



Wednesday, June 16, 2021

Zoom ® Meeting

Helena, MT

**MEMBERS PRESENT:** Paul Hopfauf (Chair), Grover Wallace, Jeaneen Campbell, Jennifer Kobza, Asta So, Becky Bey, Karen Miller, Ross Lane, Heather O'Hara, Debora Poteet, Steven Nicholls, Bill Collins, Melanie Schwarz, Dylan Klapmeier (Designee), Commissioner Laurie Esau, Scott Eychner (Designee), Commissioner Maureen Wicks, Commissioner Mike McGinley, Sara Swanson (Designee), Chanda Hermanson (Designee), Brock Tessman (Designee), Paddy Fleming, Matthew Olsen, David Smith

**MEMBERS EXCUSED:** Jeaneen Campbell, Representative Ron Marshall, Dean Bentley, Rebecca Morgan, Jolene Schalper, Al Ekblad, Morgan Marks, Director Scott Osterman

**STAFF:** Shannon Lewis

**CALL TO ORDER/ROLL CALL:** Chair Hopfauf called the meeting to order at 9:00 AM.

**ROLL CALL:** Shannon Lewis conducted roll call and established a quorum.

**AGENDA:** Chair Hopfauf asked for a motion to approve the agenda.

***Ms. Schwarz moved, and Ms. Kobza seconded a motion to approve the agenda.***

***The motion carried.***

**DECEMBER 16, 2020 MINUTES:** Chair Hopfauf asked for a motion to approve the draft meeting minutes from the December 16, 2020 meeting.

***Ms. Kobza moved, and Mr. McGinley seconded a motion to approve the December 16, 2020 meeting minutes.***

***The motion carried.***

#### **UPDATE ON MONTANA'S ECONOMY:**

Ms. Wagner updated the board on Montana's economy its post-COVID-19 recovery. She was able to give the board an overview of the industries that are currently most impacted by the worker shortage as well as an overview of the individuals currently lingering on unemployment. In addition, she was able to discuss the supply disruptions and how the flow of goods impacts the overall economy and the ripple that the disruption continues to have on Montana's economy.

In addition to an overview of Montana's economy, Barb was also able to present information about Sweetgrass and Stillwater Counties and the industry mix for those

counties, which is largely based around the mining activity and the occupations related to that industry.

#### **UPDATE ON GOVERNOR'S PRIORITIES:**

Commissioner Laurie Esau was able to give the SWIB an overview of the Governor's priorities related to workforce and the economy in the state. Overall, the Governor is interested in getting more Montanans into meaningful employment and off of unemployment. He is interested in working across industry and government partners to ensure that Montanans are afforded access to training and education that support high-wage jobs throughout the state. He is also interested in bringing in more businesses that pay higher wages to ensure that all Montanans are afforded opportunities to work and grow throughout the state.

#### **CHAIR'S REMARKS:**

Chair Hopfauf discussed the challenges of safely doing work and supporting your workforce through the pandemic. He discussed the board's role in supporting employers and individuals as Montana begins to get back to normal. He also let the SWIB know how important their role is to help ensure there is coordination across industries and partners to meet Montana's workforce challenges. He also let folks know that the intersectional work happening between the SWIB Board and industry associations will help create a common narrative across the state and help guide the work across those partners as well.

#### **WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT UPDATES:**

Chair Hopfauf kicked off the workforce updates for the board, and while there were significant changes to how businesses operated throughout the pandemic, there is now a shift to reemployment, return to work, and progress toward returning to full activity. public institutions, including, OCHE, OPI, and DLI are now pivoting to fully opening and providing services to students, employers, and individuals and shifting to hybrid models for service delivery and education. Most of the employers on the board are moving forward with expansion or growth and are trying to move quickly to keep up with work. Small manufacturers, like TKI continue to struggle with supply chain disruptions and engineering firms, like KLJ and WET are working to recruit and retain talent as they await a potential infrastructure package. Large employers on the board are also working to find talent to get back to full operation.

#### **ONSITE LUNCH PRESENTATION: MINING INDUSTRY AND ECONOMIC IMPACT ON RURAL COMMUNITIES:**

Ms. Heather McDowell with Sibanye-Stillwater Mine gave the board an overview of the mining operation in Big Timber and Columbus and the role that the mine plays within the local economy and its global impact based on the metals mined there. The mine is the largest employer in the region, with most of its employees coming in from Billings to Bozeman and the local area. The mine employs a variety of occupations, and the actual miners are only a small percentage of the staff at the mine. Many of the occupations are related to safety and environmental compliance and processing of the materials coming up from underground. In addition to the role that the mine plays on a global scale, it is also a big community partner in supporting environmental standards that allow for

these communities to remain pristine spaces that also support tourism and other industries related to the mountains that the mine is in.

#### **WIOA ALLOCATION PRESENTATION AND APPROVAL:**

Ms. Weisgerber presented the WIOA allocation and discussed the formula applied to the allocation and how the funding is distributed throughout the state to ensure that there is equitable access for Montanans seeking training and assistance across the state.

