



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 9, 2021
ZOOM Conference: Video and Audio Conference

Members Present: Michael Casale, Lindsay Collins, Joel Feuerman, Kathleen Granchelli, Jennifer Jackson, John Lang, Cathy Lattanzio, Tim Lederhaus, Michael Martin, Dennis Martinez, Kory Schuler, Suzanne Shears, Joseph Steinmetz, Jerald Wolfgang, Todd Zyra

Members Excused: John Hartwell

Members Absent: Paul Brown, William Carroll, Kevin McCabe, Shawn Williams

WDB Staff: Helen Dennis, Joanne Klemer, Bonnie Rice

Guests/Staff Present: Katie Bongiovanni – ONBOCES, Peter Coleman - Guest Speaker BNMA, Donald Jablonski - E&T, Rebecca Wydysh - Niagara County Legislative Chair

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 8:02 a.m. through video and audio-conferencing using ZOOM. The meeting was not 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.

B. Rice took a moment to welcome the following **newly appointed Board members**: Lindsay Collins of Collins Accounting, Jennifer Jackson of NYS Department of Labor (replacing Carolyn Bright due to her recent retirement from NYSDOL), Bob Palka of Jacob's Ladder, John Scherrer with IBEW Electrical Workers Local 237 and Registered Apprenticeship, and Tom Seaman of Seaman Norris LLP.

B. Rice welcomed Rebecca Wydysh, Chair of the Niagara County Legislature.

B. Rice also announced that Joseph Steinmetz, who recently retired from ONBOCES, would officially be resigning from the Board on March 10th. Joseph Steinmetz has nominated Katie Bongiovanni to fill his Board seat representing ONBOCES.

Chair Feuerman took a moment to thank Joseph Steinmetz for his years on the Board. Joe thanked the Board for many wonderful years working together.

II. Old Business

B. Rice reviewed the agenda items section by section:

- A. Meeting minutes for October 20, 2020: 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 October minutes as presented. Motion made by J. Wolfgang. Second by K.



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Granchelli. Abstained by L. Collins, J. Jackson, B. Palka, J. Scherrer and T. Seaman as they are new members. **Unanimous vote in favor of approval of the October 20, 2020 meeting minutes.**

- B. December 18, 2020 Executive Committee Meeting were presented as a matter of record to the Board. No vote was necessary.
- C. February 9, 2021 Executive Committee Meeting were presented as a matter of record to the Board. No vote was necessary.

III. Old Business – Previously Approved by WDB Executive Committee

Information regarding each item was distributed to the Board members through email prior to the meeting. The following items needed to be reviewed and voted on by the Board.

- A. B. Rice informed the Board that an amendment to the TES Staffing Contract had been unanimously approved by the Executive Committee on December 18, 2020. The Executive Committee approved a recommendation based on fiscal review and projections for the next year, of an additional \$600,000. B. Rice explained that the addition is for TANF/WIOA Youth wages, Mileage Payments and Payment of Incentives/Bonuses for Youth. B. Rice opened the floor for questions. No questions brought forward. B. Rice asked for a motion to approve the Executive Committees approval of an additional \$600,000 to the TES Staffing Contract. Motion made by M. Casale. Second by T. Zyra. All in favor. No abstentions.
Unanimous vote in the approval of the Executive Committee for an additional \$600,000 to TES Staffing Contract.
- B. B. Rice reviewed the Slate Vote items with the Board. All information regarding each item was distributed to the Board members through email prior to the meeting. Each item can be found with further details in the Executive Committee Meeting minutes from 2/9/2021 (included in Board Meeting Packet).
 - a. B. Rice reminded the Board that during the RFP and contract process for the PY20 WIOA Youth Subrecipients NYS DOL recommended a recapture clause. Six months after contract date, the WDB could review the provider's fiscal information and determine based on invoicing and payments what funding, if any, could be recaptured. After review and negotiation, it was agreed that \$50,000 of unspent WIOA Youth Funds would be recaptured from NCCC. The recapture of \$50,000 of unspent WIOA Youth Funds was approved unanimously by the Executive Committee.
 - b. The narrative of Item a. applies to this item. After review and negotiation, it was agreed that \$150,000 of unspent WIOA Youth Funds would be recaptured from ONBOCES. The recapture of \$150,000 of unspent WIOA Youth Funds was approved unanimously by the Executive Committee.
 - c. B. Rice informed the Board that the Executive Committee was asked to consider reallocating \$150,000 of the recaptured WIOA Youth funds for Youth Advertising. The Executive Committee approved unanimously.
 - d. B. Rice informed the Board that the Executive Committee was asked consider releasing an RFP for WIOA Youth Outreach and Advertising in an amount not to exceed \$150,000, to focus on social media and traditional advertising to promote the current WIOA Youth programs. The Executive Committee approved unanimously.



