

**Workforce Development Board
Meeting Minutes
Tuesday, March 17, 2026
8:00AM - 9:30AM
United Way Building - The Rochester Room
Board members also attended via Zoom**

Attendees: Dana Abramson, Bert Brinkerhoff, Anthony DiTucci, Sergio Esteban, Heather Gole, Janelle Harris, Glen Jeter, Edward Kurowski, Michael Nevins, Melissa Suchodolski, Alma Vieru, Michael Weed, Dr. Charlene Wilson, Rodric Cox-Cooper, John Brach (Proxy for Mayor Malik Evans), Lia Festenstein, Shawn Futch, Dr. Shirley Green, Judy Honan, Ana Liss, Dr. Roosevelt Mareus, Joseph Morelle, Tiffany Owens, Angelica Perez-Delgado, David Scott, Dr. Patricia Stovall-Lane

Absent: Marco Altieri, Zachary Arnold, Mary Beth Artuso, Robert Coyne, Tyrone Reaves, Gary Rogers, Randy Andre, Dr. Robin Cole, Rick Donovan, Grant Malone

Staff: Dave Seeley, Tricia Campbell, Viatta Carter, Marisol Cruz-Melendez, Jeanine Frenz, Theodore Jordan, Behiye Mansour, Mary McKeown, Antwan Williams, Daniel Donnarumma

Guests:

Call to Order:

The meeting was called to order by Melissa Suchodolski at 8:02 AM.

Approval of Meeting Minutes

A motion to approve the December 16, 2025 meeting minutes was made by Joseph Morelle and seconded by Glen Jeter. The motion was passed unanimously.

Finance Committee:

Review of Program Year 2025, Quarter 2 Financials:

Jeanine Frenz noted that earlier this month, we requested a transfer of \$150K from Dislocated Worker to Adult. This transfer was approved by DOL yesterday.

The following Financials were provided covering the Summary of Expenses.

Financials:

Revenue:

- WIOA: Year to date, we have received \$3.15M in WIOA funding (40% Adult, 13% DW, and 33% Youth. The remainder is Administration). This total also includes \$142K in incentive funding earned from meeting the prior program year goals.
- SCION: Funding for the Disability Resource Coordinator is on budget.
- SYEP: We fully expended all the Summer 2025 Youth Employment funding.
- In School Youth/ROC Your Job: This program is performing very well. The total allocation for the program is \$3.9M, which exceeded our original budget projection of \$2.85M. We have fully expended the advance the State provided to us and we have received another advance.

- EDA-Recompete: This grant ran through January 2026, we have submitted the final closeout documents, and they will be paying us the remainder this week.
- Empire State Development: Billing is semi-annual. The third voucher was submitted last month.
- COMIDA: Our contract with COMIDA began in August and we are on track to spend the full \$200K.
- Monroe County and Private Foundation Revenue: Both are on budget. This past quarter we received \$231K from ESL for the Post Employment Grant and \$210K from the Farash Foundation for the School to Work Navigator program.

Program Expenses

Direct Expenses:

- Individual Training Accounts are on budget while OJTs are under budget.
- Wage Subsidies are at \$2.73M; the majority of this is from the Summer Youth Employment Program and \$1M is from Roc Your Job.
- Client Services are about 78% of our budget, driven mostly by SYEP activity.

Service Provider Payments:

- Service Provider Payments are on budget.

Operational Expenses:

- Salaries and Benefits are on budget year to date.
- Insurance is over budget because of an overpayment. There will be a correction in the third quarter.
- Office Expense is over budget because of the CRM software that we purchased last fall, and we upgraded our document management system.

A motion to approve the Review of Program Year 2025, Quarter 2 Financials as presented was made by Joseph Morelle and seconded by Dr. Patricia Stovall-Lane. The motion was passed unanimously.

The following items are from the Executive Committee Meeting. Dave noted the Executive Committee did meet but we did not have a quorum. Generally, these items are handled by referral. The Executive Committee reviewed them and found no requirement for a formal vote.

