

**KENTUCKIANAWORKS BOARD MEETING**  
**GREATER LOUISVILLE WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT BOARD**  
**Thursday, November 19, 2020**  
**8:30 A.M. – 10:00 A.M.**  
**Zoom virtual meeting**

**Members Present:** John Archer, Jackie Beard, Caitlin Blair, Neal Cotton, Sarah Davasher-Wisdom, Eric Friggle, Tony Georges, Dr. Ty Handy, Tami Hatfield, Michael Hesketh, Jennifer Lampton, Sean O’Leary, Dr. Marty Pollio, Tom Quick, Sadiqa Reynolds, Stacey Wade\*, Mary Ellen Wiederwohl

**Greetings and Welcome** – *Tony Georges*

Mr. Georges thanked the attendees for joining the meeting this morning.

**Acknowledgements and Well Wishes to Mary Ellen Wiederwohl as She Leaves Metro**

**Government** – *Tony Georges and all*

Mr. Georges thanked Ms. Wiederwohl for all she has done for KentuckianaWorks, saying it had been a pleasure and a blessing to have her be part of the Board’s work. Mr. Gritton added his personal thanks to Ms. Wiederwohl for her guidance over the years. During her tenure, the city has worked to fund programs like SummerWorks, Reimage, and Code Louisville; she has done a lot of work for the Academies; she was an advocate for Opportunity Youth Funding; and a lot of progress has been made integrating economic development (Louisville Forward, led by Ms. Wiederwohl) with workforce development. Mr. Quick echoed Mr. Georges and Mr. Gritton, telling Ms. Wiederwohl that he appreciated her advocacy and support, that she would be missed, and that hopefully she would not be going too far away. Mr. O’Leary asked for her contract information so the Board Members could stay in touch.

Ms. Wiederwohl said she was not expecting the outpouring of love in this bittersweet moment; there is joy about what comes next, but sorrow in leaving the daily work and partnerships. She said she was looking forward to what comes next and continuing to work together in whatever her next steps would be. She admired the Board’s blending of strong government sectors, successful business sectors, and supportive non-profit sectors; people she has met in other places are envious of Louisville’s partnership of workforce development and economic development.

**Vote Needed: Review and Approve Minutes from September Meeting** – *Tony Georges*

A motion to approve the minutes was made by John Archer and seconded by Mary Ellen Wiederwohl. It passed without any opposition.

**Alignment & Youth Employment: Vote Needed on Program Oversight Committee’s Recommendation for a Work-Based Learning Platform** – *Regina Phillips & Brenda Pirtle*

Mr. Gritton introduced the presenters, saying Dr. Pollio and Ms. Rogers have been adding talented players to the JCPS team, like Ms. Pirtle. She came to JCPS from Bullitt County. Mr. Gritton was excited about this new platform for the opportunities it presents for summer employment and youth employment overall. In her presentation, Ms. Phillips wanted to highlight the potential of WorkBay to the region’s youth talent development system.

Ms. Phillips described how KentuckianaWorks provides support and leadership for several youth workforce and education initiatives (e.g., SummerWorks, the Academies of Louisville, the Kentucky Youth Career Center, and Reimage) with the goal of connecting young people (aged 16-24) to work-based learning opportunities (e.g., summer jobs, PT and FT jobs, internships, apprenticeships, co-ops, and job shadowing). Over time, it has become evident that a single, interactive platform to connect young people and employers/opportunities is needed; benefits of such a platform would include app-based texting capability, increased engagement and choices, opportunity filters, and more robust reporting capabilities, ideally all with a regional focus. To lean into these challenges, a work group was organized. They determined KentuckianaWorks would spearhead these efforts on behalf of the region. An RFP was released on October 1, and two competitive proposals were received. A selection committee (representing JCPS, GLI, Shelby County, and Norton Healthcare) ultimately chose WorkBay's proposal, which the Program Oversight Committee approved at their meeting last week.

