



**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 4, 2025**

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

**Members Present:** Maureen Bartlett, William Carroll, Michael Casale, Lindsay Collins, Joel Feuerman, David Haylett, John Lang, Michael Martin, John Scherrer, Tom Seaman, Suzanne Shears, Divya Tandon, Michele Taylor, Katie Thompson

**Members Excused:** Nasreen Akhtar, Jeanne Battaglia, Jim Bittner, Tom Grzebinski, Dennis Martinez, David Miller, Bill Robbins, Jim Scordato, Todd Zyra

**Members Absent:** Shawn Williams

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

**Guests/Staff Present:** Jeannine Brown Miller – JBM Consulting, OSSO Provider; Donald Jablonski – Niagara County Employment and Training, Director; Tom Mormile – NYSDOL; Allison Sharpe – Dream It Do It WNY; Puneet Tandon – guest of Divya Tandon

**I. Call to Order**

J. Feuerman welcomed Board Members and guests to the meeting at 8:06 am. As quorum was not yet achieved J. Feuerman started by making announcements. He introduced T. Mormile of NYSDOL to the Board Members. J. Feuerman shared that years ago, Niagara went without a WDB Executive Director for a long period of time. T. Mormile assisted the Board in keeping Niagara compliant by providing guidance regarding WIOA funding and policies. J. Feuerman noted that T. Mormile is living proof of the value government workers can bring to the community. He thanked T. Mormile for always providing exceptional support, being a valued member of the team and for taking the time to attend the meeting. J. Feuerman then announced that Kory Schuler has resigned from the Board. He shared that K. Schuler has accepted a new position with Empower. Although he was not in attendance, J. Feuerman thanked him for his time and service with the Board. He shared that K. Schuler had been a wonderful Vice Chair and leader to the Board over his many years of service. J. Feuerman also welcomed back H. Dennis and thanked her for being a valued member of the team. He also thanked B. Rice and J. Klemer for assisting in H. Dennis's duties while she was away.

At the start of the meeting, quorum was not established. B. Rice started with section IV of the agenda until enough Board Members entered the meeting to establish quorum. At 8:16 am, J. Feuerman noted that quorum was established. The meeting minutes are laid out based on the agenda outline. J. Feuerman turned the floor over to B. Rice to lead the meeting. 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.

**II. Old Business**

B. Rice reviewed the agenda items section by section. All information regarding each item was distributed to Board members through email prior to the meeting.



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- A. B. Rice asked the Board for a motion to approve the November 12, 2024 meeting minutes as presented. M. Casale noted an update to the meeting minutes. In section IV, letter I, section b is to be updated that the virtual trainings are sponsored by the Niagara County Department of Economic Development. B. Rice thanked M. Casale. The minutes will be updated to reflect the change. B. Rice asked the Board for a motion to approve the November 12, 2024 meeting minutes with the update to section IV, letter I, section b. Motion made by M. Casale. Second by M. Bartlett. All in favor. None opposed **Unanimous vote in favor of the approval of the November 11, 2024 Meeting Minutes.**
- B. B. Rice reviewed with the Board the approval made by the Executive Committee on February 6, 2024. B. Rice was seeking approval to amend the PY24 WIOA Youth budget due to increased interest in Youth classroom training opportunities. An additional \$10,000 was needed in the Youth training budget, and it could be funded with a \$10,000 reduction to the Youth staff budget category. B. Rice asked J. Klemer for further comments. J. Klemer shared that this is the second transfer that has been done within the youth training budget. She noted that this highlights how much interest Niagara youth have in receiving Classroom Training. Last year \$15,000 was spent on Youth Classroom Training, with this transfer the total will be \$45,000 for this program year. B. Rice opened the floor for questions. None brought forward. B. Rice then requested a motion to approve the transfer of budgeted funds from WIOA Youth Staff Costs to WIOA Youth Training Costs in an additional amount of up to \$10,000 for a total amount of up to \$45,000 to be spent on WIOA Youth classroom training in Program Year 2024. Motion made by L. Collins. Second by S. Shears. All in favor. None opposed. **Unanimous approval of the transfer of funds from WIOA Youth Staff Costs to WIOA Youth Classroom training in an additional amount of up to \$10,000 for a total amount of up to \$45,000 to be spent on WIOA Youth training in Program Year 2024.**

### III. New Business

B. Rice reviewed the agenda items section by section. Information regarding each item was distributed to Board members through email prior to the meeting. Any updates were shared at the meeting.

