



**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 13, 2022
ZOOM Conference: Video and Audio Conference

Members Present: Nasreen Akhtar, Maureen Bartlett, Jeanne Battaglia, Michael Casale, Lindsay Collins, Joel Feuerman, Tom Grzebinski, Cathy Lattanzio, Michael Martin, Dennis Martinez, David Miller, Tom Seaman, Divya Tandon, Michele Taylor, Todd Zyra

Members Excused: Kathleen Granchelli, John Hartwell, John Lang, Kory Schuler

Members Absent: Paul Brown, William Carroll, Timothy Lederhaus, Bob Palka, John Scherrer, Suzanne Shears, Shawn Williams, Jerald Wolfgang

WDB Staff: Helen Dennis, Bonnie Rice

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

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 8:04 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 under NYS Virtual Meetings Law the WDB is allowed to hold virtual meetings. 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.

II. Old Business

B. Rice reviewed the agenda items section by section:

- a) Meeting minutes for June 7, 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 June minutes as presented. Motion made by D. Miller. Second by M. Bartlett. M. Martin abstains. **Unanimous vote in favor of approval of the June 7, 2022 meeting minutes.**

III. New Business

- a) B. Rice shared with the Board the Revised WIOA Youth Incentives Policy. There is need to update the existing policy, which rewards Youth for achievement of milestones throughout their time in the program. The change to the policy is for item 10 "Obtain a WIOA Recognized Certificate". The update includes the text "to exclude items in "1)". Item 1 will continue to allow Youth to be paid for achieving their GED, HSD, etc. Item 10 will allow to separately pay them for WIOA Certificates earned through training. This allows clarification and the ability to serve more Youth. B. Rice asked the Board for a motion to approve the updates. Motion made by J. Feuerman. Seconded by C. Lattanzio. B. Rice opened the floor for



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questions. None brought forward. **Unanimous vote in favor of approval to revise the WIOA Youth Incentives Policy.**

- b) B. Rice gave the Board some background information regarding Customized Training. She explained that under WIOA the training allows for Businesses to train current employees, through an external trainer, to provide training for employee retention, the introduction of new technologies, new production or services, or upgrading employees to new skills. Currently, the policy does not include text regarding a business applying for multiple funding projects under the “Staff Development, no wage upgrade” portion of the policy. The text “Multiple projects for the same business in the same funding year will be subject to further review based upon available funding” is to be added. This addition allows the WDB to review the funding request of a company applying for more than one Customized Training reimbursement in a program year to ensure the second reimbursement will not displace first-time applicants. B. Rice asked for a motion to approve the text in the policy. Motion made by T. Grzebinski. Seconded by M. Casale. B. Rice opened the floor for questions. None brought forward. **Unanimous vote in favor of approve to review the WIOA Customized Training Policy.**

IV. Informational Items

- a) B. Rice shared with the Board that because NCET is the sole training provider an update is required at each meeting on how Youth enrollment is progressing. The new program year (PY22) started on July 1. Within the first two months of the program year, we have four new youth enrolled and 59 youth carrying into the program from the previous program year, for a total of 63 youth currently enrolled. NCET plans for 90 enrollments by the end of the program year (June 30, 2023).
- b) B. Rice shared an update with the Board regarding New York State Temporary Assistance to Needy Families (TANF) Summer Youth Employment Program. B. Rice explained that the program puts Youth ages 14-20 to work during the summer. The program allows NCET to pay their wages through our contract with TES Staffing. 118 Niagara County youth gained summer jobs to gain paid work experience at 39 businesses throughout Niagara County. B. Rice added that if Board members as businesses are interested in participating next year, please get in contact with her to be added to the list of potential worksites.
- c) B. Rice gave an update regarding the NYS GVP Youth program. She reminded the Board that this grant allows for youth ages 18-24 in cities affected by gun violence to be hired by local employers and have 90% of their wages reimbursed, up to \$4000, during the start of their on-the-job training. 75% of Niagara’s GVP grant is to serve City of Niagara Falls youth, while 25% serves youth in Lockport. Currently, 20 youth have been directly hired by employers and are working full time. B. Rice opened the floor for questions regarding the Youth updates. M. Bartlett asked if the Youth program information and updates were online. B. Rice shared with the Board that when visiting www.worksource1.com they can navigate to the Youth Programs page in order to get more details regarding the programs, or they can call B. Rice directly with further questions.

B. Rice asked J. Feuerman to take a moment and welcome Jeannine Brown Miller of JBM Consulting, the new One-Stop System Operator for Niagara. J. Feuerman welcomed Jeannine Brown Miller and shared that she has an extensive background as a group facilitator and



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consultant, and he knows she will add a lot of value to the team. J. Brown Miller thanked J. Feuerman and shared that she looks forward to the time ahead.

