

**NORTHEAST OHIO CONSORTIUM (“NOC”)
COUNCIL OF GOVERNMENTS
MEETING MINUTES**

March 22, 2023

11:00-AM

Portage County Offices, OMJ Portage Center, Meeting Room,
253 South Chestnut Street,
Ravenna, Ohio 44266

MEMBERS PRESENT: Commissioner Sabrina Christian-Bennett
 Commissioner Jim Dvorak
 Commissioner Casey Kozlowski

MEMBERS ABSENT:

OTHERS IN ATTENDANCE: Hattie Grubke (OMJ-Ashtabula), Alissa Drees (ACJFS), Mandy
 Minnick (OMJ-Portage), Margo Reda (OMJ-Geauga), Susan
 Brannon (PCJFS), Angel Brandner (PCJFS), Brian Boykin
 (PCJFS), Craig Sernik (Area 19 Director), Denise Gehring (Area
 19)

Ms. Christian-Bennett called the in-person meeting to order at 11:05 a.m.

Minutes

Mr. Kozlowski moved to approve the meeting Minutes from January 25, 2023, as presented. Ms. Christian-Bennett seconded the motion which was approved by all members present.

The Board decided to move the June 28, 2023, meeting start time from 11:00 a.m. to that of noon.

Administrative Report

Mr. Sernik asked the State for technical assistance regarding what Area 19 can do using WIOA funds to assist school districts that have many high school seniors who are in danger of not graduating. The question is how to work with the local school districts to build credentialing that is in-demand, a pathway to graduation, and a step to an employer. Workforce has been asked and is currently discussing recommendations regarding how to assist the SNAP program. The OWA is still discussing obtaining money to be used for providing students career and educational pathway exploration in the state budget.

Fiscal Report

Mr. Sernik reviewed the over-under report with those present.

Status of Securing Additional WIOA CCMEP Funds. We had asked the State for \$394,000.00 of which the State said no because we did not have any money obligated in the system. We are now going through the Ohio Workforce Association redistribution process to submit a request for \$394,000.00 in youth monies. The State has promised once our area goes through the redistribution process, they will provide us technical guidance and we will either update our obligations or show them what we have contractually encumbered. And then the State will give us the additional money. Closing out the BRN Grant and State will give a liquidation quarter. May have adult and dislocated worker left unspent, will need more youth, and Fresh Start monies and Portage is in need of additional RESEA money.

One Stop and Youth Reports

OMJ Geauga County. Ms. Reda reported OMJ-Geauga has partnered with Geauga County Economic Leadership (GEL) to hold an Employment Law event presented by Liz Crosby held at Kent State Geauga. The OMJ is holding a job fair for just high school students in May with two hours will be a job fair and a third hour will turn into a career fair. Held a hiring event for the Ohio State Highway Patrol who was looking for regional talent for a number of different counties. Had 17 strong candidates to speak to the State Highway Patrol with another dozen who called in. The Auburn Career Center Reverse Job Fair will be held on April 20th. The OMJ Center is shifting towards sectors and will offer businesses sector job fairs. OhioGuidestone who runs the CCMEP program is ramping up the TANF summer employment program for the months of June to August.

OMJ Portage County. Ms. Minnick reported partnering with Summit County Reentry Coalition to hold a Reentry and Resource Fair on May 18th from noon until 4 p.m. at the OMJ Portage Center for individuals who were incarcerated. Ms. Minnick is currently working with the local school district's freshman class using an 8 week curriculum to talk about OhioMeansJobs, the OMJ Readiness Seal, and Soft Skills. The OMJ Portage is partnering with Portage Development Board to hold individual job fairs with schools. Currently halfway through the Cohort Manufacturing program with 14 participants who signed up. Trying to increase numbers for the Benefits Bridge program which had only three individuals at the beginning of the year and is now up to 20 individuals currently in the program. Currently working on social media platform just for OMJ.

