

**Workforce Development Board  
Meeting Minutes  
Tuesday, June 18, 2024  
8:00AM - 9:30AM  
United Way Building – Conference Room #1  
Board members also attended via Zoom**

**Attendees:** Dana Abramson, Marco Altieri, Zachary Arnold, Mary Beth Artuso, Bert Brinkerhoff, Robert Coyne, Sergio Esteban, Melissa Geska, Glen Jeter, Gary Rogers, Alma Vieru, Joe Wesley, Randy Andre, Robin Cole, Rodric Cox-Cooper, Rick Donovan, John Brach (Proxy for Mayor Malik Evans), Lia Festenstein, Shawn Futch, Shirley Green, Ana Liss, Danielle Maloy, Roosevelt Mareus, Joseph Morelle, Angelica Perez-Delgado, David Scott

**Absent:** Rachel Baranello, Thomas Battley, Kaitlyn Bond, Janelle Harris, Tyrone Reaves, Michael Weed, Grant Malone, Tiffany Owens, Patricia Stovall-Lane

**Staff:** Viatta Carter, Jeanine Frenz, Lee Koslow, Behiye Mansour, Mary McKeown, Dave Seeley, Laura Seelman, Antwan Williams, Tricia Campbell

**Guests:**

**Call to Order:**

The meeting was called to order by Glen Jeter at 8:02AM.

**Approval of Meeting Minutes**

A motion to approve the March 19, 2024 meeting minutes was made by Melissa Geska and seconded by Joe Wesley. The motion was passed unanimously.

**Organizational:**

**Appointment to Executive Committee**

Dave Seeley announced that we had a vacant seat to the WDB Executive Committee, and our Chair and Vice Chair have recommended Mary Beth Artuso, Complemar Partners, Inc. to serve in this role. Following through the lengthy process, she has already been nominated by the Mayor, County Executive, RW Board Chair, and RW Board Vice Chair. All that is required now is for the Workforce Board as a whole to approve her nomination.

A motion to approve the nomination of Mary Beth Artuso to our WDB Executive Committee was made by Melissa Geska and seconded by Joseph Morelle. The motion was passed unanimously.

**Blanket Authorization for WIOA Funds**

Dave explained that this resolution grants Workforce Board staff the authority to transfer funds between Adult and Dislocated Worker funding without requiring WDB approval each time. We receive two funding streams from WIOA Adult and Dislocated Worker, allocated to customers based on certain criteria. This request simplifies fund transfers, which occur throughout the year. The WDB would still be notified in advance of the transfer request.

A motion to approve Blanket Transfer Authorization for WIOA Funds for Program Year 2024 was made by Melissa Geska and seconded by Rodric Cox-Cooper. The motion was passed unanimously.

## **Finance Committee:**

### **Review of Program Year 2023, Quarter 3 Financials**

Jeanine Frenz began the discussion with the following updates:

- In early June we requested a transfer of \$200,000 from Dislocated Worker to Adult funding and it was approved last week. This is our third transfer of the year, for a total of \$800,000 transferred from Dislocated Worker to Adult.

Jeanine provided financials covering the Summary of Expenses January 2024 - March 2024.

#### **Revenue**

- Total WIOA funds for the third quarter were \$1.6M: 42% Adult, 19.2% Dislocated Worker, and 27% Youth.
- SCION: This funding for the Disability Resource Coordinator through the State began its third year on January 1<sup>st</sup> and is on budget for the quarter. The program has been extended through December 2026.
- Temporary Assistance to Needy Families (TANF): The Summer Youth Employment Program for 2023 received the remaining funding this quarter, beyond the initial 85% advance.
- In School Youth: Although no budget was allocated for this program, we received an advance of \$291K at the end of January and a second advance of \$583K in April.
- Monroe County: We are on budget for the quarter and YTD for both programs.
- ROC Seeds: Billing for the ROC Seeds program is semi-annually. Our attorneys are finalizing the opinion letter, after which we can submit the required documentation to Empire State Development. We anticipate a reimbursement lag time of 6 to 14 weeks for expenses from June through November 2023.
- School to Work Navigator: This program begins July 1<sup>st</sup> with funding already advanced by the Farash and ESL Foundations.
- Gun Violence Prevention Program: This program concluded on March 31<sup>st</sup>. We have closed out this grant, with total revenue and expenditures of \$950K out of the \$2.25M allocated over the life of the grant.
- Other Revenue for this period includes \$40K from Cities for Financial Empowerment, as well as some United Way funding and interest income.

