



**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 – June 7, 2022
ZOOM Conference: Video and Audio Conference

Members Present: Nasreen Akhtar, Marueen Bartlett, Jeanne Battaglia, William Carroll, Michael Casale, Lindsay Collins, Joel Feuerman, Kathleen Granchelli, Tom Grzebinski, John Lang, Cathy Lattanzio, Dennis Martinez, John Scherrer, Kory Schuler, Suzanne Shears, Divya Tandon, Michele Taylor, Todd Zyra

Members Excused: John Hartwell, David Miller, Jerald Wolfgang

Members Absent: Paul Brown, Timothy Lederhaus, Michael Martin, Bob Palka, Tom Seaman, Shawn Williams

WDB Staff: Helen Dennis, Joanne Klemer, Bonnie Rice

Guests/Staff Present: Donald Jablonski – NCET

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 member:** Divya Tandon of SJI Properties, LLC. 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 March 8, 2022: 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 March minutes as presented. Motion made by M. Bartlett. Second by L. Collins. No abstentions. **Unanimous vote in favor of approval of the March 8, 2022 meeting minutes.**
- b) April 7, 2022 and May 5, 2022 Executive Committee Meeting were presented as a matter of record to the Board. No vote was necessary.

III. Old Business



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All information regarding each item was distributed to the Board members through email prior to the meeting.

- A. B. Rice informed the Board that the Executive Committee on April 7th had approved the ability to transfer funds as needed from DW to Adult in an amount of up to \$175,000. B. Rice asked for a motion to approve the transfer of funds from DW to Adult in an amount of up to \$175,000. Motion made by K. Granchelli. Second by J. Lang. B. Rice opened the floor for questions. None brought forward. No abstentions. **Unanimous vote in favor of the transfer of funds from DW to Adult in an amount of up to \$175,000.**
- B. B. Rice informed the Board that the items would be voted in a Slate Vote. The items were previously approved by the Executive Committee on May 5th. B. Rice reviewed the following:
- a) Approve the ability to access Erie County WIOA funds in an amount of up to \$50,000 in Adult ITA funding on a reimbursement basis, as needed. B. Rice explained that the funding is for participants that are attending Classroom Training. NCET has done a great job spending funds to train individuals in Niagara; through an agreement with Erie County, we can tap into their funding to provide further opportunities to Niagara County residents without having to turn them away.

Items b – d are all related to the following policies that had part-time employment defined differently. The listed policies have been updated to unify working less than 30 hours per week as part-time employment, which is also the national standard.

- b) Approve ITA policy – revised to define part-time employment as working less than 30 hours per week.
- c) Approve ITA during COVID policy – revised to define part-time employment as working less than 30 hours per week.
- d) Approve Priority of Service policy – revised to define part-time employment as working less than 30 hours per week.

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-d). Motion made by L. Collins. Second by K. Schuler. B. Rice opened the floor for questions. None brought forward. No abstentions. **Unanimous vote in favor of the slate vote, items a-d.**

IV. New Business

- A. B. Rice shared that the WDB had released an 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, 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. Currently Don Jablonski, Director of NCET, has filled the roll. Due to changes in grants and opportunities, he no longer has the capacity to assume the role. With the release of the RFP for OSSO, one bid was received. B. Rice explained that New York State (NYS) considers that as a failed procurement, but an analysis can be submitted and a single source award can be awarded through contract. B. Rice shared with the Board that the RFP Review Committee members individually evaluated the single bid, convened a meeting to discuss the bid, and met with the bidder, JBM HR Consulting, to ask further questions and gain a better understanding of the bid. From there, the Review Committee discussed the evaluation questions provided by NYS to analyze the potential of a single source award. B. Rice reviewed



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the failed procurement analysis with the Board. B. Rice said the Review Committee had three choices for next steps: Evaluate the single bidder's proposal and recommend it to the Board to for funding approval, reject the proposal and recommend the Board re-issue the RFP, or reject the proposal and recommend the Board approve the WDB as the One-Stop System Operator (which would require the NYS Governor's approval). B. Rice shared with the Board that the Review Committee recommends going to contract with JBM HR Consulting, Inc. as a single source award in an amount of up to \$10,000. B. Rice opened the floor for questions regarding the failed procurement process or the analysis. K. Granchelli shared that YMCA has been a bidder previously so they had received the RFP and reviewed. After reviewing, YMCA felt they did not have the capacity due to staff shortages, and felt that question three of the failed procurement analysis was accurate for many businesses and opportunities. B. Rice asked for a motion to approve and award the OSSO proposal as a single source award to JBM HR Consulting, Inc. for July 1, 2022 to June 30, 2023 in the amount of \$10,000. Motion made by K. Granchelli. Second by T. Zyra. B. Rice opened the floor for questions. M. Bartlett asked where the organization resides. B. Rice shared that the business is located in Niagara County. D. Jablonski commented that he has previously worked with owner Jeannine Brown Miller, and that the Board would be of great benefit to appoint her. B. Rice opened the floor for further questions. None brought forward. No abstentions. **Unanimous vote in favor to approve and award the OSSO proposal as a single source award to JBM HR Consulting, Inc. for July 1, 2022 to June 30, 2023 in the amount of \$10,000.**

