

**Workforce Development Board  
Meeting Minutes  
Tuesday, September 19, 2023  
8:00AM - 9:30AM  
United Way Building - Rochester Room  
Board members also attended via Zoom**

**Attendees:** Marco Altieri, Mary Beth Artuso, Rachel Baranello, Kaitlyn Bond, Bert Brinkerhoff, Sergio Esteban, Melissa James-Geska, Janelle Harris, Glen Jeter, Maggie Rivera, Gary Rogers, Alma Vieru, Michael Weed, Joe Wesley, Randy Andre, Rodric Cox-Cooper, Rick Donovan, John Brach (Proxy for Mayor Malik Evans), Lia Festenstein, Shawn Futch, Ana Liss, Danielle Maloy, Roosevelt Mareus, Joseph Morelle, Angelica Perez-Delgado, David Scott, Patricia Stovall-Lane

**Absent:** Dana Abramson, Zachary Arnold, Thomas Battley, Bob Coyne, Tyrone Reaves, Robin Cole, Shirley Green, Grant Malone, Tiffany Owens,

**Staff:** Viatta Carter, Jeanine Frenz, Lee Koslow, Mary McKeown, Laura Seelman, Antwan Williams, Theodore Jordan, Tricia Campbell

**Guests:**

**Call to Order:**

The meeting was called to order by Glen Jeter at 8:16AM.

**Introductions:**

Glen Jeter welcomed our new Board Member:

- Dr. Lia Festenstein, Rochester City School District  
Executive Director, Office of Adult and Career Education Services (OACES)

**Approval of Meeting Minutes**

A motion to approve the June 20, 2023, meeting minutes was made by Ana Liss and seconded by Melissa James-Geska. The motion was passed unanimously.

**Finance Committee:**

**Financial Report - PY 2022, 4<sup>th</sup> Quarter**

Jeanine Frenz began the discussion with the following updates:

- At the June Board Meeting, we requested a transfer of Dislocated Worker and Administrative funds to the Adult category. Our projections for the requested amounts were accurate and we utilized the transferred funds before the conclusion of the fiscal year.
- In July, our request for a waiver from the State regarding the 80% allocation for PY 2022 for Adult and Dislocated Worker was granted. While the waiver wasn't ultimately needed due to projected obligations, it was requested as a precautionary measure.
- Cash Flow:
  - The PY 2023 Youth allocation of \$1.9 million was issued on June 30<sup>th</sup> and an additional \$1.2 million was issued for Adult and Dislocated Worker on August 3<sup>rd</sup>.

- We received the initial advance of TANF funding of \$807,000 in July and the remaining \$565,000 in August.
- Audit:
  - We are currently wrapping up the NYSDOL PY 2022 audit and anticipate one minor finding.
  - Our annual audit with Bonadio is scheduled to begin the week of October 16<sup>th</sup>.

Jeanine provided financials covering the Summary of Expenses July 2022 - June 2023.

#### Revenue

Total WIOA funds spent for the year were 36.7% Adult, 19.8% Dislocated Worker and 34.6% Youth. Some of these funds were from the prior program year. As of June 30<sup>th</sup>, the remaining funds for PY 2022 were approximately \$666,000 Adult, \$363,000 Dislocated Worker, \$898,000 Youth, and \$57,000 Administrative.

- Temporary Assistance to Needy Families (TANF) funding is for the preceding program year and corresponds to Summer Youth in 2022.
- Welfare to Work (WTW) is our two contracts with Monroe County. This program got off to a slow start. We should be fully ramped up by the Fall.
- Grant Revenue includes \$126,000 from ESL and \$210,000 from the Mother Cabrini Health Foundation.
- Other Revenue is the former ROCSEEDS Program and Ticket to Work Revenue.
- Gun Violence Prevention (GVP) Program was extended until 03/31/24. In the final quarter of our fiscal year, we had an additional \$172,000 of Revenue and Expenses in this category.

#### Program Expenses

##### Direct Expenses:

- Wage Subsidies ended the year at \$1.2M. The original budget included \$390,000 for GVP. In addition, we underspent \$308,000 in this category for TANF.
- Individual Training Accounts (ITAs) ended the year at \$556,000. The original budget included \$180,000 for GVP, but only came in at \$7,000.
- OJTs were very underspent. The original budget included \$115,000 for GVP.

##### Service Provider Payments:

- These payments were on budget for the year.

