

**Southwestern Area
Workforce Development Board
Special Virtual Meeting Via Zoom or Phone**

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Thursday, September 16, 2021 at 10:00 a.m. (MDT)

MEETING MINUTES

I. Call to Order

- a. Chairman Juarez-Infante called the meeting to order at 10:13 a.m. and welcomed all attendees.

II. Roll Call and Abstentions

- a. Ms. Longovia called roll. There were no abstentions.

Present:

Alisa Estrada
Jacqueline Fryar
Joe Gristy
Robert Hawkins
Mario Juarez-Infante
Michael Olguin
Josh Orozco
Erik Padilla
Steve Sianez
Kim Skinner
Sharon Thomas
Mary Ulrich
Gary Whitehead

Absent:

Cassie Arias-Ward
Chris Boston
Mary Ann Chavez-Lopez
Rebecca Lescombes
Debbie Maldonado
Marcos Martinez
Anton Salome
Debbie Schoonover
Marlene Thomas-Herrera

Staff:

Jay Armijo, SCCOG Executive Director
Skylar Arnold, Fiscal Administrator
Angela Longovia, Communications Manager
Krisye Shook, WIOA Program Specialist
Jaymi Simms, WIOA Program Manager

Guests:

Veronica Alonzo
Margarito Aragon
Anissa Baldonado
Mayor Nora Barraza
Yvette Bayless
Steven Chavira
Concha Cordova
Mary Gandara
Yvette Gutierrez
Jeramey Harrison
Andy Huls
Darleen Lopez
Annette Montoya
Camille Padilla
Marcos Peña
Cindy Quillin
Eric Rivera
Monica

III. Public Comment

- a. No public comment

IV. Approval of Agenda

- a. Approval of the agenda includes approval of the Consent Agenda Items. Ms. Thomas **made a motion to approve the agenda; seconded by Mr. Hawkins.** Motion passed. Roll call vote was as follows:

Ms. Estrada – Yes	Mr. Padilla – Yes
Ms. Fryar – Yes	Mr. Siañez – Yes
Mr. Gristy – Yes	Ms. Skinner – Yes
Mr. Hawkins – Yes	Ms. Thomas – Yes
Mr. Juarez-Infante – Yes	Ms. Ulrich – Yes
Mr. Olguin – Yes	Mr. Whitehead – Yes
Mr. Orozco – Yes	

Consent Agenda Items – (These items were approved when the agenda was approved)

- a. *Approval of the August 12, 2021, meeting minutes

V. Discussion, Consideration and Possible Action Regarding

- a. Resolution 21 – 10 approves an amendment to the contract agreement number PY21-WIOA-04 with Arbor E&T, LLC dba Equus Workforce Solutions to provide WIOA One-Stop Operator Services for the period of July 1, 2021 through June 30, 2022, and authorizes the board chair or vice-chair to sign the agreement. Ms. Longovia stated that this contract amendment includes an increase of \$400,000.00 in the One-Stop Operator contract for a total contract amount of \$725,745.00. The amendment includes approving a recommendation from the One-Stop/Agency Coordination Committee to approve the One-Stop Operator Staffing Plan. The new staffing plan will keep temporary Customer Engagement Specialists on staff and add two new temporary Welcome Function staff through June 30, 2022. In addition to the new staffing plan, increases will be made to the Awareness Campaign and other line items outlined in the presentation.

Ms. Ulrich, Chair of the One-Stop/Agency Coordination Committee, stated that they listened to the staffing plan presentation, reviewed the information, and feel this is a good use of the funds, and recommend the staffing plan for approval.

Ms. Padilla, Regional Director for Equus Workforce Solutions, stated that this plan was developed by Ms. Lopez, the One-Stop Operator for the Southwestern area, and Ms. Padilla with input and approval from the co-located partners who will benefit from the plan. It is based on a model used in the Central region. Ms. Padilla stated that Equus uses this model in other states where they provide One-Stop Operator services.

Ms. Padilla presented the proposed staffing plan, described the Customer Flow Chart and the steps and services provided to a customer as they enter a New Mexico Workforce Connection center. Customers will meet with a Welcome Function Team Member, who will register them into the Workforce Connection Online System (WCOS), assist them in the resource room such as providing access to computers, inform them of events and workshops, and provide any referrals to programs. These team members are also responsible for maintaining the front desk, the partner-shared calendar, schedule customers into appointments and workshops, ensure welcome area and resource room is clean, and more. Front desk coverage is currently shared by partners co-located at the workforce centers. Hiring staff to assist walk-in customers, answer phones, and maintain the resource room will alleviate workforce partners from these responsibilities and allow them to focus on their participants.

Ms. Padilla also described the roles of current Customer Engagement Specialists who are working with customers by phone, and not in-person. Their key responsibilities are to pull 211 referral reports from WCOS, use the Eligibility Explorer Application in WCOS, call

participants to refer them to programs, follow up with employers who attended hiring events to gather data such as application submissions and who was hired, and more.

The current Customer Engagement Specialists are temporary staff and only budgeted through October 2021. This staffing plan includes keeping the current staff and hiring three new temporary staff through June 2022. The total cost for the five staff is \$254,318.00. Ms. Padilla stated the reason for hiring temporary staff is that they do not know what the funding will look like in July 2022. They would prefer not to hire full time employees with the possibility of laying them off at the end of the program year. At the end of this program year, this structure will be evaluated and discussions will include if they want to continue, how to modify it, and how to pay for it.

