updates on Terra Power and upcoming work on the nuclear plant in Kemmerer. Tom manages the Evanston, Kemmerer, and Jackson centers. In preparation for the nuclear plant currently under construction, efforts to build additional industry and infrastructure in Kemmerer are underway.



The overflow of industry growth will impact Evanston and surrounding communities. Companies are working on

innovative ways to turn coal into other components in the energy sector. Exxon has been working on a carbon capture project in the Shoe Creek area near la Barge and a lot of expansion is also happening in that area. Tourism and recreation are also vital industries in the community of Evanston. Individuals have been coming into the local workforce center to inquire further about the new facilities that are providing more jobs to the area.

VII. Break

VIII. Uinta County B.O.C.E.S. Presenter: Shelby Powell

Shelby Powell provided an overview of Uinta County BOCES #1. Uinta BOCES provides Title II WIOA services to support adult education, which includes academic instruction, career readiness training, life skills training, counseling, and mentoring, as well as wraparound services. The program went from six percent overall success rate to a 91 percent overall success rate between 2009 to the present. In 2023 – 2024 19 participants had a 100% completion of their high school equivalency resulting in 80% employment through the 2nd quarter after exit and 67% employment through the 4th quarter after exit. The success of the program has been in result of the partnership with the local workforce center, small class size in a cohort, functional level educational requirements, employment experience, and wraparound services.

IX. Docuseries Premier - Ryan Bros. Trucking Presenter: Josh Law

Josh Law is the CEO of Only Co. and has been working across the state to support workforce and recruitment challenges for clients. They have worked with their client Ryan Brother's Trucking to help support reaching the full potential of their dream and vision for the company in addition to making any necessary adjustments to successfully achieve those goals. Only Co. focuses on trying to help support their client's dream and to more clearly see and define their story, live that story, and then go on to tell that story engagingly. Josh explained that people are attracted to who you are and if who you are doesn't resonate with others then that is a goal to work on to improve recruitment.

X. Adjourn

The meeting adjourned for recess at 4:08 PM and will resume on May 16, at 8:30 am.



May 16, 2024

Council Members Present

Representative Ryan Berger
Larry Fodor
Nathan Williams
Charles Wilson
Mayor Matt Hall
DiRienzo for Governor
Gordon
Ron Gullberg for Josh Dorrell

Ron Wild
Michael Kercher
Phillip Cornella
Director Elizabeth Gagen
Katie Hogarty
Kristi Arneson-Gordy for
Korin Schmidt
Laurel Ballard for Ben Moritz

Acting Chair Eric Trowbridge
Bria Hammock
Brenda Morgan
Nicky Harper
Travis Lawrence
Dr. Michelle Aldrich for
Superintendent Degenfelder

Council Members Absent

Senator Fred Baldwin
Dick Smith
Daniel Burau

Jim Engel
Fabian Lobera
Tamsin Johnson

Tony Cross
Tina Conley

DWS Staff Present

Jennifer Wilch
Deanna Crofts
Robin Martin
Jeff Schulz
Stephen Palladino
Gilbert Servantez
Lynda Dean
Shannon Gage
Ivie Moore
Michael Moore
Christina Eaton

Ivy Castleberry
Kristy Tyrney
Daniel Anderson
Trevor Mansfield
Denise Rodriguez
Jaclyn Steinbach
Noemi Arellano
Mark Waltrup
Lacey Lavake
Tony Glover

Tyler Stockton
Michael Moore
Shaye Moon
Amy Souza
David Welling
Kavan Johnston
Steve Miller
Catrina Coler
Sal Sanchez
Wendy Constantine

Others Present

Lucas Lamby
Rocco O'Neill

Tim O'Brien
Dana Miller

Amy Murphy



XIV. Welcome 8:30 AM Presenter: Eric Trowbridge

A. Roll Call 8:35 AM Presenter: Jennifer Wilch

Jennifer Wilch took roll call and noted we have a quorum.