Ms. Pirtle explained "why WorkBay?" Its strengths included: short ramp-up time; texting capacity; career exploration and occupational skills training; soft skills training; easy-to-create resumes and profiles for both students and employers; Salesforce integration; job search tools; and the potential for widespread usage. JCPS was excited the platform offers equal access and opportunity to all students; provides virtual tours and job fairs; has interviews/videos featuring students who look like them; features a dashboard for monitoring, support, and communication tools for teachers; and can have a customized SummerWorks soft skills course embedded. Ms. Phillips added Shelby County Public Schools was also excited and fully on-board, particularly about virtual job fairs, work-readiness skills curriculum, and reaching their disconnected youth. Mr. Hesketh said that was particularly important giving the problems arising from the pandemic.

Mr. Gritton welcomed comments, saying this platform was for more than just SummerWorks and summer jobs; it was about youth employment that starts in high schools and youth career centers. Mr. Georges called WorkBay potentially a game-changer in alignment and connectivity. Ms. Reynolds said she was excited to support this platform, but she was curious about how success would be measured. She also encouraged KentuckianaWorks to make sure to reach the kids who need to be reached, and said she would like to see a report on outcomes in the future. Ms. Rippy asked how other community agencies would be able to use the platform; Ms. Phillips said the plan was to start out relatively small (SummerWorks, JCPS, Shelby County Schools, and KYCC) and pull together a stakeholder advisory committee to get feedback and ensure it is launched correctly; she does not want to be everything to everybody. Mr. Gritton said this was all still being figured this out, and he would be looking for groups like YouthBuild to help; the approach could be made through the school, but also through non-profits like the Urban League and YouthBuild. Mr. O'Leary thought it was an innovative way to look at solving problems; it may not work, but he was excited that at least we are trying new things. Mr. Gritton said we have been trying for years to ensure kids would get soft skills prep before going to employers for the first time, and Ms. Pirtle's team at JCPS was now trying to institutionalize that. Relentless experimentation!

Ms. Reynolds pointed out that it matters what schools the program is rolled out in and how much support they have. She encouraged KentuckianaWorks/JCPS to ensure there would be a diverse group of students participating; leaving kids behind previously is why there is a problem with

disconnected youth in the city now. Ms. Phillips agreed, and mentioned there is student participation on the advisory committee. Mr. Gritton referenced the KentuckianaWorks racial equity pledge and how SummerWorks serves a high number of minority kids, JCPS is a majority-minority school, and Dr. Pollio is committed to the cause. Ms. Reynolds said she loved Dr. Pollio and is a huge fan of the positive changes at JCPS, but people have been around long enough to see things roll out that left some kids behind in the past. She encouraged everyone to be intentional. Dr. Pollio assured Ms. Reynolds that JCPS would not let her down.

Ms. Reynolds made a motion to support the recommendation, and it was seconded by Mr. O’Leary. The motion passed without objection, and Mr. Georges was excited about having “just converted it from a dream to a plan to an accountability item.”

**Strategic Plan Follow-up: Thinking Through our Racial Equity Pledge in Light of a New Report from the National Fund for Workforce Solutions** – *Michael Gritton and All*

Mr. Gritton thanked the Board, praising the great attendance at the October 30 session. He said staff were already moving forward with the strategic priorities identified by the Board. There would also be a staff retreat on December 9 that would put layers below each of the strategic priorities. At the last staff meeting, many folks had questions about whether focusing on racial equity was an underlying principle or a part of everything; it could be both at the same time. Mr. Gritton referenced a new report from the National Fund for Workforce Solutions (he has been on their Board of Directors for a few years) that was sent out in the meeting’s pre-work materials. The National Fund report uses a data perspective to highlight the degree to which African-Americans are under-represented in “good jobs,” and highlights the uneven racial recovery from COVID (i.e., whites have done better, people of color have done worse). Mr. Gritton wanted to make sure the KentuckianaWorks focus remains on racial equity, which was one reason he was so excited about WorkBay. He wanted to match that sense of urgency with everything that is happening.

Mr. Gritton reported on additional fundraising for SummerWorks to match what comes from Metro Government/Metro Council each year (\$500,000). \$150,000 each year for the next three years from the James Graham Brown Foundation, the largest foundation in Kentucky, is huge. Of special symbolism with that gift is that it is a 3-year grant; Mayor Fischer is only in for 2 more years. This offers some power symbolically in helping KentuckianaWorks make the case to future funders that SummerWorks is a Louisville commitment, not just a Mayor Fischer commitment.

