

**West Virginia Workforce Development Board**  
**January 16, 2019**  
**WorkForce WV**  
**1900 Kanawha Blvd E**  
**Building 3, 1st Floor Conf. Rm**  
**Charleston, WV 25305**

**Board Members:** Stephanie Ahart, Penny Brown, Ray Burke, Steve Cox, Bill Crouch, Russell Fry, Mendy Marshall for Kathy D'Antoni, Michelle Foster, Dan Poling, Randall Rapp, Roy Smith, John Sorrenti, Diane Strong-Treister, Josh Sword, Kim Tieman, Marijane Waldron, Reverend Mathew Watts

**Attendees:** Ted Boettner, Rachel Bowman, Regina Brogan, Becky Calwell, Janelle Comstock, Angela Fry, Secretary C. Edward Gaunch, Claudia George, Robert Hanson, Monica Hamilton, Jake Hunt, Chad Ketchum, Nancy Ligus, Rick Martin, Robin Morgan, Maureen Parsons, Miranda Lough, Nancy Daughtery, Jeremiah Samples, David Fryson

**Attending Via Phone:** Eunice Bellinger, Geoffrey Sawyers, Stephanie Smith, Maria Larry, Brian Ulery, John Moses

**Guest Speakers:** Michelle Foster, President/CEO, The Greater Kanawha Valley Foundation  
Jeff Green, Deputy Director, WorkForce WV,  
C. Edward Gaunch, Cabinet Secretary, WV Department of Commerce  
Janelle Comstock, Region 4 Mid-Ohio Valley WorkForce Development Board  
Ted Boettner, Executive Director, WV Center on Budget & Policy  
Reverend Mathew Watts, HOPE Community Development Corporation

**I. Introduction, Opening Remarks and Approval of Minutes:** John Sorrenti, Board Chair

Meeting brought to order at 10:10 am by John Sorrenti, first item on the agenda is the approval of the minutes from October 17, 2018 meeting. Motion to approve, moved and seconded. John welcomed and introduced Russell Fry to speak first.

**II. Welcome and WorkForce WV Update:** Russell Fry, Executive Director, WorkForce WV

Russell welcomed and thanked everyone for being present. He gave a brief update on WorkForce WV. Russell gave an update on Bombardier, the first aerospace company in the state to register as an apprenticeship program and it is working out well with lots of interest and applications. Russell also gave an update on Level 1 Fasteners in Huntington, who also have an apprenticeship program that has partnered with RCBI to provide fasteners for the military. He also spoke about the Labor Participation Rate and how WV has the lowest rate in the country. Russell explained how On-the-Job Training and Transitional Employment could make a difference in this rate.

John Sorrenti introduced Michelle Foster as the next speaker.

**III. Partnering for Positive Community Impact:** Michelle Foster, President/CEO, The Greater Kanawha Valley Foundation

- The Greater Kanawha Valley Foundation is a community foundation that was created in 1962. The foundation encompasses six counties in the state including: Kanawha, Putnam, Boone, Clay, Lincoln and Fayette. The foundation is the largest in the state of West Virginia and is interested in creating partnerships with state agencies to help a more positive and proactive impact on the community. Our mission is to make thoughtful and proactive

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*An equal opportunity employer/program. Auxiliary aids and services are available upon request to individuals with disabilities.*

[www.workforcewv.org](http://www.workforcewv.org)

A proud partner of the  American Job Center® network

investments that grow the multiple forms of wealth necessary for our community to thrive. Our Vision is that we are a forward-thinking and closely-connected community that fearlessly works together to promote the prosperity of all.

A handout of the presentation was provided to all the attendees.

Website: <https://tgkvf.org/>

**Michelle Foster, President/ CEO**  
**The Greater Kanawha Valley Foundation**  
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304-346-3620  
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A question and answer session was held after the presentation. John Sorrenti introduced Jeff Green as the next speaker.

**IV. Labor Market/ Research Information Analysis Website Overview:** Jeff Green Deputy Director, WorkForce WV.

Jeff gave an overview of the Labor Market Information (LMI) Website featured on the Workforce West Virginia home page. Jeff explained how to access the LMI website via the WorkForce WV webpage. He then discussed the philosophy of the website and why it was designed the way it was designed. He then went over the different tabs of statistics that compares WV numbers to that of the U.S. He gave a brief overview on the labor market and the research that has been done.

LMI Website: <http://lmi.workforcewv.org/>

**Jeff Green, Deputy Director**  
**WorkForce West Virginia**  
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A question and answer session was held after the presentation. John Sorrenti the introduced Secretary Gaunch as the next speaker.

