



NOVAworks Foundation  
Meeting of the Board of Directors  
February 13, 2024 Meeting Minutes

Present: Frank Benest, Dennis Cima, Hilary Goodkind, and Michelle Nemits  
Secretary/Treasurer: Marlena Sessions  
NOVA Staff: Christopher Bernhardt, Giang Pham and Eileen Stanly  
Guest: Eli Poblitz, San Mateo Union High School District

The meeting was called to order by President D. Cima at 12:30 p.m.

### **EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR REPORT**

Highlights of the report included:

- **Uptick in Customer Demand:** There has been an uptick in demand for adult and dislocated worker services at NOVAworks as a result of recent layoffs across industries. The number of WARN notices has increased from about 4,000 impacted workers in 2022 to over 16,000 workers in 2023/24. In the past, NOVAworks has been able to offer same-day service but is now having to adjust to several days advanced notice.
- **Update Young Adult Services:** NOVAworks has hired several full-time career advisors for its young adult program and is ramping up services. Roadtrip Nation is expected to launch the road trip component of its initiative on March 4 through March 22 that will entail three young adults traveling throughout the Bay Area interviewing inspiring community leaders and producing a video for publication. The other component, digital career portal, has already been completed and will be rolled out to community partners. A presentation on the digital portal will be scheduled for the next meeting.
- **Other Updates:** The San Francisco Airport initiative has commenced and NOVAworks will assist with talent recruitment for employment opportunities in the hospitality industry there. Other initiatives include partnerships with Stanford University, LinkedIn, and community engagement in Redwood City, among many others.

### **CONSENT**

It was moved by F. Benest, seconded by H. Goodkind and carried by voice vote to approve the consent items. For this meeting, the items included the agenda and November 7, 2023, meeting minutes.

### **ACTION**

Financial Statement: NOVAworks Business Operations Manager Giang Pham reported out on the Foundation's Financial Statement. Two new grants were received totaling \$100,000 from LinkedIn and Irvine Foundation for the director's participation in Better Careers Advisory Group. Summary lists of invested partners and funded partners were also distributed. It was moved by F. Benest, seconded by M. Nemits, and carried by voice vote to approve the financial statement as submitted.

## **INFORMATION**

Update Internal Revenue Service (IRS) Activity: Last year, during the staff transition, the Foundation report filing with the IRS/State Registry of Charitable Trust was delayed and insufficient to address requirements. As a result, the Foundation was fined \$3,500. Staff requested and successfully received a waiver of this fine.

Guest Speaker: Eli Poblitz of San Mateo Union High School District: Mr. Poblitz discussed a very successful initiative with NOVAworks. Highlights of the discussion included:

- Last summer's program was a partnership with NOVAworks and the Department of Rehabilitation to serve differently abled young adults. This multi-year partnership with NOVAworks began in 2021.
- Services were provided to 15 young adults with a focus on workforce readiness and work-based learning. Students were placed in entry-level work experience opportunities where they earned wages and invaluable skills. This could potentially be leveraged into full-time employment after graduation. While soft skills are important, work-based learning and job coaching offers important teachable skills about future careers.
- NOVAworks partnership was invaluable with assisting students prepare for the workforce and a career. It also provided a bridge to employment services after students graduated and exited the school system.
- NOVAworks will be replicating this model in its new young adult program and target homeless, foster care, disabled and undocumented youth. The goal is to expand the work-based summer program into a year-round program. Partnerships can also be broadened to include community colleges and adult schools. NOVAworks career advisors will be placed in the community in Mountain View, Milpitas and at Allcove to raise the program's visibility. A video about the summer program was shown, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=iOjzWbVAo>.

Funding from The James Irvine Foundation: A detailed expenditure report was distributed. The Irvine Foundation awarded the Foundation a \$500,000 grant targeting the hospitality industry and \$75,000 to grow the Foundation. This has allowed NOVAworks to work in other related industries such as the San Francisco Airport and with Stanford University. There are several years remaining with this grant. A recommendation was made to present on the kind of employment placements that are taking place.

Strategic Priorities: In the past, the Foundation has developed strategies for fulfilling the Foundation's vision of a "think and do tank." This is good time to think about future directions. There is interest in workforce development and an innovation hub. There are pilots that are being launched but need better messaging. Fund development is also important to expand investments. The Executive Committee will be discussing this at its next retreat. A recommendation was made to consider where there is public investment, gaps that the Foundation can address, and what sectors need the most help. In addition, the Foundation should consider system improvement, how to maximize public funds, build capacity for public partners, and capitalize on current partners.

The meeting was adjourned at 1:30 p.m.