

**Public Meeting of the Union County Workforce Development Board**  
**Warinanco Sports Center, 1 Park Drive, Roselle, NJ 07203**  
**9:00AM Wednesday, November 10, 2021**  
**MEETING MINUTES**

**Board Members Present**

James R. Brady, The Savior Group, (Chair)  
Dr. Kamran Tasharofi, Union County Healthcare Associates (Vice Chair)  
Juanito Chiluisa, NJ Department of Labor  
Debbie-Ann Anderson, Union County Department of Human Services  
Dr. Margaret McMenamin, Union County College (Dr. Lisa Hiscano)  
Glenn Nacion, Trinitas Regional Medical Center (Mrs. Curry Bucu)  
Erich Peter, Union County Economic Development Corp  
Gwen Ryan, Union County Vocational Technical Schools  
Richard Malcolm, Ironworkers Local #11  
Teresa Soto-Vega, PROCEED  
Tina Earley, American Water  
Gloria Dunham, Qunnection Management  
Kelly Drakeford-Ledet, Kean University  
Hilary McCarron, Port Authority  
Morgan Thompson, Prevention Links

**Board Members Absent:**

Krystal Canady, Gateway Family YMCA (Secretary)  
Paul Belardo, KML Carpenters  
Richard Capac, Crowne Property Management  
Stan Robinson Jr., SHR Marketing, LLC  
Roshan White, UA Local 24 Plumbers  
Edwin Gomez, Barcode Elizabeth  
Juan Carlos Dominguez, J.J.J. Distributors  
Salvador Garcia, MAS Development Group  
Edward Faver, NJ Division of Vocational Rehabilitation Services  
Daryl Palmieri, Union County Schools K-12

**County of Union:**

Edward Oatman, County Manager  
Amy Wagner, Deputy County Manager, Director, Department of Economic Development  
Kamili Williams, Division of Social Service  
Perle Almeida, American Job Center  
Nasrene Mondol, American Job Center  
Robert Croom, American Job Center  
Pam Mata, American Job Center  
Latoya Bennet, Youth Forward  
Antonio Rivera, Director, Workforce Development Board  
Lisa Bonanno, Workforce Development Board  
Thomas McCabe, Workforce Development Board  
Meredith Barracato, Workforce Development Board  
Carolina Marin, Workforce Development Board

**Guest(s):**

Isaias Rivera, Union County College  
Scott Kuchinsky, Plainfield Public Library  
Julio Sabater, Workforce Advantage  
James Horne, United Way of Greater Union County  
Nelsa Martinez, The Leaguers Inc.

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I. **Call to Order & Welcome**

The meeting was called to order by **James Brady**, Chairman, Workforce Development Board, at 9:00AM.

II. **Pledge of Allegiance**

The Pledge of Allegiance to the flag of the United State of America was recited.

III. **Open Public Meetings Act**

The Open Public Meetings Act Statement below was read by **Meredith Barracato** into the record:

PURSUANT TO THE REQUIREMENTS OF N.J.S.A. 10:4-10 OF THE OPEN PUBLIC MEETINGS ACT, ADEQUATE NOTICE OF THIS MEETING OF THE UNION COUNTY WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT BOARD HAS BEEN GIVEN BY MAILING THE YEAR 2021 ANNUAL MEETING SCHEDULE TO THE NEWSPAPERS CIRCULATING WITHIN THE COUNTY OF UNION AND DESIGNATED TO RECEIVE SUCH NOTICE, AND BY POSTING THE YEAR 2021 ANNUAL MEETING SCHEDULE IN THE COUNTY COURT HOUSE, THE UNION COUNTY WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT BOARD WEBSITE, AND BY FILING THE YEAR 2021 ANNUAL MEETING SCHEDULE WITH THE OFFICE OF THE COUNTY CLERK.

FURTHERMORE, ADEQUATE NOTICE OF THE LOCATION OF THIS MEETING HAS BEEN GIVEN BY PROVIDING AT LEAST FORTY-EIGHT HOUR NOTICE TO THE NEWSPAPERS CIRCULATING WITHIN THE COUNTY OF UNION AND DESIGNATED TO RECEIVE SUCH NOTICE AND BY POSTING THE SAID NOTICE AT LEAST FORTY-EIGHT HOURS PRIOR TO THIS MEETING IN THE COURT HOUSE, THE UNION COUNTY WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT BOARD WEBSITE, AND BY FILING THE NOTICE AT LEAST FORTY-EIGHT HOURS IN ADVANCE OF THIS MEETING WITH OFFICE OF THE COUNTY CLERK.

THE OPEN PUBLIC MEETINGS ACT STATEMENT SHALL BE ENTERED IN FULL IN THE MINUTES OF THIS MEETING.

IV. **Roll Call**

**Meredith Barracato** conducted the roll-call of the UCWDB members in attendance. Union County employees present and guests were acknowledged on the record, as reflected on page one of these minutes.

V. **Approval of the Minutes**

The minutes of the **September 8<sup>th</sup> 2021** meeting were presented for a vote.