XV. Harvard Growth Lab 8:40 AM Presenter: Lucas Lamby

Lucas Lamby presented to the council a description of the short-term and long-term workforce challenges in Wyoming. Challenges that include: relative output and wage dynamics, credentials and skills of individuals, and demographic challenges. Follow-up discussion was also presented on how to alleviate the workforce challenges in the short-term and long-term. Over the last three years, the demand for labor has substantially increased, but the supply has not been able to keep up as there are two job openings for every unemployed person; the highest job metric in 20 years. Other states across the country are also experiencing this overall trend. Wage growth and job growth has significantly remained behind and below the national average. Wyoming has the second lowest proportion of jobs that require post-secondary education in the US overall, despite the population increase in bachelor's degrees between 2010 and 2020, while the real GDP per capita decreased. Therefore, additional education will not remedy this trend, resulting in educated Wyoming citizens looking out of state for better wages, as the trend demonstrates for every one educated citizen, three individuals left. Despite the population increase from 2001 to the present, the workforce has not seen an overall increase. Wyoming's labor force is not growing at a pace with the population, making it difficult to support further job growth. Developing a more complex economy with high-paying employment and lifting constraints on housing will help encourage growth in industries over the long term. Supporting companies in the state struggling to find employees, childcare access, individuals exiting incarceration, and job transitioning for stressed industries, alongside higher education and out-of-state labor pools are short-term goals to help alleviate current trends.

XVI. Western Wyoming Community College New Program Presenter: Amy Murphy

Amy Murphy provided information to the council on the college's work to keep educated young professionals in Wyoming. According to trends, professionals tend to return around age 30 on average. Western Wyoming Community College has provided the first powerline technology program that started in August 2022. The Wyoming Innovation Partnership (WIP) initiated the powerline technology program. Amy explained that funding is needed to launch these programs. Western was awarded close to 1 million dollars in grant funding to expand the Electrical and Instrumentation program in Evanston. A proposal has also been submitted to the state to obtain funding for a Nuclear program at the college.



XVII. Break

Resume at 10:00 am

XVIII. City of Evanston Community Development Presenter: Rocco O’Neill

Rocco O’Neill presented an economic overview of Evanston. Currently, the largest industries include healthcare & social assistance, retail, hospitality, construction, education, transportation, oil, gas, and mining. The City of Evanston is currently researching the best methods to recruit targeted industries that include: manufacturing, healthcare, and technology. In 2019 a target industry study was conducted and took a snapshot of the local economy and identified industries to target. Since the study a website was created in collaboration with a marketing campaign. Manufacturing industry growth occurred in 2020 through 2024 and Evanston recruited the ISA Corporation, Wasatch SIPS, Victor Arms, Shades of Pale, APEX Performance, and more to come. Major manufacturers in Evanston include: Mitsubishi Chemical Carbon Fiber, BPI Labs, and Clean Energy Corporation. Project West is a new extraction mine development that will provide a \$2.6 billion-dollar investment and bring 1,287 construction jobs at peak, and 309 permanent full-time employees, with a monthly average of 802 full-time employees on site. In Kemmerer, 40 miles north of Evanston Terra Power Natrium facility is underway with a \$4 billion-dollar investment, 3,000 construction workers at peak, and 300+ permanent full-time employees. South of Green River, the Dry Creek Trona Mine project is under development and will bring a \$6 billion-dollar investment, 4,200 construction workers at peak, and 530 permanent full-time employees. Over the next two to five years, there is an anticipated growth rate of 4.2%. Evanston has prepared its infrastructure to support growth. Residential, commercial, and industrial development will be a necessity to capture this growth. Addressing housing, transportation, utilities, and commercial and industrial growth alongside simplifying zoning ordinances, and streamlined development processes are some of the action steps to help support continued economic growth in Evanston.

XIX. State Plan Planning Presenter: Ivy Castleberry

Ivy Castleberry presented the strategies outlined in the state plan to the council and how to incorporate those strategies in alignment with our core partners. Ivy encouraged everyone to examine the strategy outline and provide feedback on prioritizing goals. The next steps include adding goals for the upcoming years.

XX. Spending Plan and Expenditures Presenter: Robin Martin

Robin Martin provided council expenditures for January, February, and March of 2024. 100% of the funds from the 2021 grant year have been spent with no remaining funds. As of the end of May 2024, there was a total of \$454,152 remaining. The amount remaining for the 2022 grant year was \$50,938 and the amount remaining for the 2023 grant year was \$403,214. Currently, there is \$184,133.26 remaining to pay out for current projects that include Microcredentialing,



Strategic Planning, the Southwest Manufacturing Partnership, Workforce Center Chairs, Lift Wyoming, NextGen Academy, Tri-County Partnership, and OnBoard. 100% of the local funds from the 2021 grant year have been spent and 100% of local funds from the 2022 grant year has been spent, with no remaining funds. 79.57% of the 2023 grant funds have been spent and there is a total of \$1,014,553 remaining local funds.

