

MINUTES



Strategic Directions Committee Meeting

10/17/2023

10:00 AM – 11:45 AM

Attendees: Judy Aspling (Chair) Kelly Klein Bambi Patterman
 PC Rasmussen Thomas Michels
 Jessica Wagner-Schultz Barb Flynn

Staff & Guests: Mari Kay-Nabozny Bella Potack-Rettler Jo Nowak-Thompson
 Melissa Rabska Jay Anderson

10:00am – 10:05am

1. Welcome and Opening Meeting Business

- a. Call to Order
- b. Roll Call
- c. Public Meeting Notice public meeting notice was published on the NWWIB social media, website, and distributed to the regional library systems and Class A newspapers within the WDA.
- d. Welcome and Introduction of Guests
Judy Aspling introduced Jay Anderson. Jay Anderson introduced himself and his position at the NWWIB as a Director of Business & Community Engagement. Mari Kay-Nabozny shared that he is taking Scott Schultz's place and that Jay Anderson started yesterday (10/16/23). He just moved from Savannah, Georgia to his hometown of Washburn, Wisconsin.

10:05am – 10:08am

2. Approval of Minutes

- a. Review and Approve August 22nd, 2023, Meeting Minutes

Motion to approve meeting minutes as presented: Kelly Klein

2nd: Thomas Michels

Committee vote is unanimous, motion carries.

10:08am – 10:48am

3. NWWIB Initiatives & Enrollment Update

QUEST Grant Update | *Mari Kay-Nabozny*

Mari Kay-Nabozny reported that the NWWIB has enrolled 12 participants into QUEST, as of last week. She shared that Katie Bretting has a separate contract working with WDA 6 and will be running a cohort with them in spring. Mari Kay-Nabozny also reported that Katie Bretting and Jo Nowak-Thompson are also working on creating cohorts with Northwood Technical College in Ashland, WI.

Mari Kay-Nabozny expressed a bit of the frustration that the NWWIB is running into with getting people to stay in training for QUEST. Mari Kay-Nabozny shared the reduction age bill that is going through right now for childcare in the State of Wisconsin. She shared how she is hoping that it will lead to more pathways and opportunities to get individuals into the childcare field.

Mari Kay-Nabozny shared that there is currently a Youth Apprenticeship available for kids to try to get into the childcare field. Mari Kay-Nabozny reported that students can be in the classroom with two teachers, but not alone. It is basically ‘job-shadowing’.

Mari Kay-Nabozny shared that she is slightly worried about QUEST, only because the initial purpose of the grant was to open more childcare centers as a result from it. However, the NWWIB is seeing that with QUEST, it is becoming increasingly clear that the NWWIB is trying to fill empty slots in already existing childcare facilities, rather than building new ones.

Thomas Michels brought up the state of Kentucky and the state’s Employee Childcare Assistance Program. Could benefit childcare workers much. Mari Kay-Nabozny, Thomas Michels and other members of the committee began to discuss Kentucky and how the state might have gone about implementing this assistance program.

Thomas Michels asked how many openings an extra childcare employee offers in open childcare slots at a daycare. Mari Kay-Nabozny reported that she believed that it is a 4:1 ration for infants and 16:1 for non-infants.

Jay Anderson asked how the NWWIB can put a similar model (like, Kentucky’s Employee Childcare Assistance Program) in front of State legislation that helped Kentucky be successful with their childcare issue. Mari Kay-Nabozny replied that this legislation has been in front of the state before. Mari Kay-Nabozny also shared that she would be going down to Appleton the following week for the Wisconsin Economic Development Corporation (WEDC). She shared that from WEDC she was told to not speak on the broken childcare model. Mari Kay-Nabozny shared that from the State, that ‘Everybody is sick of hearing it’.

Thomas Michels commented that he wished he knew how the advocacy group approached it in Kentucky. Mari Kay-Nabozny shared that she wasn't sure.

Kelly Klein asked Mari Kay-Nabozny how she cannot speak about it at the WEDC event in Appleton. Mari Kay-Nabozny shared that WEDC supplied her with a script and that she will be talking about 'Quality Childcare' instead.

