



**NIAGARA COUNTY
WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT BOARD**

Joel Feuerman, Chairperson
Bonnie Rice, Executive Director

Trott Career Center
1001 Eleventh Street
Niagara Falls, NY 14301-1201
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Meeting Minutes – June 6, 2023

**Niagara County Center for Economic Development/IDA
6311 Inducon Corporate Drive in Sanborn, NY**

Members Present: Nasreen Akhtar, Maureen Bartlett, William Carroll, Lindsay Collins, Joel Feuerman, Tom Grzebinski, David Haylett, John Lang, Cathy Lattanzio, Michael Martin, Dennis Martinez, Kory Schuler, Suzanne Shears, Divya Tandon, Michele Taylor, Todd Zyra.

Members Excused: Jeanne Battaglia, Michael Casale, Kathleen Granchelli, John Hartwell, Timothy Lederhaus, David Miller, John Scherrer, Tom Seaman.

Members Absent: Shawn Williams.

WDB Staff: Helen Dennis, Joanne Klemer, Bonnie Rice.

Guests/Staff Present: Jeannine Brown Miller – JBM Consulting, OSSO; Donald Jablonski

I. Call to Order

The meeting was called to order by J. Feuerman at 8:00 a.m. J. Feuerman welcomed all members and thanked them for their attendance. J. Feuerman welcomed David Haylett as a new Board Member representing Niagara County Community College's Board of Trustees. J. Feuerman asked for the Board Members to go around the room and briefly introduce themselves. J. Feuerman then turned the floor over to B. Rice. B. Rice shared with the Board that advertisements for the meeting were placed in local newspapers and online so that the public would be able to attend today. B. Rice noted that quorum was established.

II. Old Business

B. Rice reviewed the agenda items section by section. All information regarding each item was distributed to the Board members through email prior to the meeting.

- A.** Meeting Minutes for March 7, 2023: Board Members received the meeting minutes in the information materials emailed prior to the meeting. B. Rice asked the Board for a motion to approve the March minutes as presented. Motion made by S. Shears. Second by W. Carroll.
Unanimous vote in favor of the approval of the March 7, 2023 Meeting Minutes.
- B.** 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 on March 29th, 2023. B. Rice reviewed the following:
 - a.** The WDB previously requested the transfer of up to \$250,000 from Dislocated Worker (DW) to Adult; this vote will allow up to an additional \$125,000 transfer. In total, up to \$375,000 in total will be able to be transferred from DW to Adult this program year. This move between funding streams will not affect the ability for current or future DWs to access funding. Currently, there have been more Adults than DWs served under WIOA. B.



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Rice added that this transfer will help the WDB reach the 80% obligation rate required for WIOA funding.

- b. An increase in WIOA Adult and DW Individual Training Account (ITA) funding was necessary. B. Rice explained that costs of training and supplies have increased. Increasing the ITA funding cap allows Adults and DWs in training to absorb less of the increased costs that have been typically covered under the \$4,000. The WIOA Adult and DW ITA funding cap would increase from \$4,000 to \$5,000.

B. Rice requested a motion to approve the items previously approved by the WDB Executive Committee. Motion made by M. Bartlett. Second by C. Lattanzio. All in favor. No abstentions.

Unanimous vote in favor of approving the items previously approved by the WDB Executive Committee on March 29, 2023.