- d) J. Brown Miller shared that she recently met with the One-Stop Partners and shared that they had good discussions during the meeting time. J. Brown Miller presented the Board with an update regarding NCET's programs for Program Year (PY) 21, quarter four (Q4). Regarding WIOA Youth, there were 7 new enrollments for Q4, for a total of 59 enrollments by the end of the quarter. For Classroom Training (CRT), there were 100 participants enrolled at the end of Q4 with 26 new enrollments in Q4. Participants attended training with 10 approved training providers in 18 courses. J. Brown Miller shared that she enjoyed seeing the list of training providers and courses as it's nice to see who is involved. For On-the-Job Training (OJT), there were 30 participants enrolled at the end of Q4 with 9 new enrollments. 18 companies provided training through 21 different job titles. J. Brown Miller also shared an update for the current program year, PY22 Q1 data. As of August 30, there are 35 participants enrolled or about to be enrolled in CRT. Six participants have applications awaiting review, 18 participants have applications moving through the funding process, and 11 participants are attending training. For OJT, seven participants are enrolled in training. For Youth, there are currently 4 new youth enrolled in services. B. Rice thanked J. Brown Miller for her report and welcomed her. B. Rice informed the Board that should they be looking for any further statistics to reach out to herself or J. Brown Miller. J. Brown Miller thanked the Board for their time. B. Rice opened the floor for questions. None brought forward. B. Rice also commented that NCET is off to a good start, even with only being two months into the year.
- e) D. Martinez gave an update regarding the Inclusion Committee. He shared that the Inclusion Committee is a special standing committee within the WDB which addresses diversity issues among workforce development programs and businesses throughout the County. D. Martinez shared that one of the Committee's yearly goals is to provide training to employers and service providers on diversity and inclusion issues as they affect business and workforce development. The Committee has committed to providing two trainings, in the spring and fall. The upcoming fall training is September 14th, virtually, and is a LGBTQ+ Diversity Training presented by Ron Piaseczny, President of Niagara Pride and also a member of the Inclusion Committee. D. Martinez shared with the Board members that there is room to attend, currently they have 40 business signed up for the free event. D. Martinez also shared that this presentation is typically \$100 per person, but Ron has agreed to do it for free. D. Martinez asked Board members to contact B. Rice or D. Martinez if they have any ideas for diversity topics they would like to see presented. D. Martinez also shared that the Inclusion Committee also tries to highlight businesses that have made a commitment to diversity in their workforce through articles about their efforts in the WDB and One-Stop newsletters. Should Board members like to share their efforts or nominate a business, please reach out to D. Martinez or B. Rice. The Inclusion Committee meets virtually and Board members who are interested in joining can contact B. Rice or D. Martinez.
- f) D. Jablonski shared with the Board members information regarding the upcoming indoor Career Fair, Wednesday, October 26 at the Niagara Riverside Resort in Niagara Falls. There is room for 70 businesses to attend and almost all spots have been reserved as the response has been phenomenal. There is a \$150 charge to the business, which includes lunch. D. Jablonski



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shared that it is anticipated that over 500 job seekers will attend. D. Jablonski stated that should Board members need further information they can contact him directly via email or by phone.

- g) B. Rice shared with the Board that she and M. Casale will be presenting at the upcoming New York Association of Training and Employment Professionals (NYATEP) and NYS Economic Development Council's statewide conference at the Niagara Falls Convention Center. B. Rice and M. Casale will be presenting a Workshop entitled "Economic and Workforce Development Collaboration: Our Experience in Niagara". The workshop will be about the strong relationship among Niagara's WDB, Employment & Training, and Economic Development Departments, which work together to create a seamless service delivery system for our local businesses and workforce. Interested Board Members can visit www.nyatep.org/2022FallConference to register to attend. J. Feuerman congratulated M. Casale and B. Rice on presenting at the conference. He added that it speaks volumes to the work they have accomplished together. D. Jablonski shared that he had recently spoken with Melinda Mack of NYATEP and she had asked him to share that if local businesses would like to be a sponsor of the event, please visit the NYATEP website or contact D. Jablonski.
- h) J. Feuerman shared with the Board details of the upcoming WDB Networking Event. J. Feuerman shared that one of his concerns is that Board Members understand the value and benefit of what they are doing on this Board. He shared that the Board Members assist in the success of the WDB and our local businesses and job seekers, and he appreciates their time and commitment. He shared the value of the positive changes in a participant's life as they are assisted through WIOA funding and how what the Board does influences those changes and values in that person's life. He encouraged Board Members to attend this optional meet and greet, and hopes all will consider attending.
- i) B. Rice opened the floor to Board Members for announcements.
M. Casale shared with the Board information on Targeted Business Workshops. He shared that 4-6 are conducted each year; some are general workshops that involve Economic Development Alliance Partners including Empire State Development, Small Business Administration, and NCET. He shared there are also Targeted Workforce Development and Training Workshops conducted every year. He added that the next Targeted Business Workshop is September 28th. Available resources will be discussed and shared to any local businesses in attendance.

N. Akhtar shared with the Board that NAS716 had summer youth workers through the TANF SYEP program this year. She shared that she had been a summer youth worker years ago and had learned so much. She was grateful for the opportunity to give back and shared that many of the kids who participate have no knowledge of work or how to contribute at a job. N. Akhtar shared that she was able to give the summer youth workers an opportunity to create and run their own events and the opportunity to learn the different aspects of putting an event together. N. Akhtar also shared that Aero Transportation does an annual turkey giveaway and they plan to give away 500 turkeys. Should any Board Members or businesses want to sponsor, help, or donate, please contact her.



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No further announcements brought forward.

V. Adjournment

B. Rice thanked the members in attendance for their time and requested a motion to adjourn. Motion made by M. Casale. Second by J. Feuerman. Unanimous vote in favor of adjournment. The Workforce Development Board meeting was **adjourned at 8:37 a.m.** **The next board meeting is scheduled for November 15, 2022 at 8:00 a.m. through Zoom.**

Respectfully submitted,
Helen Dennis