

Public Meeting of the Union County Workforce Development Board
Warinanco Sports Center, 1 Park Drive, Roselle, NJ 07203
9:00AM Wednesday, April 19, 2023
MEETING MINUTES

Board Members Present

Dr. Kamran Tasharofi, Union County Healthcare Associates (Chair)
Stan Robinson Jr., SHR Marketing, LLC (Vice Chair)
Debbie Ann Anderson, Union County Department of Human Services
Paul Belardo, KML Carpenters
James R. Brady, The Savor Group
Curry Bucu, Trinitas Regional Medical Center
Juanito Chiluisa, NJ Department of Labor
Jessica Cohen, Bristol-Myers Squibb
Jenny Davis Toth, Port Authority of New York & New Jersey
Melynda Disla, Gateway Family YMCA
Bernadette Griswold, Community Access Unlimited
Dr. Margaret McMenamin, Union College (Dr. Lisa Hiscano)
Daryl Palmieri, Union County Schools K-12
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 (Dominique Garrett)
Courtney Villani, Villani Bus

Board Members Absent:

Hilary McCarron, Port Authority (Secretary)
Richard Capac, Crowne Property Management
Gloria Dunham, Qunnection Management
Tina Earley, American Water
Salvador Garcia, MAS Development Group
Edwin Gomez, Barcode Elizabeth
Edward Faver, Division of Vocational Rehabilitation Services
Kelly Drakeford Ledet, Kean University
Richard Malcolm, Ironworkers Local #11
Roshan White, UA Local 24 Plumbers

County of Union:

Sergio Granados, Union County Commissioner
Ed Oatman, Union County Manager
Amy Wagner, Department of Economic Development
Antonio Rivera, Workforce Development Board
Meredith Barracato, Workforce Development Board
Gina Tuesta, Workforce Development Board
Robert Croom, American Job Center
Carolina Marin, American Job Center
Nasrene Mondol, American Job Center

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Lillian Roman, American Job Center
Tina Lopez, Division of Social Service
Rhonda McClain, Division of Social Service
Scott DiNardo, Division of Social Service
Jasmine Sowah, Youth Forward
Hawa Bonds, Youth Forward

Guests:

Ingrid Macias, NJ Department of Labor
Iesha Armour, NJ Department of Labor
Anthea Williams, NJ Department of Labor
Isaias Rivera, Union College
Scott Kuchinsky, Plainfield Public Library
Brandon Phelps, Arc of Union County
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 9:10 AM.

II. Pledge of Allegiance

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

III. Open Public Meetings Act

Meredith Barracato 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

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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 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 February 8, 2023 meetings were presented for a vote.

**BOARD
ACTION**

Stan Robinson Jr. made a motion to approve the meeting minutes for February 8, 2023. **Gwen Ryan** seconded the motion. The motion was approved unanimously.

VI. UCWDB Report / Resolutions of the UCWDB

Director Rivera presented slides discussing the budget and expense report, performance report, and the project management items the Union County Workforce Development Board has been overseeing. Director Rivera mentioned the Union County Workforce Development Board has finalized the strategic plan which consisted of 200 questions that focus on the implementation of the Workforce innovation and Opportunity Act. Director Rivera review the three sections in the strategic plan which include regional and local workforce strategies, One Stop operations and local Workforce Development and Board structure and functions. Director Rivera reviewed a timeline which identified specific activities which consist of the release and approval of request for proposals, the New Jersey Department of Labor monitoring, and approval of the program year 2023 budget. Director Rivera mentioned the current American Job Center contract expires on June 30, 2023 and a procurement process will need to begin to ensure the procurement process is done in a timely matter and is conflict free. Director Rivera mentioned he has had discussion with Chairman Tasharofi to review the procurement process and develop a plan to execute the process.

Director Rivera reviewed slides regarding program year 2021 and 2022 budget and expense report. Director Rivera mentioned each program year the Union

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County Workforce Development Board manages is a 24-month period and program year 2021 funding expires on June 30, 2023. Director Rivera mentioned the funds that are unexpended in program year 2021 which were affected by the pandemic will not be able to be spent by June 30, 2023. As a result, the Union County Workforce Development Board will use the accounting principles of first in first out to transfer funding from one program year to the previous year to clear out balances to minimize the amount of funding that will be returned. Erich Peter asked will sending funding back to the state hurt us in the future? Director Rivera mentioned it does not hurt the allocation of funding in the future because the funding that is returned will then be used by the New Jersey Department of Labor. Alan Rutan mentioned that the construction industry is large and in need safety training for their workers, can programs be developed to support those industries by training workers. Director Rivera mentioned that funding can be used to train those clients and will defer to the American Job Center to discuss the specifics. Robert Croom mentioned he can set up a meeting with his team to work out a way of funding trainings for construction workers. Debbie Ann Anderson mentioned that there are specific requirements under the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act that sets eligibility standards that the workers must meet to use funding for trainings. Director Rivera added that by working together with the Deputy County Manager and the various partners they can develop plans to minimize how much funding can be sent back to the state because the first in and fist out accounting method is not the ideal way of managing the budget. These plans will need to ensure the funding is expended and how do we move forward. Director Rivera reviewed a slide on the program year 2022 budget which will need to be expended by June 30, 2024.

