



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 – June 3, 2025

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

Members Present: Nasreen Akhtar, Maureen Bartlett, William Carroll, Lindsay Collins, Tom Grzebinski, David Haylett, Michael Martin, Dennis Martinez, Bill Robbins, Jim Scordato, Tom Seaman, Suzanne Shears, Divya Tandon, Katie Thompson, Todd Zyra

Members Excused: Jim Bittner, Joel Feuerman, John Lang, David Miller, John Scherrer, Michele Taylor

Members Absent: Jeanne Battaglia, 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

I. Call to Order

J. Feuerman was unable to attend the WDB Meeting. K. Thompson, WDB Vice Chair, ran the meeting in his place. K. Thompson welcomed Board Members and guests to the meeting at 8:09 am. She noted that quorum was established. The meeting minutes are laid out based on the agenda outline. K. Thompson 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.

- A. B. Rice asked the Board for a motion to approve the March 4, 2025 meeting minutes as presented. Motion made by W. Carroll. Second by S. Shears. All in favor. None opposed
Unanimous vote in favor of the approval of the March 4, 2025 Meeting Minutes.

- B. B. Rice reviewed with the Board the approval made by the Executive Committee on March 25, 2025. B. Rice explained that the WDB had received a new grant for a Regional Energy Training Initiative (RETI), which is meant to train participants in clean, green and renewable energy fields through on-the-job training or classroom training. Both Orleans Niagara BOCES and SUNY Niagara have modified some of their courses in order to utilize the grant. B. Rice shared that along with the training courses, they are working with local employers who have clean, green and renewable energy businesses for the employment portion of the grant. She encouraged Board Members to connect with her if they have those job positions in their company, or know of companies that could benefit. B. Rice explained that the grant requires policies to pay individuals incentives for their achievements and provide supportive services such as transportation; both policies were included in the agenda packet prior to the meeting. B.



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Rice noted that item C of the Executive Committee Meeting was to release the Request for Proposals (RFP) for One-Stop System Operator (OSSO). The OSSO RFP would be further discussed under New Business for this meeting. B. Rice opened the floor for questions. None brought forward. B. Rice asked the Board for a motion to approve the March 25, 2025 Executive Committee Meeting minutes as presented as a slate. Motion made by T. Grzebinski. Second by L. Collins. All in favor. None opposed. **Unanimous approval of the Slate vote to approve the WDB Executive Committee Meeting that was held on March 25, 2025.**

- C. B. Rice reviewed with the Board the approval made by the Executive Committee on March 26, 2025. B. Rice informed the Board that additional WIOA Youth funding from another local WDB was available for Niagara to access. The funds covered the costs of Niagara WIOA Youth training during Program Year 2024. B. Rice opened the floor for questions. D. Jablonski shared that the full amount has since been used. No further questions brought forward. B. Rice asked the Board for a motion to approve the March 26, 2025 Executive Committee meeting minutes as presented. Motion made by M. Bartlett. Second by N. Aktar. All in favor. None opposed. **Unanimous vote to approve the WDB Executive Committee Meeting minutes from March 26, 2025.**
- D. B. Rice reviewed with the Board the April 17, 2025 Executive Committee meeting regarding accepting a budget modification to transfer Dislocated Worker (DW) to Adult funding in an amount of \$20,000 to be spent on training. T. Grzebinski asked if this was something we've done in past. B. Rice replied that yes, we have done transfers from DW funding to Adult funding. She explained that this is due to the complex definition to enroll a participant as a DW. B. Rice opened the floor for further questions. None brought forward. B. Rice asked the Board for a motion to approve the April 17, 2025 meeting minutes as presented. Motion made by L. Collins. Second by K. Thompson. All in favor. None opposed. **Unanimous approval to approve the WDB Executive Committee Meeting minutes from April 17, 2025.**

