



Executive Committee Meeting
April 16, 2024
9:00 a.m.
Remote

MEETING MINUTES

MEMBERS PRESENT: Dean Bentley, David Smith, Mike McGinley, Sarah Swanson, Paul Hopfauf, Chanda Hermanson, Elsie Arntzen

MEMBERS ABSENT: Adam Gilbertson, Dylan Klapmeier

STAFF: Jennifer Owen, Barb Wagner, Crystal Armstrong

PUBLIC PRESENT: None

CALL TO ORDER (9:01 a.m.): Chair Hopfauf called the meeting to order.

ROLL CALL (9:02 a.m.): Director Owen completed Roll Call. A quorum was present.

AGENDA (9:03): Chair Hopfauf asked for a motion to approve the agenda.

***Dean moved to approve the agenda and Chanda seconded the motion.
The motion carried on a unanimous voice vote.***

REQUEST FOR PUBLIC COMMENT (9:03 a.m.): Chair Hopfauf asked for public comment.

MARCH 29, 2023 MEETING MINUTES (9:04 a.m.): Chair Hopfauf asked for a motion to approve the March 2024 Executive Committee Meeting Minutes.

Sarah moved, and David seconded a motion to approve the March 2024 meeting minutes. The motion carried on a unanimous voice vote.

MT DLI COMMISSIONER UPDATE (9:04 a.m.): Commissioner Swanson provided an update on her goals and priorities as Commissioner. TechHub Phase II, if awarded, includes \$8M for DLI, a majority of which is grants through SWIB. This will be a new function for SWIB, but the right way to bring all the workforce stakeholders together. Helpful that SWIB is attending TechHub summit.

DLI is also pursuing grants for reentry. PROWD grant focuses on registered apprenticeships for prerelease. Pathways Home grant is pending. DLI also just submitted apprenticeship expansion funding focused on licensed teachers. This is not a pathway around licensure – it is an alternative approach to full license at end of apprenticeship. Initial implementation is estimated at \$2.7M, federal funding pending. If grant is not awarded, DLI will consider other funding options.

Some new faces at DLI: new PIO, Sam Loveridge; Donnie Wetzel, Office of Tribal Relations; Jay Phillips – Central Services Administration.

MAY SWIB MEETING PLANNING (9:09 a.m.): Chair Hopfauf noted we will be wrapping the Spring Board meeting around HTH Summit. Appreciate SWIB members attending the TechHub summit. Chair asks for thoughts on direction of May meeting – would like to make it more working sessions.

Members discussed balancing Tech Hub needs with other industries, as well as significant opportunities in Tech Hub, both as workforce and end users. The idea of HTH is not science experiments, needs to be practical and applicable. HTH touches industry all across the state. That's the transformational aspect. User role is critical. From workforce perspective – there are challenges in the tech sector, especially for incumbent employers who may see people shift jobs. But there are downstream benefits as well. Working through those challenges is good role for SWIB.

Voc Rehab is working to prepare staff to have conversations with job seekers. Interesting opportunities for tech-assisted employment. Would be good to have more conversations around how HTH can create solutions to integrate workers with disabilities into the workforce. Reentry projects are also of high interest.

Much of the SWIB work is not dependent on HTH. We will have workforce needs for tech and other sectors. Regardless of HTH, the photonics industry will change landscape of workforce. Are we prepared in Montana to address those trends? Are construction and trade apprenticeships ready to receive this technology, for example? We need to be at forefront of thinking, whether Phase II is received or not.

There are other macro drivers that could impact MT beyond HTH. Data expansion, power requirements, for example. David's biz devo committee is important – MT is increasingly competitive versus other states because of our energy policies and energy affordability.

As SWIB develops strategic plan, need to consider deeply about how to structure pathway for private industries. Need to have an easy way for industry to integrate investments into workforce needs. Example: work between AFL-CIO and Stone Child – \$1M investment in curriculum (national building trades) – creates JATC pathways. SWIB needs to be a thought leader identifying the on-ramps for industry.

