



**NIAGARA COUNTY
WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT BOARD**

Joel Feuerman, Chairperson
Bonnie Rice, Executive Director

Trott Career Center
1001 Eleventh Street
Niagara Falls, NY 14301-1201
Phone: (716) 278-8251
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Meeting Minutes – November 9, 2021
ZOOM Conference: Video and Audio Conference

Members Present: Lindsay Collins, Joel Feuerman, Kathleen Granchelli, Tom Grzebinski, Jennifer Jackson, John Lang, Cathy Lattanzio, Timothy Lederhaus, Michael Martin, Dennis Martinez, David Miller, John Scherrer, Kory Schuler, Tom Seaman, Suzanne Shears, Jerald Wolfgang, Todd Zyra

Members Excused: John Hartwell, Kevin McCabe, Bob Palka

Members Absent: Katie Bongiovanni, Paul Brown, William Carroll, Michael Casale, Shawn Williams

WDB Staff: Helen Dennis, Joanne Klemer, Bonnie Rice

Guests/Staff Present: Donald Jablonski – Niagara County Employment & Training: Excused

I. Call to Order

Due to the nature of Zoom and recorded meetings, Executive Director Bonnie Rice conducted the meeting with Chair Joel Feuerman's permission. The meeting was called to order by B. Rice at 8:00 a.m. through video and audio-conferencing using ZOOM. The meeting was recorded, and notes were taken to later be available on the Niagara WDB website. B. Rice noted that due to the COVID-19 Pandemic, the Sunshine Laws for New York State had been waived. Advertisements for the meeting were placed in local newspapers and online so that the public would be able to attend. B. Rice noted that no requests were made by the public to attend today. H. Dennis took attendance. Attendance is listed above. Quorum was present. The agenda and informational materials were distributed to members through email prior to the meeting.

II. Old Business

B. Rice reviewed the agenda items section by section:

- A.** Meeting minutes for September 14, 2021: Board Members received the meeting minutes in the informational materials emailed prior to the meeting. B. Rice asked the Board for a motion to approve the June minutes as presented. Motion made by J. Feuerman. Second by J. Lang. No abstentions. **Unanimous vote in favor of approval of the September 14, 2021 meeting minutes.**

III. New Business

- A.** B. Rice informed the Board that per the TES Staffing contract, the Board has the option to extend the current contract for one (1) year, from 1/1/22 to 12/31/22. The contract extension to TES Staffing Payroll Services is for an amount of up to \$600,000. B. Rice asked for a motion to approve TES Staffing contract extension time frame and dollar amount. Motion made by J. Wolfgang. Second by J. Feuerman. B. Rice reviewed the history of the contract with the Board. In 2020, the Board released an RFP for bids for providing payroll services. TES Staffing was selected as the vendor of choice. B. Rice shared with the Board that prior to



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adding the contract extension to the Agenda, B. Rice checked with NCET Staff who interact with TES as they put youth on payroll regarding if the Board should renew and how their relationship was with TES. They indicated that things were going smoothly. B. Rice reached out to TES to further delineate their duties, what tasks NCET will be responsible for and what tasks TES will be responsible for. B. Rice explained to the Board that the \$600,000 amount is not just a fee to TES, but includes the actual wages, incentives, etc. paid to the youth. While the number may seem large, most of the dollars are going directly to the Summer Youth through TANF or the youth served through WIOA funding. B. Rice opened the floor for further questions. None brought forward. All in favor. No abstentions. **Unanimous vote for the approval of TES Staffing Payroll Services contract extension for the time period 1/1/22 to 12/31/22 in an amount up to \$600,000.**

IV. Informational Items

Informational items were addressed in the meeting in a different order than listed below.