**BOARD  
ACTION**

**Dr. Kamran Tasharofi** made a motion to approve the meeting minutes for September 8<sup>th</sup> 2021. **Tina Early** seconded the motion. The motion was approved unanimously.

VI. **Budget & Expense Report**

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Tom McCabe presented the updated Budget and Expense Report for Program Year 2020, September 30th, 2021 for the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA), WorkFirst New Jersey (WFNJ), and COVID-19 DW NJ Endures in the form attached hereto. Tom McCabe reviewed the expense slide for WIOA Adult, Youth, and Dislocated Worker, which shows the funding that needs to be expended by June 30th, 2022. Tom McCabe mentioned that the COVID-19 DW NJ Endures grant must be expended by February 28th, 2022. The WorkFirst New Jersey funding needs to be expended by December 31st 2021.

Chairman James Brady asked how the board plans on spending the remaining balances that expire in six weeks.

Director Rivera responded by explaining the WorkFirst New Jersey funding challenges due to a work activity waiver resulting from COVID-19. Director Rivera added that the remaining balances would likely need to go back to the state because of the waiver, which is the main challenge. There have been discussions about the waiver being lifted in January, but nothing has been formally communicated.

Tom McCabe reviewed the updated Budget and Expense report for Program Year 2021. Tom McCabe explained that since the program year begins in July of 2021, there have not been significant expenses aside from salary and fringe benefits for the month of July.

Dr. Lisa Hiscano asked where the funding for training was. Director Rivera mentioned that the slide shows the expenses, not the budget, but there is sufficient funding for programming.

Gloria Dunham recommended that a slide be created to show program and training or separate training dollars. Director Rivera said they could separate it, but it makes it a challenge to show all expenses or funds since it's a moving target. Director Rivera informed everyone Google Link would show more details of the budget.

Chairman Brady informed everyone that if they had additional budget questions, please follow up because the goal is to be as transparent as possible. Chairman Brady welcomed and then asked the new board members to introduce themselves. Kelly Drakeford-Ledet from Kean University, Hilary McCarron from the Port Authority, and Morgan Thompson from Prevention Links introduced themselves and briefly summarized their work.

**VII. Director's Report/Resolutions of the Union County Workforce Development Board**

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Director Antonio Rivera presented various slides on the weekly initial unemployment claims, characteristics of individuals receiving unemployment insurance, and a detailed analysis of the Union County unemployment rate since January 1st, 2020. Director Rivera stressed a bigger problem with unemployment than the data reflects because many groups are not being counted within the data. Amy Wagner asked what would be the best way to understand the actual number of individuals. Director Rivera mentioned over one hundred million individuals in the US are not participating in the workforce system. Director Rivera answered Amy Wagner's question by stating the civilian participation rate report captures individuals eligible to work but are not counted, such as retirees, youth, and college students.

Debbie Ann Anderson mentioned an increase in the need for resources for Social Services such as food stamps. Kamili Williams mentioned a 20% increase since January in individuals requesting food stamps in Union County. Director Rivera mentioned that UCWDB could use other social indicators to understand the people needing the services.

Dr. Lisa Hiscano added that we know this population needs to be placed in the workforce, but they cannot access supportive services since they are not mandated to participate in work activities or training. Director Rivera mentioned that is a problem facing the nation, but departments such as social services and the American Job Center see the challenges on a daily basis.

Hilary McCarron asked if there were services for mental health to support these individuals. Director Rivera mentioned there is supportive services that provide mental health assistance. In collaboration with Debbie Ann Anderson, the UCWDB is working on a process to simplify the supportive service program.

**BOARD  
ACTION**

a. **RESOLUTION NO. 2021-31:** RESOLUTION OF THE UNION COUNTY WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT BOARD AMENDING THE AJC AFFILIATED CAREER SERVICES OPERATOR CONTRACT WITH UNION COUNTY COLLEGE – PO NO. 21004293.

**Chairman James Brady** requested motion to approve RESOLUTION NO. 2021-31. **Teresa Soto-Vega** made a motion to approve RESOLUTION NO. 2021-31. **Erich Peter** seconded the motion. The motion to approved unanimously.

**Dr Lisa Hiscano, Dr. Kamran Tasharofi** and **Tina Earley** abstained from voting on RESOLUTION NO. 2021-31.

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**BOARD  
ACTION**

b. **RESOLUTION NO. 2021-32:** RESOLUTION OF THE UNION COUNTY WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT BOARD AMENDING THE AJC AFFILIATED CAREER SERVICES OPERATOR CONTRACT WITH UNION COUNTY COLLEGE – PO NO. 21002616.

**Chairman James Brady** requested motion to approve RESOLUTION NO. 2021-32. **Erich Peter** made a motion to approve RESOLUTION NO. 2021-32. **Gloria Dunham** seconded the motion. The motion to approved unanimously.

