East Cascades WORKS
Connecting Talent To Opportunity

EC Works Board Meeting Agenda
April 28, 2021 from 11:30am-1:30pm
Virtual Meeting Via Zoom or Phone

Phone one-tap: US: +12532158782,,8793810312# or +13462487799,,8793810312#

Meeting URL: https://us02web.zoom.us/j/8793810312
Meeting ID: 879 381 0312

Board Members Present: Gary North (Chair), Jenni Newby, Dr. Marta Cronin, Robbie Smith, David Burger, John Hanner, Maggie Hubbell, Trevor Janeck, Dave Aiken, Martin Campos-Davis, Amy Gibbs, Wendy Peterson, Matt Bogatay, Michelle Alvarado, Bambi Bevill
Others Present: Todd Nell, Josh Hall, Derreck Degroot, Tony DeBone
Staff Present: Heather Ficht, Jessica Fitzpatrick, Jamie Kendellen, Melissa Barrett, Brenda Stewart, Stephanie Tarntino
Board Members Absent: Nicole Hough, Mike Graham, Heather Tramp, Julie Matthews

- **Consent Agenda:** Meeting called to order at 11:34 am by Chair Gary North. The minutes of the January meeting were presented and the Chair asked for a motion to approve the minutes.

  Motion: Martin moved to approve the minutes as presented, Marta seconded, and the minutes were unanimously approved.

- **Updated Audited Financial Statements:** Jamie, staff, presented the updated audited financials which were already presented to and approved by the Executive Committee. EC Works received another clean audit! Members asked to direct any questions to Jamie.

- **Tax Return:** Jamie, staff, presented the draft 2019-2020 Tax Return (Form 990) which was already presented to and approved by the Executive Committee and filed with the IRS. Main highlights were that our statement of functional expenses shows that our budget is ~85% program expenses, which is great as we want a high percentage for program. Additionally, all of our fiscal policies have been updated to be in compliance. Again, any questions can be directed to Jamie.

- **Appreciation of Service and Election of Officers:** Gary thanked Jenni Newby and Heather Tramp for their service as this is their last meeting as Board Members. Gary then explained the need to elect a treasurer and two other officer positions and requested volunteers. If there are no volunteers, members can be appointed by the Chair.
  After discussion, it was decided that members can let Heather know via email after the meeting about officer positions, but a Treasurer needed to be elected at this meeting; otherwise, an e-vote could be held, but that would require 100% of the Board to vote. After Jamie and Heather explained that while this is formal position on the Board, it does not

have additional responsibilities from the rest of the Executive Committee, Martin volunteered to act as Treasurer.

Motion: Amy moved to approve Martin as Treasurer, John seconded, and Martin was unanimously approved as Board Treasurer.

- **Private Sector Industry Updates**
  - **Jessica Fitzpatrick, Staff (Manufacturing)**
    - Shared an update on an incumbent worker grant that BasX in Redmond was awarded in 2018 as BasX was just awarded fastest-growing manufacturer in the US. In 2018, they began to struggle from rapid growth because they had to hire individuals with no prior experience, so they applied to EC Works for a grant to implement cross-training and certifications.
  - **David Aiken, Tofurkey (Manufacturing – Hood River)**
    - We are trying to source employees and develop a plan around retaining employees and bringing more in. We're consistently recruiting up to 8 employees a week, and we lose about 2, so not making a lot of progress. Also going through internal processes to see what employees value and what we are doing well / poorly to try to raise retention.
  - **Brenda Stewart, Staff – Reporting for Jon Stark, Redmond Economic Development, Inc. (Manufacturing – Central Oregon)**
    - Just convened first meeting since November, talent pipeline challenges similar to other sectors, not enough qualified applicants or not enough applicants period. The collaborative wants to focus on connecting with existing leadership programs in the coming year as well as making sure employers know about existing resources. Another topic was power outages in certain areas effecting productivity, and partners were going to see if this effects all areas or just some.
  - **Trevor Janeck, St. Charles Health System (Health Care – Central Oregon)**
    - We are in a war on talent environment, $16.75 an hour working full time is what you need to be earning to better unemployment insurance.
    - CNAs still are growth opportunities, as we have homegrown partnerships we are running, but these directly compete with unemployment benefits.
    - Burnout is a real thing for providers and nursing staff as well as leadership level. Exceptionally busy during COVID, we have ads going out for nursing specifically, turnover actually pretty good but we have to meet demand, at over 90% bed capacity. Seeing turnover specifically at nurse leadership level, not really in finance or support groups.
  - **Matt Bogatay, Bogatay Construction (Construction – Klamath)**
    - We are also suffering consequences of pandemic similar to others, mass downfall of any talent to hire into the industry, have 6 open positions unable to fill. We are cycling very young people through to see if we can even get people interested and also struggling with management positions in the company.

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- Massive instability of Wood, Metal & PVC market causing large price increases to bidding /current projects in contract.
- We see the forecast slowing in the private market as the uncertainty of the regulations are continuing and shutdowns continue to be a threat. Public work appears to be on an uptick, but pricing of materials has been putting projects on hold due to estimates coming in way higher than anticipated.