- A. B. Rice shared that with K. Schuler resigning as Vice Board Chair, nominations were requested through email to select a new Vice Chair. One nomination was made for Katie Thompson. B. Rice shared that K. Thompson has agreed to serve as Vice Board Chair. B. Rice then opened the floor for further nominations. No further nominations were brought forward. She then opened the floor for questions. No further questions were brought forward. B. Rice asked for a motion to approve Katie Thompson as WDB Vice Chair. Motion made by W. Carroll. Second by J. Feuerman. All in favor. None opposed. **Unanimous vote in favor of appointing Katie Thompson as WDB Vice Chair.** B. Rice congratulated K. Thompson.
- B. B. Rice explained to the Board the need for adding Market Research Analysts and Marketing Specialists to the Classroom Training Demand Occupation list. Adding this title allows for approved training providers to provide Classroom Training courses for the occupation. B. Rice shared that it is in demand locally based on New York State Labor Market Analyst data. B. Rice opened the floor to questions. W. Carroll asked what jobs would be connected to that title. B. Rice briefly explained the connection that title has to the local job market and that many job titles under it relate to marketing and advertising fields. No further questions brought forward. B. Rice asked for a motion to approve adding Market Research Analyst and Marketing



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Specialist to the Classroom training Demand Occupations list. Motion made by M. Casale. Second by S. Shears. All in favor. None opposed. **Unanimous vote in favor of adding Market Research Analyst and Marketing Specialist to the Classroom training Demand Occupations list.**

- C. B. Rice explained to the Board the need for a revision to the Adult and Dislocated Worker Supportive Services policy. B. Rice explained that due to increases in tuition and supply costs covered in the training policy, the usage of travel reimbursement has lessened as the tuition and supply costs tend to use all of the available \$5,000 to participants. The proposed changes to the Supportive Services policy would eliminate transportation mileage reimbursement, but would not eliminate the ability to provide a bus pass to a participant as a possible training expense. B. Rice shared that by eliminating the \$10 a day for travel reimbursement, there is the potential to provide training funds to four more eligible participants. B. Rice opened the floor to questions. M. Bartlett had questions in relation to Sumitomo employees and training. B. Rice provided a review of past Trade Act funding, outreach to Sumitomo employees, and Dislocated Worker funding to serve affected employees. D. Tandon asked if with the uptick in training, would participants who need the mileage reimbursement, lose out on a training opportunity because it is no longer offered. B. Rice explained that transportation is offered if the participant has not spent their full \$5000 on training and supplies. In many cases the tuition and supplies use the full \$5000 offered. Bus passes will continue to be offered to those in need of transportation. B. Rice noted that by not allocating a set dollar amount to the transportation reimbursement for training, the dollars can be used for training and help more participants. No further questions brought forward. B. Rice asked for a motion to approve the revisions to the Adult and Dislocated Worker Supportive Services policy. Motion made by D. Tandon. Second by J. Lang. All in favor. None opposed. **Unanimous vote in favor to approve the revisions to the Adult and Dislocated Worker Supportive Services policy, limiting transportation assistance to bus passes only.**
- D. B. Rice shared with the Board the need to make an addition to the On-the-Job Training (OJT) policy. B. Rice explained that in recent years, and more recently, a company providing an OJT opportunity to a participant has unexpectedly closed during the participant's training period. New York State Department of Labor's (NYSDOL) program and fiscal team have advised us to add language to the OJT policy that should a training end through no fault of the participant, as long as a reasonable amount of funding is available, the participant would be allowed to participate in a second OJT. B. Rice opened the floor for questions, none brought forward. B. Rice asked for a motion to approve the revisions to the OJT policy. Motion made by K. Thompson. Second by J. Feuerman. All in favor. None opposed. **Unanimous vote in favor to approve the revisions to the OJT policy, allowing the ability to offer 2<sup>nd</sup> OJT if 1<sup>st</sup> OJT is terminated through no fault of the participant.**
- E. B. Rice reviewed with the Board the revisions to the WIOA Youth Eligibility criteria form. B. Rice gave a brief explanation of the form and that staff have requested further clarification and explanation within the form regarding the five percent income exceptions. B. Rice opened the floor for questions. None brought forward. B. Rice asked for a motion to approve the revisions to the Youth Eligibility criteria form. Motion made by L. Collins. Second by D. Tandon. All in favor. None opposed. **Unanimous vote in favor to approve the revisions to the Youth Eligibility Criteria form, providing additional clarification of 5% exceptions.**