- A. WDB Meeting Dates for 2022: B. Rice shared with the Board the established meeting dates for 2022. Calendar invitations and a copy of the meeting schedule will be sent after this meeting. Next meeting date is March 8, 2022. B. Rice stated that she is unsure if in-person meetings will resume by then, but is hopeful, and that the option to provide hybrid meetings might be available as well.
- B. Review of Program Year 2020 (7/1/20 – 6/30/2021) Accomplishments: B. Rice shared the PY20 Review and Accomplishments document on screen for the Board. She stated that the document would be sent following the meeting. She shared and reviewed the program success from the previous program year, July 1, 2020 through June 30, 2021. The document illustrates accomplishments made because of the actions from the Board. Through On-the-Job Training, 39 job seekers gained employment. A total of 22 businesses took advantage of the On-the-Job Training program in which 50% of the new hire's wages up to \$5,000 are reimbursed to the employer for training the new hire. 75 students were sponsored in Classroom Training in demand occupations that will lead to full-time employment upon completion; up to \$4,000 of their training is paid through WIOA funding. B. Rice shared that the Board assists with policy and funding decisions that allow workers to prepare for and enter the local workforce. B. Rice reviewed the events that have been held over the past year. A resource fair allowed community agencies that provide services to job seekers, the community and businesses, to set up on the front lawn of the Trott Building to share information regarding their services. Five outdoor job fairs were held in local parks. The most recent was held in Oppenheim Park and was very well attended, job seeker attendance was over 200 people. B. Rice shared that for the Youth Program, there were three grants this year. There were 168 youth participants, 38 of them led to paid work experiences (WIOA paid their wages), 50 summer youth were hired (WIOA paid their wages), and 96 Summer Youth (TANF paid their wages) were in the program this year. This was a great turnout despite the obstacles this year. A few photos of the youth working are included in the document. An advertising campaign with Purplegator was run as well to encourage parents and children to explore the services NCET had to offer. A few of the ads are included in the document as well. B. Rice shared with the Board that it has been a very productive year, things have been going very well despite the obstacles that needed to be overcome.



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- C. WIOA Youth Program Updates: NCET has 61 new Youth Enrollees 7/1/2021 to date (does not include NCCC or ONBOCES Youth who transitioned to NCET). B. Rice explained the goal of the WIOA Year-Round Youth Program is 75 youth enrolled for the year. To date they are at 61 and are well on their way to meeting their goal.
- D. Budget Updates: B. Rice turned the floor over to J. Klemer to provide the Board with a Budget Update. Budget information was sent to the Board members prior to the meeting. J. Klemer informed the Board that each page represents a different WIOA sponsored program for the current funding year which started July 1, 2021. The Budget information is from July 1 to September 30th and shows the Board the expense categories against the Budget. J. Klemer reviewed page 10, WIOA Adult Budget. \$800,000 was budgeted for the year, \$151,900 has been accrued in expenses up to September 30th. J. Klemer explained this represents about 20% of the Adult budget to date and there are no concerns moving on from the first quarter. J. Klemer reviewed page 11, WIOA DW Budget. \$512,500 was budgeted for the year, \$156,056 has been accrued in expenses up to September 30th. J. Klemer stated everything seems to be in alignment for the first quarter. J. Klemer reviewed page 12, WIOA Youth Budget. \$722,000 was budgeted for the year, \$189,731 has been accrued in expenses up to September 30th. J. Klemer reviewed page 12, WIOA Administration Budget. \$222,000 was budgeted for the year, \$29,966 has been accrued in expenses up to September 30th. J. Klemer opened the floor for further questions. T. Grzebinski stated for Dislocated Workers (DWs) we seem to be tracking higher than the budget for payroll for the year. He asked if that was expected to slow or if there was something in the first quarter that happened as an anomaly. J. Klemer stated that Niagara is getting extra DW funding for programs so more staff time is being spent to prepare and plan how to utilize those funds. It's possible that toward the 6 or 9 month time frame, there may be a need to transfer funds from the Adult budget to the DW budget, which is allowable. J. Klemer added that the budget numbers were due prior to 7/1/21, and at that point the WDB was unaware of the additional DW monies. It is possible that a budget adjustment could be needed by the second or third quarter. J. Feuerman added that COVID could be driving career changes for Dislocated Workers and could be the reason the government is adding funding to DW programs. The WDB is reacting to that and helping out the people. B. Rice added that, as discussed at our prior meeting, the extra grants received have had requirements of being a Dislocated Worker. For those grants, staff time would go toward the DW budget. T. Grzebinski asked a question regarding the Youth budget. The Youth work experience number is a little offsetting on a prorated basis and asked if there was an explanation for that line item as well. J. Klemer answered that NCET is doing phenomenal with Youth work experience and an adjustment will probably be needed as an increase in the future. She noted sometimes there is a slowdown in the second quarter because the youth go back to school and the holidays come up. Seasonally, or trend wise, the second quarter may slow down a little. She stated an increase may be needed by the end of the year. B. Rice added that these are good problems to have as we want to put Youth to work, pay their wages, and have them working in our community so they get the experience they need. The money is getting into the hands of the Youth who need it. No further questions brought forward.
- E. One-Stop Operator Performance Update: B. Rice stated that D. Jablonski was unable to attend the meeting. She shared that the Career Center still remains open and is seeing an uptick in the number of customers utilizing the center and services. She also shared that the One-Stop Center



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now has two self check-in ADA compliant Kiosks that allow customers to sign into the Center on an iPad. Niagara County Data Processing created software to collect customer data that NCET staff accesses, then adds the information into the NYS Database. The new kiosks further protect customer's private information. Front desk staff are still available to assist customers and greet them.