III. New Business

J. Brown Miller was asked to leave the room in order for the Board to discuss item A.

- A. B. Rice explained to the Board that a vote was needed regarding the contract extension of JBM HR Consulting, Inc. to continue as One-Stop System Operator (OSSO) for the coming program year. The current contract states that the Board has the option to extend the contract twice in two one-year increments. If approved, this would be the first extension period. B. Rice noted that the extension would be for PY23 (July 1, 2023 to June 30, 2024) in an amount of \$10,000. B. Rice shared that currently J. Brown Miller has done an outstanding job as OSSO and has facilitated some new connections with community members. T. Grzebinski asked if there was an alternative business or if there was something more J. Brown Miller could be doing as OSSO. B. Rice responded that J. Brown Miller is in compliance and doing everything as stated by the contract with the WDB as OSSO. She added that the current needs of the OSSO have not changed. B. Rice asked for S. Shears to share her thoughts, as she is a partner agency that attends OSSO Partner meetings. S. Shears shared that J. Brown Miller has done a great job, she sends out email reminders and keeps partners up to date regarding job fairs and shares great data and information. B. Rice asked the Board for any further questions. None brought forward. B. Rice asked the Board for a motion to approve a one-year contract extension for JBM HR Consulting as One-Stop System Operator for PY23 (July 1, 2023 – June 30, 2024) Motion by K. Schuler. Second by S. Shears. All in favor. No abstentions. **Unanimous vote in favor of approval of a one-year contract extension for PY23 (July 1, 2023 to June 30, 2024 in an amount of \$10,000 for JBM HR Consulting, Inc. as One-Stop System Operator.** J. Brown Miller was asked to return to the meeting.

- B. B. Rice shared with the Board the need to transfer funds from the Administration budget to Youth in an amount of up to \$20,000 for Program Year 23 which starts July 1, 2023. B. Rice explained that NYS Fiscal and Oversight Technical Assistance has shared that at the beginning of the program year, WDBs have the ability to transfer large dollar amounts instead of doing smaller amounts throughout the program year. B. Rice stated that this will give J. Klemer better ability to track and monitor funding obligations and allocations. Moving dollars from the Administrative budget into the Youth budget gives further ability for Niagara County Employment and Training (NCET) Counselors to serve individuals in the program. W. Carroll asked if this transfer is consistent with previous years. J. Klemer answered that this amount is



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the same as what was requested in the previous program year. B. Rice opened the floor for further questions. None brought forward. B. Rice asked for a motion to approve the transfer of PY23 funds from Administration to Youth in an amount of up to \$20,000. Motion made by W. Carroll. Second by L. Collins. All in favor. No abstentions. **Unanimous approval of the transfer of PY23 funds from Administration to Youth in an amount of up to \$20,000.**

- C. B. Rice shared with the Board the revisions to the Adult and DW Individual Training Accounts (ITA) specifically for CDL-A training. It was brought to her attention that some CDL programs are only three weeks long and based on participant performance it is encouraged to update the duration of training to 240 hours. T. Zyra asked if providers will be able to accommodate that time frame. B. Rice shared that she and NCET have had discussions with the current CDL-A training providers regarding the change. Both were amenable, one had already implemented such a change. S. Shears asked which schools are currently on the Eligible Training Providers list for CDL-A. B. Rice shared that Buffalo Tractor Trailer School and Steven's Driving School are currently providing training. D. Jablonski added that CDL-A drivers are in extremely high demand across the country. In the first year many drivers earn \$100,000 - \$120,000. M. Bartlett asked if there are currently any training providers in Niagara County. B. Rice shared that unfortunately there are not, but currently B. Rice, NCET, Niagara County Economic Development and NCCC are working on a WORC grant opportunity that would include a CDL program. Regarding the item, B. Rice added that the policy revisions will also firm up the submission of attendance sheets by participants. In some cases, participants are not submitting attendance sheets in a timely matter. The revised policy will state that lack of compliance could affect further funding, which may improve compliance. B. Rice opened the floor for further questions. None brought forward. B. Rice asked for a motion to approve the revisions to the Adult and DW ITA policy. Motion made by T. Zyra. Second by J. Lang. All in favor. No abstentions. **Unanimous approval of the revisions to the Adult and Dislocated Worker ITA policy.**

B. Rice explained to the Board that many of the follow revisions (items D-G) are due to policy changes through New York State Department of Labor, adjustments that need to be made based on what staff are encountering with participants, and changes in demand for training and programs.

