



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 4, 2024

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

Members Present: Nasreen Akhtar, Maureen Bartlett, Michael Casale, Lindsay Collins, Joel Feuerman, Tom Grzebinski, Michael Martin, Kory Schuler, Jim Scordato, Suzanne Shears, Katie Thompson

Members Excused: Jeanne Battaglia, David Haylett, John Lang, Dennis Martinez, David Miller, Divya Tandon, Todd Zyra

Members Absent: William Carroll, Tim Lederhaus, Bill Robbins, John Scherrer, Tom Seaman, Michele Taylor, Shawn Williams

WDB Staff: Helen Dennis, Joanne Klemer, Bonnie Rice

Guests/Staff Present: Jeannine Brown Miller – JBM Consulting, OSSO; Donald Jablonski – Niagara County Employment and Training; Rob Leteste – Invest Buffalo Niagara

I. Call to Order

J. Feuerman welcomed Board Members to the meeting and called the meeting to order at 8:10 am. J. Feuerman noted that quorum was not established. B. Rice noted that in hopes a few more Board Members would join, the Informational Items of the agenda would be addressed first. 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. J. Feuerman took a moment to congratulate H. Dennis who will be welcoming her first child in October. B. Rice added that H. Dennis has also been asked to participate in the Synergy Forum led by New York State Department of Labor (NYSDOL) discussing program monitoring best practices. She shared that H. Dennis was asked to be a facilitator for the event and share her best practices as program monitor for Niagara.

IV. Informational Items

B. Rice provided the Board with an update regarding items A-C.

- A. The WIOA Youth Program goal for the current program year, PY23 (July 1, 2023 to June 30, 2024) is 75 planned Youth enrollments. To date, 89 youth have been enrolled into the program for the program year: 41 new youth enrollments, 48 carry in youth. B. Rice noted that this exceeds the goal.
- B. The New York State Gun Violence Prevention (NYSGVP) Grant ended March 31, 2024. B. Rice explained that although an update had been provided at the March 5th meeting, final numbers were not available with the NYSGVP grant ending on March 31, 2024. B. Rice shared the final numbers regarding participants in the NYSGVP program: 24 youth were hired full time directly by employers, using 90% wage reimbursement for OJT. 33 youth were hired in subsidized work experiences, and four additional youth received Classroom Training, supportive and transportation services. NCET's goal was to have 50 youth participants hired; 57 were hired out of 61 served.



