



TechHire Community Proposal Selection Committee Meeting

1:00–500 PM

Monday, February 22, 2016

Elkhorn A & B

Holiday Inn Conference Center Downtown-Helena, MT

MEMBERS PRESENT: Vince Ricci (Chair); Tina Bundtrock; Jasyn Harrington; Niles Hushka and Robert Minto

STAFF: Greg Cano and Casey Schreiner

GUESTS: Wolf Ametsbichler; Mary Berg; Jann Brown; Stephanie Gray; Kate Johnson; Darla Joyner; Dr. Kirk Lacy; Meagan Lannan; Doug Odegaard; Siri Smillie; Brittney Souza; Matt Springer; Roch Turner and Katie Weaver

Call To Order/Roll Call

Chair Ricci called the meeting to order.

Roll call

Greg Cano conducted roll call and established a quorum.

Agenda

Chair Ricci asked for a motion to approve the agenda. Mr. Minto made the motion to approve the agenda. Ms. Harrington seconded the motion. The motion carried.

Minutes-February 16, 2016

Chair Ricci asked for a motion to approve the draft meeting minutes from the last TechHire Committee Meeting-February 16, 2016. Ms. Bundtrock made the motion to approve the minutes. Mr. Minto seconded the motion. The motion carried.

Community Proposal Review and Selection

Chair Ricci introduced Siri Smillie, from the Governor's Office to the committee members. On behalf of the Governor and Commissioner Bucy, she thanked the 5 members for taking the time to serve on the TechHire Committee and thanked them for their commitment and follow through in regard to reviewing/scoring and selection of the final proposals.

Chair Ricci invited Dr. Kirk Lacy to facilitate the next portion of the meeting. Dr. Lacy concurred regarding his thanks to the SWIB committee members. He pointed out that this is the first time the DLI has issued a statewide Request for Proposal (RFP) in this kind of format. This is also the first time that 9 individual communities in Montana pulled together stakeholders from throughout their community and workforce development systems and put together pilot project

proposals that have been reviewed by the committee members for consideration for this national grant. This is the first time that a SWIB subcommittee was selected and guided through this grant selection process.

Dr. Lacy summarized the process prior to this final selection meeting. On Tuesday, February 16, 2016 each committee member received access to copies of the 9 submitted individual community proposals from Billings, Bozeman, Butte, Dillon, Hamilton, Havre, Helena, Livingston and Missoula. Upon training, each committee member was instructed to read and score all 9 proposals by Monday, February 22, 2016. Committee members had access to the TechHire scoring and administration documents, the Montana TechHire Initiative-Community Partnership Team Proposal and Reviewer's score sheet, the TechHire Grant-Final United States Department of Labor (USDOL) Funding Opportunity Announcement (FOA), and the TechHire Request for Proposal (RFP). Each of the SWIB members had the exact same spreadsheet used for scoring each of the 9 proposals. The spreadsheet-outlined in the original RFP, was based on the scoring framework from the USDOL Funding Opportunity Announcement. Each section of the narrative scoring from the FOA was outlined for the reviewers to review the proposals and provide a score of points awarded out of the total points possible for that particular item in the scoring rubric. The 9 partnership teams were informed in advance that Sections 4: A, B and C and Section 5 A did not need responses. In each of those sections, every proposal that was submitted received maximum points. Using the scoring rubric, the members could present their notes and proceed through each of the 9 proposals to fill a [Master Scoring Document](#). The scores submitted from each of the 5 reviewers were listed and ranked. Highlighted is the lowest score and separated out were the top 3-4 scores. Average scores were calculated, as well. There was a preliminary ranking at an individual level before the group begins its deliberations on how to select the top 3-5 finalists. Billings and Missoula were tied at # 1 & #2, with Butte and Dillon tied at #3 and #4. He reported that from a funding standpoint, all except one proposal proposed roughly around 1 million dollars each. In regards to the funds required in the final grant for the State level administration and coordination of the grant-to continue to keep below a 4 million dollar mark, he advised to either identify 3 proposals that would fit into the amount allotted or if there was a strong sense for a 4th proposal or more, his recommendation would be to go back to those respective groups and modify the budget proposals to get it into the budget ballpark below 4 million including the state level portion for the administration and coordination of the grant.