Ms. Padilla provided a total cost breakdown for the \$400,000.00 requested contract increase. In addition to salaries for the five temporary staff, funds would go to travel, office supplies, office rent, insurance, Awareness Campaign, profit incentives, and other items.

Chairman Juarez-Infante requested Ms. Padilla go over the scope of work. Ms. Padilla stated that it is being updated, but a simplified version was presented.

Ms. Lopez stated that discussion for this structure began a year ago. She provided some background about the need for Welcome Function staff as requested by workforce partners because the time they spend managing the front desk and assisting walk-in customers takes away from their current caseload. There has also been a large increase in walk-in customers who received unemployment and now need to visit a workforce center for RESEA (Remployment Services and Eligibility Assessment) services.

Ms. Thomas commented that we are spending about 60% of our budget on administration and the state is asking that we reduce our admin expenses to no more than 40%. If this staffing plan is approved, it will add to admin expenses and we need to be aware of what we're going to cut to have this plan in place. Ms. Thomas asked Ms. Lopez about the Career Pathways Plan and if she is aware of her role. Ms. Lopez replied that she is and that she and the partners developed a logic form that is used internally to help funnel customers down a pathway leading them from one program to another based on the career pathway or in-demand field selected. Ms. Thomas asked Ms. Lopez if she has met with various business sectors. Ms. Lopez stated she met with employers from the agriculture industry and that lead to the development of an employer forum planned for October. Ms. Thomas stated she thinks we should implement the career strategies program first. She doesn't think anyone on the board has ever seen the Career Pathways Plan and she would like to present it to the board at the next meeting. She thinks we should table this staffing plan until the board has more information about the Career Pathways Plan and talk about how to implement it.

Mr. Orozco stated he would like to see a profit incentive schedule for the new staff for this contract, showing what kind of performance we want to see from them.

Mr. Aragon, WIOA Operations and Performance Manager for the State, offered some information for the board. He talked about how none of the roles of the One-Stop Operator provide direct services to customers. He also advised the board to be cognizant of how everything is structured to avoid the OSO and staff performing functions that are outside of their scope of work as defined in WIOA. Mr. Aragon also suggested a cost allocation plan to calculate the percentages expended from each program.

Ms. Thomas made a motion to bring this item to the floor for discussion; seconded by Ms. Fryar. After additional discussion, members indicated there is not enough information to approve this item. Ms. Thomas **made a motion to table Resolution 21 – 10 until the next board meeting on October 14, 2021; seconded by Mr. Orozco.** Motion passed. Roll call vote was as follows:

Ms. Estrada – Yes
Ms. Fryar – Yes
Mr. Gristy – Yes

Mr. Padilla – Yes
Mr. Sianez – Yes
Ms. Skinner – Yes

Mr. Hawkins – Yes
Mr. Juarez-Infante – Yes
Mr. Olguin – Yes
Mr. Orozco – Yes

Ms. Thomas – Yes
Ms. Ulrich – Yes
Mr. Whitehead – Yes

VI. Reports and Information Items

a. Administrative Updates

Mr. Armijo provided an update on the hiring process for the WIOA Administrator position. The position has been advertised and the closing date has been extended to October 4, 2021 and the salary range was adjusted. A hiring committee will include Mr. Armijo, SAWDB Chair Mr. Juarez-Infante, South Central Council of Governments Board Chair Mayor Barraza, and a representative from the New Mexico Department of Workforce Solutions. He hopes to finalize the process by the third week of October and begin the onboarding process.

b. Update from DWS Liaison

Mr. Aragon stated that Ms. Garcia-Tenorio is in another meeting and he does not have any updates.

VII. Other

a. Member Input

- i. Mr. Orozco congratulated Mr. Juarez-Infante on chairing his first board meeting.
- ii. Ms. Ulrich stated that as Chair of the One-Stop Committee that recommended the Staffing Plan to the board for approval, the committee did not have all the information that was presented at today's meeting such as the amended contract. For future committee meetings, she would like to have a bigger picture and invite other people who can explain the ins and outs of funding.
- iii. Ms. Thomas stated that when we address items that involve funding, she would like to know the impact on all the programs. She'd like a bigger picture explaining if this is new money and if this request is possible.
- iv. Ms. Thomas commented getting the meeting packet the day before is too late. She suggested maybe doing a resolution to get the packet at least three days before the meeting.

VIII. Public Comment

- a. Ms. Lopez asked Ms. Thomas about meeting to further discuss the Career Pathways Plan.

IX. Next Meeting

- a. Thursday, October 14, 2021, at 10:00 a.m.

X. Adjournment

- a. Mr. Gristy **made a motion to adjourn the meeting; seconded by** Mr. Hawkins. Motion passed. Meeting adjourned at 11:38 a.m. Roll call vote was as follows:

Ms. Estrada – Yes
Ms. Fryar – Yes
Mr. Gristy – Yes
Mr. Hawkins – Yes
Mr. Juarez-Infante – Yes
Mr. Olguin – Yes

Mr. Orozco – Yes
Mr. Padilla – Yes
Mr. Siañez – Yes
Ms. Skinner – Yes
Ms. Thomas – Yes
Ms. Ulrich – Yes

ATTESTED

Mario Suarez-Infante

11/29/2021

Date

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