



**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 – September 12, 2023**  
**Niagara County Center for Economic Development/IDA**  
**6311 Inducon Corporate Drive in Sanborn, NY**

**Members Present:** Nasreen Akhtar, Maureen Bartlett, Michael Casale, Lindsay Collins, Joel Feuerman, John Lang, Michael Martin, Dennis Martinez, David Miller, Bill Robbins, Jim Scordato, Tom Seaman, Suzanne Shears, Michele Taylor, Katie Thompson, Todd Zyra

**Members Excused:** Jeanne Battaglia, William Carroll, Kathleen Granchelli, Tom Grzebinski, Cathy Lattanzio, John Scherrer, Kory Schuler

**Members Absent:** David Haylett, Tim Lederhaus, Divya Tandon, Shawn Williams.

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

**Guests/Staff Present:** Jeannine Brown Miller – JBM Consulting, OSSO; Donald Jablonski – Niagara County Employment and Training

**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 new Board Members Bill Robbins of Rubberform Recycled Products, Jim Scordato of 1199 SEIU United Healthcare Workers East, and Katie Thompson of Matrix Imaging Solutions. 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 June 6, 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 June minutes as presented. Motion made by T. Zyra. Second by S. Shears. B. Robbins, J. Scordato and K. Thompson abstain as new members. **Unanimous vote in favor of the approval of the June 6, 2023 Meeting Minutes.**
- B. B. Rice reviewed and explained the needed policy updates from the Executive Committee Vote at the Executive Committee Meeting on August 17, 2023 and requested the Board vote on the updates from that vote. B. Rice explained to the Board that New York State Department of Labor (NYSDOL) had proposed policy changes to further clarify WDB policies. B. Rice asked for a vote to approve the Executive Committee vote regarding the clarification to the Adult and Dislocated Worker Individual Training Account (ITA) for marketable skills and adding language for upskilling. Motion made by M. Bartlett, Second by L. Collins. **Unanimous vote in favor of the approval of the August 17, 2023 Executive Committee vote.**



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### III. New Business

All updates to items listed below were noted in the Agenda Packet sent to Board member prior to the meeting.

- A. B. Rice explained to the Board that after the approval of the Executive Committee regarding the revisions to the Adult and Dislocated Worker ITA policy, further updates and clarification was proposed by NYSDOL. B. Rice explained that a statement regarding equitable provision of service was added and the portion of the policy regarding Basic Skills Assessment. B. Rice opened the floor for questions, none brought forward. B. Rice asked the Board for a motion to approve the clarifications and updates to the Adult and Dislocated Worker ITA policy. Motion by M. Casale. Second by D. Miller. All in favor. No abstentions. **Unanimous vote in favor of approval of the clarifications and updates to the Adult and Dislocated Worker ITA policy.**
- B. B. Rice shared with the Board the revisions needed for the Adult and Dislocated Worker Supportive Services policy. B. Rice explained that with the increase of gas prices an increase to the daily rate of reimbursement for transportation was recommended in the amount of \$10 per day of in-person training attendance. B. Rice opened the floor for questions, none brought forward. B. Rice asked the Board for a motion to approve the update to the Adult and Dislocated Worker Supportive Services policy. Motion by S. Shears. Second by L. Collins. All in favor. No abstentions. **Unanimous vote in favor of approval of the updates to the Adult and Dislocated Worker Supportive Services policy.**
- C. B. Rice shared with the Board the revisions to the Youth ITA policy. A statement regarding equitable provision of services was added to the policy as proposed by NYSDOL. B. Rice opened the floor for questions, none brought forward. B. Rice asked the Board for a motion to approve the update to the Youth ITA policy. Motion by T. Zyra. Second by J. Lang. All in favor. No abstentions. **Unanimous vote in favor of approval of the updates to the Youth ITA policy.**
- D. B. Rice shared with the Board the revisions to the Youth Supportive Services policy. A statement regarding equitable provision of services was added to the policy as proposed by NYSDOL. B. Rice explained that with the increase of gas prices an increase to the daily rate of reimbursement for transportation was recommended in the amount of \$10 per day of in-person training attendance. B. Rice explained the clarification to the Child Care section of the Youth Supportive Service policy. She explained the need to add information regarding the maximum dollar amount per Youth enrolled, which is \$500 per participants enrollment. B. Rice opened the floor for questions, none brought forward. B. Rice asked the Board for a motion to approve the updates to the Youth Supportive Services policy. Motion by M. Casale. Second by T. Zyra. All in favor. No abstentions. **Unanimous vote in favor of approval of the updates to the Youth Supportive Services policy.**
- E. B. Rice shared with the Board the revisions to the Ticket to Work ITA policy. A statement regarding equitable provision of services was added to the policy as proposed by NYSDOL. B.



