



# SWDB BOARD NOTES

**Date: 8/24/22**

**Location: ZOOM**

## Minutes

Iowa Workforce Development Board Meeting

### Returning Citizens Committee

August 24, 2022

10:00 am – 11:00 am

ZOOM

#### Agenda item 1. Call to Order

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Chair Daniel Tallon called to order the meeting of the Returning Citizens Committee on August 24, 2022, at approximately 10:00 am via ZOOM.

#### Agenda item 2. Roll Call

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##### Members in Attendance

1. Daniel Tallon, Chair
2. Sally Kreamer
3. Julie Johnson
4. Dennis Henderson
5. Caprice Jones
6. Jim Kersten
7. Rob Denson
8. Dane Sulentic
9. Kingsley Botchway, II
10. Beth Townsend
11. Richelle Seitz

##### Members Absent:

1. Wayne Ford
2. Rita Grimm
3. Representative Charles Iselhart
4. Barb Grant
5. Katrina Carter
6. Beth Skinner
7. Courtney Arringdale

##### Other Attendees:

1. Michelle McNertney
2. Shelly Evans

Shelly Evans called roll and advised Chair Tallon that quorum was established.

#### Agenda item 3. Approval of Agenda

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Chair Tallon called the next order of business which was the approval of the meeting Agenda for August 24, 2022. The agenda was emailed to the Members of the Committee.

#### Agenda item 4. Discussion on purpose of and establishing goals for the Committee

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Chair Tallon started opened the meeting and asked for Committee members for self-introductions.

Chair Tallon opened for discussion on where the committee should go. Director Townsend gave information on the history of this committee and how it was born out of the Minority Unemployment and Outreach Committee. Caprice Jones wants see continuation of going into the prisons and providing a variety of opportunities to explain services available post release. Dennis Henderson would like to start services as soon as people enter, connecting them to training, employers, and begin building of relationships. Need to get employers involved in the lives of the inmates. Rob Denson wants good demographic data on the inmate population. Sally Kreamer indicates that data can be provided to this committee.

Dane Sulentic's perspective is from Registered Apprenticeship. Need to provide informational services, sessions, help inmates and employers understand what is available, to help break down barriers. Sally Kreamer says an obstacle is finding suitable living conditions. Housing is something this committee should discuss. More coordination with communities before release and the need for drivers' licenses. Piloting having parole officers work with inmates before release. Community-based corrections. Shelley Seitz indicates the need to make drivers' licenses available to more institutions. Prior to the pandemic IWD was connecting to community-based corrections to share information, etc. There has been a shift in employers being more willing to hire returning citizens. Julie Johnson agrees that anything we can do for employment prior release is best. Example: look at CDL training prior to release. For ELDT courses, could we look at grants to pay for this? Chair Tallon summarized key themes from the discussion. Do we want to have our scope be those currently incarcerated, those in pre-release, and post-release? Sally Kreamer strongly supports. Re-incarceration rate for those on parole is high and there is a need for a livable wage and stable employment. This will help returning citizens to feel proud. Need to stop people from going to prison. Dennis Henderson agrees that people need bounce-back plans. When one situation fails, need to get back on track. If they fail, harder to get re-employed again. Set up a mechanism/tool to help them bounce back. Chair Tallon added that those organizations involved also need support. Director Townsend indicates need to recognize and honor the integrity of work. All jobs right now pay \$15 an hour, places like McDonalds and Wal-Mart have promotional opportunities. Employers want people with soft skills, those who will show up on time everyday are ahead of the game. Need to reframe the conversation with employers. Chair Tallon added that we need to fill in the gaps, Example: cell phones are needed to apply for jobs, but most programs will not pay for a cell phone. Caprice Jones discussed support groups that will support individuals and need for innovative ideas to support them. People can get jobs, but they cannot keep them because they need support to understand they are not in the same situation anymore. DOC has a priority to figure out how to open institutions to outside visitors post covid. Director Townsend suggested that the committee to go through the exercise of what released individuals must do. Hosting employer meetings across the state to educate

employers on the benefits of hiring returning citizens.

Purpose – gather/identify, learn, disseminate, challenge, and develop. Chair Tallon will turn into statements and send to everyone for review. Next meeting needs to start with data review.

- What data should we request:
  - Basic demographic data
  - Employment data (how long staying employed, etc.)
  - Data related to youth (Department of Human Rights)
  
- Need to pick 2 or 3 tasks for this committee to focus on

#### Agenda item 5. Discussion on additional committee members

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- Director Wong from Department of Human Rights
- Greater Des Moines Partnership and Untapped Talent program
- Gabriela Palacios at Project Iowa, who is on a committee through United Way that is related to housing
- VA social workers for Veterans who are justice involved

#### Agenda item 6. Discussion on schedule of future Returning Citizens Committee meetings and tasks

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Discussion by the Committee members in attendance and agreement that future Returning Citizens Committee meetings would be held bi-monthly to build momentum, with the next meeting in the end of October 2022.

#### Agenda Item 7. Adjournment

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Chair Tallon adjourned the meeting of the Committee at approximately 12:00 pm.