Contracted Legal Services:

Background:

- RFP for general legal services was released in October 2025.
- 9 firms directly invited to respond; general invite posted on website.
- Four proposals received.
- RFP Committee unanimously scored Harris Beach Murtha the highest.
- Interview conducted in January 2026.

Recommendation:

- Positive referral to the Workforce Board to enter into a service agreement with Harris Beach Murtha to provide RochesterWorks with general legal services.
 - Term of one year, with an option for the Executive Director to execute up to three (3) one-year renewals.
 - Hourly rate to not exceed \$630.

A motion to enter into a service agreement with Harris Beach Murtha to provide RochesterWorks with general legal services as presented was made by Joseph Morelle and seconded by Anthony DiTucci. The motion was passed unanimously.

RETI Contract Award:

Background:

- RFP released in November 2025 to solicit pre-weatherization training providers, as part of New York State Department of Labor's (NYSDOL) Renewable Energy Training Initiative (RETI).
- RochesterWorks received only one responsive proposal, which was submitted by Cornerstone Training Institute (CTI).
- In January 2026, the Board authorized RochesterWorks to proceed with the evaluation and potential award of funding to CTI.
- RFP Committee reviewed and recommended a contract with CTI for an amount not to exceed \$100,000 to train an estimated 24 participants.
- WDB Board approval was provided electronically on January 17, 2026.

Recommendation:

- Positive referral to the full Workforce Board to ratify the authorization to contract with Cornerstone, that was provided initially through electronic voting.

A motion to ratify the authorization of the contract with Cornerstone, that was already provided in the form of electronic voting in January, was made by David Scott and seconded by Anthony DiTucci. The motion was passed unanimously.

SYEP Program Awards:

Background:

- RochesterWorks issued a Request for Proposals (RFP) in December 2025 seeking community partners capable of delivering structured, employment-based, paid summer work experiences to youth 14-15 years of age, as part of the 2026 Summer Youth Employment Program (SYEP).
- A total of nine proposals were received, eight of which, upon review by the Youth Committee, have been recommended for funding. Combined, these eight organizations will serve an estimated 140 teen participants.
- RochesterWorks anticipates allocating up to \$442,613 to support the SYEP work experience programs awarded funding through the RFP.

Recommendation:

- A positive referral to the full Workforce Board to fund eight work experience programs for the 2026 Summer Youth Employment Program, referenced in Attachment "A" of this resolution, for an estimated amount of \$442,613.

Organizations include:

- Action for a Better Community
- Boys & Girls Clubs of Rochester, Inc.
- Community Place of Greater Rochester
- Prosper Rochester, Inc.
- Roc Royal Inc.
- Starbridge Services, Inc.
- Taproot Collective
- University of Rochester

A motion to approve funding of eight work experience programs for the 2026 Summer Youth Employment Program, for an estimated amount of \$442,613 as presented was made by Joseph Morelle and seconded by Dr. Patricia Stovall-Lane. The motion was passed unanimously.

Proposed Revision to Policy 104: ITA Guidelines:

Background:

- This policy has historically used a lower maximum funding amount for Commercial Drivers License (CDL) training than for all other training courses (\$4,000 - \$5,000, vs. the general \$6,000 maximum for ITA awards).
- The Committee has determined that the benefit of requiring CDL trainees to share the investment in their training was outweighed by the hardship that it created.
- Therefore, the committee has determined that it would be reasonable to eliminate this exception to the cap, restoring the available amount for CDL training to the full \$6,000.

Resolution:

- Eliminate paragraph 1 or Subsection A of Section IV of Policy 104 which, at present, creates an exception to Maximum Funding Awards for CDL Training.

A motion to approve the Proposed Revision to Policy 104: ITA Guidelines as presented was made by Glen Jeter and seconded by Joseph Morelle. The motion was passed unanimously.

Directors Report:

Thank You to Outgoing Members:

Dave thanked the following members for their service on the Board as they prepare to step down:

- Michael Weed
- Alma Vieru
- Bob Coyne - We wish you well on your upcoming retirement.