- D. B. Rice shared with the Board the need to remove Home Health Aide (HHA) and Certified Nursing Assistant (CNA) from the demand occupation list for Classroom Training (CRT). She explained that these unfortunately are not good paying, full-time jobs. D. Jablonski added that participants who seek WIOA funding for training as a Licensed Practical Nurse (LPN) or Registered Nurse (RN) are sometimes turned away, as the CNA and HHA certifications are currently seen as employable positions based on the demand occupation list. Removing CNA and HHA would allow those with that certification to become upskilled with the LPN or RN. M. Bartlett added that ONBOCES has been running a free CNA class in Niagara Falls. The interest in the course has dropped off as participants has expressed frustration with training for six weeks only to find that they won't be making good money. B. Rice opened the floor for further questions. None brought forward. B. Rice asked for a motion to approve the removal of CNA and HHA from the CRT demand occupation list. Motion made by T. Zyra. Second by



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- L. Collins. All in favor. No abstentions. **Unanimous approval of removing CNA and HHA from the CRT demand occupation list.**
- E. B. Rice explained the revision to the WIOA Youth incentive policy, removing Technical Training. Currently the Technical Training incentive is a separate incentive and is duplicative. Removing it does not completely remove Technical Training as an incentive as it will be included under “WIOA recognized certificates.” B. Rice opened the floor for questions. None brought forward. B. Rice asked for a motion to approve the revision to the WIOA Youth Incentives policy. Motion made by S. Shears. Second by T. Grzebinski. All in favor. No abstentions. **Unanimous approval of the revision to the WIOA Youth Incentives policy.**
- F. B. Rice shared with the Board the need to update the WIOA Youth Supportive Services policy regarding the number of Driving Lessons for Driver’s Education. B. Rice shared that there have been issues with Youth taking a great number of lessons, sometimes with more than one trainer. Current driving packages for Youth include 7 lessons, with the option for 10 lessons if the driver trainer indicates the extra lessons are needed. B. Rice recommended limiting the policy to 10 lessons as on average many youth can complete driving lessons in that time. W. Carroll asked what the cost of lessons are. J. Klemer shared that she does not have the exact figure with her, but the average cost is around \$500 per participant. B. Rice shared that this supportive service helps to draw Youth into the program and gives many of them the opportunity to gain their driver’s license by learning from an instructor. Many Youth do not have the opportunity to learn to drive from a family member or caregiver. S. Shears asked for clarification regarding supportive services. B. Rice shared that WIOA Supportive Services can include hygiene packs, work clothing and tools, interview outfits, and the cost of training related books and fees. B. Rice directed the Board members to the agenda packet that was emailed to them and encouraged them to read the Supportive Services policy to gain a further understanding of the local policy. B. Rice opened the floor for further questions. None brought forward. B. Rice asked for a motion to approve the revisions to the Driver’s Education portion of the Supportive Services policy. Motion made by M. Bartlett. Second by N. Aktar. All in favor. No abstentions. **Unanimous approval of the revisions to the Driver’s Education portion of the WIOA Youth Supportive Services policy.**
- G. B. Rice shared with the Board that through updates and changes made by New York State Department of Labor it is necessary to update the WIOA Youth Eligibility Guide and Eligibility Policy which is used by counselors to determine eligibility into the program for in-school and out-of-school youth. B. Rice reviewed the changes and additions to the guide regarding the different criteria and five percent rules. J. Feuerman asked if a homeschooled youth were to apply, what category would they fall into. B. Rice explained they would be an in-school youth as home school programs have to be approved by State Education. B. Rice shared that many of the changes will allow for more youth to be eligible for funding. B. Rice opened the floor for further questions. None brought forward. B. Rice asked for a motion to approve the revisions to the WIOA Youth Eligibility policy. Motion made by J. Lang. Second by K. Schuler. All in favor. No abstentions. **Unanimous approval to approve the revisions to the WIOA Youth Eligibility policy.**



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B. Rice turned the floor over to J. Klemer for items H and I.