#### RWI Operational Expenses

- Salaries and Benefits were under budget because there was an additional \$875,000 budgeted for GVP. As of the end of the fiscal year, there were approximately five open positions in the Career Center. Four of these positions have been filled.
- All other operational expenses are on budget for the year except for Office Operations. A large part of this expenditure was related to the ESL Tech Refresh Grant.

A motion to approve the Review of Program Year 2022 Financials as presented was made by Melissa James-Geska and seconded by Joseph Morelle. The motion was passed unanimously.

#### Renewal of Work Experience Payrolling Contracts

Lee Koslow began the discussion with the following background information: Last year at this time, we had an RFP to cover the payrolling contracts for both our Adult and Youth work experiences. That allows us to put Adults on Work Experience Tryouts and Youth on paid work experiences without RochesterWorks having to expand our payroll every time. We pay staffing agencies a markup to take on these workers as temporary, for a number of weeks, depending on how long the

work experience is. They handle all the payroll and all the risks when it comes to having the employees on board. This has worked out to be a good service for us, for years.

At the September 2022 Board Meeting, the following fee-for-service contracts were approved for payroll services for participant work experience:

- TES Staffing, for payroll approximately 80 year-round youth and 230 summer youth per year; internal staffing for temporary youth staff; and as a secondary provider for all other payroll services.
- RBA Staffing (now known as TalentEdge), for payroll for 50 or more Adult, Dislocated Worker, National Dislocated Worker Grant, and other grant participants per year; and as a secondary provider for all other payroll services.

The contracts included up to three one-year renewal options. The initial term of both contracts began on October 1, 2022 and ended on September 30, 2023. Both TES Staffing and RBA Staffing (TalentEdge) have performed satisfactorily during the initial contract period.

The Executive Committee approved this extension at its August 15th, 2023 meeting.

Board Action: Approve the renewal of fee-for-service payroll contracts with TES Staffing, with an estimated annual budget of \$1,760,000, and RBA Staffing (TalentEdge), with an estimated annual budget of \$200,000, for a one-year renewal period beginning on October 1, 2023 and ending on September 30, 2024.

A motion to approve the Renewal of the Work Experience Payrolling Contract as presented was made by David Scott and seconded by Ana Liss. The motion was passed unanimously.

Please note, Joe Wesley, Glen Jeter and Janelle Harris abstained from this vote.

### **Approve MOU for Grant Writing Services for EDA Recompete Pilot Program Application**

Lee Koslow began the discussion noting the following information on the MOU:

Background:

- RochesterWorks is running point on a Rochester community application to the US Economic Development Administration's Recompete Pilot Program.
- We issued an RFP in early August seeking grant writing services to assist with the development and submission of the application.
- Four responses were received, and Brockport Research Institute was ranked the highest.

A motion to approve a Consultant Contract with Brockport Research Institute during the timeframe September 1, 2023 through October 5, 2023, with a maximum budget not to exceed \$7,000.00, plus 10% overage costs for unexpected expenses was made by Joseph Morelle and seconded by Joe Wesley. The motion was passed unanimously.

**Youth Committee:**

### **Amend WIOA Youth Incentive Policy**

Antwan Williams reviewed the following request to amend the WIOA Youth Incentive Policy to pilot an incentive program leveraging Empire State Development Office of Strategic Workforce Development (OSWD) Funds.

The ROCSEEDS program, funded in part by a grant from the OSWD, intends to utilize Workforce Innovation Opportunity Act (WIOA) Youth funds and NYS Gun Violence Prevention Program funds to provide incentives for classroom-based training to out-of-school youth (OSY) and in-school youth (ISY)

enrolled in the program. Each day of attendance is an intermediate step toward the goal of achieving the industry-recognized credential upon completion of classroom training.

The WIOA Youth Incentive Policy is amended as follows:

1. Youth participating in the ROCSEEDS program may be paid an incentive of \$54/day for attendance in classroom training for up to 15 days of classroom training. A day of attendance is defined as a minimum of two hours of participation in classroom training.
2. The maximum total incentive disbursement for each youth participating in the OSWD Pilot is \$810.
3. Incentive stipends will be paid directly to participants by RochesterWorks.

The provisions of this pilot program will sunset on December 31, 2025.

A motion to approve the amendments to the WIOA Youth Incentive Policy as presented was made by Melissa James-Geska and seconded by Danielle Maloy. The motion was passed unanimously.

Please note, Joe Wesley abstained from this vote.