***Mr. McGinley moved, and Ms. Bey seconded a motion to approve the PY21 WIOA Allocation.***

***The motion carried.***

#### **HEALTHCARE WORKFORCE AND RURAL SERVICE DELIVERY:**

Ms. Heather O'Hara presented data from a survey the workforce committee within the Montana Hospital Association collected from members across the state. The data revealed that, consistently across providers, there continues to be persistent stress on recruiting and retaining talent across all occupations within healthcare settings. While some healthcare providers to provide incentives for higher-level hard-to-recruit positions, it is inconsistent, and healthcare providers also have external factors that add to the operational challenges related to recruitment. Many respondents reported that lack of childcare, housing, or work for a spouse also impact their ability to recruit across all occupations.

Eric Vardell, with Pioneer Medical Center in Big Timber was able to give the board a local perspective to recruitment, retention, and training challenges. Mr. Vardell was also able to give perspective on policy changes that could positively impact healthcare providers ability to recruit and retain talent and build talent pipelines.

#### **WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT SERVICE DELIVERY PANEL:**

Rhonda Huseby, Ryan Van Ballegooyen, and Holly Wolfe presented and discussed Job Service's role during the pandemic and the changes in service delivery that developed as a result of the pandemic. Pre-pandemic Job Service offices served Montanans regionally, when the pandemic hit and everyone immediately went to remote service delivery and the role changed to supporting dislocated Montanans, it allowed for more flexibility and innovations in how they serve folks across the state. As the state shifted back to a reemployment model and service needs changed, it became clear that a wider array of services were able to be delivered to both individuals and businesses across the state. New models of service delivery are allowing new autonomy for workforce professionals to engage, regardless of location.

#### **ADJOURNMENT:**

Chair Hopfauf adjourned the meeting at 5:30 PM.



Wednesday, September 9, 2020

Zoom ® Meeting

Helena, MT

**MEMBERS PRESENT:** Dean Bentley, Ross Lane, Asta So, Rebecca Morgan, Paul Hopfauf, Vicky Byrd, Ken Fichtler (Designee), Scott Eychner (Designee), Commissioner Jane Weber, Katie Madsen (Designee), Chanda Hermanson-Dudley (Designee), Brock Tessman (Designee)

**MEMBERS EXCUSED:** Loren Rose, Karen Miller, Heather O'Hara, Representative Joel Krautter, Director Tara Rice, Commissioner Mike McGinley, Grover Wallace, Becky Bey, Jennifer Kobza, Al Ekblad

**GUESTS:**

Kathleen O'Leary, Deputy Commissioner, Montana Department of Labor & Industry

**STAFF:** Shannon Lewis

**CALL TO ORDER/ROLL CALL:** Chair Bentley called the meeting to order at 9:00 AM.

**ROLL CALL:** Shannon Lewis conducted roll call and established a quorum.

**PANEL DISCUSSION: HOW DO WE RETURN TO WORK SAFELY, KEEPING EMPLOYEES AND CUSTOMERS SAFE**

**PANELISTS:**

Dr. Maggie Cook-Shimanek, Medical Director, Employment Relations Division, Montana Department of Labor & Industry

Dr. Greg Holzman: State Medical Officer, Montana Department of Public Health and Human Services

Tiffany Ott: Occupational Health Safety Specialist, Employment Relations Division, Montana Department of Labor & Industry

Jake Sandau: Occupational Health Safety Specialist, Employment Relations Division, Montana Department of Labor & Industry

Dr. Cook-Shimanek and Dr. Holzman led the conversation about the impacts of COVID-19 in the workplace. Employees and employers throughout the state have had questions about how to work safely. Largely, employee safety and the employer's responsibilities to ensure safety falls on the Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA). Guidance from OSHA wasn't designed to cover a highly-contagious virus, therefore much of the guidance for safety in the workplace has come from Centers for Disease Control (CDC). The CDC's guidance is the best resource for employers who are looking at how to operate safely through the pandemic.

Dr. Holzman discussed the public health response to the virus, and discussed Montana's capacity and response to containing the virus and ensuring there are enough resources in place should the pandemic continue spreading throughout the state. He encouraged SWIB members to share the best practices and factual information about how to best control the spread of the virus. Including masking, practicing good hygiene, and avoid large crowds, events, and use caution when indoors.

**THE RURAL LANDSCAPE: WHERE'S THE OPPORTUNITY, WHAT ARE THE CHALLENGES?**  
**PRESENTER:**

Dr. Jayne Morrow, Assistant Vice President of Research, Economic Development, and Graduate Education, Montana State University

Dr. Morrow presented on the impacts of COVID-19 in rural communities and how rural areas are responding. She discussed the need for rural communities to look beyond disruptions, like the disruption caused by COVID-19, and find ways to collaborate and develop resiliency so that when disruptions occur, rural areas are better positioned to withstand the impacts and recover without long-term devastation. She discussed models that have worked across the globe with building partnerships and issue-based work that could be replicated in communities in Montana to help build the infrastructure necessary to create community-based resiliency models.

**ADJOURNMENT:**

Chair Bentley adjourned the meeting at 12:45 PM.