#### **Program Expenses**

##### **Direct Expenses:**

- Individual Training Accounts (ITAs): These are slightly under budget for the quarter, primarily due to underspending on the Trade Act (\$0 vs. \$15K budget) and GVP (\$5,400 vs. \$30K budget); however, spending for Adult and Dislocated Worker funding is on track for this quarter.
- OJTs: These are under budget for this quarter. Our Business Services Department has made significant progress with OJTs, particularly with COMIDA funding, but this will not be reflected in our financials until the payments are made or fully accrued at year end. In addition, we budgeted \$271K for OJTs under the ROC Seeds Program, which has yet to be billed.
- Wage Subsidies: These are considerably under budget primarily due to a shortfall in Work Experience Opportunities for Youth and minimal opportunities (\$12K vs. \$103K) initially planned for the GVP Program.

#### Service Provider Payments:

- WIOA Youth payments are lower than budgeted due to the loss of 1 navigator agency (CRC) and a slow start for two other navigator agencies.
- GVP provider payments are on target for this quarter. We project closing this grant with \$134K in payments, against a budget of \$200K for this year.

#### Operational Expenses

- All operational expenses are on budget except for office operations. We also had expenses related to new laptops and a battery backup for our server. Travel expenditures are over budget due to the NYATEP Youth Conference in March.

A motion to approve the Review of Program Year 2023, Quarter 3 Financials as presented was made by Melissa Geska and seconded by Rodric Cox-Cooper. The motion was passed unanimously.

#### Review and Adopt Program Year 2024 Budget

Dave Seeley noted that our Program Year 2024 Budget was reviewed by the Executive, Finance and Audit Committee in May and included the following talking points:

- Total Expenses at \$11.764 Million (48% increase since PY 21)
- What is new?
  - Full year In-School-Youth Employment Program (ROC Your Job) - \$1.5M
  - Recompete Pilot Strategy Development Program
  - Gun Violence Prevention Program has ended
- 10% cut in WIOA funding (approximately \$620K) for this Program Year
- We have weathered the storm and do not see any programmatic reductions. In fact, we will have more programming. How?
  - We are 1 of 13 LWDA's (out of 33) that qualified for supplemental WIOA funding (\$200K) made available, based on meeting previous spending obligations.
  - Our growing non-WIOA/non-OTDA revenue - now totaling \$1.3M (and likely to grow)
- What is not in here, but we are optimistic:
  - Additional funding for OJT and ITA programs.
  - New funding (just awarded last week) for a Post-Employment/Retention Program

Jeanine Frenz provided the following for the Program Year 2024 Budget.

#### Revenue

- WIOA: The budget includes a 10% decrease in WIOA funding compared to PY 23:
- We were granted an additional \$200K for training expenses, which narrows the decrease. The carry over amounts are primarily in Youth and Dislocated Worker.
- SCION: Funding is budgeted at \$130K. We have not yet received formal notification of the additional \$30K which was slated for January 2024.
- TANF (Summer Youth Employment): Funding for summer youth employment for this year has increased by more than \$200K.
- In School Youth: The ROC Your Job Program, which funds after school employment for youth still in high school, started in January 2024.
- Welfare to Work funds are through Monroe County to provide Employability Assessments and a Skills, Training and Experience Program (STEP) to individuals receiving public assistance.
- Other Revenue: This includes Ticket to Work and benefits advisement revenue, as well as job fair sponsorship income and interest income.
- COMIDA: This includes On-the-Job/Incumbent Worker Training and the Employment Recovery Program for individuals recovering from substance abuse.

- Gun Violence Prevention Program: This is not included as Revenue because the program has ended.
- ROC Seeds: This is funded through Empire State Development and is a partnership with YAMTEP.

Program Expense Highlights

- Wage subsidies have been increased due to the In-School Youth Program. Also included are wage subsidies through the COMIDA program as well as remaining Mother Cabrini Health Foundation funds.
- The ITA budget is increased due to an additional \$200K of WIOA funding.
- WIOA Youth Provider Payments are decreased because of the funding cut. We have eliminated two outside navigator positions. Service Provider Payments combined with Supportive Services will give us \$700K spread across four navigator agencies for 10 navigators.