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Rice shared that clarification for marketable skills and language for upskilling was added to the policy. B. Rice added that the Board had previously approved an increase to the Adult and DW ITA funding cap. To further clarify and update policies, the Ticket to Work ITA policy needed its training cap from \$4,000 to \$5,000. As previously noted in a prior meeting, the cost of training and supplies has increased. B. Rice opened the floor for questions, none brought forward. B. Rice asked the Board for a motion to approve the updates to the Ticket to Work ITA policy. Motion by J. Feuerman. Second by D. Martinez. All in favor. No abstentions. **Unanimous vote in favor of approval of the updates to the Ticket to Work Supportive Services policy.**

B. Rice took a moment to ask if the Board members had any questions regarding the updates. A discussion regarding agenda item pages was brought up by members. B. Rice noted changes to add to the Board Members understanding in future meetings. J. Feuerman shared his thoughts on the purpose of the Board and why the members are in attendance and involved. He added that although the presented policy changes feel dry, the policies in place assist a lot of people better their lives. A discussion on the advocacy of Board Members was had.

- F.** B. Rice shared with the Board the revisions to the Ticket to Work Supportive Services policy. B. Rice explained that with the increase of gas prices an increase to the daily rate of reimbursement for transportation was recommended in the amount of \$10 per day of in-person training attendance. B. Rice opened the floor for questions, none brought forward. B. Rice asked the Board for a motion to approve the updates to the Ticket to Work Supportive Services policy. Motion by S. Shears. Second J. Lang. All in favor. No abstentions. **Unanimous vote in favor of approval of the updates to the Ticket to Work Supportive Services policy.**
- G.** B. Rice shared with the Board the revisions to the New York State Gun Violence Prevention (NYSGVP) ITA policy. B. Rice added that the Board had previously approved an increase to the Adult and DW ITA funding cap. To further clarify and update policies, the NYSGVP ITA policy needed its training cap from \$4,000 to \$5,000. As previously noted in a prior meeting, the cost of training and supplies has increased. B. Rice opened the floor for questions, none brought forward. B. Rice asked the Board for a motion to approve the updates to the NYSGVP ITA policy. Motion by M. Bartlett. Second by T. Seamen. All in favor. No abstentions. **Unanimous vote in favor of approval of the updates to the NYSGVP ITA policy.**
- H.** B. Rice shared with the Board the revisions to the NYSGVP Supportive Services policy. B. Rice explained that with the increase of gas prices an increase to the daily rate of reimbursement for transportation was recommended in the amount of \$10 per day of in-person training attendance. B. Rice opened the floor for questions, none brought forward. B. Rice asked the Board for a motion to approve the updates to the NYSGVP Supportive Services policy. Motion by T.Zyra. Second K. Thompson. All in favor. No abstentions. **Unanimous vote in favor of approval of the updates to the NYSGVP Supportive Services policy.**
- I.** B. Rice shared with the Board the revisions to the NYSGVP On-the-Job Training (OJT) policy. B. Rice explained that with the increase of gas prices an increase to the daily rate of



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reimbursement for transportation was recommended in the amount of \$10 per day of in-person training attendance. B. Rice opened the floor for questions, none brought forward. B. Rice asked the Board for a motion to approve the updates to the NYSGVP OJT policy. Motion by J. Scordato. Second T. Seamen. All in favor. No abstentions. **Unanimous vote in favor of approval of the updates to the NYSGVP Supportive Services policy.**

**J.** B. Rice shared with the Board the revision to the Basic Skills Deficiency policy. She explained that further language was need within the policy regarding locally administered assessments. The policy lists Niagara County Employment and Training, Niagara County Community College and Orleans Niagara BOCES as administrators of the Test of Adult Basic Education (TABE), Wide Range Achievement Test (WRAT) and Basic Achievement Skills Inventory (BASI) assessments. B. Rice opened the floor for questions, none brought forward. B. Rice asked the Board for a motion to approve the updates to the Basic Skills Deficiency policy. Motion by L. Collins. Second D. Miller. All in favor. No abstentions. **Unanimous vote in favor of approval of the updates to the Basic Skills Deficiency policy.**

**K.** B. Rice informed the Board of the need to release a Request for Proposal (RFP) for payroll services. TES Staffing is currently providing payroll services but their contract with the WDB will expire December 31, 2023. The RFP for Payroll Services will be in an amount of up to \$1,000,000 for a contract period of January 1, 2024 to December 31, 2024 with the ability for up to two, one year, contract extensions. B. Rice explained that the RFP will be released through Niagara County Purchasing through BidNet Direct and bids would be turned into Niagara County Purchasing and then reviewed by the RFP review team committee. The committee is tasked with recommending a bid to the Board, and the Board will have the opportunity to vote on the recommended bid. B. Rice opened the floor for questions. K. Thompson has questions regarding the previous contract extensions. J. Klemer provided clarification and dollar amounts. J. Scordato had questions regarding the review committee. B. Rice explained that she will be looking for Board Members to be a part of the review committee. She explained the process and responsibility of review committee members. D. Martinez shared his experience with being a part of past review committees and encouraged Board Members to volunteer to review. B. Rice asked the Board for a motion to approve release of an RFP for Payroll Services. Motion by D. Miller. Second N. Aktar. All in favor. No abstentions. **Unanimous vote in favor of approval for the release of the RFP for Payroll Services.**

