

BUSINESS SERVICES COMMITTEE
August 30, 2022
MEETING MINUTES

STAFF: Tran, Thoo, Sanchez, Walter

GUESTS: Greg Harris, Business Services Manager, Equus Workforce Solutions and Michael Hernandez, Adjunct Professor, Evergreen Valley College

NOTE: All votes were by roll call unless otherwise indicated.

I. CALL TO ORDER & ROLL CALL

Chair George Chao called the meeting to order at 3:04 pm.

Roll Call

Present: Chao, Koepp-Baker, McGrath, Taunk, Takahashi (arriving 3:08), Smith (arriving 3:38)

II. OPEN FORUM

Mr. Chao opened the floor for public comment. There was none.

III. BUSINESS

A. Minutes Approval

Ms. McGrath moved to approve the minutes of the June 14, 2022, Business Services Committee meeting. Mr. Takahashi seconded. The committee approved unanimously.

B. Employer Engagement

Staff reports and discussion, including without limitation

- 1. Meta/Facebook Marketing Internship Updates** – Equus Workforce Solutions Business Services Manager Greg Harris provided a wrap-up report on the Career Connections partnership between work2future and Meta/Facebook. The project paired small businesses in Santa Clara County with interns trained in digital marketing. There was no cost for the participating businesses. Facebook provided and funded a 5-week mentoring/training program for young adults in digital and social media marketing. 22 interns completed the training and the work experience portion of the program. All required documents have been completed. Participating interns received ongoing support from the Equus staff throughout the duration of the program. Final evaluations are underway. Mr. Harris noted that participating employers came from low-income census tract areas in San Jose representing a wide range of industries.
- 2. Layoff Activity** – Lead Business Services Analyst Huong Tran gave an update on recent layoff activity in the region and work2future’s Rapid Response efforts. The first of two WARN notices in July was for a small marijuana dispensary with 14 impacted workers, eight of whom attended a Rapid Response orientation session. Second, Amy’s Kitchen, a large food manufacturer closed their San Jose production facility with 330 impacted workers. The work2future team provided four Rapid Response orientation sessions in multiple languages. In coordination with the facility’s HR team and Equus Workforce Solutions, the Business Services team held a job fair for the laid-off workers at the San Jose Career Center. 15 local employers attended the job fair, as did over 75 of the impacted workers. Several workers were hired at the event with many interviews scheduled in the following weeks.

C. Services

- 1. Career Fairs** – Ms. Tran reported on recent job fair activity including two recent events in June and July. On June 23, 2022, work2future hosted a Career Fair in partnership with Bloom Energy and the San Jose Mayor’s Office. 22 employers participated with over 260 job seekers in attendance. Ms. Tran also highlighted a San Jose Works job fair with a focus on youth employment. On July 26, 2022, 25 employers and 150 job seekers attended the latter event at the San Jose Career Center. The next focus for the Business Services team is the San Jose Career Expo in September. The Career Expo will be a coordinated effort between work2future and SJ Works. It is slated to be a large event with 80+ employers and community resources. The team anticipates 500+ job seekers to attend.
- 2. WAF 9.0 Career Accelerator Update** – Strategic Engagement Manager Lawrence Thoo gave a report on the conclusion of the recent WAF 9.0 Career Accelerator Pilot with Flex Interconnect Technologies (FIT). Four participants successfully completed the training and work experience portions of the program and received offers for permanent employment at FIT. Michael Hernandez, lead faculty advisor on behalf of Evergreen Valley College, gave the committee his thoughts on the pilot. Mr. Hernandez was instrumental in the planning of the program and provided most of the classroom training. He stated that the ‘earn and learn’ program was very successful and should be a model for industries to adapt as an ongoing hiring and training effort. He credits the success of the program to the dynamic collaborative effort between the school and the employer as they aligned classroom learning topics with real-world hands-on work experience that validated and expanded their training. Mr. Hernandez noted an effort happening at the state level to include work experience for educational credit. Fidel Sanchez, Business Services Specialist, gave an update on efforts to identify partner companies for the third and fourth rounds of the WAF 9.0 Career Accelerator Pilot. A discussion among the committee members around work experience and education ensued.
- 3. Incumbent Worker Training** – Project Manager Deanna Walter gave a status report on the Incumbent Worker Training (IWT) program. Ms. Walter shared that initial conversations with employers are underway and that outreach and communications pieces are in place. She anticipates that final legal approval from the city of San Jose will be completed within the month.

D. Business Intelligence

Staff reports and discussion, including without limitation

- 1. July 2022 Labor Market Summary** – Strategic Engagement Manager Thoo reported on the status of the labor market in Santa Clara County and the San Jose-Sunnyvale-Santa Clara Metropolitan Statistical Area (MSA). He noted many mixed signals about the overall national economy, specifically a lower unemployment rate paired with higher inflation and lower GDP. Unemployment rates continue to remain low, while the labor participation rate is also lower than average in many parts of the county. The unemployment rate within the MSA is 2.2%, and within Santa Clara County is 2.3%, both indicators slightly down from the previous month. Month-to-month overall job gains were modest, with gains in professional/business services and leisure/hospitality compensating for larger than average losses in local government and education. Mr. Thoo indicated that the work2future will be evaluating its current priority industry sectors to determine if changes should be made to reflect local trends. The number of people in the labor market remains steady, nearing pre-pandemic levels. The number of people employed has continued to rise, slightly surpassing numbers from February 2020.

Regarding employer demand, Mr. Thoo detailed various statistics that reflect current complaints from employers about hiring and retention struggles. Job posting data highlighted increased demand for employment and a disparity between the number of job postings and unemployed workers.

The committee discussed local employment reflections, training needs, and applicable funding streams.

E. Member's Roundtable

Committee members shared thoughts and experiences about a variety of topics: difficulty in maintaining adequate staffing levels at manufacturing facilities, new possibilities in the cyber security industry, implications of the recently signed CHIPS Act, local expenses inhibiting infrastructure investment, shortages in nursing and mental health professions, reskilling and upskilling existing employees for advancement opportunities, coordination between employers and local community colleges, work experience for high school students, easier/faster pathways to employment, cost-of-living and affordable housing solutions that are attractive to families, local licensing requirements, and state-level initiatives aimed at healthcare workforce development.

IV. OTHER

Mr. Thoo reminded the committee about the upcoming job fair and asked for assistance in promoting the event within their networks. He also announced the next work2future Board Meeting in September 2022.

V. ADJOURNMENT

Mr. Chao adjourned the meeting at 4:20 pm.

Draft minutes prepared by D. Walter, reviewed by L. Thoo.