- F. WDB Inclusion Committee Updates and Business Panel Outcomes – Dennis Martinez: D. Martinez shared that the Inclusion Committee meets regularly to discuss issues, topics and projects that can be put forth to increase opportunities for people with disabilities and others within the Niagara County Workforce Development System. The most recent project for the Inclusion Committee was to coordinate and host a virtual business round table panel discussion regarding retention issues for employers who are experiencing an aging workforce and people developing impairments that affect their job. The discussion also included diversity issues, increasing diversity with hiring people with disabilities, and discussing the issues and fears of doing so. The panel consisted of a cross-section of local employers: J. Feuerman from Home Depot was a panel member. D. Martinez noted that J. Feuerman has a long history and interest in diversity and people with disabilities in the workforce. Judy Villani from Niagara Falls Memorial Medical Center was a panel member and has worked with students with disabilities through ACCES-VR and NCET Youth. Kim Naus, Director for the Center of Assistive Technology, talked about low-tech low-cost accommodations that can assist people with disabilities in job retention as they age in place and develop disabilities. A representative from the New York State Commission for the Blind was a part of the panel as well. The panel also had a question and answer opportunity for attendees. There was a lot of positive feedback from the attendees. Many were impressed with the information, wanted to learn more and wanted future events to further discuss these issues. D. Martinez stated that the Inclusion Committee would be meeting to discuss the outcome of the event and plan similar future events since the feedback was so positive. These panels would give the Inclusion Committee more opportunities to be the spokesperson for inclusion in the Workforce Development System and the employment community within Niagara County and throughout Western New York. D. Martinez stated that the Inclusion Committee is very proud of the experience and happy to share the experience with the Board. D. Martinez asked B. Rice and J. Feuerman if they had anything to add, as they had been a part of the panel and coordination. B. Rice stated that it was a great event. She stated that it costs over \$4,000 to train a new employee, there are ways to help employers retain employees who are aging or develop a disability with low cost alternatives. J. Feuerman shared that he was impressed by the level of interest and that the feedback from the audience was so positive. He shared that many people don't realize the percentage of people who become disabled later in life. You can maintain an employment relationship by assisting them and can gain loyalty from that employee. The employees around them realize that if something were to happen to them, the employer would work to maintain their employment. He shared that in his experience that means a lot to people. He also shared that he really enjoyed the event and hopes to participate in more of them. B. Rice shared that if any Board members are interested in attending the next panel to contact herself or D. Martinez. D. Martinez also stated that if anyone on the Board would like to serve on the Inclusion Committee to contact him or B. Rice. J. Feuerman shared that the Inclusion Committee accomplishes a lot and they are very active and engaging.



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- G.** Announcements by Board Members: No further announcements were brought forward.
- H.** B. Rice also shared that in January the WDB will have grant funding (NYSGVP Grant) for participants ages 18-24 who reside in the City of Niagara Falls zip codes (75%) and Lockport zip codes (25%) that will pay 90% of their wages while they train in a new job. NCET will offer a work readiness work shop and J. Feuerman has offered to be a presenter. B. Rice also shared that participants can obtain gift card incentives and possibly receive transportation assistance as well. B. Rice informed the Board that if they would like their business on the wait list in order to participate in the program to contact her. Also, if they plan to hire someone from those zip codes in January to call her as NCET will need to meet with the business and youth prior to hiring. The goal is to put 50 youth to work in Niagara County before July 31, 2022. K.Granchelli asked what the recruitment strategy is for the NYSGVP grant. B. Rice explained that NCET has a pool of youth in mind, NYS DOL has shared a list of over 600 youth and the community partners will be informed as well. Recruitment has tentatively started but no money can be spent until January. No further questions were brought forward.

IV. Adjournment

B. Rice thanked the members in attendance for their time and requested a motion to adjourn. Motion made by J. Feuerman. Second by L. Collins. Unanimous vote in favor of adjournment. The Workforce Development Board meeting was **adjourned at 8:33 a.m.** **The next board meeting is scheduled for March 8, 2022 at 8:00 a.m.**

Respectfully submitted,
Helen Dennis