Motion to approve the Spending Plan and Expenditures

Rep Berger moved to approve the spending plan and expenditures, and Michael Kercher seconded. All in favor of the spending plan and expenditures, the motion carries.

XXI. WIOA PY24 Funding Model Presenter: Trevor Mansfield

Trevor Mansfield presented the annual funding model request. The Strategic Performance and Finance Committee approved this recommendation for the full amount of 15% in April 2024. Robin Martin shared that the Department of Workforce Services (DWS) was granted the general fund request which will allow the council to comfortably allocate the full 15%.

Motion to approve WIOA PY24 Funding Model

Michael Kercher moved to approve WIOA PY24 Funding Model, Larry Fodor seconded. All in favor of the WIOA PY24 Funding Model, the motion carries.

XXII. PY23 Funding Change Presenter: Trevor Mansfield

Trevor Mansfield presented a request to the council to move \$150,000 currently being allocated for administrative costs to adult participants of the Workforce Innovation Opportunity Act (WIOA) until grant funding is received after June 30, 2024. This request was passed in April 2024 by the Strategic Performance and Finance Committee. This request will not lead to a shortage due to the case management system being less expensive. Funds will go towards supportive services and individuals in workforce centers throughout the state.

Motion to approve PY23 Funding Change

Ron Wild moved to approve PY23 Funding Change, Nicky Harper seconded. All in favor of the PY23 Funding Change, the motion carries.

XXIII. NIU Evaluations Contract Presenter: Jennifer Wilch

Jennifer Wilch provided a request to the council to amend the contract with Northern Illinois University (NIU) for another year. NIU provides the evaluations required by regulations from the Department of Labor for the council. The current year's evaluation is being finalized and will be presented at the September Quarterly meeting. Department of Workforce Services (DWS) does not have the in-house capability to conduct these evaluations independently and this amendment will help remain in compliance. The request is for a one-year extension and \$45,000. This cost can also be added to the regular budget as it will be an on-going cost.



However, any expenditures that exceed \$5,000 have to go through approval in the Strategic Performance and Finance committee and to the full council for a vote according to the bylaws.

Motion to approve NIU Evaluations Contract

Ron Wild moved to approve the NIU Evaluations Contract, Director Elizabeth Gagen seconded. All in favor of the NIU Evaluations Contract, the motion carries.

XXIV. Committee Breakouts

XXV. Committee Updates

A. Communications & Community Relations

Presenter: Phillip Cornella

Nothing to report from the committee at this time.

B. Sector Partnerships & Career Pathways

Presenter: Larry Fodor

Larry provided an update on the recent Next Gen Academy in April 2024 with 80+ participants in attendance. The Laramie County Healthcare partnership has begun having regular meetings. The Laramie County Construction partnership remains strong and has provided outreach to local high schools. New companies and participants have also been in attendance of meetings recently in Laramie County. The young contractor's group in Laramie, Albany County, has become actively engaged and they hope to also partner with Climb Wyoming in the future. At the Next Gen Academy, an industry champion from Evanston was talking about potentially starting a construction partnership in the community, as there is currently an increasing need for one. In Casper, a young contractor's group is also in development.

C. Strategic Performance & Finance

Presenter: Travis Lawrence

Travis provided an overview of the committee's monthly tasks and introduced himself as the new chairman of the committee. Much of the committee's work is brought forward to the full council during quarterly meetings, which include grant applications and reallocation requests. The committee is strategizing ways to be more effective, examine what kind of information can be presented to help provide additional clarity, cash flow data, and providing education on finances and federal grants from Department of Workforce Services (DWS) staff. Education will help the committee provide effective and informed updates.



XXVI. Public Comment

Brenda Morgan thanked DWS for the grant received for a virtual reality item that will be implemented in the fall. No comments were brought forward for public comment.

XXVII. Adjourn

Acting Chairman Eric Trowbridge called for a motion to adjourn, and Ron Wild motioned. The meeting adjourned at 11:44 am.