Chair Ricci recommended that a motion be made to review the top 4 proposals versus reviewing all 9 proposals. Several board members asked the Chair for discussion before the motion was made. Discussion ensued regarding the amount of time allotted for recommended changes on a given proposal. Dr. Lacy reported that there is a 1 ½ week window of time after the final recommendations for the state team to work with the respective communities and partnership teams to put together the final grant submission to the federal level-so there isn't a lot of time to gather additional resources. Therefore, if possible, base decisions by what was submitted. When asked by a committee member, Matt Springer, the TechHire grant writer, noted that he thought

administrative and coordination costs at the state level would be approximately 975 thousand dollars-not approved by Commissioner Bucy or others as of now. Therefore-there is the possibility to go over the 3 million dollars and be safe-but again-the budget has yet to be discussed with anyone. In reality, could business partners, for example, make the necessary commitments in such a short time? If requirements weren't demonstrated upon submission of the proposal, this may be a significant limitation. Concerns in regards to the lower scored proposals were voiced by board members as they cited missing required elements, a sense of weaker employer/business commitment, no mention of assessment, and lack of evidence of required public sector support. Mr. Minto wondered if the purpose of scoring/ranking was for technicality and/or for the most innovative projects which would blend well into a single grant? Dr. Lacy responded that both reasons may lead reviewers to their results. There was no right or wrong answer.

Chair Ricci suggested to the committee that they choose the top 3 or 4 proposals and eliminate the rest as the 1st step. Dr. Lacy again confirmed that the grant budget needs to be under 4 million dollars with approximately 1 million of that used for state administrative and coordination costs.

After deliberation ensued, Mr. Minto made a motion to select Missoula and Billings proposals as the 1st and 2nd selections. This decision was based on the prior ranking of scores coming into this meeting. Ms. Harrington seconded the motion. The motion carried.

Chair Ricci, referring to their last proposal selection, asked if the committee could choose the lowest scoring proposal if they felt strongly about doing so; rather, how important is the score? Dr. Lacy reported that the scores are a way to show comparisons of the proposals. Mr. Schreiner reported that the committee could choose any of the last 7 proposals, regardless of the score, if they felt it was a strong application. Ms. Harrington cited the budget as a sensible way to choose only selecting one more proposal. Ms. Harrington made a motion that of the remaining 7 proposals, the committee choose one more proposal. Mr. Minto seconded the motion. The motion carried.

The committee decided to identify a third and final proposal. Mr. Minto moved to eliminate proposals 5, 6 and 7-Hamilton, Havre and Helena to allow time to focus on the remaining 3 proposals. Mr. Hushka seconded the motion. The motion carried. Dillon, Bozeman, Butte and Livingston were the remaining proposals. Mr. Minto made a motion to drop Livingston from the list-he had intended on including Livingston with the previous eliminated proposals. Tina Bundtrock seconded the motion. The motion carried. This left 3 proposals-Dillon, Bozeman and Butte. Several board members praised Dillon's proposal for showing strong employer letters of commitment and being well written and easy to follow. Mr. Hushka, a Bozeman resident, pointed out that Bozeman has Oracle and the ability to hire H1B employees quickly because of labor shortages and other high tech businesses located in the area-as real strengths for its consideration. The jobs are in Bozeman. Mr. Minto commented that if Bozeman was selected,

there would be no rural representation regarding this grant. Is it a criteria considered or not important? Ms. Harrington considered the importance of the proposals being as articulate as possible, yet Bozeman is where the jobs are located. She pointed out the strengths in Bozeman's proposal: mention of assessment, the supportive service strategy-the case management piece is a big piece-staying connected with the individual-not only do they enter; they succeed and get a job. Mr. Minto cited that Bozeman was the only proposal that factored in attrition rate. Mr. Springer suggested that one process to use to rank the final proposals would be to identify strengths and weaknesses of the proposals-how complete were they? Case management is a big component. Three different tracks need to be highlighted: direct placement, boot camp model and pathways-the more traditional education model. On the job training should be a component of the project overall-on the job training, internships, work experiences and/or Apprenticeship. Strong industry partnerships, and the indication of more than one partnership, and lastly credentials-are the target occupations and good justification for the targeted occupations clearly listed? Are educational credentials associated with those occupations-specifically industry recognized credentials? Or, is part of the proposal the creation of those credentials?