Mari Kay-Nabozny concluded this part of the meeting encouraging committee members to get people who are interested in childcare to come to the NWWIB. Mari Kay-Nabozny shared that Jo Nowak-Thompson is also hosting a Wisconsin SHARES enrollment night at the NWWIB office the night of the meeting and currently has 3 people signed up to meet with.

Mari Kay-Nabozny asked for any comments or questions. There were no comments or questions.

[PR Report | Bella Potack-Rettler](#)

Bella Potack-Rettler shared the PR Report and noted that it was the same report that was shown during the NWWIB Board Meeting. She reported on the numbers that are recorded in the PR Report included in the Strategic Directions Committee meeting packet. There were only a few numbers that she shared that were not in the committee meeting packet, one of these was that the open rate for the Workforce Today: Fall Newsletter was 28%. Bella Potack-Rettler also shared that the Workforce Waves podcast launched a new episode this last week. She did not have the download numbers for this episode yet.

Bella Potack-Rettler asked for any questions or comments. There were no questions or comments.

[Program Enrollments | Mari Kay-Nabozny](#)

Mari Kay-Nabozny reported on the enrollment numbers in the meeting packet agenda. She shared some new details regarding the Pathways Home 4 Grant. Currently, Matthew Filipek oversees Pathways Home 2. The NWWIB just received the Pathways Home 4 grant on top of this. Mari Kay-Nabozny reported that the only difference that the NWWIB can tell between Pathways Home 2 and Pathways Home 4 is that the sentence days have been pushed out more for Pathways Home 4. She also reported that participants in Pathways Home 2 will go into follow-up starting December 31st and then be enrolled for Pathways Home 4. Mari Kay-Nabozny shared that the NWWIB is trying to work on getting more participants involved from the Ashland and Douglas country areas.

Bambi Patterman asked if there is a way to infiltrate the jails? She shared that Northwood Technical College has been trying to find a contact at the Ashland and Douglas country jails too with no luck.

Mari Kay-Nabozny shared that Matthew Filipek and Melissa Rabska met with Ashland jail that was named and that the guy that they met, immediately that went on leave. She shared that there are plenty of contacts but it's a matter of finding the one that will consistently respond.

Kelly Klein asked if gaining for participants from Iron County would work. Mari Kay-Nabozny shared that, that would work but that Iron County is just so small. She shared that the NWWIB is still in communication with the Iron County jail, but the number of participants from Iron County is significantly smaller than elsewhere.

Barb Flynn shared that she knows who the Ashland County Jail Administrator is. She informed the committee that she will send their contact information to the NWWIB to help. Mari Kay-Nabozny thanked Barb Flynn for the help.

Mari Kay Nabozny continued her report stating that the NWWIB is very busy in all the programs. She also shared that programs: WAI, S2C and QUEST will be sunseting in 2024. This will be their last program year, unless the NWWIB gets picked up for them again. Mari Kay-Nabozny assured that if a staff member's program does end permanently, that the NWWIB has full intentions and goals to carry-over said staff to other programs and keep them on the team working.

[Staffing Update | Mari Kay-Nabozny](#)

Mari Kay-Nabozny introduced Jay Anderson again. She shared his position title as Director of Business & Community Engagement. Mari Kay-Nabozny also showed the committee that with Jay Anderson's hire, the NWWIB Staff Reporting Flow Chart needed to be updated. She shared that Clarice Baumgartner will be leaving. Mari Kay-Nabozny went over all who are still working at the NWWIB. She shared again that Kristi Waits has moved to Oregon and will be contracted with the NWWIB till June 2024. Mari Kay-Nabozny also shared that the NWWIB will find a replacement to fill Clarice Baumgartner's role as Dawn Knapp's assistant.

