



Area 20 Workforce Development Region
Fairfield – Hocking – Pickaway – Ross – Vinton

January 29, 2025
Fairfield County Workforce Center

Board Members: Stephen Carson, Matt Claypool, Missy Clum, Renee Conley, Jeremy Dennis, Carrie Fife (virtual), Sally Galecki, Richard Games, Nathan Hale, Todd Hoffman, Kimberly Jeffers, Michael Linton, Theresa Ragosta, Ben Smith, Jessica Stroh (virtual)

Partners: Corey Clark, Rick Moore, Rick Reynolds, Jodi Smith (virtual), Cristy Stewart, Bryn Stepp, Nick Tatman, Jody Walker

Staff to the Board: Tia Dauterman, Bayley Fields, and Rick Szabrak

Guests: Madison Cox, Rick Henson (virtual), Medea Loibl (virtual), Josh Renison

Welcome and Introductions

Chairman Linton called the meeting to order and brief introductions took place among the attendees.

Approval of Agenda

No additions or deletions.

Approval of October 30, 2024, Minutes

Stephen Carson motioned to approve the October 30, 2024, minutes and Kimberly Jeffers seconded. The motion passed.

Board Roster Update

Rick Szabrak shared that there are openings within the board due to the retirement and promotion of two former board members. One of these positions will need to be filled by a Hocking County business. Rick shared that Chelsea Huffman of Park National Bank has joined the board. Bayley Fields added that she has been working with one of the former board members to identify someone, at PPG, who could continue to represent the business, but Bayley said the board is open to other businesses and will explore options. Rick opened the floor for board members to share ideas of businesses from Hocking County, emphasizing in-demand jobs are the focus, and tourism is an industry that could be leaned into.

WIOA Legislation Update

Rick Szabrak shared updates with the group regarding the halt of federal funding. He stated that the state receives WIOA funding for the program year, so there will be no immediate changes to funding. Rick also discussed the reauthorization of WIOA and summarized “A Stronger Workforce for America Act,” or ASWA, which includes changes such as 50% of funding would need to go toward training or adding supportive services. Rick stated that the Area is in good shape regarding this, but some adjustments would be needed. Rick closed by saying the Area is in good shape in terms of funding, but WIOA will need to be reauthorized, and it is unclear what that will look like in the future.

Financial Report

Rick Szabrak presented the area’s financial report. Rick shared that the Area has done a better job at spending by highlighting that most funds (which will expire in June 2025) have been spent. Rick also shared that there will be an increase in funds in the next year, so the board is performing well from a funding standpoint. Michael Linton asked if using the remaining funds before June 2025 will be



Area 20 Workforce Development Region
Fairfield – Hocking – Pickaway – Ross – Vinton

the last quarter, 26 visitors were interested in WIOA and there are now seven open cases. Cristy also stated that CDL continues to be the most popular program that people inquire about. The OMJ center will be hosting a spring job fair on March 4, 2025, so the staff has begun its employer outreach. Cristy recalled a successful OJT with Oak Valley. Cristy then explained the center's plans to continue hosting informational training sessions; the next session will be on childcare to meet a need within the community.


Rick Moore from OhioMeansJobs South Central Ohio discussed the combined numbers of Ross, Vinton, and Hocking counties. Rick reported that OMJ South Central Ohio continues to see annual increases in Resource Room visits with 6,327 in 2024. Rick reported 12 job postings, seven hiring events, and two OJT contracts for the quarter.

Industry Trends/Climate

Michael Linton asked the employers in the room about employment, and the ability to fill positions, in January 2025 compared to January 2024. Many of the employers responded that they find employment to be better this year in comparison to last year. A discussion opened regarding the importance of building a long-term, sustainable foundation for workforce development and the importance of becoming involved in BACs.

The next board meeting will be April 23, 2025, at the Pickaway County OhioMeansJobs Center. Michael Linton adjourned the meeting.

Area 20/21

Representative  4-28-25
Date

Area 20/21 Board

Chair  4/22/2025
Date