Operational Expense Highlights

- We are adding only one new position to the budget. It is for a Youth Program Supervisor and this individual will oversee much of the In-School Youth Programming.
- Benefits funding is being kept flat as a percentage of salary this year.
- Except for rent and utilities, we are projecting budget cuts in all other categories.

A motion to approve the Review of Program Year 2024 Budget as presented was made by Joe Wesley and seconded by Zachary Arnold. The motion was passed unanimously.

**Requests for Proposals:**

**Award Contract for Website Redevelopment and Services**

Dave Seeley provided the following background information:

- Workforce Development Board (WDB) staff wishes to enlist the services of a qualified firm to assist RochesterWorks with 2 primary objectives:
  1. The redevelopment of the primary website, [www.rochesterworks.org](http://www.rochesterworks.org)
  2. Code review and service agreement for supplemental web applications.
- An RFP was released on 4/25/24 and was sent to 18 web development firms
- 18 Responses were received
- The RFP Review Committee interviewed 3 finalists.

Recommendation:

The RFP Committee has determined that the organization would be best served by entering into contracts with 2 separate firms, who would each execute 1 of the primary objectives of the project:

1. Contract with Black Dog, LLC for primary website redevelopment, not to exceed \$52,972.
2. Contract with Envative for code review and ongoing service of supplemental website, for a cost not to exceed \$10,000.

A motion to approve the Contracts for Website Redevelopment and Services as presented was made by Melissa Geska and seconded by Bob Coyne. The motion was passed unanimously.

**Award contract for Programmatic Outreach (Marketing) for WIOA Youth Navigator Program**

Dave Seeley provided the following background information:

- Seeks to better market our WIOA Youth programming and restore sustained high enrollment in the program.
- Post-pandemic: more programs with target population who have grown harder to reach.
- An RFP was released on May 1, 2024 and was sent to 19 marketing and communication firms.

- 6 Qualified responses were received.
- 3 Firms were interviewed.

**Recommendation:**

The RFP Committee has recommended Advance Media NY. Contract not to exceed \$100,000 for a campaign to take place in Summer/Fall of 2024.

A motion to approve the Contract for Programmatic Outreach for the WIOA Youth Navigator Program as presented was made by Melissa Geska and seconded by Ana Liss. The motion was passed unanimously.

**Youth Committee:**

**Amendment of WIOA Youth Navigator Program**

Dave Seeley provided the following background information on the WIOA In-School-Youth Program Service Providers for PY 2024 as follows:

- Approximately \$199,000 reduction in WIOA Youth funding has forced us to reduce the overall number of Navigators serving the program.
- 1 Provider (CRC) is now defunct. Those navigators were brought in-house mid-program year.
- Overall, there will be a reduction of 2 Navigators in the program, which will be the result of 2 agencies losing 1 navigator.

**PY 2024 WDB subrecipients for Navigator Program:**

- Center for Youth: 4 Navigators
- Greentopia/Green Visions: 1 Navigator
- Community Place of Rochester: 3 Navigators
- Starbridge: 2 Navigators

RochesterWorks will have 3 in-house Navigators.

Total Obligation for PY 2024: \$700,000 to 10 partner agencies.

A motion to make an amendment to our WIOA Youth Navigator Program for PY 2024 as presented was made by Melissa Geska and seconded by Robert Coyne. The motion was passed unanimously.

**Workforce Innovation and Performance Committee:**

**Renewal of One-Stop Operator Contract**

Dave Seeley began the discussion by noting that for the past two years we have worked with Action Collaboration. They are a WIOA subrecipient of RochesterWorks, Inc., acting as our One-Stop System Operator. We are required to have a One-Stop Operator whose job is to convene workforce system partners, and that has to be contracted out because it is supposed to be an external agency that works throughout the year with all of the WIOA system partners. We convene and discuss common strategies and it is a good partnership. Our staff have been very happy with Action Collaboration. The recommendation is to continue, and this will be the final one-year renewal of the contract.

**Summary:**

Action Collaboration is a WIOA subrecipient of RochesterWorks, Inc., acting as our One-Stop System Operator. The current Operator Contract includes the option of one (1) remaining one-year

renewal. They passed their annual monitoring review, and staff is recommending a one-year renewal of their contract.