[Winning with Wisconsin \(12.7.23\) | Mari Kay-Nabozny](#)

Mari Kay-Nabozny shared that the next Winning with Wisconsin's Workforce event will be on December 7th at the Northwood Technical College in Ashland, Wisconsin. Technology will be the focus of the event. Jay Anderson is currently looking for keynote speakers for the event. It will be from 1pm-3pm. DWD will send out people to attend. Last time it was the Governor, probably not the same level of guest but someone still of importance will show up.

[Gener8tor Skills Accelerator | Mari Kay-Nabozny](#)

Mari Kay-Nabozny shared that in the meeting packet she put a small synopsis of who Gener8tor is. The organization is based in Madison but works nationwide.

She shared that Genr8tor approached the NWWIB about 3 months ago to do Microsoft skill training in our area. NWWIB and Gener8tor currently have 8 individuals enrolled for the Microsoft skills training. Mari Kay Nabozny shared that the NWWIB and Gener8tor have set up weekly meetings to touch base on the ongoing training.

Mari Kay-Nabozny shared that Genr8tor wanted to run a second cohort in the month of November, but Mari told them, 'no'. The reason for this is because there is no great time in November to plan a cohort between the holidays and hunting season. Instead, Mari Kay-Nabozny told Genr8tor that if they want to run another cohort that it will have to be in January or February.

Mari Kay-Nabozny shared that benefits in these cohorts running are that CEP has huge funds in training that this can count for. Mari shared its \$3200 per participant. Melissa Rabska shared that it is cheaper than training to get a CDL.

Kelly Klein asked if these cohorts could be run annually. Mari Kay-Nabozny responded that they absolutely could and that it's great for the career planners at CEP too, moving them to more digital platforms. Teaching them there's a whole new way to go about the workforce.

g. Youth Mental Health First Aid – Nov 13

Mari Kay-Nabozny shared that there are ten spots open in Hayward for the Youth Mental Health First Aid training at Lakewoods. The mental health training is specifically for youth ages 17- 24. It falls in line with WAI youth definition. Mari Kay-Nabozny shared that it is an excellent program and open to anyone who is working with youth.

Judy Aspling asked for clarification if the training was for individuals who *WORK* with youth and not with the youth? Mari Kay-Nabozny shared that, that was correct.

Jessica Wagner-Shultz shared that she would love to have more information for the Youth Mental Health Training passed on to her to share with schools in the area. Mari Kay-Nabozny replied that, that would be possible but that the opportunity to fill the spots with go to workforce partners first.

h. TDCON 2024 in La Crosse (April 9 – 10)

Mari Kay-Nabozny shared that everyone present should put TDCON 2024 on their calendars now. She shared that Jay Anderson will play a big part in the planning for the event this upcoming year. Judy Aspling shared that she went last year and enjoyed the event. Mari Kay-Nabozny shared that if individuals want to go, that the NWWIB will be present.

4. **Regional Report** | *Mari Kay-Nabozny/ Thomas Michels*

Mari Kay-Nabozny shared that this is the same presentation as was at the September NWWIB Board Meeting, but with updated numbers. Thomas Michels shared that the Northwest Wisconsin labor force, employment and unemployed numbers are up from last year. He also shared that August 2023 vs. August 2019 Northwest Wisconsin labor force shrank. Thomas Michels referenced the report in the packet, going over that a lot of these numbers that are shown, shows that the Northwest Wisconsin population is predominately older, without much of a younger generation being recorded as pushing through. He shared that this is a labor force problem to keep an eye on.

Thomas Michels shared that the National Economy asked the public if they felt that a recession was going to be coming soon. He shared that the public opinion is 'no', however, big CEOs who were asked, say 'yes'. The finance analyst wanted to know why and found these reasons: Student loan payments are beginning again, individuals are reporting to have less than \$300 month to spend for fun, business bonds are mature, more loans to pay off in debt, interest on debts for the nation is 3 billion and next year will be a trillion. Overall, Thomas Michels shared that it is a grim outlook.

Moving on, Thomas Michels also shared that there are still a lot more job openings than workers will be interested in. This is where the NWWIB will have to go in to help with retraining. He shared that there will still be a lot of layoffs. Thomas Michels shared that manufacturing at Superior Inventory is starting to stack and starting to layoff.

