



NORTH CENTRAL PENNSYLVANIA REGIONAL PLANNING and DEVELOPMENT COMMISSION

49 Ridgmont Drive, Ridgway, PA 15853

Phone: (814) 773-3162

Fax: (814) 772-7045

North Central Board Meeting Wednesday, September 25, 2024 – 9:30 AM

Members – via Teams & In-Person

| | |
|------------------|---------------------------------|
| Josh Zucal | Cameron County |
| Cliff Clark | Cameron County |
| Dave Glass | Clearfield County |
| Jodi Brennan | Clearfield County |
| Kristy Smith | Clearfield County |
| Matt Quesenberry | Elk County |
| Tracy Gerber | Elk County |
| Eric Wolfe | Elk County |
| Jeff Pisarcik | Jefferson County |
| Scott North | Jefferson County |
| Jim Sleigh | Jefferson County |
| Carol Duffy | McKean County |
| Susa Zook Wilson | McKean County |
| Richard Fry | McKean County |
| Marty Wilder | McKean County |
| Doug Morely | Potter County |
| Will Hunt | Potter County |
| Jill Martin-Rend | At-Large BC3@Brockway |
| Pam Streich | Workforce Solutions for NC PA |
| Carolyn Newhouse | At-large Bradford Area Alliance |

Staff - via Teams & In-Person

Jim Chorney
Amy Kessler
Chris Perneski
Mikala Biondi
Lisa Oerting
Aidan Bobik
Mary Lou Jessop

Guests

| | |
|------------------|------------------------------------|
| Ann Kaufman | Congressman 'GT' Thompson's Office |
| Jill Grosch | Rep. Marty Causer's Office |
| Dominique Wright | Performance Pro |
| Pat Straub | Elk County |

Chair Dave Glass called the meeting to order at 9:30 AM with the pledge to the flag.

QUORUM/INTRODUCTIONS

Roll call was taken and there was a quorum for the meeting.

PRESENTATION

As a little background, this is software to help with performance and things like that. One of the things we have always done is using our own basically home-grown system where we have tracked a lot of our things using Excel spreadsheets. The way we have been judging the way we have evaluated everyone seems to be adequate. But we have been looking at how we can improve this.

How do we improve the communication of the expectations with our employees and improve that communication altogether with the employees and find a better way to track all this information?

Ana has been working on this for a while with different systems as to what would be the best system for us. We have settled on Performance Pro as the cost was very good as far as what we are looking at and what it does.

With that, Jim introduced Dominique Wright of Performance Pro who gave a very high-level PowerPoint presentation going through various menus and briefly describing the way they would be used.

One of the things we are hoping to do with this is use it for Jim's evaluation. Is there a set up where each board member can submit an evaluation and it collated and averaged?

There is and it is called the Multi-Appraiser, which is multiple appraisals and at the end will give you an overall average.

Another question was regarding the total licenses. As we do this evaluation once or twice a year, would each board member need a license and if so, is there some way we can work with that?

Each board member would have to have a license in the application, so it is licensed based.

It was suggested that perhaps getting licenses for the Executive Committee so they can take input from the full board to fill out the app or this portion of the Performance Pro. We can work through that through.

Dave likes the different features, and it does seem that the user interface is pretty straight forward. It's very customizable and he likes it.

Dave thanked Dominique for her very informative presentation.

Adding to this Dave had a few thoughts to discuss with the Board. We have a hard time getting the Board engaged in the evaluation process. The Board meets and sets a certain number of goals for Jim each year and then they meet to see if he has met those goals and those are the things we can track. However, one thing we can't evaluate is how he does his day-to-day work.

Dave's thought is towards the end of the year the Board meets and have an executive session to put goal ideas out to be discussed and evaluate Jim on those goals set for him. Then in perhaps six months do another evaluation using this new system where we can let him know how the Board thinks he is doing, and he can also tell the Board how he thinks he is doing.

When Dave took over as Chair, he promised to try to revamp this process and now wants feedback and comments as to what you think.

When asked what the cost could be and if it is worth it, Jim said there are 36 seats at a cost of \$102 per user. It was suggested that perhaps the Executive Committee be users or even get one license and have one person enter the goals into the system after the Board sets them.

Eric Wolfe stated that going from the transition from an activity-based evaluation to a goal-based one is a good idea, and he supports it 100%.

Getting back to Dave's thoughts about an Executive Committee Session, our next full board meeting is in November; and it will take us a little time to plan for that as we need to find a venue to be able to do everything; but is this something we can start planning?

Dave thinks this is the kind of thing that is better for us to get into the room and hash out these goals. And he thinks it is a good idea to meet twice a year in person. Hearing no objections to meeting in person for the November meeting, Jim stated we will start working to have an in-person meeting at a centralized venue and also have a separate room for a private meeting for goal setting. And we will have a meal served as well.

