



**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 – March 8, 2022
ZOOM Conference: Video and Audio Conference

Members Present: Nasreen Akhtar, Marueen Bartlett, Jeanne Battaglia, Michael Casale, Lindsay Collins, Joel Feuerman, Kathleen Granchelli, John Lang, Cathy Lattanzio, Timothy Lederhaus, Michael Martin, Dennis Martinez, David Miller, Bob Palka, John Scherrer, Kory Schuler, Tom Seaman, Suzanne Shears, Michele Taylor, Jerald Wolfgang, Todd Zyra

Members Excused: Tom Grzebinski, John Hartwell

Members Absent: Paul Brown, William Carroll, Shawn Williams

WDB Staff: Helen Dennis, Bonnie Rice

Guests/Staff Present: Donald Jablonski – NCET, Chairman Rebecca Wydysz – Niagara County Legislature

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 8:01 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.

- A. J. Feuerman took a moment to welcome the following **newly appointed Board members:** Nasreen Akhtar of Aero Transportation, Maureen Bartlett of Orleans-Niagara BOCES (replacing Katie Bongiovanni), Jeanne Battaglia of Managed Care Network, Michele Taylor of NYSDOL (replacing Jennifer Jackson). J. Feuerman acknowledged and thanked all Board members for their time and dedication to helping the people of Niagara County through the Board.

II. Old Business

B. Rice reviewed the agenda items section by section:

- a) Meeting minutes for November 9, 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 November minutes as presented. Motion made by K. Schuler. Second by K. Granchelli. No abstentions. **Unanimous vote in favor of approval of the November 9, 2021 meeting minutes.**
- b) December 1, 2021 Executive Committee Meeting were presented as a matter of record to the Board. No vote was necessary.



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III. Old Business

A. All information regarding each item was distributed to the Board members through email prior to the meeting. B. Rice informed the Board that the items would be voted in a Slate Vote. The items were previously approved by the WDB Executive Committee. B. Rice reviewed the following:

- a) ITA Classroom Training Policy was revised to add a residency definition to the policy.
- b) The ability to transfer up to one hundred percent (100%) of Administration back to the originating program funds in all three programs (Adult, Dislocated Worker and Youth). The amount cannot exceed the original ten percent (10%) designated as Administration. B. Rice shared that these things are happening because the NCET team is doing a great job of spending and getting funding dollars to local Youth, center customers that need training in demand occupations, and getting On-the-Job training contracts which allow businesses to hire people and get reimbursed for training wages. The WDB is finding ways that are allowable to transfer money so that we can spend more on center customers. Transferring the money from Admin into the needed funding streams for Youth, Adults and Dislocated Workers served by the program.

B. Rice reviewed the Budget Report in the packet sent prior to the meeting with the Board members for items c-f (pages 14-17). Further details regarding the budget updates can be found in the Executive Committee Meeting minutes for December 1, 2021 (included in the packet sent prior to the meeting).

- c) The Adult budget needs less money transferred from Dislocated Worker than originally budgeted in an amount of \$35,000. B. Rice explained that the \$8,000 listed is estimated carry over from the prior year that needs to be rolled into the budget. Within the Adult funding stream \$10,000 is being moved from Operational and into Training which will allow for more Adult funded OJT's and Classroom Training.
- d) The Dislocated Worker budget has been adjusted for \$5,000 of carry-in funding from the prior year. B. Rice shared that two grants were also received that the budget needed to be adjusted for. Niagara received more money for the TET-NDWG Grant and a new grant, the DR-NDWG, which assists serving customers who lost their job because of the COVID-19 Pandemic.
- e) The Youth budget has been adjusted for \$26,000 of carry-in funding from the prior year due to adjustments from subcontractors. \$33,000 will transfer from Admin, back into the Youth budget.
- f) The Admin budget has been adjusted to transfer \$33,000 back to the Youth budget.

B. Rice explained that the budget adjustments allows for money to get into the hands of the customers NCET serves. B. Rice asked the Board for a motion to approve as a slate, the items that were previously approved by the Executive Committee (items a-f). Motion made by D. Miller. Second by B. Palka. B. Rice opened the floor for questions. None brought forward. No abstentions. **Unanimous vote in favor of the slate vote, items a-f.**

III. New Business

A. Release RFP for PY22 One-Stop System Operator: B. Rice explained to the Board the role of the One-Stop System Operator (OSSO). The OSSO convenes the WDB Partner Agencies,



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ensures successes are being measured, and provides guidance on needed and recommended improvements to the operation of the One-Stop Career Center and the One-Stop System. B. Rice asked for a motion to approve the RFP for release in an amount of up to \$10,000. Motion made by M. Casale. Second by T. Zyra. B. Rice opened the floor for questions. None brought forward. No abstentions. **Unanimous vote in favor to release an RFP for PY22 One-Stop System Operator in an amount of up to \$10,000.** B. Rice also noted that any Board Members interested in volunteering to review proposals/bids once received should contact her.

