

NORTHWEST WISCONSIN CEP REGULAR BOARD OF DIRECTORS MEETING

February 19, 2025 | 10 AM
417 9th Ave W; Ashland, WI 54806

IN ATTENDANCE

In Person: Bill Kacvinsky (Chair), Dave Willingham, Bob Kopisch, Patricia Stephan, Dee Gokee-Rindal, Steve Kariainen, Charlie Glazman, Rollie Thums, Larry Youngs, Bob Olsgard, Terry Wedwick

By Phone/Teams: Elizabeth Franek, Emmett Byrne

Excused: Larry Fickbohm, Thomas Gordon

Staff/Guests Present: Skyler Dural-Eder, Mary Zinnecker, Michelle Smith, and Sue Stephens (CEP – in person); Brent Blomberg (Burnett County – Alternative Representative by Teams); Lauren Schrubbe (DWD LPL by Teams)

CALL TO ORDER, ROLL CALL, AND REPORT OF PUBLIC MEETING NOTICE

Bill Kacvinsky, CEP Board Chair, called the meeting to order at 10 AM. Skyler Dural-Eder conducted the roll call. Quorum present. Skyler reported that the public meeting notice was published on the CEP website and social media and distributed to the regional library systems and to the county offices for posting and publication. The Pledge of Allegiance was recited, and the CEP mission statement was read by Emmett Byrne.

MOTION: Approval of the December 18, 2024, meeting minutes: The minutes were reviewed. Motion by Steve to approve the minutes as presented and seconded by Rollie. The minutes were approved unanimously.

ORGANIZATION UPDATE, SKYLER DURAL-EDER (EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR)

Skyler reviewed the board report document, newsletter, and employee commendation letter that was emailed out to all board members. She stated that the recent executive orders from the federal government are causing some confusion, but we are conducting business as usual for now. The independently leased space in Superior is fully vacated. We still pay for the One Stop Operator MOU and will have Title 1 WIOA presence as required by WIOA policy.

All full-time staff whose hours were not previously increased will increase to 37.5 hours per week starting March 10, 2025. This will run for an eight-week trial period, hoping to continue based on VR caseloads, work on youth career academies, and WIOA needs. We hope to hire 1-2 part-time employees for Superior and VR services coverage.

We have received information that Health Insurance Navigator funding will be significantly reduced for the next program period that starts in August 2025. Federal funding for Navigators is currently \$98 M, which will be cut to under \$10M nationally. Wisconsin currently receives \$8 M.

A discussion took place about federal employee layoffs impacting the region.

Skyler discussed efforts to provide information for community members, board representatives, county representatives, and other stakeholders. A newsletter was created and can be distributed publicly, showcasing CEP's work.

Resignations – Brad Leino (Career Planner; previously VR Specialist– 3 years); Jenny Decker (Variety of positions – 30 years)

FINANCIAL UPDATE, MICHELLE SMITH (FINANCE DIRECTOR)

Michelle discussed that the audit process is currently underway with Wagner Audit Firm. They are helping us clear up our records for some open records and accounts that date back numerous years. A discussion took place regarding why these open records were not cleared out during past audits with Wipfli or Wagner. There is no clear answer to this; however, it should be resolved under this audit. To address UW's payment delays concerns, they will provide an upfront payment of \$100,000, on which we will then provide status updates. This payment should arrive in March. Future disbursements will be in \$50,000 increments.

A discussion took place on switching from MIP software to QuickBooks for costs and something more appropriate for an organization of our size. We are currently under contract with the company who provides MIP (Abila – Community Brands). With a significant reduction in funding, we may be able to discontinue the contract earlier than the April 2026 timeline. A decision needs to be made by January 2026.

Skyler and Michelle discussed that the budget planning process would soon be taking place; however, there is limited information on funding levels at this time so that process will be based on what projections are available.

Northern State Bank unilaterally closed CEP's line of credit without prior notice. Following this discussion with our bank representative, a temporary line of credit was reinstated for half of the amount. Board members expressed concern over the lack of prior communication from the bank. Discussion took place about establishing secondary banking operations in addition to our Northern State Bank accounts.

MOTION: To approve a \$100,000 line of credit to be taken out at Northern State Bank for at least six months, preferably through the end of 2025. Motion by Bob Kopisch and seconded by Bill Kacvinsky. Roll call vote; all in favor. Motion carried.

MOTION: To approve Michelle Smith and Skyler Dural-Eder to look into secondary banking operations at Northwoods Community Credit Union or Chippewa Valley Bank and establish the necessary account documentation. Motion Rollie Thums, seconded by Larry Youngs. Motion carried.

CLOSED SESSION

MOTION: A motion was made by Dave Willingham and seconded by Charlie Glazman to convene into Closed Session at 11:11 am under Wisconsin State Statute 19.85 (1) (e) to discuss the Ashland lease agreement and personnel expense reports.

MOTION: Dave Willingham made a motion to convene out of Closed Session at 12:17 pm under Wisconsin State Statute 19.85 (1) (e) and (c). Seconded by Bob Olsgard.

Staff member Skyler Dural-Eder was present during closed session along with the in person board members.

OPEN SESSION

No actions or announcements were made back into the open session.

NEXT MEETING

The next meeting will take place on Wednesday, April 16, at 10 AM or the call of the chair.

Meeting adjourned at 12:18 pm.