

Niagara County Workforce Development Board
Meeting Minutes—October 20, 2016

Next Meeting: **Thursday, November 17, 2016 @ 7:30a.m.**

Members Present: Paul Brown, Cèsar Cabrera, John Helak, Christine Luly, Kory Schuler, Suzanne Shears, Joe Steinmetz

Members Excused, Absent: Tom Austen, Frank Budwey, Mary Lynn Candella, Michael Carney, Sam Ferraro, Joel Fuerman, Susan Gouthro, Kathleen Granchelli, Tim Miller, Joseph Naccarato, James Pane, James Ward, Shawn Williams, Henry Wojtaszek, Jerald Wolfgang

Workforce Development Board (WDB) Staff: David See, WDB Executive Director; Joanne Klemer, WDB Fiscal Manager; Marilyn Behm, WDB Counselor

Others Present: Michael Casale, NCCED; Don Jablonski, NCE&T; Kathy Krebs, NCE&T; Andrew Zalikowski, NYSDOL

I. **Call to Order**

The meeting was called to order at 8:07am at the Niagara County Department of Economic Development. David See called the meeting to order, a quorum was not present, so David said there would be general discussions of items that will be put before the board at a future date when we have a quorum.

II. **Old Business**

Due to not having a quorum, minutes from the past meeting were not read or voted on.

III. **New business**

A. Opening/Members Update

The meeting started with introductions of all Board members as well as WDB Staff and others in attendance. David mentioned that Carolyn Bright of NYSDOL, will be the DOL Representative for Niagara County, due to a retirement. He also said that Carolyn has provided service to Niagara County businesses for years, so many may already be acquainted with her. He stated that there will probably be more interaction with Stan Sikorski, the DOL office manager, as we work through Program changes from WIA to WIOA.

B. Policy Update relating to On-the-Job Training (OJT)

David said that there has been a WorksourceOne proposal to increase the dollar reimbursement to businesses for OJT contracts from \$3,000. to \$5,000. As well, it has been proposed to increase the percentage of reimbursement based on a company's size.

Example: Small businesses up to 250 employees could be eligible to receive a 75% reimbursement, not to exceed \$5,000.

Larger businesses of 251 employees and up, would be eligible for 50% reimbursement, not to exceed \$5,000.

There was some discussion regarding the policy of “minimum” pay for a position to be covered under an OJT contract. It is currently at \$9.00 an hour and it was suggested by David to raise it to perhaps \$10 or \$1.00 over the NYS minimum wage. Cesar pointed out that minimum wage in NYS increasing in January. Kathy Krebs said that rather than setting a fixed dollar amount, especially with the proposed periodic increases in minimum wage, it would be better to agree to a floating figure. Christine Luly voiced concerns that we might price ourselves out of the market for some companies hiring people with little or no experience. After further discussion, it was pointed out that these OJT’s are designed to help enhance a skills set rather than provide assistance to hire someone with no skills for a fast food restaurant.

After some discussion regarding OJT, Board Members were unanimous in their approval of presenting this to the Board for a vote at the next meeting (if there is a quorum).

Individual Training Accounts (ITA) would stay at \$3,000.

C. Proposed next meeting date:

David mentioned meeting on Wed., Nov. 16th at 8am. Don Jablonski said that if meetings are scheduled for Thursdays, don’t change it to the Wednesday on his account. Paul Brown said he can’t make 11/16. After discussion on meeting dates and times, Kory Schuler mentioned he is on a Board that moved their meetings to noon and are having better success in reaching a quorum. Christine Luly attends meetings for other WIB Boards with noon meeting times, Cesar does as well. Several members commented reaching quorums were problems across the state. Both Paul Brown and John Helak indicated morning meetings are better for them. Don Jablonski said that a meeting that deals with the business at hand and wraps up in about 45 minutes is usually preferred.

David said under Niagara County rules, the WDB would not be able to provide lunch, additionally, when he contacted Board members they indicated a morning meeting works best for them – even those not in attendance. Joe Steinmetz recommended making it very clear of the responsibilities of a Board member and necessity of attending meetings. He suggested reviewing attendance and making efforts to maintain attendance. The bylaws could stipulate replacement of members who did not attend a number of meetings. John Helak suggested setting the meeting dates for the next year so that people could mark them on their calendar now. David said he would research dates and provide a schedule going forward. It was also decided to move the meeting time to 7:30am so that people can come to the meeting and then get

on with their day. This, too, met with unanimous approval and will be presented to the whole board at the next meeting, which is set for Thursday, November 17th at 7:30am.

IV. **Adjournment**

David See adjourned the meeting at 9:07am.

Respectfully submitted,

Marilyn Behm