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 turned the floor over to J. Klemer to review the Program Year (PY) 2025 budgets. The PY25 Budget was handed to the Board Members at the start of the meeting. J. Klemer reminded the Board that PY25 funding start July 1, 2025 and ends June 30, 2026. She also noted that there is funding carried in from the previous year. J. Klemer briefly reviewed each funding section of the budget starting with Adult. The Adult budget has a total of \$1,066,233, a slight decrease from last program year. She noted there is an overall decrease in funding of 11%. S. Shears asked why we did a transfer earlier. J. Klemer explained that Niagara tends to transfer money between Adult and DW for the reasons B. Rice explained earlier, and because WIOA gives the ability to do so. She added that the transfers help with balancing the 80% obligation that is required. J. Klemer asked if there were further questions. W. Carroll asked for the dollar amount of the decrease. J. Klemer shared that it is an amount of \$226,000. T. Grzebinski noted that salaries had decreased. J. Klemer explained that the funding cuts were anticipated, B. Rice and D. Jablonski had been working with her to apply for other grant funding to help cover staff costs and keep staff employed. Some salaries were moved from



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WIOA and onto the other grants. B. Rice added that they have been working to diversity funding with the Finger Lakes Performing Provider Service (FLPPS) grant, RETI grant, TANF YEP grant, and OMH grant. Not all of these grants are controlled by the WDB, but they help to ensure the operation of the office and provide services to participants. She shared that due to NCET meeting performance measures, Niagara was awarded over \$200,000 in incentive money. Also, due to meeting the 80% obligation rate in the prior year, Niagara was awarded an additional \$100,000. D. Jablonski added that diversifying has covered the cost of the decrease. He shared that through another grant opportunity with ESD, funding is available for infrastructure. M. Bartlett shared an example of how those grants are also helping partner agencies of NCET. The participants of ONBOCES's nursing courses are able to utilize the FLPPS grant instead of WIOA funding. D. Jablonski shared that the grant covers the cost of training, so long as the participant commits to obtaining a job in Western New York and staying employed for three years. J. Klemer reviewed the total amounts for the remaining three programs. For DW the proposed budget is \$414,000, about \$28,000 less than the previous program year. For the Youth budget, the proposed budget is \$589,000. For the Administrative budget, the proposed budget is \$194,000. T. Zyra asked if these are different from last program year. J. Klemer answered that yes, they had all decreased. T. Grzebinski asked if this is now the new normal, that decreases should be expected to continue; and what would be beneficial moving forward. B. Rice shared that advocating for flexible funding by local businesses would be beneficial. A discussion regarding advocacy and further funding was had. T. Grzebinski requested that B. Rice create a letter of support to share with the Board members. Discussion ensued regarding the need for workers in health care, the skilled trades, and other demand occupations. J. Scordato shared that Kaleida Health System has over 1,000 job openings. B. Rice asked if there were further questions regarding the budget. No further questions brought forward. B. Rice asked the Board for a motion to approve the PY25 Budget as presented. Motion made by T. Zyra. Second by W. Carroll. All in favor. None opposed. **Unanimous vote in favor of accepting the Program Year 2025 Budget as presented.**

- B.** B. Rice requested the ability to transfer up to 100% of funds, as needed, from DW to Adult funds. B. Rice opened the floor for questions. No questions brought forward. B. Rice asked for a motion to approve a blanket transfer request from DW to Adult funds. Motion made by T. Grzebinski. Second by L. Collins. All in favor. None opposed. **Unanimous vote in favor of approving a blanket transfer request, up to 100%, for PY25 Dislocated Worker to PY25 Adult funding as needed.**
- C.** B. Rice requested the ability to transfer up to 100% of funds, as needed, from Administration to Adult, DW, or Youth funding. No further questions brought forward. B. Rice asked for a motion to motion to approve a blanket transfer request from Administration to Adult, DW, or Youth funds. Motion made by T. Zyra. Second by N. Aktar. All in favor. None opposed. **Unanimous vote in favor of approving a blanket transfer request, up to 100%, for PY25 Administration to PY25 Adult, Dislocated Work or Youth funding as needed.**
- D.** B. Rice asked J. Brown Miller to leave the room. B. Rice shared with the Board that an Executive Committee Meeting was held March 25, 2025 and voted to approve the release of an RFP for the OSSO as the current contract for JBM HR Consulting, Inc., was set to expire June 30, 2025. The RFP was released. The contract award amount was reduced to \$5,000 due to lower funding amounts. The decrease in no way reflects the current awardee JBM HR