Dave also feels Jim should be in the meeting to tell the Board what he thinks his internal goals are and then have him leave and the Board will come up with their goals for him for the year from the Board's perspective.

Next year we can evaluate our evaluation process and if there is something that needs to be fixed, we will fix it. It will be incumbent on us as a Board to have that conversation every year just to make sure the process is working. Clearly the feedback last year showed it wasn't working and was obvious from the number of members who didn't participate.

Minutes

Chair Glass called for a motion to approve the July 24 and August 28, 2024 Board meeting minutes as presented.

Jeff Pisarcik moved to approve the minutes as presented, seconded by Scott North. The motion unanimously passed.

NEW BUSINESS

Financial Reports

Jim presented the Financial Statements for July and August.

Carol Dully questioned why there was a difference of approximately \$1 million on the Total Revenue. Jim will look into the difference and let the Board know as there is something on the approved budget that is now showing up on these reports.

A95s

There were no A95s to be approved.

Correspondence

Amy provided an update on the EDA Tech Hub and RFP. North Central sent out an RFP on behalf of NC Pressed Materials Consortium for professional and technical planning services to develop a cutting-edge and transformative 10-year Implementation Plan aimed at scaling the entire pressed materials ecosystem in NC Pennsylvania. The RFP was advertised, posted and distributed to firms on July 25 with a response due date of September 15, 2024.

Three proposals were received from the following firms: Fourth Economy, Nexight Group, LLC and Axcel Innovation, LLC.

A review committee, made up of NC Staff and members of the Pressed Materials Consortium, reviewed and independently scored each proposal. Fourth Economy was selected as the consultant as they had local knowledge of the industry and the region and put together the most well-rounded futuristic look at the industry, not just getting into the academia of data. The Committee is in consensus recommending the firm of Fourth Economy as the consultant for this project.

Therefore, we are requesting approval to enter into a contract with Fourth Economy to carry out the development of the Pressed Materials EDA Tech Hub Implementation 10-year Plan for North Central Pennsylvania. This has been budgeted under the EDA Tech Hub funding with a total project cost not to exceed \$285,000.

Dave's comment was that perhaps at the next meeting Amy could give kind of a high-level overview of what we're heard about this Tech Hub.

Amy said she will give an explanation at the October meeting, but the high-level cliff note version is that we are charged with developing a list of eight to 10 futuristic projects for the industry, not one specific company.

If we want to put in a major research and innovation center for \$100 million, if that's one of the big projects that come out of this, we would look at putting that in as one of our recommendations. It needs to be industry-driven about where they feel that is going to take them in the future and not what they want to do today. Is it a new market? Is it a prototype? It positions us to make those recommendations to get Phase Two designation, which give up to \$75 million to \$100 million to implement those eight to 10 projects.

With no further questions, Chair Glass called for a motion to approve to enter into a contract with Fourth Economy to carry out the development of the Pressed Materials EDA Tech Hub Implementation 10-year Plan for North Central Pennsylvania. This has been budgeted under the EDA Tech Hub funding with a total project cost not to exceed \$285,000.

Carolyn Newhouse made the motion to enter into a contract with Fourth Economy to carry out the

development of the Pressed Materials EDA Tech Hub Implementation 10-year Plan for North Central Pennsylvania. This has been budgeted under the EDA Tech Hub funding with a total project cost not to exceed \$285,000, seconded by Matt Quesenberry. The motion passed with Pam Streich abstaining.

Amy talked about the MOU between North Central and PA Wilds Center for Entrepreneurship for PA Wilds Planning Study. The Entrepreneur Center received money from EDA. To do the Planning Study, North Central received a Municipal Assistance Program (MAP) grant to help fund the development of the Planning Study. They are matching each other so the MOU between North Central and the Entrepreneur Center is an agreement that we are going to go out for an RFP to help select a consultant. We are going to make available the \$50,000 MAP; and PA Wilds agrees to provide the required match of \$50,000 in Federal EDA funds to North Central by June 30, 2025.

Chair Glass called for a motion to approve the MOU between North Central and the PA Wilds Center for Entrepreneurship.

Jeff Pisarcik moved to approve the MOU between North Central and the PA Wilds Center for Entrepreneurship, seconded by Carolyn Newhouse. The motion passed unanimously.

The next was the PA Wilds Planning Study Update. North Central went out for an RFP on behalf of the PA Wilds Planning Team for the PA Wilds Planning Study Update. The RFP was advertised, posted and distributed on July 1 with responses due July 31, 2024.

