

Metro South/West Workforce WIOA Board Meeting Minutes

October 9, 2025

Attended via Zoom: Lisa Kubiak, Chair, Rosemary Alexander, John Bogdan, Mark Fegley, Ernie Houle, Shannon Laingen, Rev. Lloyd, Sue Medeiros, Craig Nesta, Kevin O'Connor, Jason Palitsch, Nick Pavone, David Podell, Chris Vericker

Members Absent: Bob Bower, Patrick Davis, Walter Gardner, Tom O'Rourke, Nick Pavone

Others: Metro South/West Workforce Board staff: Henry Bryson, Greg Bunn, Meghan Burke, Zoie Jaklitsch, Louise Meyer, Rute Vales, Carol Wolf; Cindy Cedrone, Consultant

Welcome, Introductions

Greg Bunn welcomed everyone and turned the meeting over to Lisa Kubiak. Lisa introduced the newest board member, Kenny Webster from McGovern Auto.

Approval of June 26, 2025 minutes

Lisa asked for a motion to approve the minutes of June 26, 2025. Rev. Lloyd made a motion to approve; Ernie Houle seconded the motion. Motion approved.

Annual Plan: Integrated Budget

Carol Wolf presented the FY26 Integrated budget and the budget vs projected comparison between FY25 and FY26, noting a \$2M reduction (17%) in funding. She explained the decrease was due to the completion of multi-year grants and a 10% cut in WIOA grants but emphasized that the budget remains solid and staffing levels are not affected. Greg noted other workforce boards have had to lay off staff but through the Board's efficient staffing, cross-training, and benefits of the merger, layoffs won't occur with the annual plan budget as proposed. Henry Bryson presented pie charts showing FY26 funding sources, allocations, and categories, highlighting that most funds go towards personnel and services. The Finance Committee has reviewed the budgets in more detail and discussed strategic planning.

Annual Plan: Negotiate Performance

Greg noted performance goals were being maintained. He presented performance goal summaries, noting that while overall service numbers remain stable, the Career Center is operating below capacity due to three unfilled state positions because of the State's hiring freeze. The Department of Career Services discussed potential workarounds, including using seasonal employees, but these aren't feasible for the Career Center to implement. Greg reminded members that a proposed federal rule change could allow states to waive the requirement for state staff to provide certain services. Performance metrics for WIOA programs were reviewed, showing some reductions in service numbers but maintaining above average outcomes overall. Zoie Jaklitsch highlighted the use of surveys, testimonials and direct feedback from job seekers to improve services and address any issues that may arise.

Annual Plan: Board Approval

Lisa asked for a motion to approve the Annual Plan as presented. Rosemary Alexander made a motion. Ernie Houle seconded the motion. Motion approved.

Federal Updates & Potential Impacts

Greg presented federal budget updates, expressing concern over potential cuts to WIOA programs, which could lead to layoffs if the House version of the budget is approved. He explained that while carry-in funding from previous years would remain available, new funding could be clawed back. Greg is concerned with the uncertainty of future federal funding and sees the need for more strategic planning in FY27. He will develop various scenarios for cross-committee discussions, to explore funding contingency options and explore alternative funding sources. Greg will provide federal funding updates when received.

Greg also raised concerns about a possible proposal to consolidate all workforce development programs into a block grant. If that happened and WIOA funding disappears, the board structure would also disappear. At that time the board could consider continuing as a nonprofit for its future structure.

Proposed: AI Steering Committee

Greg proposed creating an AI advisory committee to develop internal policies/standard operating procedures, evaluate job displacement/ reskilling needs, and identify training vendors/relevant content for WIOA training funds. He also noted ongoing internal efforts to evaluate different AI platforms. Greg asked interested members to contact him.

Lisa asked for a motion to adjourn. Mark Fegley made a motion, Chris Vericker seconded. The meeting was adjourned at 10:15 AM.