Workforce Members in the News:

The following Board members were recently featured in the news, and Dave recognized them for their valuable contributions:

- Ana Liss: Women of Excellence
- Joseph Morelle: Forty Under 40; Albany
- Angelica Perez-Delgado: The Power 100; RBJ

Updates:

Finger Lakes ON-RAMP:

- \$30M NYS initiative, designed to provide short-term training pathways into advanced manufacturing careers.
- Finger Lakes region was awarded a \$300,000 planning grant last year, centered on our ON-RAMP being housed at the FWD Center at the MCC Downtown Campus.
- Goal is to have 450 participants by Year 3.

What Hasn't Changed?

- MCC FWD Center will still be the primary hub for training.
- RW will be leading recruitment, career navigation, and supportive services efforts.

What's New?

- RW is now the interim grant applicant for the implementation phase while a 501(c)3 is established to provide governance and administration.
- A more robust role for RW, in addition to these new administrative responsibilities.
 - By year 5, there will be over 20 new FTEs.

Key RochesterWorks Roles:

- Fiscal agent for the grant, for at least 18 months
- Coordinator of Training Infrastructure
- Community Outreach/Recruitment
- Career Navigators/Success Coaches
 - Starting with three in Year 1, ending with 18-20 by Year 5

What's Next?

- RochesterWorks has applied to NYS ESD for Phase II Implementation.
- When approved, short-term punch list items include:
 - Engaging with a consultant to assist with Start-Up
 - Working with MCC to form an advisory board which will eventually become the 501(c)3 Board of Directors
 - Hiring an Executive Director for the Program
 - Start enrolling students under the program in Q3 of 2026

Career Center Project (MCC):

Key Milestones:

- Design is complete: all 24,000 square feet accounted for.
- Phase I (Abatement/demo work) is currently out to bid with bid opening on 3/19, and work anticipated to commence in May 2026, and be complete by June 2026.

Overall Project Updates:

- Longer design phase (approx. 4 months) than originally planned.
- Final Project bids set to go out late Spring (June).
- County Legislature must approve awards, leading to estimated October 2026 commencement of final buildout with move-in date of September 2027.

Branding/Marketing:

As part of a broader campaign highlighting our staff, customers, and partners, RochesterWorks has produced around two dozen marketing videos. Tricia Campbell, our Marketing and Communications Manager, noted that video is an increasingly effective way to showcase what RochesterWorks offers, who we serve, and the impact of our work. Overview videos for the Youth Unit, Career Services, and Business Services are now available on the RochesterWorks website. Featured today was one such video spotlighting our work with DeCocoa Chocolate Crafters, who have also utilized our OJT grant program. A customer testimonial sharing her experience with RochesterWorks was also presented.

Annual Report:

The annual report was reintroduced for the first time since the pre-pandemic period to share RochesterWorks’ story, reflect the current moment, and provide accountability for the organization’s work. It was intended to highlight the breadth of RochesterWorks’ programs and services, while also showcasing the strong work of our staff. Although the initial goal was to keep the report to 12 pages, it became clear that the organization had more to share. The report is seen as a strong foundation and a template for producing an annual report on a regular basis going forward.

Strategic Planning:

Over the next several months, RochesterWorks will begin updating our 2022 Strategic Plan.

- Plan will establish a vision of the organization we want to be by the end of 2029 and create a blueprint to get there.
- More internal looking, while responsive to the world around us.
- Will be done largely by internal RW staff but will also include extensive stakeholder outreach.
- Consultant RFP responses for stakeholder outreach are due Thursday (3/19).
- Looking for WDB members to participate.
- Plan to be more concise and have better chart towards implementation and accountability.

Adjournment: 9:02AM

A motion to adjourn the meeting was made by Melissa Suchodolski and seconded by Joseph Morelle. The motion was passed unanimously.

WDB Meeting Schedule:

June 16, 2026

Approved:

David Seeley

Date

Submitted by: Mary McKeown

Reviewed by:

David Seeley: March 25, 2026

Jeanine Frenz: March 25, 2026