

# Southwest Wisconsin Counties Consortium Meeting

February 22, 2022

Meeting Minutes

The Southwest Wisconsin Counties Consortium meeting was held on Tuesday, February 22, 2022, via conference call. Attendance was as follows:

**Members Present:**

Mr. Marty Brewer  
Mr. Art Carter  
Mr. Robert Keeney

Mr. John Meyers  
Mr. Russ Podzilni

**Members Absent:**

Mr. Jack Sauer

**Staff Present:**

Ms. Katie Gerhards  
Ms. Rhonda Suda

Ms. Danielle Thousand

The meeting of the Southwest Wisconsin Counties Consortium (SWCC) was called to order by Mr. Carter at 11:49 a.m.

**1. Approval of Agenda**

The meeting agenda of the February 22, 2022, SWCC meeting was reviewed by SWCC members. No corrections or changes were made.

Motion made by Mr. Podzilni, seconded by Mr. Meyers, to approve the February 22, 2022, SWCC meeting agenda. **Motion carried unanimously.**

**2. Approval of Minutes**

The meeting minutes of the November 23, 2021, SWCC meeting were distributed and reviewed by SWCC members.

Motion made by Mr. Meyers, seconded by Mr. Podzilni, to approve the minutes of the Southwest Wisconsin Counties Consortium (SWCC) meeting held on November 23, 2021. **Motion carried unanimously.**

**3. Program Year 2021-22 Financial Reports, Quarter 2**

Ms. Thousand presented the financial statements to SWCC members. The draft financial statements include the Balance Sheet and Statement of Operations as of December 31, 2021.

The Balance Sheet is current through Quarter 2 (October 1– December 31). SWWDB is in a great spot financially. Overall, operations were successful adapting to working from home during the pandemic. The Balance Sheet shows revenue exceeding expenditures by \$108,014.16. The SWWDB Finance Dept. tries to make sure to use carryover revenue for potential government shutdowns as well as pull in as much cash as possible. This was done last week and it will be done again next week.

There are no new accounts and there is nothing out of the ordinary on the Balance Sheet. Ms. Thousand asked if there were any questions. Mr. Carter asked if the excess funds will be used in the future. Ms. Thousand said yes. Account 6740-Customized Training on the Statement of Operations shows \$2,000 spent for the year. SWWDB made a contribution of \$1,000 each to Blackhawk Technical College (BTC) for Manufacturing Day 2021 and CESA 3 for the Business and Education Summit. Both contributions were industry-related and promote employment and training. SWWDB administration is also looking into expenses for refugees; such as laptops.

Ms. Suda said local organizations in the Platteville area came together and started discussing what Southwest Wisconsin could do to help the refugees. There are a few national resettlement agencies that work with the local resettlement agencies to rehome refugees. They also work with the state. Of the 13,000 refugees that came to Wisconsin, the state only planned to resettle approximately 700. The local organizations discussed ways to help the refugee families as well as grow the local workforce. The Southwest Wisconsin Community Action Program (SWCAP) is leading this effort. Today, one (1) family with ten members has moved to Platteville and secured housing. Local organizations are working with those family members over 18 years of age to find employment in the area and the requirements in order to get employed (clothing, lunch boxes, etc.). This has been a process because the national resettlement agency has detailed steps that must be followed. Ms. Thousand added that SWWDB has hired Najla Habibullah part-time to help the refugees and be their liaison to the workforce.

Going back to Mr. Carter's initial question, the excess in reserves also helps protect the counties. In the event the Department of Workforce Development (DWD) identifies a large amount of disallowed costs during monitoring, the fee for service overage is there to help the counties.

Since SWWDB is through Quarter 2, the goal on the Statement of Operations is to be around 50% spent. The column labeled "Pct" is showing revenues at 45.12% and expenditures at 50.23%. SWWDB is in a positive position. Ms. Thousand went over a few of the accounts.

Account 6170-Staff Training/Development is showing 515.9% spent because the Pathways Home 2 grant required staff take CMI Access Training and go through the Makin' it Work curriculum. SWWDB administration did not know SWWDB was going to be awarded this grant when preparing the budget. At the next meeting in May, SWCC members will amend the current year's budget and review and approve the next program year's budget.

Account 6317-Moving Expense shows 0% spent. This is because when the Rock County Job Center moved, moving costs were incurred in that account.

Account 6709-Incentives is running slightly high and showing 69.76% spent. This is due to the incentives eligible youth in the Foster Care/Independent Living grant are receiving. The last month for youth to receive a payment is March 2022.

Ms. Suda reminded SWCC members that SWWDB received the Worker Advancement Initiative (WAI) grant in October after the budget was prepared. A wide variety of incentives and stipends comes along with this grant. Currently, the Early Childhood Education (ECE) project is in full motion. The grant will pay for eligible participant's books, tuition, and fees and provide them with a weekly stipend of up to \$100.00 for attending class. By doing this, SWWDB is helping the students graduate debt-free which will

affect their cost of living after graduation. Accounts 6708-Stipends and 6709-Incentives will significantly increase over the course of this grant. Ms. Thousand agreed that those accounts will be affected and SWCC members will see the change at the next meeting in May.

Ms. Thousand reminded SWCC members that the Statement of Operations compares budget to actual. Some accounts are affected because of a timing issue.

Mr. Meyers asked about those students going into child care. How does SWWDB make sure they stay in that field? Ms. Suda said like any education funded by SWWDB, there is no assurance that those participants stay in their field of study. Part of the WAI project SWWDB proposed to the Department of Workforce Development (DWD) was denied.

