

**Public Meeting of the Union County Workforce Development Board**  
**Warinanco Sports Center, 1 Park Drive, Roselle, NJ 07203**  
**9:00AM Wednesday, February 8, 2023**  
**MEETING MINUTES**

**Board Members Present**

Dr. Kamran Tasharofi, Union County Healthcare Associates (Chair)  
Stan Robinson Jr., SHR Marketing, LLC (Vice Chair)  
Hilary McCarron, Port Authority (Secretary)  
Debbie Ann Anderson, Union County Department of Human Services  
James R. Brady, The Savor Group  
Curry Bucu, Trinitas Regional Medical Center  
Richard Capac, Crowne Property Management  
Juanito Chiluisa, NJ Department of Labor (Anthea Williams)  
Gloria Dunham, Qunnection Management  
Edward Faver, Division of Vocational Rehabilitation Services  
Kelly Drakeford Ledet, Kean University (Craig Coughlin)  
Richard Malcolm, Ironworkers Local #11 (Tim McConway)  
Dr. Margaret McMenemy, Union College (Dr. Lisa Hiscano)  
Daryl Palmieri, Union County Schools K-12 (Maria Mendez)  
Erich Peter, Union County Economic Development Corp  
Alan Rutan, Rutan Mechanical LLC  
Gwen Ryan, Union County Vocational Technical School  
Teresa Soto-Vega, PROCEED (Srabanti Sarkar)  
Morgan Thompson, Prevention Links  
Courtney Vallani, Vallani Bus  
Roshan White, UA Local 24 Plumbers (Chadwick Garris)

**Board Members Absent:**

Paul Belardo, KML Carpenters  
Melynda Disla, Gateway Family YMCA  
Jessica Cohen, Bristol-Myers Squibb  
Tina Earley, American Water  
Salvador Garcia, MAS Development Group  
Edwin Gomez, Barcode Elizabeth

**County of Union:**

Sergio Granados, Union County Commissioner  
Amy Wagner, Department of Economic Development  
Antonio Rivera, Workforce Development Board  
Lisa Bonanno, Workforce Development Board  
Meredith Barracato, Workforce Development Board  
Gina Tuesta, Workforce Development Board  
Robert Croom, American Job Center  
Perle Almeida, American Job Center  
Carolina Marin, American Job Center  
Nasrene Mondol, American Job Center  
Lillian Roman, American Job Center

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Scott DiNardo, Division of Social Service  
Jasmine Sowah, Youth Forward  
Hawa Bonds, Youth Forward  
Francheska Porteguez, Youth Forward

**Guests:**

Maya Garcia, Community Foodbank NJ  
Ingrid Macias, NJ Department of Labor  
Amanda Modale, NJ Department of Labor  
Isaias Rivera, Union College  
Julio Sabater, Workforce Advantage  
Nelsa Martinez, The Leaguers  
Franchely Inoa, YWCA Union County  
Pieria Lobos, YWCA Union County  
Juanita Vargas, United Way of Greater Union County

**I. Call to Order & Welcome**

The meeting was called to order by Dr. Kamran Tasharofi, Chairman Workforce Development Board, at 9:05 AM. Chairman Tasharofi asked that all the Workforce Development Board members introduce themselves.

**II. Pledge of Allegiance**

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

**III. Open Public Meetings Act**

Gina Tuesta read the Open Public Meetings Act Statement below 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 2023 ANNUAL MEETING SCHEDULE TO THE NEWSPAPERS CIRCULATING WITHIN THE COUNTY OF UNION AND DESIGNATED TO RECEIVE SUCH NOTICE, AND BY POSTING THE YEAR 2023 ANNUAL MEETING SCHEDULE IN THE COUNTY COURT HOUSE, THE UNION COUNTY WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT BOARD WEBSITE, AND BY FILING THE YEAR 2023 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.

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

**IV. Roll Call**

**Gina Tuesta** conducted the roll-call of the Union County Workforce Development Board 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 November 9, 2022 and December 8, 2022 meetings were presented for a vote.

**BOARD  
ACTION**

**Gloria Dunham** made a motion to approve the meeting minutes for November 9, 2022 and December 8, 2022. **James Brady** seconded the motion. The motion was approved unanimously.

**VI. UCWDB Report / Resolutions of the UCWDB**

Director Rivera the project management items the Workforce Development Board has been overseeing which include strategic plan development and evaluation of the American Job Center Network evaluations. Director Rivera reviewed presentation slides and discussed the time line of the strategic plan which included the various activities such as focus groups and surveys, that need to be completed to finalize the strategic plan. Director Rivera mentioned the local area plan needs to integrate the regional plan which has only started to be developed by the other Workforce Development Boards in the region. Due to this delay with the regional plan there might be a delay in submitting the local area plan. Director Rivera mentioned the local plan needs to be published for public comment period for 30 days and once that is completed it can then be submitted to the State Employment and Training Commission for final approval. The intent is to have the plan completed and presented to the Workforce Development Board at the April 12, 2023 meeting. Director Rivera discussed details of the strategic plan slides, employer survey, and the American Job Center Certification which will be presented at the April 12, 2023 meeting. Vice Chairman Stan Robinson asked what has been the response rate on the employer survey. Antonio Rivera provided details on the employer survey which was released in January to employers. Director Rivera continued to discuss the project timeline which include the New Jersey Department of Labor monitoring, procurement of career services and approval of program year 2023 budget. Director Rivera then moved the conversation to program year 2021 and 2022

