

**Workforce Development Board (WDB)  
Executive Committee  
Worknet Merced County  
1900 Airdrome Entry,  
Atwater, CA 95301  
November 10, 2022, 4:00 p.m.**



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**Members Present:**

Leslie Abasta-Cummings  
Michael Altomare

Tim O'Neill  
Daron McDaniel

Vinton Thengvall  
Jack Mobley

**Members Absent:**

**Others Present:**

Erick Serrato, Mario Pena, Stacie Tury, Patricia Hinson

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1. **Call to Order/ Roll Call** – The Board Chairperson, Mrs. Leslie Abasta-Cummings, called the meeting to order at 4:05 p.m.
2. **Public Opportunity to Speak** – None
3. **Approval of Minutes** – Mobley/ *Altomare* approved August 5, 2022, meeting minutes.
4. **Chair Comments:** The Chair thanked all members for being present at the meeting.
5. **Director's Comments:** Erick shared with members a synopsis of meeting agenda, special project and partnership updates, legislative news, and other areas. He added that he has two questions to share with the group.

Unemployment Rate: We are in a very different situation than we've ever been before. We've a historically low unemployment rate, but we are being moved towards a recession. He asked members the following questions.

- a) What do you think the economy and labor market is going to look like next year?
- b) How might we respond and what kind of indicators should we be looking for?

Tim noted that he feels the marketing will be hit early and hard. He added that marketing and training will get cut pretty much. So far, he has not seen any changes. He has talked to several different colleagues and they're all in pretty much the same situation. Continue to treat the sales part as everything is normal, but are rationing down on the expense side, because we know this can't last.

Michael shared that his staff has a lot of work. He noted that in agriculture it usually weathers the storm pretty well because people have to eat. He is more concerned that chicken prices have dropped. It has nothing to do with the recession, it's just like in agriculture, they over produced, this will take about a year to adjust. What has been hit hardest has been turkeys and eggs. If there is an indication, he feels that it's the slowdown in trucking.

He's been getting feedback from truckers stating that it's not as in demand as it was before.

Erick shared that we still have a high demand of truck drivers in the area.

Michael noted that the shortage is in California. He is not looking forward to a recession, but he can see it slowing down. He added that Ag always recovers and does well.

Leslie shared that we should focus on people that are moving away from employer-based coverage, as well as the additional folks that are moving into employer based medical coverage. Leslie shared that the rising costs of employer-based insurance premiums and the increased minimum wage in California places additional financial stressors on employers.

Vinton shared that the sales are strong where he works. He has seen issues with the high pricing in products that have copper or metal, customers have expressed their concern. In regards to staffing, currently they are fourteen employees, and hired two new staff.

Jack has heard about a shortage of diesel supply. He noted that if we don't have diesel, everything falls apart. He heard in early October that we were running out of diesel, but so far, he has not heard anything else.

Erick noted having no urgency indicators in regards to services, he will continue to track changes if any.

On another note, Erick shared with members that staff is working on the next procurement cycle. Will bring a draft contract to you to make sure we include all the changes/updates we want to see. He asked members to provide feedback in regard to the opportunity to go back to a county employee model or if we want to continue with the contract model to see if we can get more bidders to apply this time.

Members feedback:

We have a contract one time and learn from that contract moving forward.

The only way some would support going back would be if the landscape in the contracting world were just not existing.

Maybe we can consider a shorter period of contract, it could be a three year, goes well, then you get another year. And not necessarily be tied into five years. Three years with one year of extension.

We need to start up front and let them know how we want for the contract to work. They need to meet our needs and not us meet theirs.

Erick shared that we have the flexibility of starting with one year with the possibility of renewing up to four more times.

- 6. Strategic Board Meeting Follow-up:** Erick provided review and discussion of September 28<sup>th</sup> Strategy Session, including staff workplan, priority issue areas and follow-up activities through 2023. He shared with members copy of the PowerPoint Presentation that was shared at the Strategy Session on September 28<sup>th</sup>.

Following are three Indicators that resulted from the Strategy Session.

**Workforce Board Structure:** Members indicated desire to continue to become a sophisticated, multi-strategic workforce agency. Members were generally committed to 4-6 hours a month. There was some interest in looking at the Board membership to include other representatives than those required by WIOA (some examples: a resident, community organization). Add committees where they have value. Other comments were to have high-level engagement with UC Merced.

**Mission/Focus:** Members shared their interest in childcare focus, in partnership with MCOE. In addition, they would like an emphasis on business-focus, and deeper connection to industry sector. Also, more interest in entrepreneurships, small business development, Agriculture, and more clarity on outcomes and impact, with better indicators.

**Special Populations:** Interest in youth, preventative workforce programming, focus on basic skills and ethics (youth development). Skills development around workforce readiness and soft-skills. High-school to community college/workforce academy alignment, role to convene and align programs and outcomes.

7. **2023 Meeting Calendar:** The 2023 Meeting calendar was shared with WDB Executive members. The approval of the 2023 Calendar will be added to the WDB Meeting Agenda, scheduled on 12-7-22 meeting.

8. **Adjournment:**

Adjourned at 4:56 p.m.