H. J. Klemer explained the needed changes to the PY22 Budget. Regarding the Adult budget, she explained the transfer from DW to Adult increased to \$375,000, as approved by the Board. She noted that the increase in transferred funds were primarily going towards the Adult training and supportive services budget categories. J. Klemer then reviewed the DW budget with the Board and noted the funds being moved from that budget to the Adult budget. J. Klemer reviewed the Administration budget with the Board. She noted that there are minor adjustments. \$2,000 was moved from operational to staff costs in order to ensure costs are covered, as she is estimating staff costs to be a bit higher than originally estimated. J. Klemer noted that these funds are being moved between budget lines. J. Klemer opened the floor for further questions. None brought forward. B. Rice asked the Board for a motion to approve the PY22 Budget adjustments as presented. Motion made by C. Lattanzio. Second by T. Grzebinski. All in favor. No abstentions. **Unanimous approval of the PY22 Budget adjustments as presented.**

I. J. Klemer shared with the Board that the start of the new program year, PY23, is July 1, 2023. J. Klemer reviewed the PY23 budget pages as presented in the packet Board members received at the start of the meeting. She explained that as in previous years, carry in funds are noted in the budget. She noted the anticipated transfer of approximately \$350,000 from DW to Adult. She also noted that the Adult budget is spread across staff costs, operation, training, and supportive services and pointed out the substantial Adult training budget. Regarding the DW budget, she noted funds being carried into the budget, the estimated \$350,000 transfer to Adult, and the remaining funds from the previous DW grant, Emergency Relief National Dislocated Worker Grant. B. Rice added that the definition for DW participants is harder to qualify for, and with the ER-NDW Grant being used more specifically for DW participants, the ability to move funds to the Adult budget and still serve DW participants is good for those needing funding. J. Klemer moved onto the Youth budget. She explained the transfer of funds from the Administration budget, which was discussed earlier in the meeting. J. Klemer moved on to the Administrative budget reviewing line items and dollar amounts. J. Klemer opened the floor for further questions. C. Lattanzio asked why 100% of the funds were not allocated. J. Klemer explained that WIOA funds are received in Notices of Obligation Authority (NOAs) which are not given as a full amount, but a smaller portion at first. She added that WIOA requires 80% of the funds to be obligated but that Niagara tries to utilize 90% in an effort to not under or over spend. Adjustments to the budget are utilized throughout the program year as needed. J. Klemer opened the floor for further questions. T. Grzebinski asked why there was no PY22 Youth budget in order to make comparisons. J. Klemer stated that there were no adjustments needed to the PY22 Youth budget, so it was not included with the previous PY22 budget adjustments presented. She offered to email the PY22 Youth budget to Board members after the meeting. B. Rice asked if other questions or clarification was needed by Board members regarding the budget. None brought forward. B. Rice asked for a motion to approve the PY23 Budget as presented. Motion made by L. Collins. Second by D. Tandon. All in favor. No abstentions. **Unanimous approval of the PY23 Budget as presented.**

J. B. Rice explained to the Board the need to approve a transfer of an amount up to \$400,000 from DW to Adult as J. Klemer had explained in the meeting. This early approval of a larger



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transfer amount than what has been estimated in the PY23 budgets, was advised by New York State Department of Labor fiscal and technical assistance personnel to help reduce the need for multiple transfer approvals by the Board. B. Rice opened the floor for further questions. None brought forward. B. Rice asked the Board for a motion to approve the transfer of PY23 funds from DW to Adult in an amount up to \$400,000. Motion made by T. Grzebinski. Second by C. Lattanzio. All in favor. No abstentions. **Unanimous approval of the transfer of PY23 funds from DW to Adult in an amount of up to \$400,000.**