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budget and expense report. Director Rivera noted there is over one million dollars unexpended for program year 2021 that will need to be returned to the New Jersey Department of Labor by June 30, 2023. Commissioner Sergio Granados asked about the On-the Job Training budget line item. Director Rivera mentioned the funding available in program year 2021 is allocated to Union College. Dr. Hiscano mentioned there have not been any interested employers who have followed through on completing the paperwork to receive those On-the Job Training funds. Commissioner Granados added he will like to explore more ways to facilitate businesses taking advantage of the program. Commissioner Granados encouraged all members of the Workforce Development Board to use the program. Dr. Hiscano added that for employers to take advantage of the program they need to plan out the details such as the training program the new hire will participate in. Commissioner Granados asked if there is a template to help employers to identify the training opportunities. Dr. Hiscano mentioned some of the obstacles is having to get the employers legal team to buy into the contract and program. Dr. Hiscano shared she will be meeting with the American Job Center next week to iron out the details on how to roll out the program. Gloria Dunham asked what the process is for enrolling someone in the program. Dr. Hiscano mentioned her team works closely with employers and the enrollment process can take two to four weeks and consist of the following steps:

- Identify employer's hiring and training needs
- Research job responsibilities for employer based on needs
- Create training plan
- Contract process
- Identify eligible candidates for employers
- Certification process for clients through the American Job Center

Curry Bucu mentioned the certification process through the American Job Center is challenging and adds an additional layer many candidates don't complete. Chairman Tasharofi agreed with Curry Bucu and added there needs to be a seamless process. Robert Croom added that many clients are unable to produce the documents needed to get them through the certification process quickly. Robert Croom offered some details on the item's clients need for the certification process. Director Rivera mentioned the New Jersey Department of Labor has the same process for On the Job Training. Commissioner Granados mentioned Union County will two host business summits in April and May that provide more information on how to streamline items and discussions on supportive services.

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Director Rivera continued to review the budget and mentioned that the funds committed to trainings in the participant career services can be moved between line items depending on the need. Director Rivera reviewed program year 2022 budget.

Meredith Barracato reviewed the program year 2021 evaluation. Meredith Barracato noted the Workforce Development Board completed an evaluation of the American Job Center Network Partners implementation of the 2016 strategic plan. Meredith Barracato reviewed slides that focused on each goal, promising practices and growth opportunities. Vice Chairman Stan Robinson asked how does Union County compare to other counties. Meredith Barracato responded that Union County is doing well in term of the strategic plan, engagement of the partnerships and documenting where our strengthens and weakness are. Director Rivera added Union County's has been successful in our ability to adapt especially during these challenges which includes the transition in the American Job Center administration. Erich Peters asked how is the completion rate determined. Director Rivera mentioned there are 54 sub-strategies the partnerships have been evaluating. Vice Chairman Stan Robinson asked if the new strategic plan would incorporate new goals or keep the same ones from the previous plan. Director Rivera mentioned the plan will be a modification and the goal will be to identify ways to streamline job seeker process and engage employers.

**Resolution No. 2023-01:**

**Resolution of the Union County Workforce Development Board Authorizing the Award for the Provision of Legal Services—Union County Workforce Development Board Conflict Counsel.**

**BOARD  
ACTION**

Chairman Tasharofi requested a motion to approve **Resolution No. 2023-01**. **James R. Brady** made a motion to approve **Resolution No. 2023-01**. **Richard Capac** seconded the motion. The motion was approved unanimously.

Meredith Barracato discussed the details of the resolution authorizing the award for the provision of legal services for Union County Workforce Development Board conflict counsel. Meredith Barracato noted one proposal was received in November 2022 from Weber Dowd Law, LLC who satisfied all request for qualifications requirements.

VII. **American Job Center Report**

Robert Croom reviewed the American Job Center presentation, which included services provided to job seekers through individual training accounts and through class size contracts. Robert Croom highlighted the Youth Forward

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program services and the start of the summer youth employment program. Robert Croom discussed the Business Team development, partner updates from Employment Services, Union College, and Division of Vocational and Rehabilitation Services. Ed Faver mentioned the numbers of individuals who have requested services has gone up.

Commissioner Granados thanked Hilary McCarron for closely working with the American Job Center and providing a tour of the Port Authority and introducing everyone to the various businesses located at the port. Commissioner Granados also thanked Robert Croom for all the work Robert Croom has done over the past year. The report submitted by AJC is attached to the minutes. Robert Croom mentioned there are more things his team is working on that will help the American Job Center move forward.

VIII. **Old Business**

No Public Comments

IX. **New Business**

No Public Comments

X. **Public Comments**

No Public Comments

XI. **Adjournment**

Chairman Tasharofi offered to all the board members a tour of the American Job Center especially for the new board members so they can see how the American Job Center operates. Chairman Tasharofi thanked everyone for their commitment and mentioned he appreciated everyone's thought process and questions.

The meeting was adjourned by Chairman Dr. Kamran Tasharofi at 10:30 am.

**Meeting Schedule:**

**9:00 AM, Wednesday, April 12, 2023 9:00am**

**Location:**

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