- B. Prior to the meeting, Board members received the Budget via email for review. B. Rice shared that Program Year (PY) 22 starts July 1, 2022 and ends June 30, 2023. B. Rice turned the floor over to J. Klemer to review and explain the budget with the Board. J. Klemer explained that the Board had received the projected and proposed budget for PY22. There are four program budgets: Adult, Dislocated Worker (DW), Youth and Administration, each similarly formatted. The top section of the budget shows where the money is coming from. J. Klemer provided a review of the Adult program budget. The Adult program has carry-in funds from the previous year, of which 100% will be spent. The next line shows the current program year allocation, of which approximately 91% will be spent. The last line shows the transfer of funds from DW, which is an estimate for the upcoming year similar to an earlier transfer that occurred the current program year. The overall Adult budget is approximately \$900,000 for the upcoming program year. J. Klemer reviewed the proposed budgeted items in the Adult program budget. Four major cost categories are listed: staff costs, operational, training and support/other. J. Klemer opened the floor for questions. None brought forward. J. Klemer moved onto the DW budget. She reviewed with the Board the funding amounts and spending categories. J. Klemer opened the floor for questions. M. Barlett asked if the WDB salaries is based on one staff member represented over the various tabs. J. Klemer explained that cost allocations are based on how staff is spending their time across the programs. J. Klemer shared that the proposed DW budget stands at \$501,500. J. Klemer moved on to the proposed Youth budget. She reviewed with the Board the funding amounts and spending categories. Total proposed budget for Youth is \$721,000. J. Klemer opened the floor for questions. None brought forward. J. Klemer moved on to the proposed Administration budget. She reviewed with the Board the funding amounts and spending categories. Total proposed budget for Administration is \$197,000. J. Klemer shared that some funds will be transferred into the Youth budget from



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Administration, which is allowable under WIOA. J. Klemer opened the floor for questions. None brought forward. B. Rice asked for a motion to approve the PY22 Budget as presented. Motion made by J. Feuerman. Second by D. Martinez. B. Rice opened the floor for questions. None brought forward. No abstentions. **Unanimous vote in favor to approve the PY22 Budget as presented.**

- C. B. Rice shared with the Board that Niagara has the ability to add two new occupations to the Classroom Training (CRT) Demand Occupation list: Massage Therapists, and Landscaping and Groundskeeping Workers. B. Rice explained the process of adding occupations to the CRT Demand Occupations list by working with NYS Department of Labor and submitting proof that there is a demand for these occupations in Niagara County. Adding these occupations allows WIOA funds to be used to train participants in these occupations through Classroom Training. B. Rice asked for a motion to approve adding Massage Therapists and Landscaping and Groundskeeping Workers to the Demand Occupation List. Motion made by M. Casale. Second by L. Collins. B. Rice opened the floor for questions. M. Bartlett asked for clarification on Nursing and occupations looking to be trained by ONBOCES. B. Rice offered to discuss the demand occupation list after the meeting with M. Bartlett. No further questions brought forward. No abstentions. **Unanimous vote in favor to approve adding Massage Therapists as well as Landscaping and Groundskeeping Workers to the CRT Demand Occupation List.**

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 96 youth, exceeding their goal. For PY22, NCET plans to enroll 90 youth.
- 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 took a moment to thank the Board for the several years of support as OSSO. He shared that with the responsibilities as NCET Director and increases of department grants and funding, he has been busy and looks forward to focusing on upcoming growth and changes. D. Jablonski thanked the Board for their support as OSSO and looks forward to working with the incoming OSSO. D. Jablonski shared that from July 1, 2021 to date, 57 people have been hired using WIOA funded On-the-Job Training and 118 people have received WIOA scholarships for training in demand occupations. 96 youth have enrolled in the WIOA Youth programs. D. Jablonski shared that 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 youth hired. NCET's goal is to have 50 youth hired by 2023. Currently 19 youth have been hired at six companies in Niagara County. 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 TANF Summer Youth Employment Program is operational. NCET is accepting applications for youth (ages 14-20) and for worksites. NCET proposed putting 100 youth to work, but that may increase. D. Jablonski shared information for the career fair at Oppenheim Park at 11 am on June 8th. The career fair



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is fully booked, with 60 businesses scheduled to attend. Another outdoor career fair is being organized for Lockport and North Tonawanda. D. Jablonski shared that this fall a full-scale indoor event will be scheduled as well. D. Jablonski opened the floor for questions. None brought forward. B. Rice added that Board members are welcomed and encouraged to visit the job fairs.