A motion to approve that Action Collaboration's One-Stop System Operator Contract be renewed for the period 7/1/2024-6/30/2025, in the amount of \$8,000.00 was made by Ana Liss and seconded by Joseph Morelle. The motion was passed unanimously.

### **Director's Report:**

#### **WDB Member Workforce Spotlight: Melissa Geska**

Dave Seeley began this discussion by noting that Glen Jeter wanted to try something new at our Board meetings. He would like to spotlight our Board Members and have them talk about the work they are doing. The first WDB Member Spotlight featured is our Vice Chair, Melissa Geska, President, US Ceiling Corp.

Melissa talked briefly about the background of her construction firm, noting 23 years in business, minority woman certified in New York State, but really a social impact focus for them. Their motto is empowering lives where they live and work, because it is really important for them to be part of the community, and really it is about being people-focused and purpose-driven. She said the reason she found passion in construction, which was not a traditional career path for not just her personally, but for most women, is recognizing the opportunity to provide priority populations access to construction trades training. They have 100 employees and are about 46% minority makeup of that population, and that is done by intention, by outreaching and recruitment to organizations that serve priority populations almost exclusively.

They self-perform Acoustical Ceiling (ACT) Installation, Wood Framing & Metal Stud Framing, Insulation Services, and Drywall Installation & Finishing. They are also an exclusive dealer for AeroBarrier, which is an air ceiling system that reduces air leakage in multi-family and single-family homes.

Melissa also noted since opening their doors in 2001, they have:

- Created 500 Jobs in our community.
- Helped build 11,807 affordable housing units.
- Made 120 charitable donations.

In 2018 they developed an internal academy which initially started with hard skill training and grew to also provide a lot of soft skill development. Since launching their USC Academy, they have provided 339,283 hours of paid skills training in ACT, AeroBarrier, Air Sealing, Blueprint Reading, Drywall (installation & finishing), Insulation, Metal Stud Framing, Wood Framing, plus Safety, intro to estimation & soft skills training.

Melissa is also now a developer and was attracted to development through just connections in the Rochester Community that know she has that social impact focus and recommended her for the opportunity to go after the Bull's Head Revitalization Project. Team Members/Companies and their roles, along with other Partners on the Bull's Head project were included in the presentation. Along with a commitment to the City of Rochester, this team has the ability as a collective team to execute large, very complex projects, and that is exactly what this one is. The area of the revitalization is 12 acres and is centered on the convergence of 5 major arterials: West Main Street, Genesee Street, Chili Avenue, West Avenue, and Brown Street. Most of it is new construction. It is a Brownfield Opportunity Area and an Opportunity Zone. They will also be renovating an existing 15,000 square foot building. This project has been a long time in the making and still is probably a couple of years out from actually being shovel ready. Development Concepts look to bring about almost 800 housing units and hundreds of thousands of commercial square footage in this development, both

on the north side of West Main Street and the south side. On the south side of development, they are looking at a vertical hydroponic farm, where 1,000+ acres of product will be grown that will yield an incredible amount of microgreens and fresh food into a food desert area. Another retail they are hoping to bring here is a personally subsidized grocery. The very first shovel ready project will be an ESL branch. In addition, a lot of what they are predicting in terms of urban density is factoring that they can do some subterranean parking, adding about 375 spaces underground. The north side will include multi-family housing and some townhouses. Original plans for 160 Clifton Street have changed. Previous plans for this space included a police substation. Then the City Council put a freeze on those funds and the City started to really look at other ways to utilize the space. Melissa has announced that she made a proposal to move her business to this building, which will be the first anchor commercial tenant. With moving her 100 person construction business to this neighborhood, they are planning to take the existing structure, which is about 15,000 square feet and adding 3 stories to it. The Bull's Head Revitalization Team is looking to be shovel ready at the end of this year for ESL's Project. They will get into design early next year for 160 Clifton Street and start construction hopefully next spring. The rest of the project is likely to be 2026 or 2027.

In closing, Melissa mentioned their focus for programming is the intentionality of HEART. Recognizing when they partner with local community agencies on the subject of Health, Education, Arts, Recreation and Technology, then they are really bringing sustainability and viability to the community itself.