### **Workforce Innovation and Performance Committee:**

#### **Amend Gun Violence Prevention Policy**

Lee Koslow reviewed the following amendments to the policy, one of the measures being taken to be able to maximize resources under this grant to allow us to serve more participants, serve them better, and spend out on grant funds in doing so.

Revisions include:

1. Allow for paid stipends for classroom training as part of ROCSEEDS program with YAMTEP
  - Up to \$54/day
  - Up to 15 days of classroom training (minimum 2 hours of training per day)
2. Increase the maximum occupational skills training amount to \$9,000

A motion to approve the amendments to the Gun Violence Prevention Policy as presented was made by Bert Brinkerhoff and seconded by Ana Liss. The motion was passed unanimously.

#### **Amend In-Demand Occupations List for Monroe County**

Lee Koslow began the discussion by noting that every 2 years, New York State Department of Labor's Research and Statistics Division publishes a new 10-year occupational employment projection for the regions, such as the 9-county Finger Lakes region, and that allows us to take a look at our demand list.

The Occupations in Demand List serves two main purposes, including:

1. We use this list when considering approval of WIOA-funded Individual Training Accounts (ITAs). If an occupation is on this list, and an individual wants a WIOA ITA in that occupation, provided they are otherwise eligible, and the training is on the Eligible Training Provider List, it goes a long way toward proving that it is a demand occupation that can be approved for WIOA training. We would not need a waiver or an overabundance of proof that there are jobs for the individual.
2. It serves as a signal for job seekers, training providers, businesses, and other stakeholders that these occupations have good hiring potential in Monroe County.

Currently, we have a list of 63 different Occupations in Demand, now reduced to 62 due to a change in the Standard Occupational Classification, combining two of the occupational titles into one.

The following are proposed additions and deletions to the List of Occupations in Demand for Monroe County:

**Proposed Additions:**

- Industrial Engineers
- Community Health Workers
- Special Education Teachers, Kindergarten and Elementary School
- Phlebotomists
- Ophthalmic Laboratory Technicians

**Proposed Deletions:**

- Paralegals and Legal Assistants
- Graphic Designers

A motion to approve the recommendations of the Workforce Innovation and Performance Committee to add 5 occupations and remove 2 occupations as presented was made by Melissa James-Geska and seconded by Gary Rogers. The motion was passed unanimously.

**Business Services:**

Laura Seelman began the discussion with a little background information, along with recommended revisions, to our 2 existing policies: On-the-Job Training Grant (OJT) and Work Experience Tryout (WET).

- History: Policies include required elements outlined in NYS Dept of Labor guidance & federal Workforce Innovation & Opportunity Act (WIOA) legislation.
- Purpose: Outline business & job seeker eligibility, occupational & industry requirements, application, monitoring, and reimbursement policies.
- Revisions: Updates to formatting, removal of elements determined to be internal procedure vs policy, changes to provide flexibility based on feedback from businesses & staff.

**Amend On-the-Job Training Grant Policy**

The On-the-Job Training Grant Program provides funding for businesses to hire and train unemployed candidates with some, but not all, skills needed for a full-time position. The business directly hires the candidate, and their current staff/supervisor train the new hire on-the-job in the skills they need to succeed in their role.

- 50% reimbursement of wages up to a maximum of \$7,500 per new hire
- Length of training period is minimum four weeks (160 hours) and maximum 16 weeks (640 hours)
- Businesses eligible to receive up to three contracts per program year (July 1 - June 30)

**Proposed Revisions to the OJT Policy include:**

- Minimum Employee Requirement removed to allow start-ups to participate
- Expand definition of underemployed workers to include part-time workers
- Allow use of OJT if individual has accessed other grants/funding (e.g., ITA)
- Expand eligibility for Re-Employment (same participant/same employer)
- Remove JobZone Skills Survey - seen by staff as a barrier to participation
- Considerations given to 3 OJT cap for business (if participant cancels midway)
- Align with Priority of Service and Self-Sufficiency Wage policies

## **Amend Work Experience Tryout Grant Policy**

The Work Experience Tryout Program allows businesses to try out candidates with barriers to employment in short-term, paid work experiences to see if their skills and work habits are a fit for the business and its culture. Candidates with inconsistent work histories or long-term unemployment issues work on-site with a business while employed by a staffing agency partner.