IV. Informational Items

- A. B. Rice provided the Board with an update regarding the WIOA Youth Program. The goal of the PY22 program year (ending June 30, 2023) was 90 planned Youth enrollments. 94 youth are currently enrolled. The goal for the next program year, PY23, starting on July 1, 2023 and ending June 30, 2024 is 75 planned Youth enrollments. B. Rice shared that the decreased goal is due to increased reporting requirements, counselors are also tasked with the TANF summer youth program which absorbs some of the work experience wages, and due to changes in eligibility New York State has shared they anticipate local areas enrolling fewer in-school youth. B. Rice also shared that serving a smaller number of youth will not only benefit counselors, but youth as well as they will better receive the time and services needed. B. Rice opened the floor for questions. None brought forward.
- B. B. Rice informed the Board that the New York State Gun Violence Prevention (NYSGVP) Grant closed on March 31, 2023. Since then New York State has reopened and extended the grant until March 31, 2024. B. Rice shared Niagara's accomplishments: 24 youth were hired full-time using 90% wage reimbursement for On-the-Job training, 20 youth were hired in subsidized work experiences, 11 youth received supportive services that related to employment, and one youth received classroom training. A total of 52 youth have been served to date, and 44 have stayed with employers after the training was completed. Those 44 count toward the state goal of 50 hires. Since the grant has been extended, NCET has approximately \$35,000 left to spend by March 31, 2024. B. Rice assured the Board that NCET is aligned to hit the goal of the program. M. Martin thank B. Rice and D. Jablonski for their accomplishments with the NYSGVP grant. He noted that many other areas are underspent and struggling to spend their grant. He added the outcomes and remaining dollar amount show how well the team has worked and how passionate they are to get youth into the program. B. Rice and D. Jablonski thanked M. Martin for his comments.
- C. B. Rice turned the floor over to J. Brown Miller of JBM HR Consulting to give the One-Stop Operator report. J. Brown Miller noted the GVP and WIOA Youth parts of her report were covered by B. Rice, she added that her report (which was included in the packet prior to the meeting) included further details regarding the businesses Youth were placed with under GVP in On-the-Job training and Work Experience opportunities. J. Brown Miller shared with the Board the information regarding Classroom Training: 84 participants enrolled at the end of the third quarter, participants utilized 11 different Approved Training Providers, and utilized 20 different courses. At the end of quarter three, 13 had successfully completed training and 70 were in progress. She noted that within the report were the names of training providers and courses utilized. J. Brown Miller moved on to On-the-Job training: 20 participants enrolled at the end of the third quarter, 10 different companies had provided OJT opportunities to



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- participants in 15 different job titles. At the end of quarter three, seven participants had completed training successfully and nine were in progress. J. Brown Miller opened the floor for further questions. None brought forward. B. Rice thanked J. Brown Miller for her report.
- D. B. Rice turned the floor over to D. Martinez to give an update on the WDB Inclusion Committee. D. Martinez shared with the Board that in April a diversity, equity and inclusion panel and career fair was held in Buffalo Public Library. The panelists included B. Rice and J. Feuerman. The panel discussed challenges and strategies to find talent in the post-pandemic world, and included conversations relating to people with barriers to employment. This discussion was so well received and sparked many great conversations. Because of this, the Inclusion Committee will be hosting a virtual panel of similar information and discussion on June 14th at 8:30 am titled “Where did they go?”. D. Martinez shared that should anyone be interested in attending, please reach out to him or B. Rice. B. Rice opened the floor for further questions. None brought forward.
- E. B. Rice opened the floor to Board members and guests for announcements.
- a. D. Jablonski shared that NCET has an upcoming Job Fair in Oppenheim Park on Wednesday, June 7th. Approximately 60 employers have signed up to attend. D. Jablonski and NCET staff are hopeful for another great turn out as previous job fairs have had significant job seeker attendance. D. Jablonski also shared that NCET will be opening an office in Lockport in the Civil Defense Building on Hawley Street. The grand opening is planned for Monday, June 12th at 1:30. There is a small pop-up job fair that day as part of the grand opening celebration which will be attending by Rubberform, Venture For the, Niagara County Human Resources and Elderwood at Lockport. D. Jablonski also shared that NCET plans to hold two more job fairs this year in August and September.
 - b. M. Bartlett offered thanks to the partnership ONBOCES has with NCET. She shared that 80% of ONBOCES students are entering their training through WIOA. She appreciates how well the partnership works with helping people get training and find jobs. No further announcements brought forward.

V. Motion to adjourn.

B. Rice thanked the members in attendance for their time and requested a motion to adjourn. Motion by W. Carroll. Second by M. Martin. All in favor. **Unanimous vote in favor of adjournment.** The WDB Meeting adjourned at 8:56 a.m. The next WDB Meeting is scheduled for September 12, 2023 at 8:00 a.m. at the Niagara County Center for Economic Development.

Respectfully submitted,

Helen Dennis