**V. WV Department of Commerce-Serving as a Catalyst:** C. Edward Gaunch, Cabinet Secretary, WV Department of Commerce

Secretary Gaunch discussed his expectations and the opportunities for West Virginia and WorkForce WV. Secretary Gaunch spoke about his unique stance on State Government that he learned from his work in the State Senate. He also spoke about the enthusiasm he has for the state and the great opportunities all 9 Divisions of the WV Department of Commerce have to make some really special things happen. Secretary Gaunch commented on how efficient things at WorkForce WV are being done that he's observed in just the two official weeks he has been Cabinet Secretary. Secretary Gaunch wanted to call the following issues to the Board members' attention:

- Understanding the role as A Board Member
- One troubling stat related to the workforce participation rate, which is 52% less than 10 points below national average.
- Get people back into the workforce

**C. Edward Gaunch, Cabinet Secretary,**  
**WV Department of Commerce**  
1900 Kanawha Blvd. East, Building 3 Suite 600  
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A question and answer session was held after the presentation. John Sorrenti the introduced Janelle Comstock as the next speaker.

**VI. Overview of the Collaborative, Innovative, & Successful Implementation of WIOA within the Mid-Ohio Valley Workforce Dev. Board Region 4:** Janelle Comstock, Region 4 Mid-Ohio Valley WorkForce Development Board

The Mid-Ohio Valley Workforce Development Board of Region 4 has participated in several seminars in working towards professional Development. This Board's American Job Center transitioned to new leadership in PY 17-18. This new leadership has implemented the Review of this center including Active Shooter Training, CPR and First Aid Training, and a Safety Team. They have also implemented an Inclusion Team, a Partner Service Training Manual, and have developed career pathways for occupation in demand industries in the MOV. With this new leadership they have new AJC Team Goals for PY 18-19 that include Revising current Standard Operating Procedures, Creation of a clothing closet, and collaboration with MOV Re-Entry Council. The Mid-Ohio Valley Dev. Board shared some of there customers success stories. This board also shared some of its programs and the numbers regarding those served for PY 2017-2018.

A handout of the presentation was provided to all the attendees.

**Janelle Comstock, Region 4 Mid-Ohio Valley  
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A question and answer session was held after the presentation. John Sorrenti the introduced Ted Boettner as the next speaker.

**VII. West Virginia's Low-Wage Future: Finding Policies to Power Prosperity:** Ted Boettner, Executive Director, WV Center on Budget & Policy

Ted presented graphs on median hourly wages in WV from 1979-2017, and the real wage growth by period in WV. Ted explained that median wages are substantially higher in states with better educated workers. He also explained the problems with natural resource-based economies and the vicious cycle of the Resource Bust. Ted also gave some statistics on wages in WV.

- 65% of WV's 2026 Projected Job Openings will be in Low-Wage Occupations (meaning – of the approximately 82000 projected job openings from 2016 to 2026, 65% are in occupations that pay less than the self sufficiency standard for a family of three (Kanawha County: \$36,513 in 2016) )
- 16 of WV's top 20 occupations of 2026 pay below self-sufficient wages for a family of three.

Ted also presented the benefits of raising the minimum wage:

- Reduces Poverty and public assistance
- Boots customer spending
- Saves labor costs created by turnover

He then presented the impact of Raising Minimum wage by \$15 by 2024 in WV:

- 37.1% workforce get raise
- 244,000 workers impacted
- Total wages increase by \$942 million
- Average wage increase: \$3,900

He then spoke about creating a WV Earned Income Tax Credit and Paid Family Leave. He ended the presentation by talking about the policies that could affect these types of programs and increase local job growth.

A handout of the presentation was provided to all the attendees.

Website: <https://wvpolicy.org/>

**Ted Boettner, Executive Director,  
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A question and answer session was held after the presentation. John Sorrenti the introduced Reverend Mathew Watts as the next speaker.

**VIII. Specific Recommendations to Improve WV's Workforce Development System & To Improve Labor Force Participation in WV: Reverend Mathew Watts, HOPE Community Development Corporation**

Reverend Watts Explained that WV has the Lowest Workforce Participation Rate in the Country – Roughly 53%, meaning that only 54% of the people in WV age 16 and above are working or actively seeking employment. WV's labor force participation rate is over 9% below the national average and the lowest in the nation. This situation will only get worse in coming years due to several factors. He then presented a summary of Eight Factors Depleting WV Labor Force:

1. The Aging Workforce
2. Poor Health of WV Workers
3. High out migration of skilled workers and low immigration rates of skilled workers
4. Impact of adult criminal justice system
5. Historic low labor force participation rate among West Virginia women
6. Crisis of high school dropouts and low skill level graduates
7. Impact of juvenile justice system
8. Low college enrollment and graduation rates

A handout of the presentation was provided to all the attendees. A question and answer session was held after the presentation.

**Reverend Mathew Watts,  
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**Other Business/Adjournment:** John Sorrenti reminded all members of the next meeting in April. No other business. Meeting adjourned at 2:45 p.m.