

**WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT BOARD, INC.
OF
MAHONING AND COLUMBIANA COUNTIES**

Individuals with Disabilities Committee Meeting
July 11, 2024
9:00am
OhioMeansJobs Center Mahoning County

Committee Members Present: Shirley Bowald, Ed Emerick, Brian Eskridge, Dawn Haines for Joe Caruso, Marcy Patton, Alex Hertzner, Brenda Linert, Marcy Patton, Julie Rupert, and Susie Wickline
Committee Members Absent: Matt Golladay and Brenda Heidinger
Adjunct Members: Jack Hile, Ashlee Iannucci, and Carol Ramsay-Loomis
Board Staff: Mary Ann Kochalko

Mr. Eskridge, Committee Chair, called the meeting to order at 9:00am after verification of a quorum.

Approval of April 11, 2024 Meeting Minutes

Motion: To approve the April 11, 2024 meeting minutes as prepared.
Motion made by: Julie Rupert
Seconded by: Ed Emerick
Discussion: None
Motion approved.

Committee Membership Updates

Alex Hertzner from Mahoning Valley Manufacturers Coalition (MVMC) and Brenda Linert from the Youngstown/Warren Regional Chamber were welcomed to the committee as new members with no objections. Introduction of committee members took place.

Guest Speaker – Alex Hertzner, Interim Executive Director, MVMC

Alex Hertzner provided an overview of the Mahoning Valley Manufacturers Coalition (MVMC). MVMC is an industry-sector partnership; it serves as an intermediary between industry and education to recruit new individuals into manufacturing and works with employers to train and retain its current workforce. MVMC was one of the first manufacturing industry-sector partnerships, and its model has been replicated across Ohio.

MVMC is comprised of approximately 75 manufacturing members, over 50 associate members, which are companies adjacent to the manufacturing industry, and over 20 educational/community-based/workforce organizations.

Key initiatives of MVMC include workforce, upskilling and retention, and youth outreach. To recruit individuals into manufacturing, MVMC supports career fairs, grassroots efforts, and is involved in the WorkAdvance initiative, which hires individuals with little to no experience and trains them for growth-oriented, entry-level jobs. Career coaching and mentoring is also available to provide support or to make referrals to other agencies that can help foster success for the employees.

As part of upskilling, MVMC has developed group-sponsored registered apprenticeships for employers. Efforts are also made to organize credential-earning opportunities for employees and connect them to funding sources for the training. MVMC also assists employers to be strategic in the training offered to its employees. OOD has a hiring event next week, and some employers that are MVMC members will be participating.

Grant Updates:

Pathways to Careers Grant

The Pathways to Careers Grant will be ending soon, however, YSU will be applying for a Disabilities Innovation Fund Grant offered through the Department of Education. YSU has already been in touch with the Columbiana County Board of Developmental Disabilities for guidance.

RETAIN Grant

OOD had a virtual meeting with the evaluator for the RETAIN grant, and the focus is now on sustainability of the project. Mercy Health will continue to provide services, as various strategies for sustainability will be reviewed for consideration.

East Palestine Resiliency Center

The East Palestine Resiliency Center opened in June, and the grand opening is scheduled for July 15th. The purpose of the center is to help people in East Palestine and the surrounding areas, reestablish themselves. Multiple agencies will offer various therapies and services to residents at no cost. The center will also be available for support groups to meet. Grant funding is available through December, and efforts are being made to determine other funding sources. A Facebook page has been created called East Palestine Resiliency Center that provides additional information.

Member Updates

Regional Chamber

The Regional Chamber is partnering with Goodwill Industries to conduct a community needs assessment pertaining to the workforce. The goal is to identify barriers impacting the area workforce. After barriers are identified, committees will be developed to create action plans to help solve the barriers. By addressing the barriers, the number of people who can enter and participate in the workforce will increase for employers. The needs assessment will go from July to August; surveys and focus groups will be used in the five-county area.

Guest Invite Ideas – next and future meetings?

The suggestion was made to invite Shelley Murray, Interim CEO at Goodwill Industries of Youngstown, to discuss the results of the community needs assessment.

Additional suggestions can also be emailed to Brian Eskridge at brian.eskridge@ood.ohio.gov.

Other Business – topics for discussion?

No other business was discussed.

Adjournment

The meeting was adjourned at 10:05am.