Three proposals were received from the following firms: Fourth Economy; Herbert, Rowland and Grubic, Inc. (HRG) and Innovation Resources Group LLC.

A review committee, made up of NC Transportation Staff and members of the PWPT, reviewed and independently scored each proposal. HRG was selected as the consultant for this project. We are requesting approval to enter into a contract with the team of HRG to carry out the PA Wilds Planning Study Update. This has been budgeted under the DCED Municipal Assistance Program (MAP) grant \$50,000 with matching funds from EDA through PA Wilds Center for Entrepreneurship (\$50,000) with a total project not to exceed \$100,000.

Chair Glass called for a motion to enter into a contract with the team of HRG to carry out the PA Wilds Planning Study Update.

Jim Sleigh moved to approve the motion to enter into a contract with the team of HRG to carry out the PA Wilds Planning Study Update, seconded by Jeff Pisarcik. The motion passed unanimously.

One quick item before Amy had to leave the meeting. She just received notification that the PennDOT Multi-modal applications for 2025-2026 opened on Tuesday, September 24. Applications are due November 5 by 4 PM EST; therefore, if anyone has Multi-modal applications to PennDOT, that window is now open.

The Export Marketing Program requests consideration for extending the current Export Hotline for PY 2024-2025, which is July 1, 2024 – June 30, 2025. The Hotlines assist in answering non-traditional questions that may be beyond the expertise of the Export Staff. Two Export Hotline Resources were

offered during PY 23-24, Bob Imbriani of Team International Trade Services/Team Ocean Services and Adam Mook of Logistics Plus. The request is to extend the current MOU at a cost of \$3,000 each and has been budgeted for under the Export Regional Export Network Contract.

Chair Glass called for a motion to approve the extending of the current MOUs to Team International Trade service/Team Ocean Services and Logistics Plus at a cost of \$3,000 each.

Tracy Gerber moved to approve the extending of the current MOUs to Team International Trade Services/Team Ocean Services and Logistics Plus at a cost of \$3,000 each, seconded by Jim Sleigh. The motion passed unanimously.

Chris reported that about nine to 12 months ago a number of PREP partners were discussing what is going on with the Wood Products Industry, which included the Steel Valley Authority, AHUG, North Central as well as Workforce Solutions. They were looking at what was going on employment wise and the mergers and acquisitions or closures and training within the industry.

Workforce Solutions/North Central Workforce Development Board is leading the collaboration of partners for the development and implementation of a comprehensive, collaborative strategy to strengthen and enhance the Forestry and Wood Products Industry's future in Pennsylvania. Submissions of RFPs were due September 20, 2024.

Workforce Solutions has received \$40,000 under Statewide Rapid Response Funds/PA Dept. of Labor and Industry. The total project cost is projected at \$80,000 - \$100,000. North Central's request is up to and including \$10,000 in matching funds and has been budgeted under NC PREP.

Chair Glass called for a motion to approve North Central's request up to and including \$10,000 in matching funds and has been budgeted under NC PREP.

Carolyn Newhouse moved to approve North Central's request up to and including \$10,000 in matching funds and has been budgeted under NC PREP, seconded by Jim Sleigh. The motion unanimously passed.

Mikala Biondi stated that North Central is requesting approval to proceed with contracting and subcontracts under the NC PREP Program for FY 2024-2025.

North Central is finalizing the NC PREP application for funds July 1, 2024 - June 30, 2025. The North Central Partnership for Regional Economic Performance (PREP) Program is designed to encourage regional coordination for economic development efforts, while offering superior customer service to the business community as part of a statewide economic development strategy. The NC PREP Network includes both funded and unfunded partners. The seven subcontracted funded partners are:

- Cameron County Industrial Development Authority
- PennWest Clarion SBDC
- Clearly Ahead Development
- St. Marys Economic Development Corporation
- Jefferson County Development Council/Jefferson County Commissioners

- McKean County Commissioners
- Potter County Redevelopment Authority

NC PREP for Program Year 2024-2025 received an allocation of \$614,496. Statewide PREP received level funding. Allocations for each PREP region are based on an established formula allocation /percentage that DCED has utilized since program inception. This formula is referenced in the fiscal code of the budget.

NC PREP Allocations for Program Year 2024-2025 requested for subcontracting are:

| NC PREP PY 2024-2025 Allocation | \$614,496 | Percentage |
|--|---------------------------------|-------------------|
| Organization | Allocation 2024-2025 | |
| North Central | \$398,745 | 65% |
| PennWest Clarion SBDC | \$158,436 | 26% |
| Subcontracts | \$57,315 | 9% |
| Total | \$614,496 | 100% |
| Subcontractors Total | \$57,315 | |
| Cameron County | \$6,397 | 11% |
| Clearfield County | \$13,778 | 24% |
| Elk County | \$9,175 | 16% |
| Jefferson County | \$10,207 | 18% |
| McKean County | \$10,207 | 18% |
| Potter County | \$7,551 | 13% |
| Total | \$57,315 | 100% |

*North Central does not hold the PennWest Clarion SBDC subcontract. Performance, metrics and reporting is the responsibility of North Central, but we do not serve as the fiscal agent.

