

Workforce Innovation Board of Ramsey County

Technology Committee Meeting Minutes

Thursday, January 8, 2026, 1–2pm

Via Zoom Video Conference

Present:

Ismail Ali
Annie Byrne
Caroline Karanja
Sam Drong
Koami Pedado

Absent:

Ama Asantewaa
Len Cacioppo-EA
Abdi Mohamed
Sabina Saksena
Jaime Wascalus-EA

Staff/Guests:

Rebecca Milbrandt, Workforce Solutions
Catrice O’Neal, Workforce Solutions
Mary Rick, City of Saint Paul

Call to Order & Land Acknowledgement

Chair Ismail Ali called the meeting to order at 1:04pm. Drong read the Land Acknowledgement aloud.

Approve November Minutes

Motion (Byrne/Drong) to approve the November 13, 2025, Tech Committee meeting minutes as presented. Motion carried unanimously by voice and chat vote.

Conflict of Interest Acknowledgement

Milbrandt reviewed the Conflict of Interest policy, noting it is standard practice for the WIB and each committee to review the policy at the first meeting of the year. All members were asked to review, sign, and return the acknowledgement form.

Committee Work Plan/Project Updates

Tech Employer Project Report: Byrne and O’Neal provided an update on the Employer Engagement Project, emphasizing the partnership between Workforce Solutions, Full Stack Saint Paul, and Right Track. The project has evolved into a three-phase structure designed to better capture employer needs and align regional workforce resources. Phase 1, currently underway, focuses on employer insights sprints that include interviews with about ten local tech employers to understand shifting labor market demands, particularly those influenced by AI and automation. Early findings show that entry-level roles are being reshaped by automation, employers are investing more in upskilling their existing workforce, and stronger partnerships between training providers and employers are increasingly important. Committee members emphasized the need to assess employer openness to hiring non-traditional talent, including candidates without four-year degrees. Byrne and O’Neal confirmed this is included in the interview questions. The employer list is being developed using Right Track partners, Full Stack Steering Committee members, and employers meeting “good employer criteria.” It was suggested that Traveler’s Insurance be added. Phase 2 will focus on aligning public resources, such as training dollars, incentives, and supports, with the needs employers identify. Phase 3 will involve securing employer commitments for hiring and internship opportunities, with particular emphasis on trained individuals already within regional talent pipelines.

Full Stack Saint Paul: Byrne provided an update on the Full Stack Saint Paul Vision Tracker goals. The 2026 goals are expected to place a stronger emphasis on employer relationships and overall ecosystem alignment, with the “tech training and placement” goal being refined to better reflect employer engagement findings. Full Stack continues to sponsor regional tech events.

Staff Updates

Upcoming Events: Milbrandt shared updates on:

- National Association of Workforce Boards–AI Fluency Webinar: January 15. Milbrandt plans to attend and invited others to join. The registration link will be shared in the follow up email.
- Skills-Based Hiring Accelerator Workshop: The next workshop is on February 24 at Xcel Energy High Point Plant in Saint Paul. Members were encouraged to share with employers interested in skills-based hiring practices.

Committee Member Updates and Other

Ali provided information on MnTech's leadership development efforts, including the ACE Leadership Program, the new Amplify program for senior leaders, and an upcoming AI Leadership Program designed by former CIOs from major Minnesota employers.

O'Neal acknowledged the recent events taking place in the community and encouraged members to care for their well-being.

Adjourn

Upon completion of the agenda, meeting was adjourned at 1:56pm.

Next Meeting: Thursday, March 12, 2026, 1-2pm