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- e. B. Rice informed the Board that the Executive Committee was asked to consider reallocating the recaptured \$50,000 WIOA Youth funds to increase the WIOA Youth Work Experience budget from \$77,000 to \$127,000. This budget increase will further serve current and incoming Youth that qualify for work experience within the WIOA Youth Program. The Executive Committee approved unanimously.
- f. B. Rice informed the Board that the Executive Committee was asked to consider the authorization of an RFP for WIOA Youth Programs in the amount of up to \$400,000. The Executive Committee approved unanimously.
- g. B. Rice informed the Board that the Executive Committee was asked to consider increasing the Dislocated Worker OJT training budget by \$10,000, from \$10,000 to \$20,000. The Executive Committee approved unanimously.
- h. B. Rice informed the Board that the Executive Committee was asked to consider increasing the Dislocated Worker ITA training budget by \$25,000, from \$60,000 to \$85,000. The Executive Committee approved unanimously.

B. Rice opened the floor for questions. None brought forward. B. Rice requested a motion to approve items a. - h. by the Executive Committee as a Slate Vote. Motion made by K. Granchelli. Second by C. Lattanzio. J. Wolfgang, representing NCCC and J. Steinmetz representing ONBOCES abstained from voting. **Unanimous vote in favor of the approval of items a. – h. as a Slate.**

IV. New Business

- A. B. Rice informed the Board that another increase to Dislocated Worker OJT training budget is needed. B. Rice asked the Board to increase the DW OJT training budget by \$20,000, from \$20,000 to \$40,000. She explained that although an increase was made previously (see Slate Vote) another increase is needed to further assist DW OJT customers. B. Rice opened the floor for further questions. None brought forward. B. Rice asked the Board for approval to increase the DW OJT training budget. Motion made by M. Casale. Seconded by K. Schuler. No abstentions. **Unanimous approval of the increase to the DW OJT training budget by \$20,000, from \$20,000 to \$40,000**
 - B. B. Rice informed the Board that another increase to Dislocated Worker ITA training budget is needed. B. Rice asked the Board to increase the DW ITA training budget by \$15,000, from \$85,000 to \$100,000. She explained that although an increase was made previously (see Slate Vote) another increase is needed to further assist DW ITA customers. B. Rice opened the floor for further questions. None brought forward. B. Rice asked the Board for approval to increase the DW OJT training budget. Motion made by J. Wolfgang. Seconded by J. Lang. No abstentions. **Unanimous approval of the increase to the DW ITA training budget by \$15,000, from \$85,000 to \$100,000**
- B. Rice shared with the Board that from July 1, 2020 to today, 25 OJT contracts have been created and 66 CRT contracts/ITAs have been created for customers. B. Rice also thanked the Board for their hard work over that last year and assisting the WDB to create and update policies in order for customers to be better served during this past difficult year.



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V. Guest Speaker – Peter Coleman, President and CEO of Buffalo Niagara Manufacturing Alliance.

B. Rice introduced Peter Coleman as Guest Speaker. Peter is responsible for providing strategic leadership for the Buffalo Niagara Manufacturing Alliance (BNMA) by working with the board of directors to establish long-range goals, strategies, plans and policies. Peter represents the BNMA in meetings with industry and association leaders, government officials, media, academia, and others interested in manufacturing trade association matters.

Peter gave an overview of the current state of the Metro Buffalo Niagara Area. Below are some notes and statistic expressed in his presentation:

- There are an estimated 1,500 employers with 50 or fewer employees and 1,600 manufacturing firms in the area with about 65 employees who have experienced a 4% employment growth over the last year. This is an increase of 2,200 people in the workforce; probably closer to 4,000 people because of retirements due to COVID-19.
- The median income in manufacturing is about \$65,000 annually, which is more than double the median income for our County.
- Currently there are 3,000 open positions in the market to fill. If those 3,000 open positions were filled, it would generate \$1 B in revenue.
- BNMA is working to develop strategic planning sessions and encourages the local businesses to come to the table to discuss and understand needs.
- Although the industry offers double the median income of the local area, it is struggling to bring people into the trades.
- There is a need to change and pivot to include apprenticeship as an option instead of traditional college. BNMA provides scholarships to sponsor apprenticeships to earn and learn. BNMA has been working with Northland.
- Bring/market trades education and potential opportunities to Middle School and High School students to encourage an interest.
- The majority of manufacturing is dedicated to production and supply. Typically marketing to job seekers isn't as focused as what it could be. This is something that needs to be changed and adjusted as part of the manufacturing culture.
- Culture change to how trades/manufacturing is viewed. Currently viewed as low income, dirty, not safe.
- Strategic plan: Work with Workforce Development, Diversity, show opportunities, operation of manufacturing and trades and illustrate automation, supply chain and logistics, retention and attraction.
- Maintain current local manufacturers, and compete to bring in more by marketing expansion, global focus, and expansion to Canada.

B. Rice thanked Peter for his presentation and opened the floor to Board members to ask questions. J. Steinmetz shared programs and classes currently available through ONBOCES for trades and the labor/manufacturing market. He shared areas of agreement and reflection to Peter's presentation.



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Peter further discussed the need for summer employment to further youth interest in work and skills.

He also discussed marketing tactics for those on UI and those in nonessential and part-time jobs with poor benefits exposed to trade and manufacturing opportunities.