- B.** Reallocation of WIOA Youth PY21 Budget: B. Rice reviewed with the Board the revised Youth budget. As previously discussed in the slate vote, the Youth budget has an increase of \$59,000 from additional carry-in from previous program year funding and the transfer of funds back to the youth program from Admin allocation. The re-allocations in the budget are as follows: \$15,000 due to staffing changes and staff member being partially covered under the NYSGVP grant (starting January 2022), \$6,000 on the operational line due to changes in MILOR, IT, etc. based on staff time, \$12,000 on the training line due to anticipated trainings being cancelled or postponed. The total amount of \$33,000 is to be moved to the other program line which will add funds needed to cover work experience, wages, program incentives and related supportive services. B. Rice asked for a motion to approve the Reallocation of the WIOA Youth PY21 Budget as presented. Motion made by K. Schuler. Second by B. Palka. B. Rice opened the floor for questions. None brought forward. No abstentions. **Unanimous vote in favor of the Reallocation of WIOA Youth PY21 Budget.**

IV. Informational Items

- A.** WIOA Youth Program Updates: B. Rice shared with the Board that the NCET Youth team goal for the program year, which ends June 30, 2022, was to enroll 75 youth into the program. As of today, the NCET Youth team has enrolled 81 youth, exceeding their goal. This does not include the Youth who transitioned from the subrecipient programs.
- B.** One-Stop System Operator Performance Update: B. Rice turned the floor over to D. Jablonski of NCET to give an update on the OSSO. D. Jablonski shared that from July 1, 2021 to date, 48 people have been hired using WIOA funded On-the-Job Training and 64 people have received WIOA scholarships for training in demand occupations. 81 youth have enrolled in the WIOA Youth programs. Of those youth, 22 have received either their High School Diploma or GED, 13 have enrolled in either college or the military and 7 are getting their NYS Driver's License. D. Jablonski noted that assisting these youth helps them to become independent and to become productive members of society. The NCET staff has done a yeoman's work to assist youth and job seekers. D. Jablonski shared that NCET has received additional grants. The NYS Grant to extend the Summer Youth Employment Program put an additional 50 youth to work beyond the summer program. The NYS Gun Violence Prevention grant allows employers to direct hire local youth and allows for 90% of the youth's training wages to be reimbursed up to \$4,000 per employer. NCET's goal is to have 50 youth hired by 2023. Currently 11 youth have been hired, 2 more are expected to be added today. D. Jablonski explained that the grant is titled Gun Violence Prevention not because it aims to hire youth who are involved in gun violence, but to hire those that live in zip codes affected by gun violence. For Niagara County that includes all City of Niagara Falls zip codes and City of Lockport. D. Jablonski shared with the Board that NCET has received a SCION-DRC grant to extend the Disability Resource



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Coordinator program that assists individuals with disabilities in navigating their return to work. Our current DRC is a trained Benefits Advisor and assists individuals with understanding how work will affect their benefits. She also has a close working relationship with D. Martinez and ACCES-VR. The grant focuses on employers as well as employees and is for \$100,000 per year for 3 years. D. Jablonski shared, regarding the RFP for One-Stop System Operator, that he is currently the OSSO but due to increased responsibilities and projects within NCET he needs to devote his time to those projects. D. Jablonski opened the floor for questions. None brought forward.

- C. Youth Committee Update: B. Rice shared details from the Youth Committee Meeting. The first ever LGBTQ+ adult vocational conference will be held in Niagara County on April 23rd. Interested Board members can contact B. Rice for further details. The Youth Committee also received an update regarding the NYS GVP grant (previously discussed by D. Jablonski.), the WIOA Youth program and TANF Summer Youth Employment Program. B. Rice reminded the Board that if they would like to be considered as a work site for the Summer Program to contact her, or if they know of any youth ages 14-20 who would be interested in the Summer Program to contact her.
- D. Inclusion Committee Update: B. Rice turned the floor over to D. Martinez. D. Martinez shared with the Board that the Inclusion Committee meets monthly and if Board Members are interested they can contact him. D. Martinez shared that the committee plans to hold two business trainings this year. In April, the committee is planning a business training with Microsoft to talk about the accessibility features available in Microsoft Office products. In the fall, the committee is planning a cultural competency of LGBTQ+ issues and employment for employers. The committee is also working on a project to highlight Niagara County businesses that have benefited from instituting policies of Diversity, Equity and Inclusion (DEI). D. Martinez shared that the committee has some nominations of local businesses and will publish their stories as part of the project. D. Martinez shared with the Board that any members interested in joining the committee can contact him or B. Rice. B. Rice added that the Microsoft Workshop will be run by Microsoft staff and if members are interested in joining the free workshop to contact her or D. Martinez.
- E. Announcements by Board Members: B. Rice opened the floor to any members who wished to make an announcement. M. Bartlett shared that ONBOCES will be visiting NF High School and speaking with their Seniors who did not attend ONBOCES during High School. ONBOCES plans to host Summer Career and Technical Training at the Niagara Falls and Lockport sites. ONBOCES will be listing funding options on the flyer. M. Bartlett further explained that the program will be available for graduating students, out of school youth and adults and will encourage youth and older adults in the same household to attend together. M. Casale thanked D. Jablonski and D. Martinez for joining the NCCED first business workshop of the year which centered on workforce development training. The workshop was very successful with nearly 40 businesses attending. M. Casale shared that they plan to have at least one event annually focused on workforce development.

V. Adjournment

B. Rice thanked the members in attendance for their time and requested a motion to adjourn. Motion made by M. Bartlett. Second by J. Lang. Unanimous vote in favor of adjournment. The Workforce



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Development Board meeting was **adjourned at 8:33 a.m.** The next board meeting is scheduled for **June 7, 2022 at 8:00 a.m.**

Respectfully submitted,
Helen Dennis