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Consulting, Inc. B. Rice noted J. Brown Miller has been compliant and provided great services to the WDB. B. Rice noted that the decreased amount is comparable to other WDBs in New York State. B. Rice shared with the Board that a review committee was established and their summary was distributed in the agenda packet prior to the meeting. B. Rice noted that one bid was received from JBM HR Consulting, Inc. B. Rice explained to the Board that since only one bid was received New York State Department of Labor (NYSDOL) considers the OSSO RFP a “failed procurement”. The review team independently reviewed the single bid. They then met and discussed the single bid. The review team then evaluated the responses of the failed procurement. After the responses were reviewed the committee had three choices:

1. Evaluate the single bidder’s proposal and recommend it to the WDB for funding
2. Reject the proposal and recommend the Board re-issue the RFP
3. Reject the proposal and recommend the Board approve the WDB as the OSSO.

This would require the NYS Governor’s approval.

After careful consideration, the Review Committee unanimously recommends that the WDB award the OSSO Contract to the single bidder, JBM HR Consulting, Inc., as a single source award. The B. Rice opened the floor for questions, none brought forward. B. Rice asked for a motion to approve and award the One-Stop System Operator proposal as a single source award to JBM HR Consulting, Inc., for the time period of July 1, 2025 to June 30, 2026 in the amount of \$5,000. Motion made by J. Scordato. Second by D. Haylett. All in favor. None opposed.

Unanimous vote in favor to approve and award JBM HR Consulting, Inc. as a single source award for One-Stop System Operator in the amount of \$5,000 for PY25 (7/1/25-6/30/26). J. Brown Miller was asked to come back into the Meeting Room and was informed of her contract award. B. Rice thanked J. Brown Miller for her proposal and looked forward to continuing to work with her. J. Brown Miller thanked the Board and Review Committee members for their time and looks forward to continued service in the OSSO role.

- E. B. Rice shared with the Board the need to make revisions to the WIOA Youth Incentives policy. She explained that, due to funding cuts, the dollar amounts for youth incentives and the utilization of the incentives were reviewed and evaluated. The amounts had been based on prior year funding, when Niagara had more available Youth funds. B. Rice noted that some incentives were removed, some of which were underutilized. B. Rice opened the floor for questions. None brought forward. B. Rice asked for a motion to approve the revisions to the WIOA Youth Incentives Policy. Motion made by K. Thompson. Second by D. Tandon. All in favor. None opposed. **Unanimous vote in favor to approve the revisions to the WIOA Youth Incentives Policy.**
- F. B. Rice informed the Board that the WIOA Youth Supportive Services policy also needed to be adjusted due to funding cuts. She noted that the policy was reviewed and evaluated. Although hygiene packs are well utilized, the cost of products and the staff time it takes to purchase items and assemble the packs is costly and time consuming. She added that the child and dependent care reimbursement was going to be removed, as it has not been utilized. B. Rice also explained that travel reimbursement would be removed, but bus passes would remain. Rice opened the floor for questions. None brought forward. B. Rice asked for a motion to approve the revisions to the WIOA Youth Supportive Services Policy. Motion made by T. Grzebinski. Second by D. Martinez. All in favor. None opposed. **Unanimous vote in favor to approve the revisions to the WIOA Youth Supportive Services Policy.**



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IV. Informational Items

B. Rice informed the Board that the Local Plan is now posted to the WDB website for Public Comment. She informed the Board that she would be sending an email with the link for the Local Plan after the meeting for their own review.