B. Rice again thanked Peter for his time and presentation. She will be sending Peter's contact information to the Board if they have further questions for Peter.

VI. Informational Items

A. B. Rice asked J. Klemer to take the floor and update the Board on the current state of the budget. J. Klemer reviewed the budget and gave some background information so the new Board members could better understand WIOA Funding. She explained that there are four programs funded: Adult, Dislocated Worker, Youth and Administration. The fiscal and program years run from July 1st of the current year to June 30th of the following year. Prior to each new program year 80% of the budget needs to be obligated, funding can be carried for two years from award year. J. Klemer explained the budget pages in the Meeting Packet on pages 10-13. She explained that the top area, above the gray line, shows the source, funding amounts, carry-over and current allocations. Below the gray line illustrates line by line spending budget, accruals and remaining balance. J. Klemer opened the floor for questions. None brought forward. B. Rice commented that 33 areas in New York State are struggling with their budgets. Niagara is currently aligned well with NYS DOL expectations.

B. B. Rice asked D. Jablonski to take the floor and give a summary as One Stop Operator. D. Jablonski commented on Peter Coleman's presentation, stating that from E&T perspective they have seen many in skills trades starting to retire. He agreed that marketing clean work, great benefits, being able to build, create and service machines was a good choice of marketing to further encourage opportunities for job seekers, and that E&T was doing that as well. D. Jablonski took a moment to introduce himself to the new members. He explained his role as One Stop Operator and what is offered with a One Stop Center. D. Jablonski informed the Board that during the COVID-19 pandemic NCET was able to operate without interruption. March 2020 to June 2020, staff worked remotely and kept programs in operation. NCET has embraced new technology, created a YouTube channel creating several "How To" videos, and is currently looking into Podcasting. In June 2020, staff were gradually brought back into the center to serve customers with restrictions to comply with mandated COVID-19 guidelines. They also continued to utilize Zoom and other technologies to continue to serve customers. In July 2020 NYS OTDA gave green light to operate TANF Summer Youth Employment Program. Despite extremely tight time constraints, staff provided 100 youth with summer employment. The NCET Youth Team's dedication and perseverance allowed them to spend the entire \$466,000 allotted. D. Jablonski also informed the Board that NCET has also surpassed the 2019 total for On-the-Job and Classroom training contracts. D. Jablonski shared with the Board that due to the pandemic career fairs had to be cancelled. NCET got creative and held a walk-up career fair on the front lawn of the Trott building, following mandated COVID-19 guidelines. 10 businesses participated, 50 jobseekers attended and 8 jobseekers were hired that day. A second career fair was held as a Drive Thru Fair in Oppenheim Park. 27 businesses attended and 150 job seekers attended. D. Jablonski noted that both were very successful



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and employers as well as job seekers who attended gave glowing reviews. D. Jablonski also noted that a business roundtable meeting was scheduled for February 18th 2021, but had to be postponed due to a spike in the COVID-19 infection rates. Arrangements are currently being made for an alternate date and time. D. Jablonski also informed that Board that two quarterly one-stop partners meetings were held in July and December via Zoom. Both meetings were very well attended with a good flow of information among the members. Should the Board members have further questions D. Jablonski encouraged them to call or email him.

- C. B. Rice gave a brief overview of the WIOA Youth Subrecipients performance over the last two quarters. The information can be found on page 14 of the meeting packet. The information shows the contracted enrollments per Subrecipient as well as the number of youth currently enrolled in each quarter. She noted that ONBOCES gained a late start, which is why they show zero enrollments in the first quarter. She also noted the chart contains information on each contractor's spent and unspent funds.
- D. B. Rice informed that Board that volunteers are needed for the RFP Review Team for the Youth Subrecipients RFP. She encouraged Board members to call or email her if they are interested in being a part of the Review Team.
- E. B. Rice opened the floor to Board members who wished to make any announcements. M. Casale thanked Peter Coleman for his presentation and being a guest speaker. He noted that the Niagara County Center for Economic Development had been reaching out to and keeping in contact with local companies during the pandemic in order to assist them as they could. He thanked D. Jablonski for being on his show this month. M. Casale also mentioned that the NCCED was offering virtual workshops, one of which focused on Workforce Development. He noted that more workshops were available and encouraged Board members to contact him if they had any questions. Chair Feuerman thanked the members for attending the meetings. He noted that it was wonderful to have them engaged and seeing the results of what the Board has been doing to further help business and jobseekers in Niagara. M. Martin informed the Board that Native American Community Services was expanding with 15 additional counties in their workforce development area. He noted that from Peter Coleman's presentation he wanted to add the need to include transportation into strategic planning to further move the workforce forward.

IV. Adjournment

B. Rice again congratulated Joseph Steinmetz on his retirement and thanked him for his years of service on the Board. B. Rice thanked the members in attendance for their time and requested a motion to adjourn. Motion made by M. Martin. Second by J. Lang. Unanimous vote in favor of adjournment. The Workforce Development Board meeting was **adjourned at 8:59 a.m. The next board meeting is scheduled for June 8, 2021.**

Respectfully submitted,
Helen Dennis