### **Presentation: Update Business Grants Program**

Laura Seelman began this discussion by reviewing some data on this program year, which runs July 1<sup>st</sup> through June 30<sup>th</sup>. Over the past year, we have made a significant effort to grow, enhance and make some adjustments to a lot of our Grant offerings for businesses to make them more accessible, increase business participation, and just really try to improve things overall. Some of the updates and changes that have been made include:

- June 2023 - WIP Committee & WDB Board approve On-the-Job Training (OJT) award amount maximum increase from \$5,000 to \$7,500
- September 2023 - WIP Committee & WDB Board approved Incumbent Worker Training (IWT) Grant Policy
- October 2023 - Approved for \$250K in funding from County of Monroe IDA to support OJT & IWT Grants. We are thankful for the support of COMIDA and Ana Liss for their support.
- December 2023 - Launch IWT Grant for businesses
- January 2024 - New Business Services staff member hired

Laura provided an overview on the activity over the last program year, including:

- 62 Grant applications approved, serving 33 unique businesses, serving 104 individual trainees, to process over \$350,000 in grant opportunities.
- Total Funding Provided in all 3 programs include the following comparison, Program Year 2022 vs. Program Year 2023:
  - Overall, we have doubled the volume of grant applications that we have processed and the amount of funding we have been able to award to businesses over the last year (OJT ↑112%, WET ↑104%, IWT N/A).
- Total Trainees Served in all 3 programs has increased (OJT ↑71%, WET ↑89%, IWT N/A).
- Average Hourly Wage Rate for OJT and WET includes growth in the hourly wage rate for individuals who have been served through these programs. OJT has increased slightly (↑4%) and we have seen a higher increase in WET (↑13%).
- Average Award Amount, OJT and WET includes a significant increase in the OJT program (↑24%) and WET has increased slightly (↑8%).
- Industries Supported by Trainee, OJT and WET includes the industries we have been able to serve and the growth that we have seen in our previous program year compared to the current program year. We have grown particularly in the areas of Advanced Manufacturing and Skilled

Trades. We also do a significant amount of work with Non-Profit organizations. There are areas where we would like to grow and see improvement. Healthcare is a huge need in the community. We have grown the number of businesses we have supported from 0 to 3 in the last program year, but there is still a lot of work to do.

Laura also provided a brief overview of the new Incumbent Worker Training Grant Program, including:

- We have provided \$36,677 to businesses to train 46 individuals, average cost/trainee \$797.33. The businesses themselves also contribute a percentage as well. They have to contribute anywhere from 50% to 90% of project costs as part of the application process.
- Examples of Training supported include a lot of soft skills, leadership-type skills, as well as technical skills, such as blueprint reading for manufacturing.
- We are really excited with the potential to continue growing this program offering. We are going to be doing more over the next program year, again with COMIDA funding and marketing support, to be able to continue to run more ads and do more outreach to get more businesses signed up.

### **Strategic Plan Implementation**

Dave Seeley provided a brief update of the 2022 Strategic Plan Implementation, noting the following:

- Plan adopted by Workforce Development Board in September 2022.
- Developed with consultant Peter Carpino and Associates.
- Strategic Planning Committee made up of WDB Board Members and RochesterWorks staff.
- Aimed to complement the Local Workforce Area 4-year plan that is required by WIOA.
- Focuses on organization, in addition to workforce system outputs and outcomes.

The Strategic Plan includes four Primary Objectives and Strategies, as follows:

**Objective 1:** Increase access for job seekers and ensure that employers can retain, as well as recruit, skilled workers.

#### **Strategies:**

1. Develop the partnerships and infrastructure to assist small, mid-sized, and large employers by industry with recruitment, retention, employment training, and placement.
2. Create partnerships within the local workforce system that will enable RWI to support recruits once they are hired, including mentoring between employer and employee, transportation, day care, and other supports.

**Objective 2:** Become more “community facing” by more effectively using communication technologies and increasing access to services.

#### **Strategies:**

1. Outreach proactively to potential job seekers through churches, schools, neighborhood associations, and other community-based organizations.
2. Outreach proactively to small, medium, and large employers by industry, both directly and through existing associations.

**Objective 3:** Diversify revenue streams; lessen reliance on Federal and State funding; and generate new, sustainable revenue for current and new programming.

