

**COMBINED MEETING**  
**OhioMeansJobs Stark County Office**  
**822 – 30<sup>th</sup> Street NW, Canton 44709**  
**November 9, 2023 @ 12:00 p.m.**

**STARK TUSCARAWAS WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT BOARD - COUNCIL OF GOVERNMENTS**

**MEMBERS:**

Janet Weir Creighton, Commissioner, Stark Cty.-Present  
Chris Abbuhl, Commissioner, Tusc. Cty. -Present  
Scott Robinson, STWDB Chair – Present

**STWDB STAFF:**

JoAnn Breedlove-Absent  
Rebecca Harris-Present

**FISCAL AGENT:**

Chuck Byrd-Present

**GUEST/OTHER:**

Mayor Tom Bernabei-Present  
Rob Roland, Attorney-Buckingham Doolittle-Present

**WORKFORCE INITIATIVE ASSOCIATION - COUNCIL OF GOVERNMENTS**

**MEMBERS:**

Janet Weir Creighton, Commissioner, Stark Cty.-Present  
Chris Abbuhl, Commissioner, Tusc. Cty.-Present  
Tom Bernabei, Mayor, City of Canton -Present

**WORKFORCE INITIATIVE ASSOCIATION STAFF:**

Chuck Byrd - Present

**GUEST/OTHER:**

JoAnn Breedlove-Absent  
Rebecca Harris-Present  
Rob Roland, Attorney-Buckingham Doolittle-Present

**BUSINESS MINUTES**

**STWDB AND WIA COGs Chair, Commissioner Weir Creighton** formally called the meeting to order at 12:03 p.m.

**ROLL CALL:** Taken. Quorum present for both STWDB and WIA COGs

**Service Recognition (Mayor Tom Bernabei) ..... J. Weir Creighton, Chair**

Commissioner Creighton recognized Mayor Tom Bernabei for his service to the Workforce Initiative Association Council of Governments board. Byrd said he appreciates his participation and guidance.

**APPROVAL OF June 27, 2023, MEETING MINUTES**

**MOTION: COMMISSIONER ABBUHL MOVED FOR THE APPROVAL OF JUNE 27, 2023; MEETING MINUTES AS PRESENTED. MAYOR BERNABEI SECONDED. MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY.**

**PY23 Wage & Salary Increases .....C. Byrd, WIA Executive Director**

Byrd shared a PowerPoint presentation along with the Executive Resolutions for Workforce Initiative Association and Stark Tuscarawas Workforce Development Board and a spreadsheet of all employees for PY23.

Byrd noted at the end of the year, we typically discuss pay increases which would be effective for the new calendar year. We are proposing a 3.5% annual increase for STWDB & WIA employees who have a successful evaluation and if not capped based on the new compensation structure. The 3.5% annual increase was derived by using the following key comparisons: CPI-U=3.7% (September 2023, last 12 months), Previous Comp Study Data-Competitive as of October 2022, Ohio Minimum Wage=3.5% increase (\$10.10 to \$10.45), Social Security COLA=3.2%, and other agencies in the community. The following increases were previously granted: 2.5%-July 2018, 3.00%-July 2019, 3.00%-December 2020 (lump sum only), 5.00%-January 2022, 4.00%-January 2023, and Varied-March 2023 (compensation restructure).

Byrd noted that after proposed increases, personnel costs are still projected to be less than the original approved budget. For STWDB, there was a July approved budget of \$454,000 with proposed increases equaling \$454,500 which increases by \$500. For WIA, there was a July approved budget of \$2,762,00 with proposed increases equaling \$2,699,000 which increases by \$63,000.

Byrd shared the spreadsheet called Salary & Fringe Rates for PY23 on the screen and everyone present had a copy of this document at the meeting. Byrd went through each column of a spreadsheet. He pointed out the highlighted items are employees who would not receive the full 3.5% increase since they are at capped amounts.

**MOTION: Mayor Bernabei moved that effective January 8, 2024, that Workforce Initiative Association (WIA) adopt the proposed 3.5% annual increase. Commissioner Abbuhl seconded. Motion carried.**

**MOTION: Scott Robinson moved that effective January 8, 2024, that Stark Tuscarawas Workforce Development Board (STWDB) adopt the proposed 3.5% annual increase. Commissioner Abbuhl seconded. Motion carried.**

**Workforce Investment Council (WIC) .....C. Byrd, WIA Executive Director  
Presentation & Discussion R. Roland, Legal Counsel**

Byrd referenced PowerPoint slides regarding a continued conversation on a COG Donation / Grant to Nonprofit from the June 27, 2023, meeting. He said the STWDB and WIA COGs have idle, unrestricted funds-currently dormant and not invested or growing, which presents a missed opportunity cost of \$3,500 per month. We would like to better utilize / leverage these funds. The idea is to donate / grant the funds to the Workforce Investment Council nonprofit to establish an endowment fund. This would provide a permanent, sustainable additional funding source. Funds would be placed with the Stark Community Foundation (SCF) as an Organizational Endowment Fund. SCF would provide professional investment management, "legitimacy" for future fundraising / donor confidence, a possible matching

opportunity, and potential for \$20,000 in sustainable annual withdrawals, plus appreciation, after the first year. The alternative is funds could be spent on "one-and-done" projects. This proposal also aligns with the Stark Tuscarawas Workforce Development Board's 2024-26 Strategic Plan tactics to leverage the nonprofit and coordinate multi-partner grant applications and grants administration for workforce initiatives in the region.

The STWDB and WIA have unrestricted funds. The original sources of these funds are: 1. funds in excess of expenses from various non-cost reimbursable grants over our 45+ years existence 2. incentive funds earned from the Ohio Workforce Incentive Program (OWIP), and 3. Ohio BWC rebates in excess of premiums (unrestricted per Auditor of State guidance). Currently the following amounts are available: \$107,000 (STWDB), \$353,000 (WIA), for a total of \$460,000, which amounts to 75% of the organizations' total unrestricted funds with the remaining 25% held for working capital.

Byrd stated the Workforce Investment Council (WIC) is a 501©3 tax-exempt nonprofit corporation. There has always been a nonprofit element to our local workforce system starting back with the Private Industry Council, next the Workforce Investment Board, and currently since 2006 called the Workforce Investment Council. The specific purpose is "....to support the work of the Workforce Development Board and OhioMeansJobs Centers." The current trustees are Chuck Byrd-Chairperson, JoAnn Breedlove-Secretary, Joe Sekely-Treasurer, with plans to add additional trustees.

The question that arose: Do the COGs have authority to take action on a donation/grant to a private nonprofit? We had our COG legal counsel, Rob Roland of Buckingham Doolittle, review the question and he presented his research, which in summary concludes, "*as long as one the member jurisdictions has the authority, then the COG has the authority.*" In his presentation, Roland referenced a compendium of his research which was supplied to all present.

After discussion, the members agreed to review the information with their respective prosecutors/law directors.

**Other Business .....J. Weir Creighton, Chair**

No other business was presented.

**Adjournment: 12:50 p.m.**

**MOTION: COMMISSIONER ABBUHL MOVED TO ADJOURN THE MEETING AND MAYOR TOM BERNABEI SECONDED. MOTION CARRIED.**