Chair Ricci, in regard to Butte, wanted clarification with the 25 % special populations. Dr. Lacy reported that the Butte proposal emphasized the corrections population-which could also include individuals aged 17-29 years of age who are also in corrections. This would mean 100% fitting into that 17-29 year old category. If they are not in that group, clarification needs to be made to see if both bases were covered. Ms. Bundtrock had concerns regarding the attrition rate of their dropouts. Commitments need to be made to change long life behaviors and this may pose a problem. She pointed out that it is hard for inmates released from prison to find housing because of their background. A public comment was made by Brittney Souza, from Billings Works, mentioned that she worked as an IT staff and recruiting firm that worked across the region and that regarding IT and healthcare occupations, potential employees have to pass strict background checks. Mr. Hushka reiterated that the communities need the ability to sustain this effort after the grant money is gone. Many of the eliminated proposals don't have the systems and support and/or the capacity to handle the amount of people coming into the programs to sustain. If 35 people a year enter a program, the community needs to be large enough to sustain the program. He mentioned the strength of assessment regarding Bozeman's proposal. The issue of the finalists all being from larger communities emerged. The issue of selecting the previously considered 4 proposals was mentioned-with the recommendation to reduce the dollars. Wolf Ametsbichler, from the Missoula Job Service Office reported that the communities of Bozeman, Billings and Missoula have reached out to each other as part of this proposal and coordinated their responses both during intake and result orientation. They have had a tough time selling to the industry non-degree accelerated learning in the IT field. Responses were that individuals with 4 year degrees are hired or at best; with 2 year degrees. Any accelerated learning program was met with some amount of skepticism. He has 3 1/2 years of working extensively with re-entry efforts. Between the security concerns, as well as the non-degree concerns, they worked very hard to get buy-in and industry placements. Mr. Minto said it would be a mistake to not include

Bozeman including the presence of Montana State University. He supported a vote for Bozeman. Jann Brown with Montana Cooperative Development in Havre, wondered if rural and impoverished counties were considered. The answer was yes. The Dillon proposal was cited for having no budget item for participants. Brittney Souza commented that Billings would collaborate with smaller surrounding rural communities. Mr. Ametsbichler commented that much of this is about distant learning in the IT fields. So, this is a plus. This is about building the infrastructure in larger cities and making it available to rural Montanans. Mr. Minto pointed out that a strength of the Billings, Havre and Missoula proposals was the proximity to the Native American populations-populations with barriers to employment.

Mr. Hushka made the motion to select Bozeman as the final proposal selection with an addition of assurance that the three selections will collaborate and specify a component for statewide use of a more enhanced online perspective without the need for users to have to travel to larger cities for training-that an infrastructure is built to assist the rural communities in Montana. Mr. Minto seconded the motion. Dr. Lacy pointed out that the representatives from the top three selections, if Bozeman were to be selected, were in the audience and it is advantageous that they have heard the discussions and concerns mentioned today. Stephanie Grey from Gallatin College spoke. She noted that Gallatin County has nothing for IT training. That is because Gallatin College is fairly new. The needs are there regarding training and recertification. Chair Ricci asked the committee to vote on Bozeman as the final selection and the motion carried.

Darla Joyner from Career Transitions, had a question regarding procedure. Was the recommendation final to the SWIB board tomorrow-February 23, 2016, or does the board have the option of changing any choices? Mr. Schreiner reported that the board will take action tomorrow, but it will be to endorse. The decisions made by this group would be final. The SWIB can vote to endorse or not endorse, yet, that does not change this committee's decision.

Adjournment

Chair Ricci asked for a motion to adjourn. Mr. Minto made the motion to adjourn and Ms. Bundtrock seconded the motion. The motion carried. The meeting was adjourned at 2:38 pm.