



**Eastern Kentucky Workforce Innovation Board (EKWIB)  
Meeting Minutes  
March 19, 2018**

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**Attendees:**

**EKWIB Members**

Betsy Clemons  
Brent Sturgill  
Carla Bishnoi Proxy (Gretta Fields)  
Denise Thomas  
Frank Dawahare  
Howard Blackburn  
Janet Slayden  
Kevin Chesnut  
Paul Dole  
Paul Patton  
Sonya Bergman  
Tracey Smith  
Vince Adams

**EKCEP Staff**

Trish Adams  
Bridget Back  
Jennifer Bergman  
Ian Mooers  
Sharon Poff  
Jeff Whitehead  
Travis Winkler  
Joyce Wilcox  
Vanessa Collier  
Melissa Quillen  
Tonya Collins

**Guests**

Ray Leathers  
Chris Tomlinson  
Teresa Coomer Mays  
Misha Curnutte  
Regina Jones  
Darlene Bussell

## Minutes

The Eastern Kentucky Workforce Innovation Board (EKWIB) held its quarterly meeting on March 15, 2018 in the boardroom at the Kentucky Career Center--JobSight, Hazard, Kentucky.

Howard Blackburn, EKWIB's Chair called the meeting to order. Howard Blackburn asked for the roll call. Roll call resulted in 13 members being in attendance.

Howard Blackburn asked for a motion to approve the minutes of the December 2017 EKWIB meeting, which had previously been distributed to the members. Janet Slayden made a motion to approve the minutes as distributed. The motion was seconded by Tracey Smith. All voted in favor, none opposed.

### **Introduction of Guests – Priority Workforce Needs of Our Region**

Howard Blackburn asked for each person attending the meeting to introduce themselves and note WIB membership.

Jeff Whitehead, EKCEP's Executive Director stated he wanted us to have an open dialog discussion about the region's workforce and business communities.

Jeff Whitehead introduced Misha Curnette, Big Sandy Area Development District and Teresa Coomer Mays, Director of Economic Development for the City of Beattyville, Ky they are both working on a Sister City Project, basically sharing advantages and best practices from one community to another community. Jeff also introduced Chris Tomlinson, owner of Silverliner.

Jeff Whitehead asked Chris Tomlinson to tell the group about his company. Chris stated he was born in Pikeville and educated in Pikeville, Kentucky. Chris explained he had been building tanker trucks since his childhood. Silverliner is a start-up business and without EKCEP he could not do it. Chris stated Trish Adams, EKCEP Industry Liaison was instrumental in getting applicants, interviewing and setting up the training for his business. Chris said it was good to have an organization that will assist in the hiring process.

Chris said the initial hire would be 50 qualified welders. Silverliner will require advance training and advance welding to be able to run the business. Chris said he would have to work with EKCEP and the local technical colleges to be able to provide the training needed.

Howard Blackburn asked Chris if he was going to participate in career days with the local high schools. Chris said he had to work with high school students because they provide a good "feed system". Silverliner has the potential to employ approximately 1,000 people over the long term.

Vic Adams said South East Community College is doing more "fast track" training. Vic said they are doing more evening and weekend training classes.

Chris Tomlinson stated he had no idea all the services that are available for employers in our area. Jeff Whitehead said we have a system with great potential for servicing our business community, but we are only serving a small percent of that community.

Denise Thomas asked Chris if he required his employees to have a GED or high school diploma. Chris said he did not require that of his employees. Chris said he has approximately 50 employees who are currently attending drug court, but Silverliner has a zero drug tolerance.

Jeff Whitehead asked Teresa Mays and Misah Curnette to share with the board what the Sister City Project is and what they are learning from the project. Misah said the idea behind it was to get people talking and networking in the communities.