#### **Strategies:**

1. Benchmark and develop a fee structure for employer services (i.e., placement, administration, training).
2. Develop a comprehensive resource development plan with the support of an outside consultant.



**Objective 4:** Address the disproportionate impact that COVID-19 has had on the employment of people of color, veterans, women, and persons with disabilities.

Strategies:

1. Create comprehensive recruitment and placement approaches targeted to impacted segments, in partnership with other community-based organizations and promote training opportunities for populations that have been disproportionately affected.
2. Remove barriers and provide the necessary “wraparound” support services to job seekers by proactively developing relationships with the community-based organizations.

In monitoring our progress, for some of these we were able to use existing metrics that we do track, that are actually mandated by WIOA and performance indicators, and some we had to start tracking, which did not represent to us challenges, but we were able to incorporate, to merge with our strategic plan.

Each strategy had a Key Driver, Metrics and Action Steps, and we do track data. RochesterWorks already has certain dashboard metrics, including:

- WIOA Primary Performance Indicators (Employment at Q2 and Q4 Post Program Exit, Measurable Skills Gain, etc.)
- At the request of Monroe County, for the past several years it has furnished additional dashboard indicators (recruitment outputs for employers, training grants, business grants, unique employer engagements).

The Strategic Plan led to new dashboard items being created (i.e., Community Outreach metrics).

Action Steps:

- The good news is, RochesterWorks overall has taken tangible steps to implement the 8 Strategies within the Strategic Plan.
- Some have followed the recommended playbook (i.e., Business Services and Community Outreach).
- Others have used a different implementation course (i.e., fundraising).

Dave provided an example of how we approached each strategy, and there were 8 of them. This example involved our Community Outreach, and we know that we have taken targeted action towards implementation.

- We created 2 new FTEs specific to Community Outreach; Community Outreach Specialist and Recompete Community Outreach Specialist.
- More partnerships with other human services agencies who interface with a similar target population.
- Outreach to Job Seekers:
  - A focused strategic initiative concentrating on prime-age employment in the City of Rochester (Recompete Rochester).
  - RWI has taken the lead with spearheading RMAPI’s human-centered initiative to increase employment levels of Black men.
- New strategic partnerships (i.e., RCSD, YAMTEP, Beyond the Sanctuary).

Dave also presented how some of the metrics were suggested in the Strategic Plan and what we ended up doing with our dashboard. The dashboard for this particular strategy shows that some of the metrics are found in multiple strategies, but in this case, we started tracking our Community Outreach and you can see growth in that. Noted is the growth in our Average Monthly Traffic, and our Total Traffic will exceed last year:

Metrics included:

- # of People Contacted

- # of People Using Services
- # of Placements
- Retention Rate
- # of Referrals

Dave also noted the following:

- We do track referrals, but it is done by the Business Services division and probably does not come close to capturing every instance where a member of our staff makes a referral to an employer, other agency, or training provider.
- Retention Rate is a metric which we hope to make progress, but with our Business Services follow-up and Supportive Services Policy, and through new post-employment initiatives.
- # of Placements is a broad metric and all our areas of our business do placements. It is just how you track them.

Noting what we still need to do includes:

- Overall, our implementation plan demonstrates that we have made substantial programmatic and organizational decisions that advance the strategies and objectives of the plan. So, qualitatively, we are doing well.
- We still have some work to do with developing a more concise dashboard that demonstrates this in a quantitative manner.
- In some instances, this involves just re-situating data we already collect or have at our disposal.
- In others, we need to continue to develop dashboards that demonstrate the full extent to which we are meeting a strategic objective.

**Executive Session:**

At this time, Board Members only went into Executive Session.  
Meeting Minutes end at 9:30AM


**Adjournment: 9:48AM**

Glen Jeter adjourned the Executive Session at 9:48AM

**WDB Meeting Schedule:**

September 17, 2024  
December 17, 2024  
March 18, 2025  
June 17, 2025

Approved:

  
\_\_\_\_\_  
David Seeley

9-17-24  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

Submitted by: Mary McKeown

Reviewed by:

David Seeley: 7/2/24  
Jeanine Frenz: 6/28/2024  
Laura Seelman: 7/1/24  
Lee Koslow: 6/28/2024