



**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 7, 2023

Naz716 Business and Cultural Center – 6951 Williams Road, Niagara Falls, NY

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

Members Excused: Maureen Bartlett, John Hartwell, Timothy Lederhaus, Michael Martin, Dennis Martinez, David Miller, Bob Palka.

Members Absent: Shawn Williams.

WDB Staff: Joanne Klemer, Bonnie Rice.

Guests/Staff Present: Jeannine Brown Miller – JBM Consulting, OSSO; Ann Enger – Ibero Business Center.

I. Call to Order

The meeting was called to order by J. Feuerman at 8:01 a.m. J. Feuerman welcomed all members and guests, and thanked N. Akhtar for hosting the meeting at her business location. J. Feuerman then called for a moment of silence to recognize the passing of Jerald Wolfgang, a long-time member and contributor to the Board. 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. 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. 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. B. Rice reviewed the following:

- A. B. Rice reminded the Board that the items addressed at the 11/15/22 Executive Committee were reviewed individually at the WDB Board meeting held 11/15/22. As quorum was not achieved on 11/15/22, the Executive Committee meeting followed. 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-f). Motion made by S. Shears. Second by W. Carroll. **Unanimous vote in favor of approval of the slate vote, Items a-f, with K. Granchelli abstaining.**
- B. B. Rice reviewed Items a-d individually. B. Rice said the Executive Committee had approved Items a-d on 2/1/23. 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 K. Granchelli. Second by W. Collins. **Unanimous vote in favor of approval of the slate vote, Items a-d.**

III. New Business



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- A. B. Rice explained the changes required by NYS Department of Labor to bring the WDB policy for WIOA Adult Priority of Service into compliance. The changes reflect additional Priority Populations identified by NYS Department of Labor. B. Rice asked the Board for a motion to approve the changes. Motion made by M. Casale. Second by T. Zyra. B. Rice opened the floor for questions. None brought forward. **Unanimous vote in favor of approval of revised WDB Policy for WIOA Adult Priority of Service.**

IV. Informational Items

- A. B. Rice turned the floor over to J. Klemer. J. Klemer reviewed the budget and provided background information. She explained that there are four programs which are funded: Adult, Dislocated Worker (DW), Youth, and Administration. The reports reflect the accrued expenditures through 1/31/23 compared to budget for the program year. 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 forward two years from award year. J. Klemer explained the budget pages in the Meeting Packet on pages 31-34. W. Carroll asked about the percentage of WIOA Adult ITA training amount. J. Klemer explained the report reflects the budget amount, accrued expenditures as of 1/31/23, and the amount remaining. W. Carroll was satisfied with the explanation. T. Zyra asked if there were any concerns. J. Klemer replied that there may be a need for a further transfer of funds from DW to Adult funding stream before the program year ends on 6/30/23. If needed, this would be brought to the Board for approval. No further questions arose. J. Klemer said she could be reached by phone or email if there were any further questions.
- B. B. Rice provide an update on the WIOA Youth Program. Currently, there are 84 Youth enrolled with a goal of 90 Youth enrolled by 6/30/23.
- C. B. Rice gave an update on the New York State Gun Violence Prevention (NYSGVP) Youth Program. Currently, a total of 52 youth are being served. It is possible that a time extension will be granted for this funding; if so, it will be included in the NYS Governor's Budget.
- D. B. Rice turned the floor over to J. Brown Miller for a One-Stop System Operator Report. J. Brown Miller reviewed the PY22 Quarter 2 (Q2) data as presented in the agenda packet. At the end of Q2, 84 WIOA Youth are enrolled, including 37 carry-in and 47 new enrollees. 14 of these Youth are also dual enrolled in the NYSGVP grant to ensure they receive as many services as possible under both grants. The NYSGVP grant has 52 participants, with 24 participating in On-the-Job Training (OJT), 17 in a Work Experience, 1 in Classroom Training, and 10 receiving other services from the program. WIOA Classroom Training has 106 students enrolled, with 20 completing training successfully and 84 still in progress. J. Brown Miller stated there continues to be an increase in the volume of Classroom Training for our area. There were 16 individuals enrolled in OJT at 14 different companies, including 3 new companies using OJT for the first time. J. Brown Miller opened the floor for questions. None brought forward. J. Brown Miller thanked the Board Members for their time.
- E. In the absence of D. Martinez, B. Rice shared the WDB Inclusion Committee update. The WDB Inclusion Committee hosted another successful free online training for local businesses. Michelle Plesh of Excelsior Orthopaedics was the guest speaker and 30 local businesses attended. The DEI topic was low-cost and no-cost ways to incorporate Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion into a business. The audience was very engaged in the session and appreciative of



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the training. B. Rice reminded the Board that they are welcome to join the WDB Inclusion Committee or to attend any of the free virtual workshops.

- F. S. Shears said Niagara Community Action Program (www.niagaracap.org) has received a grant award for home repair and weatherization for all Niagara County residents meeting the 200% poverty level income requirement. Please contact her for more information. K. Schuler suggested sharing this information at an upcoming Agricultural Seminar. K. Granchelli offered to share this information with the Niagara County Low Income Housing Group.

M. Casale suggested that S. Shears should work with the Land Bank (Norlic) to coordinate services for weatherization.

J. Feuerman shared a story about an employee whose boiler broke over the holidays and his company was able to assist her with a replacement at no cost. He encouraged businesses to embrace a “Total Care” model to enhance employee retention.

In D. Martinez’s absence, J. Feuerman shared that ACCES-VR will host a free job fair at Buffalo Public Library on 4/27/23 with a free panel discussion for businesses attending. B. Rice said she will be a member of the panel, with the topic of finding talent post-pandemic. The panel discussion runs from 9am to 10:30am, with the job fair immediately following.

K. Schuler said the Niagara USA Chamber will host a Small Business Forum from 8am to 10am on 3/24/23 at the Wurlitzer Events Center, 908 Niagara Falls Blvd. in North Tonawanda. Speakers will include M&T Bank, Board members D. Tandon and N. Akhtar, Momentum the Business Growth Agency, and others. Tickets are \$10 and available by contacting ewoods@niagarachamber.org.

B. Rice shared that there are resources available for child care expenses and she will email the information to members after the meeting.

- G. N. Akhtar shared information about Naz716 services and the businesses that currently occupy space at her location. There are still 6 offices available for interested businesses. N. Akhtar then provided a tour of the facility to interested Board members.

B. Rice thanked the members in attendance and requested a motion to adjourn. Motion by W. Carroll. Second by K. Schuler. **Unanimous vote in favor of adjournment.** The WDB meeting was adjourned at 8:36am.

Next Board meeting is scheduled for June 6, 2023 at 8am at the Niagara County Center for Economic Development.

Respectfully submitted,
Joanne Klemer / Bonnie Rice