- 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 96 enrollments, which exceeds the planned enrollments. B. Rice shared further details for the PY25 (July 1, 2025 to June 30, 2026) youth program; 60 youth enrollments are planned for PY25. B. Rice noted that this lower amount is reflective of funding decreases and a decrease in youth counselors.
- 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 May 21, 2025, 112 of the participants have been enrolled in a subsidized work experience. Currently, 87 youth are enrolled. W. Carroll asked if that enrollment number is fairly constant year over year. B. Rice shared that it depends on what YEP budgets for Niagara. D. Jablonski added that there is uncertainty if more YEP funds will be available. B. Rice shared that she will be inquiring with NYS as to if there will be future funding available. T. Grzebinski commented on the previous WIOA Youth enrollments. He asked if those enrolled were on a first come, first served basis. B. Rice explained that that is the case, as well as meeting eligibility criteria set by WIOA. She further explained that by the start of the program year some participants will have exited the program and the number being served will lessen, allowing for new enrollments into the program as of July 1st. No further questions brought forward.
- C. B. Rice turned the floor over to J. Brown Miller of JBM HR Consulting, Inc., to provide the Board with the One-Stop Operator Report. J. Brown Miller noted that a copy of the One-Stop Operator Report was included in the Agenda packet previously emailed to Board members. She reviewed the information. J. Brown Miller shared an update to the WIOA Youth program. At the end of Quarter 3, 58 participants were enrolled, 46 from the previous quarters and 12 newly enrolled. J. Brown Miller gave an update regarding the Classroom Training (CRT) program. 120 participants were enrolled at the end of Quarter 23, including 104 from the previous quarter and 10 newly enrolled. Ten training providers had been utilized by participants and 16 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 3, 58 participants have completed training and 50 are in progress. J. Brown Miller gave an update to the On-the-Job Training (OJT) program. At the end of Quarter 3, 18 participants had enrolled, six from the previous quarters and 12 newly enrolled. Ten local companies had provided OJT training opportunities over 13 different job titles. At the end of Quarter 3, seven 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 scheduled for June 5th. She noted that she will be updating the Partner Referral Guide and getting in touch with the Partner agencies for this purpose.
- D. B. Rice turned the floor over to D. Martinez. D. Martinez shared an update to the Innovative Employment Committee. D. Martinez shared an update to the planned career fair for high school seniors with disabilities who do not intend to enroll in college. The fair is designed to



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connect them to broaden their understanding of what careers are available in our local area. He explained that they are looking to bring in businesses that have the ability to do hands-on or AV demonstrations to give those in attendance a visual example of the occupation. D. Martinez shared that the Committee is working with ONBOCES and are hoping to have the event scheduled for this October.

- E. B. Rice turned the floor over to L. Collins for a Youth Committee update. L. Collins shared that the Youth Committee had not met this past quarter but a meeting is scheduled for June 26th. B. Rice shared that if any Board Members are interested in joining either committee, they can get in touch with L. Collins or D. Martinez.
- F. B. Rice opened the floor to Board Members for further announcements:
 - a. M. Martin shared that Native American Community Services is looking for Workforce Development Coordinators for Erie and Niagara Counties. If Board Member know of anyone who would be interested, please contact him.
 - b. M. Bartlett shared that the AWS certification has been added to ONBOCES Welding program. ONBOCES will also be running a summer HVAC program. She shared that ONBOCES is also utilizing the RETI grant with the help of NCET.

No further announcements brought forward.

V. Next WDB Meeting

B. Rice informed those in attendance that the next WDB Meeting is scheduled for September 9, 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 L. Collins. Second by M. Martin. All in favor. **Unanimous vote in favor of adjournment.** The WDB Meeting adjourned at 8:50 a.m.

Respectfully submitted,
Helen Dennis