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**IV. Informational Items**

- A.** B. Rice shared with the Board an update to the WIOA Youth Program. 80 youth enrollments were planned for the PY24 program year, which runs July 1, 2024 to June 30, 2025. To date there have been 90 enrollments, which exceeds the planned enrollments. B. Rice shared further details for the youth program; there have been 36 new Youth and 54 carry-in youth.
- B.** B. Rice shared an update to the YEP (Youth Employment Program). 110-150 enrollments in to YEP were planned for the September 1, 2024 to June 30, 2025 time frame. As of January 31, 2025, 110 of the participants have been enrolled in a subsidized work experience. Currently, 93 youth are enrolled.
- C.** B. Rice turned the floor over to J. Brown Miller of JBM Consulting to provide the Board with the One-Stop Operator Report. J. Brown Miller noted that a copy of the One-Stop Operator Report was on the sign in table for Board members to review as she reviewed the information. J. Brown Miller shared an update to the WIOA Youth program. At the end of Quarter 2, 68 participants had been enrolled, 54 from the previous quarters and 14 newly enrolled. J. Brown Miller gave an update regarding the Classroom Training (CRT) program. 138 participants were enrolled at the end of Quarter 2, including 95 from the previous quarter and 43 newly enrolled. Nine training providers had been utilized by participants and 15 different courses have been taken. She noted that trainings attended by participants are by participant choice and that it is great to see such a variety offered and attended. At the end of Quarter 2, 30 participants have completed training and 89 are in progress. J. Brown Miller gave an update to the On-the-Job Training (OJT) program. At the end of Quarter 2, 17 participants had enrolled, 11 from the previous quarters and six newly enrolled. Eleven local companies had provided OJT training opportunities over thirteen different job titles. At the end of Quarter 2, 12 participants have completed training successfully and three are in progress. J. Brown Miller also shared with the Board members the details for the upcoming One-Stop Partners meeting.
- D.** B. Rice shared an update to the Special Populations Committee as D. Martinez was unable to attend the meeting. B. Rice shared that the committee name has been updated to the Innovative Employment Committee. B. Rice shared that the Innovative Employment Committee recently held a free virtual workshop for businesses. It was led by the Yang Tan Institute who have a grant and were able to provide information based on the legal aspects related to employing individuals with disabilities. B. Rice also shared updates to the planned career fair for high school seniors with disabilities who do not intend to enroll in college. The fair is designed to connect them to broaden their understanding of what careers are available in our local area. B. Rice shared the hope of this being a hands-on event this October.
- E.** B. Rice turned the floor over to L. Collins for a Youth Committee update. L. Collins shared that the Youth Committee has been gathering information on pre-apprenticeship and apprenticeship programs, and attempting to further connect with grant opportunities. The Youth Committee members plan to assist the Innovative Employment Committee at the career exploration fair in October.





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- F. B. Rice welcomed Allison Sharpe of Dream It Do It WNY, and turned the floor over to her. A. Sharpe presented her role with Dream It Do It WNY to Board Members as well as the plans to work with the local schools and manufacturers. Any Board members with further questions or who would be interested in working with A. Sharpe can contact her by phone or email. B. Rice thanked A. Sharpe for taking the time to attend the Board meeting and presenting the details for Dream It Do It WNY to the Board.
- G. B. Rice opened the floor to Board Members for further announcements:
- a. M. Martin shared that Native American Community Services is in the process of hiring new managers. M. Martin asked if there was any update to the federal WIOA reauthorization bill. B. Rice shared that she and D. Jablonski are keeping in contact with other areas and those within the State as the State and Federal budget are discussed. Currently, there isn't any set expectations for the WIOA reauthorization. B. Rice also mentioned that she and D. Jablonski have been working to obtain a diverse amount of grant funding such as the Youth Employment Program (YEP), Finger Lakes Performing Provider Service (FLPPS), Renewable Energy Training Initiative (RETI), a Employment Focused Services (EFS) Probation grant and Disability Resource Coordinator grant to help with funding gaps. There was a discussion regarding State and Federal budget cuts and allocation estimates regarding funding cuts that affect the program, Niagara County Employment and Training (NCET) team, and the WDB. M. Martin also asked about Trade Act and the potential of job losses due to trade. B. Rice shared that Trade Act expired, but any local job losses relating to trade would fall under WIOA Dislocated Worker funds. M. Bartlett asked who Board members could contact federally to advocate and share success stories based on WIOA funding. D. Jablonski recommend contacting local Congress and State representatives. There was further discussion regarding grant opportunities and cost of training.

No further announcements brought forward.

**V. Next WDB Meeting**

B. Rice informed those in attendance that the next WDB Meeting is scheduled for June 3, 2025 at 8:00 a.m. at the Niagara County Center for Economic Development.

**VI. Motion to Adjourn**

B. Rice thanked the members in attendance for their time and requested a motion to adjourn. Motion by J. Lang. Second by M. Martin. All in favor. **Unanimous vote in favor of adjournment.** The WDB Meeting adjourned at 9:12 a.m.

Respectfully submitted,  
Helen Dennis