A short memo from Mr. Rodriguez was included in the pre-read materials sent out in the Board packet; he and Ms. Smith both wrote National Funds grants that were selected for funding. One grant addresses the digital divide, and we partnered with the Louisville Urban League (Ms. Reynolds and Ms. Thompson) and Goodwill (Ms. Sharpe) on it. The other grant, which Ms. Smith worked on, focused on what a lot of national foundations are referring to as “job quality.” This grant will work to try to find ways that make jobs work better for the people who get them.

Additionally, the Racial Equity Dashboard from the Labor Market Intelligence team (Ms. Ehresman/Ms. Elliott) should be ready early next year. Finally, Ms. Read will be developing a regular racial equity report, which she will be bringing to the Board early next year.

Mr. Georges was encouraged by these developments, saying “this is work that we need to keep the pedal to the metal, time is of the essence [with a] sense of urgency to move.”

**Discussion: Heads Up on Key Performance Challenges Across Some of our Key Programs in the COVID World** – *Michael Gritton and Cindy Read*

Mr. Gritton said Mr. Hesketh had called him last Friday after digging into the program reports for the Program Oversight Committee, wanting to make sure the Board took a moment to look at them today. Mr. Gritton said a number of the core KentuckianaWorks programs have been experimenting with the best way to serve customers in the COVID-19 era, programs including those like Rescare/Equus (adult career services), JCPS Adult Ed (youth career services), Goodwill (regional county services), TANF (Goodwill), etc. Mr. Gritton wanted to be upfront and transparent with the Board – all of those programs are struggling in some degree to find customers and keep them enrolled through completion (whether that be getting a job, training, GED, whatever). KentuckianaWorks program staff have been digging in with those long-term partners/contractors/friends, who all have a track record of doing good work. Mr. Gritton’s workforce colleagues around the country have confirmed with him they have never seen anything like this. The contractors have been experimenting with online job fairs, calling new Unemployment Insurance recipients, and providing trainings in manufacturing and construction. Still, some of the things discussed at the Strategic Plan session in October are real problems: transportation barriers, childcare concerns, etc.

Mr. Hesketh wanted the Board to know the Program Oversight Committee is doing great work, the meeting agendas are just always so full of work to do. Mr. Gritton assured the Board that KentuckianaWorks staff will dig in and will have more to report to the Board soon; he and Ms. Read have talked about having the POC look a little more into this, to hear from some of the folks who have been doing the work. Mr. Gritton also pointed out that with COVID numbers in the red, there has also been a lot of uncertainty and fear. Ms. Reynolds said the Urban League would be happy to partner with ResCare, as the Urban League was “drowning from a staffing perspective.... All of our seats are still full,” she said, but “We are exhausted... We have opportunities all the time, but we just don’t have the human resources to do it all.” Mr. Gritton thanked Ms. Reynolds and said Ms. Read and the team would reach out to her shortly.

**Discussion: Update on Metro’s New Investment in Programing for Opportunity Youth** – *Michael Gritton and All*

Mr. Gritton said he has shared a lot of good news today (e.g., new National Fund grants and additional SummerWorks funding), but unfortunately, he did not get good news from the city in terms of how they will be spending the \$1,000,000 of Opportunity Youth funding. In April’s budget proposal, Mayor Fischer suggested putting some of the savings from the closure of the youth detention center into efforts to prevent youth from reaching that point; specifically, the Mayor recommended \$500,000 for Vincent James’ Office of Youth Development and \$1,000,000 to KentuckianaWorks to expand KYCC and Reimage, programs JCPS Adult Ed runs for KentuckianaWorks and has done a good job with for a long time. However, the Metro Council did not accept the Mayor’s recommendation; they set the funds aside for an opportunity youth RFP. The OYD hired a couple of new staff members. Councilmembers Dorsey, George, and Peden were the people on the Council who did the homework and made recommendations.