Jeff Whitehead asked Ian Mooers, EKCEP Industry Liaison how does this type of project connect with workforce development. Ian said the majority of employers he has spoken with, have employees who have “soft skill” issues. These issues range from showing up to work on time to how to speak to customers. Ian Mooers told the group that Dottie Nolan, EKCEP’s Outreach and Recruitment Coordinator can provide soft skill training for employers.

Jeff Whitehead said he was in a meeting with Joe Grossman from ARH and Betsy Clemons and a topic of discussion was the issue of high school students not interested in the nursing profession. Jeff asked the group to give their perspective on the reasons why young people were not interested and what are the issues we need to be addressing to help us progress. Vic Adams said statistics show that 1 in 3 of our residents are addicted to, or have been addicted to opioids. If you are a recovering or current addict you don’t want to work in a hospital. The same holds true in skilled trades, you must have the initiative to come to class. Vic Adams said we must start coupling our higher education with drug rehabilitation. Southeast Kentucky Community College is in a partnership with Addiction Recovery Care, ARH, and Mountain Comprehensive Health Corporation to provide in-patient drug rehabilitation and educational training. This will allow recovering addicts, who enter phase II of the recovery process, the ability to have a trade when their rehabilitation process is complete.

Sonya Bergman said it is important to educate the high school and middle school students about the drug issues in the community and also start discussing the subject of vocations. Sonya also stated they had found the lack of counselors in the school systems is also a hindrance to students.

Jeff Whitehead said we will begin working on a new strategic plan in the coming year and we should be thinking about what are our region’s priorities and how we connect opportunities, training and the connection to employers in an effective way.

### **Audit Report**

Jeff Whitehead discussed the process of completing our annual audit. The EKCEP board approved the preliminary audit this week. Tonya Collins, EKCEP’s Assistant Director of Finance

worked with our auditor and the audit resulted in “no findings”. Jeff Whitehead said the auditor will be in attendance for our June 2018 board meeting to discuss the audit.

### **Kentucky Health Updates**

Jeff Whitehead said Kentucky Health is the initiative to require certain people receiving SNAP or Medicaid benefits to engage in a variety of community activities in order to meet the requirements of the program. The rollout has been delayed until late in 2018. Jeff informed the board that Stakeholder Advisory Forums are scheduled throughout the state in the coming months. Jeff said he was going to work toward having the presenters come to the June 2018 meeting.

Jeff Whitehead asked the group to review the anticipated funding spreadsheet provided in the board meeting packet. Jeff said EKCEP is anticipating to receive approximately \$900,000 for case management. The Promise Zone, which is 7 of our 23 counties, has not been included in the \$900,000 figure, that funding will not be available until after Paths2Promise has been finalized.

Brad Sturgill asked Jeff Whitehead what opportunities will people living in rural areas have to volunteer. Jeff said if someone is doing their best to comply, but there are no opportunity for them, there will be a waiver opportunity. Jeff said he was not sure of the details on the waiver.

### **Workforce Activities and Opportunities by Community Action Counties**

Jeff Whitehead asked everyone to look at the Progress Performance sheet provided in the WIB meeting packet. This sheet reflects the number of clients our providers have served since February 2018. The services range from assisting with resume development all the way to finding employment.

### **Other**

Jeff Whitehead asked Ray Leathers, Private Sector Liaison for Education and Workforce Development Cabinet to ask him to elaborate on the prior discussion. Ray Leathers said the real need is for folks with a good work ethic. Ray said he had been the president and CEO of a metal part manufacturing business and did not know all this assistance existed until he retired. The workforce development resources in our state is incredible. Ray stated statics show, 40% of the folks in Kentucky who can work don't. The opportunity is we have 400,000 workers we need to put back to work.

Ray Leathers stated Kentucky is the demographic center of the US for everything east of the Rocky Mountains. He stated all crossroads are in Kentucky, all major rivers, all major interstates, and all railroads.

### **Call for Adjournment**

Howard Blackburn asked for a motion to adjourn. Frank Dawahare made the motion to adjourn. Vick Adams seconded the motion.