



Corporate Board of LWIA #15

Serving the counties of: Fulton, Marshall, Mason, McLean, Peoria, Stark, Tazewell and Woodford

MINUTES

DATE: Thurs. October 24, 2024

8:30 am

Telephone Conference Dial-In:

309/585-6250 PIN 5856

I. Roll CALL - Chairman, Bruce Marston ROLL CALL & INTRODUCTIONS - CHAIRMAN, BRUCE MARSTON

Chairman, Bruce Marston opened the meeting at 8:33am with roll call.

Corporate Board Members Present: Chair, Bruce Marston, Eric Snow and Luke Gruden

Corporate Board Members Absent:

Career Link Staff Present: Executive Director, Steve Martin, Assistant Director, Dena Weth and Fiscal Director, LeeAnn Norris.

II. *ACTION ITEM: Approval of 09/25/2024 Corporate Board Minutes

A motion was made by Luke Gruden and seconded by Eric Snow to approve the 09/25/2024 Corporate Board Minutes.

III. *ACTION ITEM: Approval of changes to the Starting Salary of the **Career Planner position to \$38K annually and the Resource Room Tech position to \$16.00 per hr.** - Executive Director, Steve Martin / Assistant Director, Dena Weth / Fiscal Director, LeeAnn Norris

Board member, Luke Gruden ask Steve if he could provide some additional information with regard to what the starting salary was and where is this increase going. Steve said it is 37.5 hrs. per week. The salary was at \$35,925 but Career Link needs to be competitive to attract talent. At this time, it is recommended to move it to \$38K starting salary with a cap of \$52,500. The recommendation is to also raise the Resource Room Technician from \$15.50 to \$16 per hr. Also, the current Career Planner's salary would be moved from under \$38K to \$39K respectively. There are three staff that that would affect, effective Nov. 2, 2024. Chair, Bruce Marston asked if there are any positions that are currently open for those positions? Steve said yes, there are two Career Planner openings in Peoria and one Career Planner in McLean Co. as well as a Resource Room Technician in the Wyoming, IL (Stark Co.) for part-time and considering hiring in Peoria for Resource Room Tech. Steve reached out an email to LWIA Directors around the state to get an idea of their salary ranges. This would help us in being competitive in basing it on other LWIAs of our size. After the responses that he received back, he feels the \$38K puts Career Link at a competitive wage under LWIAs. Bruce asked how long the positions have been open. Steve said that two Career Planners in Peoria, IL were not working out and were let go for about two weeks. The third position has been open for approx. a month or so. Dena reported that the Employment Specialist at IDES and located potentially three Peoria, IL interviews for this Wednesday. The Normal, IL position is still having a lack of interest. Bruce asked if they are quality resumes with the required experience. Dena said that yes, there have been very good resumes; retired social workers, retired teachers, etc. Luke asked what are the job duties or role for these positions? Dena stated that for a Career Planner