Chair Glass called for a motion to approve the Request for Approval to Proceed with Contracting and Subcontracts under the NC PREP Program Year 2024-2025.

Scott North moved to approve the Request for Approval to Proceed with Contracting and Subcontracts under the NC PREP Program Year 2024-2025, seconded by Jeff Pisarcik. The motion unanimously passed.

Mikala Biondi stated that North Central is requesting approval to proceed with contracting and subcontracts under the NC Engage! Program for FY 2024-2025.

North Central’s application for funds under the Engage! Program for July 1, 2024 - June 30, 2025, is pending approval by the Department of Community and Economic Development (DCED) for **\$179,450**. Engage! is a Pennsylvania statewide business retention and expansion (BRE) program designed to regularly and proactively interact with CEOs, senior managers and business owners. The overall goal of Engage! is to retain existing businesses in a community and to help them grow and expand by building strong relationships between business owners or key decision makers and economic and workforce development partners and their representatives. The NC Engage! Program subcontracts with the NC PREP funded partners for the implementation of the Engage! Program. The exception is Potter County in which the Potter County Education Council holds the Engage! subcontract as the PREP Partner Potter County Redevelopment Authority did not express any interest in the Engage! Program.

Subcontracts to the NC Engage! Partners will be drafted and are pending. North Central’s application for the contract was submitted on September 5, 2024. The application process has been impacted by the State Budget.

Funding for Engage! subcontracts are based on staffing levels, qualifications, past performance and/or the initial request of interviews:

Performance Metrics

| Region: North Central Region | 2024-2025 Engage! Metrics |
|--|----------------------------------|
| Engage Surveys Completed | 202 |
| Referrals to Partners | 80 |
| Focus Groups/Business Walks | 3 |
| Action Plans Developed | 200 |
| Action Plans Accepted for Implementation | 150 |

Budget

| Per Interview | Subcontract Allocation | Number of Interviews |
|--|-------------------------------|-----------------------------|
| \$750 | \$151,500 | 202 |
| Special Project \$750 | \$20,250 | 27 |
| Subcontractors | Allocation July 2024 | Number of Interviews |
| Cameron EDC | \$3,000 | 4 |
| Clarion SBDC | \$46,500 | 62 |
| Clearfield EDC | \$48,000 | 64 |
| Elk St Marys EDC | \$30,000 | 40 |
| Jefferson County EDC | \$3,750 | 5 |
| McKean County Commissioners | \$7,500 | 10 |
| Potter County Education Council | \$12,750 | 17 |
| Subcontract Total | \$151,500 | 202 |
| | | |
| Admin Cost | \$7,700 | |
| | | |
| | \$159,200 | |
| PennWest Clarion | \$20,250 | 27 |
| Total | \$179,450 | 229 |

Chair Glass called for a motion to approve the Request for Approval to Proceed with Contracting and Subcontracts under the Engage! Program Year 2024-2025.

Carol Duffy moved to approve the Request for Approval to Proceed with Contracting and Subcontracts under the Engage! Program Year 2024-2025, seconded by Matt Quesenberry. The motion unanimously passed.

Purchases

There were no purchases to be approved.

Resolutions

There were no resolutions to be approved.

Loans

There were no loans to be approved.

Good of the Order

Jim introduced Aidan Bobik to the Board. Aiden is with AmeriCorps and will be with us for about a year and will be working in our Community Development Department.

He said it is very nice to meet everybody and for those he has not met he hopes to meet you throughout this year. And he's excited to be here with AmeriCorps.

Aidan said a few words about AmeriCorps and said the best way to describe AmeriCorps is from the pledge he took with about 110 of his peers on the steps of the U.S. Capitol, which is that "I'm an AmeriCorps member and I will get things done." He is very proud to be here at North Central for the next year to help increase capacity in the Community Development Department.

The next board meeting will be Wednesday, October 23, starting at 9:30 AM and will be Virtual only.

The November board meeting will be In Person and further information regarding the time and place of this meeting will be forthcoming,

ADJOURN

With nothing further to be discussed, Chair Glass called for a motion to adjourn the meeting. Tracy Gerber moved to adjourn the meeting, seconded by Richard Fry. The meeting adjourned at 10:45 AM.

Respectfully submitted,

Joseph K. Haines
Secretary/Treasurer