#### **IV. Informational Items**

- A.** B. Rice provided the Board with an update regarding the WIOA Youth Program. The goal for the this program year, PY23, starting on July 1, 2023 and ending June 30, 2024 is 75 planned Youth enrollments. As of September 6<sup>th</sup>, five new youth have been enrolled and there are 53 participants carried in from the previous year. 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 has been extended the grant until March 31, 2024 and that Niagara County Employment and Training (NCET) had been awarded an additional \$30,000. She explained that these



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- additional funds had been from recouped unspent funds of other providers and reissued by NYSDOL. B. Rice shared with the Board the accomplishments of the NYSGVP as previously noted in prior meetings. M. Casale asked what the ages of the youth served under this grant. B. Rice shared that the NYSGVP grant served youth ages 16 – 24.
- 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: 97 participants enrolled at the end of the fourth quarter, participants utilized 11 different Approved Training Providers, and utilized 20 different courses. At the end of quarter four, 58 had successfully completed training and 33 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: 40 participants enrolled at the end of the fourth quarter, 18 different companies had provided OJT opportunities to participants in 23 different job titles. At the end of quarter four, 27 participants had completed training successfully and five were in progress. J. Brown Miller opened the floor for further questions. B. Rice added that these statistics show what a great year NCET has had. A lot of participants have gained training and services thanks to WIOA funding. 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 on September 27<sup>th</sup>, there will be another virtual presentation for DEI: What, How and Why. The presenter will be Kelly Services and they will be sharing their program of promoting employment candidates with barriers including statistics of success and benefits to businesses. D. Martinez encouraged Board Members to attend. He added that the Inclusion Committee is hopeful to get another presentation in before the end of the year. B. Rice opened the floor for further questions. M. Martin asked if with the equitable provision of services added to the policies, will the Board receive future data on equitability in order to be sure services are being provided? B. Rice shared that in the text weeks New York State will be doing an EO audit. She was hopeful that the State EO office would soon share statistics with the WDB as she currently doesn't have access to it, as the State data base does track that data. No further questions were brought forward.
- E. B. Rice turned the floor over to J. Klemer for an update regarding the Fiscal Audit recently conducted by New York State Financial Oversight and Technical Assistance (FOTA). J. Klemer shared that FOTA reviewed Niagara's policies, procedures, financials and documents. She reported that Niagara received a clean audit. She added that FOTA found Niagara to be low risk as we have had consistently clean audits. B. Rice thank J. Klemer and H. Dennis for their hard work and organization in reviewing documents and processes for NCET. She added that NCET staff is also to credit for their work and organization. B. Rice further explained to the Board that FOTA and NYSDOL program monitors preform quarterly reviews as well as annual reviews. J. Klemer and H. Dennis also provide quarterly reviews of the financials and programs offered.
- F. B. Rice gave a presentation to Board members of the recently purchased VR Headsets from Transfr VR by NYSDOL. She explained that the VR Headsets would give Career Centers the



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opportunity to provide training through different VR programs. The programs will offer Adults and Youth the opportunity for career exploration and certificate opportunities to further or start their professions. A video from Transfr VR was played so Board Members had a further understanding of what trainings are offered. B. Rice shared that NCET is hoping to incorporate the trainings into the center within the next year. N. Aktar asked for further connections to the VR headset opportunities as she has youth who would benefit.

- G. B. Rice opened the floor to Board members and guests for announcements.
- a. On behalf of D. Jablonski, B. Rice informed the Board Members of the upcoming NCET career fair at Oppenheim Park on September 27<sup>th</sup> from 11 am to 2 pm.
  - b. L. Collins invited Board Members to an upcoming golf tournament fundraiser. She can be contacted for further details.
  - c. M. Casale shared that in reviewing J. Brown Millers OSSO data, he was thrilled to see business who had attended a Workforce Development workshop had connected to NCET for OJT services. He shared with the Board details regarding the workshop and other presentations upcoming events with Niagara County Economic Development. He also shared the opportunities Niagara Falls High School is offering their students and how those graduates affect our local workforce. M. Casale shared that upcoming workshops and past recordings are available on their website, niagaracountybusiness.com.
  - d. M. Bartlett shared that ONBOCES offers training to youth in Sanborn as well as Adults at their Niagara Falls location. She shared that ONBOCES is looking to expand their Niagara Falls location. She asked Board Members willing to write a letter of support to contact her. She will also email members details for the letter.
- No further announcements from Board Members were brought forward.

**V. Motion to adjourn.**

B. Rice thanked the members in attendance for their time and requested a motion to adjourn. Motion by M. Casale. Second by J. Feuerman. All in favor. **Unanimous vote in favor of adjournment.** The WDB Meeting adjourned at 9:02 a.m. The next WDB Meeting is scheduled for November 14, 2023 at 8:00 a.m. at the Niagara County Center for Economic Development.

Respectfully submitted,

Helen Dennis