- **Gary North, R & H Construction (Construction – Central Oregon)**
  - There are a lot of signs point to inflation on the whole. Lumber is up 300% y/y and many other materials are seeing price increases as well as some level of schedule uncertainty.
  - The way contracts are written, we are often third tier with materials, our expectation is that contracts stay in place, but contracts being pulled mid project to subcontractors, creates huge issues to deal with, contractors having to eat those costs.
- **Brenda Stewart, EC Works – (sharing insights from Curtis Homes in Hood River)**
  - Home sales in the Gorge are at all-time highs and inventory is at all-time lows. This is creating great demand in the industry.
  - Outside of lack of trades people our greatest challenge in The Gorge is a lack of buildable land supply. It is really hard to develop in the Gorge and land is sparse.
  - We continue to see growth but have an uphill battle with trades and land supply.
  - Covid has created a unique environment within our industry to build a huge demand for getting out of the city and have more room as you spend more time in your home but our lack of trades makes it a challenge to face this demand.
- **Maggie Hubbell, Shift (Tech – Central Oregon)**
  - Finding qualified talent is difficult - shortage, especially engineers.
  - Remote work is being embraced. Companies must get good at it which will in part solve their employee pipeline problem. Must look outside of local. Managing well is important as are solid HR policies, understanding legal and tax consequences is necessary.
  - Oregon generally doesn't pay as well as markets where (tech) talent may be. This simply won't work if you want a great team.
  - New technologies are being embraced more than ever - good for tech companies.
  - All about talent – finding, keeping, managing well.
- **Wendy Peterson, Google (Tech – Gorge)**
  - Consistent labor scarcity in:
    Construction, Electricians, Low Voltage/High Voltage/Fiber Optic, Machinists, Industrial HVAC, Mechanical Engineering,
    - Technical growth needs include updating all cabling, fiber optics, telecom - there should be lots of jobs laying fiber optic cable
    - Industrial HVAC - with these skills and if they get licensed, this kind of work should be insulated through economy shifts
  - Many existing training programs support the white-collar jobs in tech and thus can delay construction and trades education which in turn delays progress

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- We need investment in infrastructure

Continued Discussion: Gary stated that all issues discussed are national issues, not specific to us in OR. There was discussion around providing workforce housing and opportunities at a national level to get resources and pushing the issue in Salem. Additionally, there is never really attention to who workforce is, and it would be helpful for advocacy to focus on this.

- **WorkSource Reopening Plans:** Mel, staff, and the Local Leadership Teams have been working on reopening plans (WorkSource Centers have been closed to public for in-person services for some time). The regional plan and employee guide were submitted to the Workforce System Executive Team in March and approved in April. It is a comprehensive guide for staff to ensure health and safety in our WSO Centers, i.e making sure we have the plexiglass needed, appropriate signage, and meeting areas configured to maintain social distance, etc. The plan is included in the Board materials. Heather clarified that WorkSource has been serving job seekers and business, but this plan is about re-opening centers to in-person services.

- **General Group Updates and Discussion**
  - Heather will send a summary of the advocacy requests for: Overall HECC-OWI budget (we're down $1.2M in state investments since 2015), SB623, HB2092 and HB2820 as well as investments from American Rescue Plan. Additionally, she talked to Exec Comm and Maggie and Wendy from the Board and they would love to get volunteers (specifically private sector) to form an ad hoc committee related to COVID and our target populations. We need to do a deeper dive with the data to determine if our current strategies and plans are good or if we need to change to really support recovery and reemploy people. If interested, follow back up with Heather. Gary, Trevor and Dave Aiken volunteered to join the committee during the meeting.
  - Heather thanked the Board members who sat on the committee for the Klamath and Lake RFPs, and congratulated Klamath Community College as they prevailed in both Adult and Youth services contracts and will continue to be our provider.
  - Heather shared that we got feedback that our Local Plan is looking pretty good, and there are only a few areas we need to update, specifically clarity around the "how" of doing things. There should not be material changes, but Heather will let Board know if there are.
  - Brenda is supporting planning for a drive-through job fair with colleagues in WorkSource at the WS Redmond location. This will be a pilot program to see if we can implement in all of our areas and this will take place Saturday, May 22.
  - Stephanie will be reaching out to everyone to sign annual consent forms as we have to have these for each program year. We are being monitored by US DOL in June so please sign and get back to us ASAP!

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- Dr. Cronin let the Board know that the aviation construction project has been completed and enrollment is up!
- Gary reiterated need for people to sign up for officer positions and thanked the group for a great discussion and charged everyone with finding ways to solve the issues that were brought up.
- Maggie stated that it is important to have representation from all different industries in the ad hoc committee, as well as to have clarity about what is the actual question we are asking. She said she would volunteer to speak at the committee for tech, but would not have perspective from other industries.
- Bambi asked that the Board remember Vocational Rehabilitation (VR) when attempting to hire for open positions and she is there to assist. As we are coming out of this pandemic, people will experience new disabilities which could impact employment and working with VR can help.

- Meeting was adjourned by Chair Gary North at 12:54 pm.