Mari Kay-Nabozny shared that an Ashland manufacturing plant saw that too. She shared that their workweeks went from 5 days a week to 4 days. Thomas Michels agreed that this is something that the region hasn't experienced in terms of a labor shortage coupled with a recession.

The committee commented on how the labor force, potential recession and current housing market are all relative.

Thomas Michels asked for any questions or comments, there were no questions or comments.

10:55am – 11:10am

5. **PY22 WIOA Performance Q4** | *Committee Members*
Reflects WIOA funds. ONLY WIOA. Sub award money with CEP. Ask Melissa

Mari and the committee reviewed and discussed the PY22 WIOA Quarter 4 Performance. A handout was in the meeting with an overview of the Adult, Dislocated Worker, and Youth performance measures.

There was a discussion on how Northwest CEP needs to be enrolled for youth and Dislocated Workers than last year. Mari Kay-Nabozny shared that she thought the goal for CEP with enrolling youth was 50 participants, but that CEP only had 28 in total.

Judy Aspling had a question on the age range for youth. Melissa Rabska and Mari Kay-Nabozny shared that the age range for youth is 14-24 years old.

Judy Aspling shared that her observation is that fewer high schoolers are working nowadays and asked if it was because of the intensity of high school? Mari Kay-Nabozny shared that she thinks it's a lot of factors and all speculation. She shared that she feels there is a portion of parents who want kids to enjoy their childhood, therefore, the youth don't pursue work options. Mari Kay-Nabozny also shared that another portion of kids don't work because it's a learned habit from parents and generational. Another group of youth were impacted by COVID, and Wisconsin saw this shift in less older youth working but younger youth were. Mari Kay-Nabozny shared that there were more work permits distributed for 14-year-olds in 2022, then there has been in the past two years. Again, Mari Kay-Nabozny shared that these are all just her opinions and speculations and probably multiple different factors for why less youth are working nowadays.

Thomas Michels asked what would the motivation be for a teen to get a job? Mari Kay-Nabozny shared that kid's patterns are different and seem to be more motivated to stay at home, on social media and connected via phone. However, she did share that she has high hopes for the 14-15-year-old generation to be good workers.

Thomas Michels commented that it is hard to change the youth mindset if the parent's mindset doesn't change first.

Barb Flynn commented that vaping and marijuana usage is increasing amongst the youth in the area and shared that the Youth Mental Health First Aid Training is a great resource to try and address the younger population and catch them before they get into trouble.

Mari Kay-Nabozny agreed that Barb is correct, even though it feels like a very different mindset than from what those primarily in the committee grew up in.

Judy Aspling encouraged that the NWWIB should involve more youth alongside older members of the population.

Thomas Michels asked that at the Visions Northwest meeting, some of these people disappear and if Mari Kay-Nabozny felt that some of these

disappearing participant numbers are due to suicide or overdose. Mari Kay-Nabozny shared that it is not, because the NWWIB will be sent a notification through their database on a participant passing.

11:10am – 11:15am

6. Partner Updates on Workforce Related Items

a. Comments and Announcements | *Committee Members*

Judy Aspling shared the news of the CVS 7 billion dollar surplus with the State of Wisconsin. She noted that Governor Tony Evers committed to using that money to help the workforce. Mari Kay-Nabozny added to this statement, stating that he also committed to helping with childcare. Thomas Michels reported that last year, there was a 4.1-billion-dollar surplus.

Mari Kay-Nabozny shared projecting with childcare count payments was on October 11th.

Barnb Flynn shared that through a county supervision program, they are having people in program be done in 6-9 months. She shared that these participants in the program leave with adjusted behavior. She shared that they are Looking to save resources and using grants to do this.

There were no further comments or announcements to be made.

11:30am

7. Adjourn

a. Next scheduled meeting date: January 16th, 2024 at 10:00am or at the call of the Chair

Related meeting items are included in the packet for your review before the meeting. Thank you.