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- C. The Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) Summer Youth Employment Program (SYEP) has been expanded into a continuous year-round program with SYEP during summer months and Youth Employment Program (YEP) for non-summer months. The YEP grant started on January 1, 2024. To date, 92 youth have been placed at 18 worksites in Niagara County through subsidized work experiences. B. Rice asked Board Members to refer any public or private businesses interested in serving as a work site to her.
- D. B. Rice turned the floor over to J. Brown Miller of JBM Consulting for the One-Stop Operator performance update. J. Brown Miller noted that B. Rice had reviewed the Youth section of her report previously. J. Brown Miller shared with the Board the information regarding Classroom Training: 129 participants enrolled at the end of the third quarter, participants utilized 11 different Approved Training Providers, and utilized 22 different courses. At the end of Quarter Three, 63 had successfully completed training and 54 were in progress. She noted that within the report were the names of training providers and courses utilized. J. Brown Miller moved on to On-the-Job Training: 21 participants enrolled at the end of the third quarter, 13 different companies had provided OJT opportunities to participants in 14 different job titles. At the end of Quarter Two, 14 participants had completed training successfully and two were in progress. J. Brown Miller noted that NCET has spent as much as budgeted for the year, performance measures have been met, and NCET has made consistent progress. J. Brown Miller noted that the WDB would be receiving incentive funds from NYSDOL and asked B. Rice to provide further details. B. Rice shared that in PY23 overall, every dollar available was expended on job seeker Classroom Training and On-the-Job Training. Kudos to D. Jablonski and his NCET team on their hard work. She added that a total of 104 individuals received Classroom Training and 45 On-the-Job Training contracts were written with local Niagara County businesses in the current program year (PY23). J. Brown Miller opened the floor for further questions. None brought forward. J. Brown Miller reminded those who are a part of the One-Stop Partners' Group that they would be meeting Thursday, June 6th at 9 am through Google Meet. B. Rice thanked J. Brown Miller for her report.
- E. B. Rice shared Inclusion Committee updates as D. Martinez was unable to attend the meeting. B. Rice informed the Board that the Inclusion Committee has met several times as they are planning for the Career Exploration Fair at SUNY Niagara on October 23rd from 9 am to 2 pm. Niagara County high schools students with disabilities will attend the event as a field trip. She asked that if Board Members' businesses would like to demonstrate or provide a hands-on activity for youth at this event, it is free of cost and there is outdoor and indoor space available. Interested members can contact B. Rice or D. Martinez to find out more. She added that the Inclusion Committee recently held another "DEI: What, How, Why?" online workshop. 24 businesses attended, the topic was "Making Accommodations Reasonable for All". A panel of four local businesses in the DEI fields led the discussion. The businesses in attendance asked pertinent questions regarding issues that could occur within their business and how to accommodate an individual.
- F. B. Rice turned the floor over to L. Collins for the Youth Committee update. L. Collins shared with the Board that the Youth Committee meet on April 4th. Members received information on the progress made under the WIOA, NYSGVP, and YEP grants. D. Martinez of the Inclusion Committee attended and gave an update on the Career Exploration Fair. L. Collins added that the Youth Committee plans to assist with the Career Exploration Fair on October 23rd. L.



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Collins shared with the Board that Alla Breve Consulting attended and asked questions regarding the local workforce. Their statewide responses will be aggregated into a report to drive workforce decisions in New York State.

- G.** B. Rice introduced Rob Leteste of Invest Buffalo Niagara. B. Rice shared that R. Leteste and Invest Buffalo Niagara have been instrumental in encouraging Niagara County businesses to future plan. R. Leteste presented data to the Board using Niagara's Demand Occupation List. He provided examples regarding job seekers and local labor market assessments. He discussed local pathways, future collaborations, and the talent landscape. R. Leteste discussed Niagara's manufacturing and tech opportunities as well as the local programs and organizations available to encourage and support high school students, immigrant and refugee populations, and minority populations within the local area. R. Leteste will provide Board Members with a copy of his PowerPoint presentation. B. Rice thanked R. Leteste for his time and informed Board Members that should they like to network with R. Leteste she will share his information.
- H.** B. Rice opened the floor for announcements by Executive Committee members and those Board Members who were still in attendance.
- a.** S. Shears shared that Niagara Community Action Program (NiaCAP) has received grant funding from the City of Niagara Falls Community Development department that will help families who live and reside in the city of Niagara Falls, with back rent, mortgage and utility bills if they qualify for the program. She added that those who qualify need to be the owner or renter of the address, and the circumstances would need to be COVID related. S. Shears passed around a copies of a flyer to those in attendance. She can also be reached for further questions and information.
 - b.** M. Bartlett shared that ONBOCES just graduated classes for five adult training classes. 30 students from those classes received WIOA funding. She shared photos of the classes with those in attendance. She added that ONBOCES will also be graduating 850 high school students between their two centers. They have 35 LPN students in the current class, which is the largest number of students to date.
 - c.** D. Jablonski shared that NCET will be having an outdoor job fair Wednesday, June 5th (tomorrow) at Oppenheim Park. The next planned job fair will be in Lockport's Day Road Park. If Board members wish to attend, please reach out to D. Jablonski.

As quorum was not established, the meeting was closed and moved to the Executive Committee. B. Rice thanked those Board Members who attended the meeting and informed them they could leave or stay for the Executive Committee Meeting but would be unable to vote at this time. Agenda items II Old Business A-B and items III New Business A – F were moved to the Executive Committee at 8:42 a.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Helen Dennis