

Open Work Session
Lower Shore Workforce Alliance
June 18, 2019

Mr. Greg Padgham, Executive Director of the Tri-County Council, and Ms. Becca Webster, Lower Shore Workforce Alliance Director, came before Council. Mr. Padgham thanked Council for taking the time to allow them to go over a little bit of business. He said they just want to briefly update Council on how the Workforce Investment Act's transition to the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) of 2014 affects Board composition and other services, so he will turn things over to Ms. Webster.

Ms. Webster said the handout she gave Council goes over the purposes of WIOA, so that is something they can review at their leisure. She said the second part of that is Board membership, which is what she is going to talk about, and then just a short statement about what the commitment for Board members is so they can refer to that if they need to. She said WIOA lists 13 functions of the Board in the law, so there is a pretty big responsibility for the Board and what they are to do, but it is all about workforce development, working with employers, and working with job seekers to fill the needs in the community for workforce. She said 51 percent of the membership on the Workforce Board need to be business members. She said the way they have that set up in their workforce area, which is the three Counties of Wicomico, Worcester and Somerset, is five members of the Board from each County are business members, so there are 15 business members, and five come from Wicomico. She said the purpose is for the Board to be business led so they can tell what is going on in the job industry, what they project the job openings to be, and what skills folks need to have to be able to fill those jobs, so that they can then do their job to prepare job seekers.

Ms. Webster said the membership for businesses is what they really wanted to talk about today and get into detail about. She said, to be a business representative of the Board, they are looking for folks who have optimum policymaking or hiring authority, and that is listed on the handout. She said they are really looking for folks who have their finger on the pulse of what is going on, and who have hiring authority because they are the ones who then, obviously, are able to tell them what the qualities or skills of the job seeker needs to be. She said they are looking for four folks from areas that are in demand industry sectors because, obviously, they want to know where growth is, and not where decline is. She said they are looking for folks who, within their own organizations or businesses, are training their folks to continue to be good workers, and they are appointed by the Council. She said, for Wicomico County they have one member who is unable to attend because there is a conflict on the date of the meetings, so they currently have five seats on the Board full, but they are going to request replacement for one member because, unfortunately, she has a conflict. Ms. Webster said meetings are held four times a year, so they are quarterly meetings, and usually they have a guest speaker, some voting items, budget items, strategic plans, and selection of providers for any of their services. She said they have officers and some internal policies, so that is a general idea of what a Board meeting looks like. She said their challenge, which is why they are here to talk to Council today, is keeping those seats filled. As she said, they have one member who has a conflict, so, even though the terms are for four years, there is almost a constant turnover of trying to keep appointments up to date and the seats filled. She said each County is almost always missing at least one or two members, and that puts their Board out of compliance. She said they have certification this year, which is why it was particularly important for them to come and give Council a little overview of the types of folks they are looking for. Mr. Padgham added, this is very important, not just for compliance, but also to make sure job providers are tuned in to the workforce, and this allows the Lower Shore Workforce Alliance and its Board to do its job, and helps employers in the private sector.

Mr. Cannon asked how Council can help them, to which Ms. Webster responded, her ask today is, when she sends in the letter to replace the one member, that they are able to fill that seat pretty quickly. She said her question for Council is whether they prefer for them to try to identify a member, or does Council prefer to have control over that and identify a person they would appoint on their own, to which Mr. Cannon responded, he does not think they need to micromanage that, and she is more qualified than Council to make that decision. Ms. Webster said different Counties prefer to have that handled differently, but their Board has had some discussions about having a little more control over that. She said, if they identify a person in a priority industry, they are able to come to Council and say they have, essentially, gone through the recruitment process for that person, and ask them to approve them. She said if that works for Council, it works for them. Mr. McCain said they would rather it come from them.


Mr. Cannon asked who their liaison is with the Chamber of Commerce, to which Ms. Webster responded, she has a staff person who is doing a little bit more legwork with that. She said right now they are planning a business summit in August, and they have been working with Mr. Chambers. Mr. McCain said every person who is a member of the Greater Salisbury Committee meets the definition because they have to be CEOs or heads of companies to be a member, and they are the ones doing the hiring, to which Mr. Padgham responded, that is a source. He said he and Ms. Webster will work on submitting some names, if Council is fine with that.

Mr. Cannon said he attended a Census Committee meeting yesterday, and they were talking about how, with the new census coming out, they are also going to be looking for people to try to accomplish that goal, and to make sure they get enough people throughout Wicomico County, so it may benefit Ms. Webster to contact them, to which Ms. Webster responded, they have job fairs at the American Job Fair for the census takers, so they are constantly involved in that with recruitment. Mr. Padgham added, the Federal Census people have a representative in the region. Ms. Webster said they are connected with that, so those are examples of things they try to stay connected with throughout their network. She said they have done some job fairs and on-site interviewing with them, and they have it listed in their job listings through the Maryland Workforce Exchange, and she has also seen it at the Delmar Library and some other places, so hopefully they will get enough people because it sounds like they need a lot. Mr. Padgham said Mr. Cannon mentioned interaction with the Chamber of Commerce too, and he is in contact a lot with the Chamber of Commerce, and he will bring this issue up again. He said, in fact, he will probably be in contact with Mr. Chambers today regarding another matter.

Mr. Hastings said Mr. Padgham is doing a great job of taking over after Mr. Pennington. He said they served on the Rural Maryland Council together, and he is a fantastic person who ran the Tri-County Council for a long time, so he is happy to see how things are developing. Mr. Padgham thanked Mr. Hastings, and said he has been in this position for about six months, and as soon as the grant period closes out and they begin their new fiscal year, there are some things he would like to do. He said he is already setting the stage for that with a region-wide marketing plan, which he decided the Tri-County Council will take the reins on, and he is excited about it. There was no further discussion.

Signatures on next page


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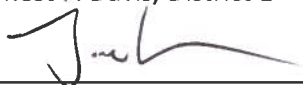
John T. Cannon, President

absent


Larry W. Dodd, Vice President, District 3




Ernest F. Davis, District 1



Josh Hastings, District 4



Joe Holloway, District 5



William R. McCain, At-Large



Laura Hurley, Council Administrator