OMJ Ashtabula County. Ms. Grubke-Barnard reported scheduled 124 RESEA appointments, 122 CCMEP scheduled in February, and going out with A-tech to a number of businesses to introduce the Incumbent Worker Training program to employers. The Summer Manufacturing Camp will be the week of July 17th and July 24th. Conducting Mock Interviews, Summer Work program will be funded with TANF dollars for this year. As of last week, the OMJ had 623 CCMEP youth of which 107 are WIOA individuals and 150 are in follow-up.

Old Business

Discussion Regarding Status of ADA Survey Remediation Issues. Mr. Sernik reported only three items remain to be corrected they are the closing speed of door, issue with the back parking lot needs a sign pointing to main entrance, and the clearance of the front door. The front door is ADA compliant and will take builders response to the state and ask for them to waive the door issue.

Discussion Regarding Status of Workforce Plans. Mr. Sernik stated he is editing the Regional NOW Plan and will afterwards update the Area 19 Local Plan. The Regional NOW Plan and Local

Plans will be advertised for 30 days for public comment until early May with the Plans to be submitted into State on May 30th.

New Business

Discussion of NOC COG GAAP Conversion. Mr. Sernik reported LGS' services have increased and could be approximately \$4,000. It was recommended to secure a one year agreement with LGS.

Mr. Kozlowski moved to approve a 1-year agreement with Local Government Services (LGS) to perform the GAAP Conversion for the NOC COG Office. Ms. Christian-Bennett seconded the motion which was approved by all members present.

Discussion Regarding 5G Broadband Opportunities. Mr. Sernik reported as part of an application and build back project this is not only to increase internet across state but to bring in 5G Broadband training. The RFP is out there for four year universities and secondary educational institutes to do this, and they need coordination of OMJ Centers. KSU reached out to Brad Ehrhart who connected them with us, and CSU reached out to us this morning. Is it the recommendation of the Board that we offer both CSU and KSU letters of support or because KSU has more of a presence in our three counties to support KSU only. Whoever wins the grant there will be money to pay for individuals to obtain the 5G skills. The Board recommended to choose KSU only.

Discussion Regarding Opportunity to Amend IWT Policy. The State has given the okay to local areas to expand to local county/municipal workers to participate in the Incumbent Worker Training program. Discussion commenced regarding whether participants after the completion of the training should be required to take the test when a certificate is available, with the cost of the test to be part of the reimbursable expenses. Discussion concluded.

Discussion to amend vacation policy for Area 19 staff. The Area 19 NOC COG staff currently does not have roll over vacation is it a use it or lose it policy. Asking to amend the policy so that an employee could carry over eighty hours and cap it at an employee having no more than 280 hours. Discussion commenced. Discussion concluded. The Board will discuss and then make a decision at the next scheduled meeting.

WDB Membership.

Mr. Kozlowski moved to approve the Slate of Nominations for WDB memberships with one clarification of Keith Webb pending the receipt of the 7 questions and a biography after receiving these documents approval to be placed on the board.

Those who have submitted the answers to the 7 questions and a biography:

- a) **Mark A. Trushell, Mantaline Corporation, Business for Portage County**
- b) **Phil Rath, Compass Packaging, Business for Portage County**
- c) **Rose Dolance, MAC LTT, Inc., Business for Portage County**
- d) **Ryan Keegan, Escape Design LLC, Business for Geauga County**
- e) **Greg King, Plastpro, Business for Ashtabula County**
- f) **David Flautt, Edward Jones, Business for Ashtabula County**
- g) **Keith Wyatt, Grand River Rubber & Plastics, Business for Ashtabula County.**

Those who we are waiting to receive answers for the 7 questions and a biography:

- h) **Keith Webb, SPIRE, Business for Ashtabula County**

Ms. Christian-Bennett seconded the motion which was approved by all members present.

Public Comment

None.

Adjourn the Meeting

Mr. Kozlowski moved to adjourn the meeting. Ms. Christian-Bennett seconded the motion which was approved by all members present.

Meeting Adjourned at 12:31 p.m.

Minutes prepared by Denise Gehring.