The Budget Modifications show changes to the budget since the last meeting. The largest change is the \$30,000 approved transfer of Dislocated Worker funds to the Adult program. SWWDB has Employment Recovery Dislocated Worker Grant (ERDWG) funds to assist dislocated workers. Therefore, this allows SWWDB administration to transfer funds to where the need is. SWWDB strives to spend out all funding within the allotted timeframe and transferring funds allows this to happen.

New funds from the Department of Corrections for the Prairie du Chien Job Center and work at the Boscobel institution is included in the Budget Modifications. Lastly, SWWDB took advantage of the larger DocuSign package as it has been greatly used since the onset of COVID-19.

Motion made by Mr. Meyers, seconded by Mr. Podzilni, to approve the Program Year (PY) 2021-2022 financial statements, including the Budget Modifications, for the period ending December 31, 2021.

**Motion carried unanimously.**

#### **4. Appointment of Board Members**

At the last SWCC meeting, members and Ms. Suda discussed Board membership. As a result of this discussion, Ms. Suda made it a goal to recruit new Board members that represent small businesses. Board member Gina Erickson retired from Tricor and the SWWDB Board of Directors in December. Ms. Erickson recommended Keith Kruse from Tricor replace her. Ms. Suda indicated that she has worked with Mr. Kruse in the past. Tricor Insurance is not necessarily a small business, but Mr. Kruse would fill Ms. Erickson's spot. Tricor has good knowledge of small businesses. If SWCC members do not approve Mr. Kruse to the Board of Directors, Ms. Suda will continue recruiting.

Motion made by Mr. Brewer, seconded by Mr. Keeney, to appoint Keith Kruse to fill Gina Erickson's position and serve on the Southwest Wisconsin Workforce Development (SWWDB) Board of Directors.

**Motion carried unanimously.**

#### **5. Southwest Wisconsin Counties Consortium Agreement**

At the last SWCC meeting, possible options to change the language in the Southwest Wisconsin Counties Consortium (SWCC) Agreement were shared and discussed. The current agreement indicates that the Department of Workforce Development (DWD) can make a final assignment of disallowed costs, which is not allowable under the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA). SWCC members and Ms. Suda discussed ways to address disallowed costs at the local level. The revised agreement was sent to members in December to share with county council. It was presented to SWCC members again for discussion.

Ms. Suda provided example situations where disallowed costs would come out of SWWDB's corporate reserves, not from the Counties. The only time the Counties would get involved is if SWWDB does not have corporate reserves. Additionally, if there are any disallowed costs where the mistake is the program operator's, it is their responsibility to pay it back. Ms. Suda clarified further that the Counties are not responsible for the entire SWWDB budget – only that of WIOA. SWWDB administration tries to fight disallowed costs as much as possible.

The largest purchase right now is updating SWWDB's Payment Authorization System (PAS). This is the system SWWDB uses to issue and track client payments. It is being updated now and will be depreciated.

SWWDB administration is proposing the following language if the Counties are unable to reach agreement:

*“Finally, after every possible method to reduce liability is exhausted, and the Counties are unable to reach agreement on relative liability, the liability, as determined by the CEO Consortium, shall be apportioned between the six counties in proportion to their respective percentage of the workforce expenditures by WIOA Program in the fiscal year the disallowed cost or other liability occurred. For example, if 10% of WIOA Adult program funds were expended in a County, that County would be responsible for 10% of the liability/disallowed cost.”*

SWWDB administration is looking for whether or not this is an appropriate change. Changing the language in the SWCC Agreement requires majority vote. However, if this needs further action with county council, a vote can wait. A decision does not need to be made today. DWD has not provided a deadline, but asked that SWWDB work on changing the language this year. SWCC members can discuss this again at the next meeting as another month or so would help finalize the process.

Ms. Suda will resend the revised SWCC Agreement to members to present to their county council. It will be sent with high importance and include a summary. Any ideas from the county council can be incorporated into the agreement. This is an important decision to make that all members must be comfortable with. It is not urgent.

**6. SWWDB Recertification**

SWWDB has been recertified for calendar years 2022 and 2023 by the Department of Workforce Development (DWD). SWCC members were provided with a copy of the recertification approval letter.

**7. Leased Employee Program**

Ms. Thousand presented a summary of SWWDB's leased employee program to SWCC members. It is summarized by contract/department, not by person. As of February 17, 2022, SWWDB has five (5) contracts: one (1) with Grant County, one (1) with Green County, and three (3) with Richland County.

The leased employee information shared with SWCC members is current through SWWDB's second fiscal quarter (October 1 – December 31). The information compares the fourth calendar quarter numbers in 2019, 2020, and 2021. In 2019, there were 29 leased employees with a gross billing of around \$184,000. In 2020, there were 27 leased employees with around \$235,000 in gross billing. In 2021, there were 34 leased employees with around \$256,000 in gross billing.

There has been a steady increase and Green County activity has increased. Green County experiences much turnover, but SWWDB is happy to provide this program as an option for them. There are more full-time employees with benefits being hired.

The number of contracts has increased from four (4) to five (5). The Richland County Management Information Services (MIS) department contract restarted. There is also the possibility of the Rock 5.0 Internship program returning this summer.

Ms. Suda reiterated that this information is presented to SWCC members because the counties are the primary customer for this program. It is important that SWCC members know county agencies reach out to SWWDB administration for assistance.

Mr. Brewer stated that having this program available allows the county to act quickly during a time of retirements and staff that “come and go”. Mr. Carter added that it takes some burden off of county personnel staff as well.

**8. Adjournment**

Mr. Carter will not be returning for the next SWCC meeting as he is retiring as Green County Board Chair and from the SWWDB Board of Directors. Mr. Carter will continue to work and not fully retire. SWCC members thanked Mr. Carter for his many years of service.

Motion made by Mr. Meyers, seconded by Mr. Podzilni, to adjourn the meeting at 12:52 p.m. **Motion carried unanimously.**