Another example: Utility industry across the county has a learning management system & curriculum. Would like to see it integrated into high schools here in MT. Has entry/exit for related industries. It is built and free – just need to figure out how to implement.

COMMITTEE PLANNING (9:31): Need to restart committee work. We have some committees that are relevant to priorities. SkillUp Montana – Adam's committee. Apprenticeship – Dean. Business recruitment/industry on-ramps – David. Lots of discussion about WIOA for Mike's committee as well.

Committee chairs feel a bit frustrated – have not been given tasks, not connected enough to Governor's office. Need to identify some policy recommendations, but also need tasks. Also need to work more closely with Commerce and business recruitment. Business attraction specialists are a resource. When a business is actively looking, there is an event in state – tours, agency meetings, industry and local meetings, etc. The process for this is evolving with Sarah and Paul Green being new: Red Carpet 2.0. DLI is working on a standard presentation and format. SWIB business attraction committee can be a sounding board and part of the welcoming team.

Business attraction efforts should be a huge win for Montana. What the governor is doing is tremendous. Need to build SWIB and Commerce relationships. Energy is a big advantage for MT – there are resources

around the state from energy industry, opportunity to include them in recruitment events. Smaller towns don't have recruitment capacity, but companies are looking at them. Small towns are welcoming to new economic opportunities. Montana really is open for business everywhere.

Committee members discussed HTH work – where does it live? WIOA committee needs to focus on making sure funding piece comes through; committee has generally been focused more on ordinary compliance. Interested to understand how WIOA intersects with HTH. Members discuss having various HTH assignments throughout the committees; could get lost in full board. Executive committee to parse out assignments to the committees, serve as the coordinator of HTH overall and the various tasks.

Discussion about using WIOA as jumping off point for other strategies. Need to align committee meetings with full meeting. Meet more regularly but still quarterly. All remote. Members give feedback that they are available as needed for action items.

REENTRY WORK (9:53 a.m.): Crystal presents on reentry. PROWD2 – collaboration across 2 fed agencies but provided through DOL. \$1.8M grant, focused in Billings and Great Falls. Focuses on people being released from federal facilities and coming back to Montana, especially for apprenticeships. Could get additional funds for these efforts through WIOA - \$943,000. Separate application to ensure we aren't taking WIOA dollars from other efforts.

Committee members discuss and ask questions.

Crystal presents on pending Pathways Home 5. \$3.5M requested to serve 350 individuals. Goal is to focus on people leaving state facilities (pre-release, MSP, Montana Women's Prison). Yellowstone and Missoula, adjacent tribal communities. Partnership with MTDOC. Should know in June or July. Similar to PROWD, but open to employment opportunities outside of apprenticeships.

Discussion about planning/prioritization. Reentry work is an example of a priority that SWIB could develop. There is data to support some priorities – of the Montanans not in the labor force, economists are investigating as to why they aren't in the labor force. Ask to think about these things heading into the May meeting and summer/fall strategic planning. OPI is working with corrections as well – GED/HiSet, other education opportunities. Better direction from SWIB would help all the partners coming together. All stakeholders have an interest, SWIB can help direct and bring everyone together.

Need to think about individuals and how they access the workforce system. Grant is for 18 and older, but there are significant youth needs coming out of Pine Hills and juvenile system.

Members discuss whether reentry work is a priority. Have an obligation, given the opportunity and the need SWIB brings the collaborative voice to connect everyone. Make sure we are focused on equity of opportunities. Discussion around policies that might support prison reentry – bridging the gap between youth and adult correctional systems, creating certifications that resonate with employers, etc. Evolve the processes. Committee would support prioritization of reentry, workforce focal point.

REQUEST FOR PUBLIC COMMENT (10:26 a.m.): Chair Hopfauf sked for public comment. No members of the public were in attendance.

ADJOURNED (10:27 a.m.): Chair Hopfauf adjourned the meeting at 10:27 a.m.