Ultimately, an RFP for \$950,000 went out. KentuckianaWorks did not bid for the whole total, as we were aware there were other players in the space who wanted to build out their capacity. We were supportive of that; for example, Lynn Rippey is part of the Coalition Supporting Young Adults, who have been doing a lot of great volunteer work over the years. KentuckianaWorks bid for \$380,000 of the total. We learned some folks we think of as partners (Goodwill, Urban League, etc.) also competed for the funds; that is the reality of what happens when the city puts out money and invites people to apply! The city offered KentuckianaWorks \$300,000, but to serve as a pass-through for half of that amount; specifically, they wanted us to create a peer mentoring component across the consortium, though at the time they would not tell us who was in the consortium. Mr. Gritton conferred with Mr. Georges and Ms. Wiederwohl, and decided to turn this down as we were not eager to build out something new for a set of partners who hadn't even been identified to us. We also did not want to create a precedent of serving as a "pass through" funding organization to route funds to others, as we have never done that before. The city is now funding three organizations: The Coalition Supporting Young Adults, Goodwill (transportation and mentoring), and the Louisville Urban League (case management, with a focus on mental health). The challenge for KentuckianaWorks now is to stay at the table and make sure whatever is going to happen through these new efforts still allows us to connect as many young adults as possible with our services.

Mr. Georges told Mr. Gritton he appreciated the insight, pointing out there are a lots of good people and good organizations trying to do good things; we just occasionally bump into each other. Mr. Hesketh likewise applauded the commitment to still pursue strong relationships, that it was admirable. Mr. Quick said KentuckianaWorks "will have another opportunity down the road" and "we have these strong relationships for reasons; money only lasts for so long, there will be future RFPs." Mr. Gritton said KYCC is one of the KentuckianaWorks programs that has been especially challenged by the virtual shift, but their track record is strong and they have produced some great outcomes. With all that in mind, KentuckianaWorks staff will dig in and stay connected, will come to the consortium meetings, and will be transparent in sharing data.

### **Final Thoughts** – *Tony Georges and All*

Mr. Georges had a couple of things to share before concluding the meeting:

1. He and Ms. Reynolds have been appointed to the KWIB, the state's version of a workforce Board of Directors. He had been invited to serve on an employer engagement subcommittee, and he said he could not wait to share information about, and hear the state's perspective on, the Academies of Louisville.
2. He encouraged attendees to order early if they planned on ordering presents online.

Mr. Georges looked forward to connecting with people along the way prior to the next Board convening in January 2021, and wished everyone a happy holidays. There is a lot of work ahead in 2021.

Per the suggestion of Mr. Georges, Ms. Wiederwohl gave the concluding remarks. She said today's meeting offered a chance to see the work done by the KentuckianaWorks Board and Staff, and the work that remains still to be done together. She encouraged everyone to "dig in, roll up our sleeves, keep going." She appreciated the time with everyone and said it had been

great working together. Finally, she told everyone to stay safe, have a great holiday season, and stay in touch. She would be with Metro until the week of Christmas, and be in touch after that.

The meeting adjourned 9:35 A.M. The next meeting is scheduled for January 28, 2021.

**KentuckianaWorks Staff:**

Aleece Smith  
Angella Wilson  
Bailey Preston  
Barbara Ferrell  
Brian Luerman  
Chris Locke  
Cindy Read  
Elizabeth Davis-Terhune  
Jaime Disney  
Joi McAtee  
Katie Elliott  
Laura Paulen  
Lori Hiser  
Mary Rosenthal  
Michael Gritton  
Patrick Garvey  
Regina Phillips  
Rider Rodriguez  
Sarah Ehresman  
Stacy Roderick  
Zakiyyah Raymore

**Contractors and Guests:**

Ashley Janicki  
Angela Wells-Vereb  
Charlotte Kerns  
Christy Ralston  
Debra Giordano  
Jennifer Welch  
Jessie Schook  
Joshua McKee  
Kristin Wingfield  
Lisa Thompson  
Lynn Rippey  
Marsha Berry  
Monica Collins  
Patricia Williams  
Regan Wann  
Rena Sharpe  
Renee Walters  
Sara Dodeci  
Shatrece Johnson  
Violet Skinner  
'iphone' (person unknown)  
\*Mr. Wade is still pending final approval

**Special Guests:**

Councilwoman Keisha Dorsey  
Brenda Pirtle