- C. Youth Committee Update: K. Granchelli shared that the Youth Committee has not met since March. She thanked D. Jablonski for sharing information regarding NCET Youth and the TANF Summer Youth Employment Program.
- D. Inclusion Committee Update: 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 more business workshops for employers and business professionals. In April, the committee hosted a business training with Microsoft to talk about the free accessibility features available in Microsoft Office products. D. Martinez shared that the committee has been engaged with the WDB Newsletter and NCET newsletter to create a diversity business spotlight story to share stories of Niagara County employers who have benefited from hiring diversity in their workforces. The first was Joel Feuerman at Home Depot, who is a champion of diversity in Niagara County for Home Depot. D. Martinez shared that the committee hopes to do a new spotlight on a regular basis. In the fall, the committee is planning a cultural competency event addressing LBGTQ+ issues and employment for employers.
- E. WDB Networking Mixer: B. Rice shared that the Board will be invited to an in-person event at Trott on October 18th at 2 p.m. It will be an opportunity for Board members to meet and connect. NCET and WDB Staff will provide a tour of the center, and light refreshments will be provided. Please RSVP to H. Dennis or B. Rice.
- F. Announcements by Board Members: B. Rice opened the floor to any members who wished to make an announcement. J. Scherrer shared there is a zoning board meeting for the planning stages of the Amazon project for the Town of Niagara June 7th (tonight) at 7 PM at the Town of Niagara Town Hall. J. Scherrer and others from the Building Trades will be in attendance and any Boards members that wish to attend in support would be appreciated. M. Casale thanked J. Scherrer for sharing the information and added that the project is pretty transformational and viewed as a catalyst for the County, providing 1,200 good paying jobs for the community. M. Casale also shared that Amazon will be looking into doing transportation mitigation work along Lockport Road on a NYS certified shovel ready site. There has been a review of the traffic that will be created with both trucks and employees. The Town of Niagara website has a lot of documentation regarding the project for review. M. Casale shared that NCDED and the IDA look forward to continuing to work with Amazon. D. Jablonski shared that he had reviewed the documents as the Chairman of the Lockport Zoning Board of Appeals and has been in contact with the Town of Niagara Zoning Board members. D. Jablonski shared that he feels the project is transformational. M. Casale agreed and shared with the Board the benefits the project would have to the County. N. Aktar shared that the Naz716 Business and Cultural Center (www.naz716.com) will be having a community day with activities, food and music. N. Aktar also shared that the Center now has the Naz Studio which hosts a daily podcast with different speakers and topics each day. N. Aktar invited Board members to be on the podcast and promote events. She also shared there are business suites available for rent. ONBOCES is on



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site teaching English and naturalization classes and other opportunities for helping small businesses. N. Aktar shared that they are looking to help the community in any way they can, and thanked the Board for the opportunity to share. M. Bartlett thanked NCET for assistance with participants in skilled training programs. She shared that new this year ONBOCES went to every single high school and promoted skilled trades offerings for graduating seniors. There are currently 15 students who will be starting in the adult skills trades class. Most of the students will be applying for WIOA Youth funding. Two programs will run this summer in Niagara Falls, Welding and Precision Machining. The program is for graduates and older. The Precision Machining and Welding courses start July 5th and spots are still available. Both classes will run in the morning. B. Rice asked if employers could send employees to be part of the program to gain training. M. Bartlett shared that yes, that is an option and many funding options are available. M. Bartlett also shared that ONBOCES has been covering the Nurse Assisting program for free in Niagara Falls because Niagara Falls Housing Authority won the Blue Fund grant that subsidized the training. They cannot apply again, so ONBOCES will be applying. The grant would allow ONBOCES to run Nurse Assisting, Phlebotomy and HHA trainings for free. M. Bartlett shared that ONBOCES is looking for letters of support and will send information to the Board if they would like to assist with creating a letter. B. Rice asked if there were further announcements from Board members. None brought forward.

V. Adjournment

B. Rice thanked the members in attendance for their time and requested a motion to adjourn. Motion made by J. Feuerman. Second by D. Martinez. 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 September 13, 2022 at 8:00 a.m. through Zoom.**

Respectfully submitted,
Helen Dennis