



Carroll County Workforce Development Board Work Session Minutes

Thursday, April 25, 2024

Exploration Commons, 9:15am

Attendees: Zach Tomlin, Chris Abell, Bryan Zuber, Scott Yard, Alyce Verville, Suzy Dyer Gear, Bill Eckles, Matti Franzén, Anita Hammond, Steve Berry, Margaret Welliver, Susan Torpey, Julie Givens, Jesse McCree, Heather Powell, Stan Whiteman, Darian Rahnis, and Shelby O’Leary.

Guests: Bob Stokes.

Meeting began at 9:20am.

1. **Key Bridge Update-** Ms. Powell shared with the Board that there are grants available for businesses affected by the Key Bridge Collapse. She shared that the Baltimore County American Job Centers were seeing around 100 people coming in for unemployment assistance. Ms. Givens shared that MD Department of Labor reported that there were 2,000 people laid off and 1200 UI claims. Ms. Powell said there were 5 people identified in Carroll County that were affected.
2. **CCWD Updates-**
 - US DOL Audit- Ms. Powell informed the Board that Carroll County Workforce Development was audited during March and are awaiting results. So far, she has heard an overall good response, with some recommendations to update policies to federal standards. The auditors praised the adult and youth program staff saying they had never heard such positive comments about the staff as they did with CCWD customers.
 - MD DOL Program Audit- Ms. Powell said that MD DOL are currently monitoring WIOA programs.
 - Construction Update- Ms. Powell reported that CCWD, Carroll Community College Adult Education, and the Care Healing Center have moved out temporarily during the HVAC construction project. CCWD is currently at the Cove Building, 115 Stoner Avenue, Westminster, MD 21157 until approximately October 2024.
 - Comment: Mr. Yard shared that HSP has 7,000 people in the community are using services. The new Family & Children Shelter will be at the Cove Building after the CCWD construction project is finished. He says their current location is not ideal, it’s on the fourth floor, there is no room for children to play outside, and there are no windows. He said Citizen Services and HSP have gathered funds to build a new shelter and construction is projected to begin in the fall.
 - FY25 Budget- Ms. Powell said that the state allocations for WIOA funding have not been assigned yet. She also commented that Carroll County has lowest unemployment rate.

She reported that the Carroll County Commissioners are still working on finalizing the FY25 county budget.

- Youth & Young Adult Update- Ms. Rahnis shared with the Board that the Summer Youth Program is July 8th through August 16th. There is a campaign to recruit youth participants and businesses, the goal is 50 youth participants with an extra 10 participants in a DORS cohort. She encouraged the Board to host a youth participant at their business/organization and share the flyers with colleagues.
 - Comment- Mr. Yard emphasized the need to publicize that Carroll County Government handles all the financial obligation and the business does not have to pay for anything.

Ms. Rahnis shared that the participant can work up to 20 hours a week and they must attend career development enrichment days on Wednesdays from 9:00am until 12:30 pm. These will include resume writing instruction, mock interviews, a tour of Carroll Community College, a presentation from a financial literacy advisor, and the chance to use Transfr VR headsets for career exploration. Ms. Powell shared that CCWD can help with a list job duties that participants can do. Ms. Rahnis said that they are looking for businesses all throughout the county to help with the transportation issue for the youth.

- Blueprint-
 - Mr. Eckles shared that the middle school students are using Pathful Explorer for career exploration, engaging in career days, taking field trips to businesses (National Guard trip), etc. He said that the school system had a meeting yesterday with counselors, career navigators, and career coaches to discuss the future going forward.
 - Mr. Whiteman reported that CCWD is working with Pathful to tailor the curriculum to include local businesses. He confirmed that the students are using it to learn about careers. The Blueprint team is working on shadow days for students to go to businesses and see what they have seen on the VR goggles in action. He also said that there are recognized training credentials using the VR software/goggles available. They are planning on using the VR goggles in late spring/early summer in the schools, targeting seniors that do not have career path set out yet. He stated that the team is also working with Carroll Community College to plan field trips for the 7th graders to see training classes. The three agencies are working together well, breaking down barriers that siloed agencies in the past.
 - Comment- Mr. Abell commended the collaboration of the Blueprint team. He observed that they worked through difficulty and conflict and never yelled at each other like other counties have done.
 - Comment- Ms. Dyer Gear shared her experience of working with Teresa Mena with MD Department of Labor and the Blueprint team with CCWD. She said she will host tours for students in the future. Mr. Whiteman encouraged the Board members to consider hosting a field trip for students.

Mr. Berry reported an upcoming large increase of students in the credit programs. He stated that for the 2024-2025 school year, the pharmacy and dental assistant programs have been approved for Blueprint registered

apprenticeships. He said they are considering adding the welding and auto-tech to the list as well. They have changed the drones to only count on the credit side. Mr. Berry also said they are looking at an adapted curriculum for neurodivergent students for the veterinary assistant program. He said there is no required certification for this program, but an optional NAVDA certification exam.

- Comment- Mr. Eckles said that the MD Apprenticeship program has released a starter list of recognized certification exams, but they won't have a final list until July 2025.

3. Local Plan Work-

- Mr. McCree shared the importance of having a solid local plan that also has deliverables. He and the Board decided to include the economic overview from Lightcast in the plan. The Board discussed ensuring that career pathways are more defined and list specifics on what they are, wage increases, trainings required, etc.
 - Comment- Mr. Abell commented that IT was not on the emerging industries listed on the economic overview. Mr. McCree responded that IT skills are included in other occupations (i.e., Marketing, sales, construction, healthcare, etc.) Mr. Tomlin added that an example would be cybersecurity for HIPPA in the healthcare industry. Mr. Abell emphasized the importance of marketing IT programs into other programs.
- Ms. Powell stated that the Board should provide feedback that CCWD needs to build the plan. She shared that the timeline for the state, regional, and local plans has been delayed due to the Key Bridge collapse. Once CCWD receives guidance then the plan can be built. Ms. Powell and Mr. McCree will organize ideas for a committee and communicate the information to the Board soon.

Meeting adjourned at 10:54am.