- Wages and staffing agency markup 100% paid by RochesterWorks
- Length of work experience is four weeks (160 hours)
- Candidates establish a work history, demonstrate success and develop skills to lead to unsubsidized employment

Proposed Revisions to the WET Policy include:

- Clarify that jobsite should be in Monroe County
- Clarify that WET participants cannot represent more than 25% of employer staff
- Consideration of employer past performance when reviewing application
- Expand eligibility for Re-Employment (same participant/same employer)
- Clarify definition of full-time employee (minimum 35 hours/week)
- Encourage retention of employee (not required)
- Allow for expansion from 4 weeks to 6 weeks, when appropriate

## **Adopt Incumbent Worker Training Grant Policy**

Laura also introduced the new Incumbent Worker Training Policy that will provide funding for businesses to train and upskill their existing employees to help increase competitiveness, retain a skilled workforce and avert potential layoffs. The Incumbent Worker Training Policy includes the following:

Training Requirements:

- Training or educational activity that demonstrates a benefit to both the business and employee in terms of retention and layoff aversion, increased wages, productivity, competitiveness and/or skill attainment
- Completed within six (6) months

Reimbursement Policies:

- Maximum award amount \$10,000
- Limit one award per program year
- Reimbursement anywhere from 50%-90% reimbursement to businesses for costs including instructor/course costs and exam fees
- Business must provide matching funds in the form of training costs, employee wages, travel expenses, etc.

Business Eligibility:

- Operations and jobsite located in Monroe County
- In need of assistance training current employees
- Able to contract for customized, short-term training services

Trainee Eligibility:

- Must be considered "incumbent workers"
  - Employed
  - Qualify as an employee as defined by FLSA
  - Employed with business for six months or more\*\*
- Reside within 9 county Finger Lakes region
- Work as a full-time employee of the business (35 hrs/wk)\*
- Earn at least NYS minimum wage and up to a maximum of local area self-sufficiency wage rate of \$34.87

A motion to approve the revisions to the On-the-Job Training Grant and Work Experience Tryout Programs and the introduction of the new Incumbent Worker Training Grant Policy as presented was made by Shawn Futch and seconded by Sergio Esteban. The motion was passed unanimously.

Please note, Ana Liss and Rachel Baranello abstained from this vote.

## **Director's Report:**

### **Summer Youth Employment Report**

Antwan Williams reported the following on the 2023 Summer Youth Employment Program:

Over 700 Youth Benefited:

- Over 700 young individuals (445 on the RW side) benefited from wage subsidies provided through SYEP/SOOP.
- A pivotal partnership with RCSD significantly contributed to the success of SYEP/SOOP, including:
  - Effective communication with counselors, marketing, and recruitment.
  - On-site access to directly connect with youth.
  - Opportunity to meet RCSD community service requirement.

Comprehensive Onboarding included:

- Streamlined Onboarding: Youth now undergo a comprehensive 2-day onboarding process, covering:
  - Job Readiness and Employment Retention
  - Team Building
  - Sexual Harassment and Financial Literacy

Financial Empowerment through Job Connect included:

- The Job Connect partnership allowed youth to open non-custodial banking accounts with ESL without fees and penalties.

Youth Ambassadors for 2024:

- Recognizing Excellence: 20 outstanding youth were chosen as Youth Ambassadors for 2024 due to their exceptional work ethic, allowing youth to be involved in different aspects of planning, and providing a platform for youth voice.
- Building Connections: These youth engaged in team-building exercises at Muller's Farm.

Room for Improvement includes:

- Extended Application Period:
  - Consider creating a revised timeline to extend the application period, providing more opportunities for youth to apply.
- Comprehensive Reporting:
  - Enhance reporting mechanisms to include wage data, offering a complete overview of program outcomes.
- Engaging Appreciation Breakfast:
  - Explore new formats and approaches for the appreciation breakfast to make it more engaging and memorable for all participants.

A motion to approve the Summer Youth Employment Report as presented was made by Joe Wesley and seconded by Lia Festenstein. The motion was passed unanimously.

At this time, the WDB members went into Executive Session.

**Adjournment 9:38 AM**

A motion to adjourn the RochesterWorks Workforce Development Board meeting was made by Joseph Morelle and seconded by Sergio Esteban. The motion was passed unanimously.

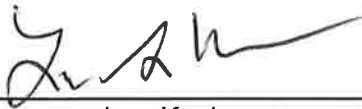
**WDB Meeting Schedule:**

December 19, 2023

March 19, 2024

June 18, 2024

Approved



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Lee Koslow

12-19-2023

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Date

Submitted by: Mary McKeown

Reviewed by:

Jeanine Frenz: 10/10/23

Antwan Williams: 10/5/23

Lee Koslow: 10/6/2023

Laura Seelman: 10/4/23