position is a person, they work with customers, who, say for instance, will go into post-secondary training from the beginning to end. The Career Planners complete the customer's assessment, the general eligibility, assess the individual with enrolling in classes at a particular college, they monitor grades, attendance and provide supportive services to the individual, provide resume and job search assistance, all that incorporate a type of mentor to the individual that comes into our organization for the post-secondary services. Steve stated that the Career Planner position has a requirement of having a Bachelor's degree. Steve stated that IDES is providing assistance in posting these positions on IL skills match website. Luke ask about the three employees at \$39K and what is their hourly. Steve stated that it adds up to \$20 per hr. Board member, Eric Snow asked if \$38K to \$52K and the \$16 for R.R. Technician positions is enough in salary. . . Steve reminded the board members that Career Link and all LWIA's that are administrating the W.I.O.A. laws and directives and the DCEO requirement rule of '50% of all funds must be spent towards the 'training' costs'. This rule caps on what Career Link can offer as far as salary and filters down to what is able to be provided for raises, etc. and trying to keep staff on. This 50% rule has been difficult in all LWIAs in the state. Consistently, Career Link has been able to meet this 50% requirement and this is why the needle can't be moved any higher at times. Bruce asked what the educational requirements for the \$16 per hr. Resource Room position? Dena stated that generally the experience is important but the high school diploma or GED. The Resource Room Technician works specifically works with the community individuals who walk in who might be looking for job search assistance, assistance with completing online applications, interviewing skills, etc. Some R.R. Technicians help with Career Planners with completing customer's timesheets, etc. It is a professional position because you have an individual who is relying on the R.R. Technician in helping with opening up the path way to employment and/or training. Bruce asked what the current minimum wage? Dena stated that it will be \$15 per hr., as of Jan. 01, 2025. Bruce stated that a Resource Room Tech is helping people find employment and helping them with resumes and things of that nature and if minimum wage is \$15 per hr. at McDonalds, you aren't going to get a lot of quality resumes and asked if the R.R. Tech is one of the harder positions to fill? Dena stated that it is very hard to fill. Bruce asked if \$16 is really enough when it is only \$1 more than the minimum wage, when your are really needing someone who has more skill than just a high school graduate because you want someone who has experience, right? Dena and Steve stated that experience working with people is very important. Bruce asked LeeAnn what her thoughts on what the maximum that Career Link can go on these positions, since Steve stated that these amounts are an average of what other LWIAs are paying. How much do room we have there for these positions. LeeAnn stated that is not a whole lot of room for these positions. She stated that while looking at the Budget, she is always concerned about the 50% requirement rule. The higher the amount that goes towards Staff salaries, in addition to bonus costs, which are based on salaries, everything gets more expensive as you increase wages. We do need quality personnel in these positions, and we do need to remain somewhat competitive, but we are very limited to what we have available and the higher the salary wages, the fewer people we can employ to do the job and makes it a difficult position. Luke said that if was possible, he would like to increase the Resource Room Technician salary higher than .50 cents. Bruce stated that maybe take a look at it as we go, if you're not getting any quality applicants for R.R. Technician since it is one of the harder positions to fill. Dena stated that the Peoria, IL office has not had a R.R. Tech. for quite some time. There were a number of individuals in that position, but they were either terminated or they have 'ghosted' us and disappeared on their own. Eric asked if this R.R. Tech is part-time of full-time position? Dena stated that there is a mixture of P.T. and F.T. in our Agency regarding the R.R. Tech position. There are a couple Full-time R.R. Tech and they receive the Full-compensation package. The individual in our Henry, IL (Marshall Co.) office, and the potential hire for Wyoming, IL (Stark Co.) office and the Peoria, IL (Peoria Co.), where there have been so many problems with background checks, start-up training and then eventually leaving shortly after, we felt to start them at part-time and they were doing a good job, we would put them into a full-time status, if the budget allowed. Steve stated that full-time means that their health-care is paid 100%, the 401K is matched, as well as sick days, PTO days and Holidays. Luke asked what is the full-time hours? Dena stated that it is 37.5 hrs. per week. Eric asked if these part-time positions have a process of maybe moving them to full-time after 30 days or 60 or 90 days to check in with them and let them know how they are performing, 'dangle that carrot' regarding benefits, 401K, etc. to see if they would perform better because the \$16 per hr. is not very high. He stated that him being a store director in retail, they start out paying clerks bagging groceries at \$15 per hr., now. He is concerned about what staff are reporting on and he understands about staying within the guidelines that are given. He asked if the R.R. Technician salary is raised, now, do the other salary ranges not being raised, possibly going to create dissention in the ranks? Bruce stated that there were a number of positions that were already filled, in order to try to keep them from getting poached. Now we are looking at these other positions that are open, that are tough to fill. He agrees that the benefits are the carrot that needs to be offered. Steve stated that the things that have changed these days, is the age of the applicants, who want higher wages but because of their age, they don't really care about the Health Care Ins.

or 401K benefits. Those are not attractions to them. They simply want higher wages. Steve stated that the other R.R. Techs that are currently employed, have been with Career Link for over 20+ years each, so their salaries have been moved up throughout the years. If it starting wages were moved up, it wouldn't affect them at all. The Wyoming, IL (Stark) and the Henry, IL (Marshall Co.) offices R.R. Techs are fairly new so if the \$16 per hr. was moved up to a higher wage, this would have an affect on that fairly new position. This has been on ongoing discussion across the LWIAs in dealing with the 50% training funds requirement rule. There are some LWIAs that are not and will not meet this requirement, moving forward and there will be sanctions for not meeting this performance measures requirement. However, Career Link has consistently met DCEO and DOL requirements for 35+ years (with exception during COVID pandemic). Steve agrees that the \$16 per hr. is a VERY low rate. Can it be raised? That would be a topic for further discussions when looking at the budget. Bruce agrees that the sanctions for deliberately not meeting the 50% performance measures, are pretty stringent, and that is not very wise for any LWIA. He stated that he will defer to Steve, Dena and LeeAnn's expertise in making this decision whether to keep the \$16 per hr, or raise it if possible, and then in the future, in the event that this R.R. Tech position has not been able to be filled, then a second look can be made and discuss it further. Steve stated that the priority is to meet the performance measures. These measures are created by those who may not be in the field of applying these measures. Luke asked if there was a way that is similar to the Career Planner position, in being able to make a little adjustment, if adjustment can be made at 'starting at \$16 per hr.' instead of a flat rate? LeeAnn stated that if they have experience, etc., we could start them a little higher, if we need to. Bruce asked what is the range of the R.R. Tech.? Steve stated that the R.R. Tech's ranged has been moved up, because we have some R.R. Technicians that have been here for 20+ years and have absorbed 5% raises. Luke said that he understands that the range provides that is a starting salary rate but is not a solid \$16 per hr. Bruce asked that if there was someone with a little more experience you could give them a little more than \$16 per hr. because there is a range of \$16 to \$18 for that position, or something like that? Steve said that it would depend on their skill set. Bruce stated yes, that is true but there is a range for that position, right? LeeAnn stated that is correct. Luke said that he was just a little unsure and that is why he asked about this option.

A motion was made by Luke Gruden and seconded by Eric Snow to the adjustments to the Starting Salary of the Career Planner position to \$38K annually salary and the Resource Room Tech position to \$16.00 per hr. salary. Motion carried.

IV. Other Comments

There was no other comments.

V. Public Comments

There were no public comments.

VI. *ACTION ITEM: Adjournment

A motion was made by Luke Gruden and seconded by Eric Snow to adjourn. Motion carried. Adjournment @ 08:59 am.

Respectfully submitted,

Recording Secretary,
Theresa Kotte, Executive Assistant
LWIA #15