**Dr Lisa Hiscano, Dr. Kamran Tasharofi** and **Tina Earley** abstained from voting on RESOLUTION NO. 2021-32.

**BOARD  
ACTION**

c. **RESOLUTION NO. 2021-33:** RESOLUTION OF THE UNION COUNTY WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT BOARD AMENDING THE PROGRAM YEAR 2021 UNION COUNTY WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT AREA BUDGET FOR THE PURPOSE OF ALLOCATING FUNDING FOR INDIRECT EXPENSES.

**Chairman James Brady** requested motion to approve RESOLUTION NO. 2021-33. **Dr. Kamran Tasharofi** made a motion to approve Resolution No. 2021-33. **Gwen Ryan** seconded the motion. The motion to approved unanimously.

**BOARD  
ACTION**

d. **RESOLUTION NO. 2021-34:** RESOLUTION OF THE UNION COUNTY WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT BOARD AMENDING THE PROGRAM YEAR 2020 UNION COUNTY WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT AREA BUDGET FOR THE PURPOSE OF ALLOCATING FUNDING FOR INDIRECT EXPENSES.

Erich Peter asked why does the UCWDB has to vote on normal operations of the funds. Director Rivera mentioned along with County Commissioners the UCWDB has the budget authority and have to agree on changes to the budgets as per state law. A resolution will need to be approved by the commissioners after the meeting.

**Chairman James Brady** requested motion to approve RESOLUTION NO. 2021-34. **Dr. Kamran Tasharofi** made a motion to approve Resolution No. 2021-34. **Teresa Soto Vega** seconded the motion. The motion to approved unanimously.

**BOARD  
ACTION**

e. **RESOLUTION NO. 2021-35:** RESOLUTION OF THE UNION COUNTY WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT BOARD AMENDING THE PROGRAM YEAR 2021 UNION COUNTY WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT AREA BUDGET FOR THE PURPOSE OF ALLOCATING FUNDING FOR CLASS-SIZE DISLOCATED WORKER TRAINING CONTRACTS.

Director Rivera mentioned there is currently RFPs with the law department waiting for approval for class size contracts for in demand training. Director Rivera stated

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after speaking with Debbie Ann Anderson it became necessary to ensure the training dollars were spent on training programs for clients.

The vendor has to have the capacity to do the class size training. We are going to move the funds now but

Hilary McCarron asked if the contracts will have MWSDBE requirements. Director Rivera stated he is not aware if the law department sets those specific requirements in the contracts.

**Chairman James Brady** requested motion to approve RESOLUTION NO. 2021-35. **Dr. Kamran Tasharofi** made a motion to approve Resolution No. 2021-35. **Tina Earley** seconded the motion. The motion to approved unanimously.

Chairman Brady asked what can the educational institutions offer clients. Dr Lisa Hiscano mentioned before creating any programs UCC follows the in demand sections and offer trainings in transportation and logistics, digital literacy, patient care tech program and all the programs provides credit certificates. Gloria Dunham asked if all the trainings certified. Dr Lisa Hiscano mentioned UCC has all their programs approved by the Eligible Training provider's list and offer credentials.

VIII. **American Job Center Report**

*The report submitted by AJC Director Debbie Ann Anderson is attached these minutes.* Debbie Ann reviewed slides which discussed 2020 performance measures, direct service data, youth services, professional development and business initiatives. Debbie Ann provided information on the UCC's and Plainfield Public Library collaborative program such as soft skills and IC3 classes.

Debbie Ann Anderson and Director Rivera discussed that 60% of Union County residents work outside the county, and the business team will now target broader businesses in surrounding counties.

Hilary McCarron asked the percentage of students who graduate high school and go directly into the workforce and if the youth participating in the program are at risk of not graduating. Debbie Ann Anderson mentioned she did not have the specific data on youth entering the workforce but will have something for the next meetings. Latoya Bennet answered that not all the students are at risk, and some are currently in school. Director Rivera mentioned that 75% of the WIOA funding is geared to out-of-school youth, and 25% are directed to in-school youth to ensure they do not drop out of school.

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Dr. Kamran Tasharofi mentioned it is frustrating to see so much money spent on training but not know if the clients obtained a job. Dr. Kamran Tasharofi asked if Debbie Ann Anderson could include job placement numbers in the following presentation. Director Rivera shared with everyone that it's challenging to obtain those numbers because this is the hardest to reach clients and some clients looking to extend their unemployment benefits. Debbie Ann Anderson added that since the population is vulnerable, career counselors have to provide more counseling to ensure they are supported.

Isaias Rivera mentioned UCC works with the students and follows up every three months for a year to ensure the clients get a job after completing a training course. Isaias Rivera added that those clients sometimes ignore the phone calls or refuse to provide the information needed for the training outcomes. Chairman Brady asked if clients could report every month. Director Rivera and Teresa Soto Vega mentioned it was already a requirement, but clients do not comply.

**IX. Old Business**

*No old business was discussed.*

**X. New Business**

*No new business was discussed.*

**XI. Public Comments**

No Public Comments.

**XII. Adjournment**

**Meeting Schedule:**

**9:00AM, Wednesday, December 8<sup>th</sup> 2021**

**Location:**

**Warinanco Park Sports Center**  
**1 Park Dr, Roselle, NJ 07203**