Director Rivera review the FutureWorks BI performance data for program year 2021 and 2022. Director Rivera mentioned that FutureWorks takes the data that is input from the American Job Center regarding quarter two and four employment trends, credentials and measurable skills gains. James Brady asked how does Union County compare to other counties in regards to the performance data. Director Rivera informed him he will need to pull the data from FutureWorks and will make it available for the board members to review. Amy Wagner asked if the performance rates will be reviewed at every meeting. Director Rivera mentioned it is a requirement by the New Jersey Department of Labor and previously was done by the One Stop but was discontinued. Director Rivera mentioned the information reflected on in the data only captures clients who have been exited and does not capture all the activities done by the American Job Center and its partners. Director Rivera mentioned there are other data sets that shows the other people that the American Job Center is working with that are not exited. Amy Wagner asked if program year 2022 data is looking better than program year 2021. Director Rivera agreed that 2022 data is looking

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better. Robert Croom mentioned in program year 2021 which was during the pandemic Unemployment Insurance was giving clients an extra \$600.00 and they didn't have many people coming into the one stop. Stan Robinson Jr. asked what population does Wagner-Peyser serves. Juanito Chiluisa responded unemployed and underemployed individuals. Director Rivera mentioned Wagner Peyser does not offer the comprehensive case management and training services that is being offered at the American Job Center and that is why the numbers are much higher for Wagner Peyser.

Director Rivera transitioned the conversation to the following resolutions that need approval.

Resolution No. 2023-02:

Resolution of the Union County Workforce Development Board approving the Union County Workforce Development Board Strategic Plan 2022-2026 for the Implementation of the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act of 2022.

Director Rivera mentioned the first resolution is to approve the strategic plan that will then be approved by the Board of County Commissioners. Director Rivera reviewed slides regarding specific strategic plan priorities which include but are not limited to the following initiatives:

- Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act policies, procedures, and guidance
- Support State vision, goals, strategies, recommendations, policies, and operational guidance
- Procurement of American Job Center operator, and career services providers
- Employer incentives, participant training, and supportive services
- Budget management
- Comprehensive economic development
- Soft Skills, digital literacy, virtual learning, industry-valued credentials, co-enrollment, and career pathway
- Participant and youth voice
- Quality assurance monitoring
- Measuring performance
- Board governance, MOU, IFA
- Local and Regional planning

Director Rivera added that the strategic plan for Union County focuses on Governor Phil Murphy and the Union County Board of County Commissioner's initiatives.

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ACTION**

Chairman Tasharofi requested a motion to approve **Resolution No. 2023-02**. **James R. Brady** made a motion to approve **Resolution No. 2023-02**. **Stan Robinson Jr.** seconded the motion. The motion was approved unanimously.

Resolution No. 2023-03:

Resolution of the Union County Workforce Development Board approving the Memorandum of Understanding between the Union County Workforce Development Board and the Union County Board of County Commissioners.

Director Rivera discussed the resolution that requires an update to the Memorandum of Understanding between the Workforce Development Board and the Board of County Commissioners.

**BOARD
ACTION**

Chairman Tasharofi requested a motion to approve **Resolution No. 2023-03**. **Paul Belardo** made a motion to approve **Resolution No. 2023-03**. **Erich Peter** seconded the motion. The motion was approved unanimously.

Resolution No. 2023-04:

Resolution of the Union County Workforce Development Board Authorizing the Use of Competitive Contracting Procedures for the Procurement of Basic Career Services by Libraries as Affiliate American Job Center Sites Under the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act.

Director Rivera mentioned this resolution is to allow the procurement for basic career services to be offered by local libraries who can provide services during days and hours that the American Job Center is not open.

**BOARD
ACTION**

Chairman Tasharofi requested a motion to approve **Resolution No. 2023-04**. **Jenny Davis Toth** made a motion to approve **Resolution No. 2023-04**. Melynda Disla seconded the motion. The motion was approved unanimously.

Resolution No. 2023-05:

Resolution of the Union County Workforce Development Board amending the Program Year 2022 Union County Workforce Area Budget for the purpose of inserting additional funding from the New Jersey Department of Labor and Workforce Development.

Director Rivera mentioned this resolution was to approve additional funding given to the Union County Workforce Development Board for Workforce Learning Link Services.

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Chairman Tasharofi requested a motion to approve **Resolution No. 2023-05. Juanito Chiluisa** made a motion to approve **Resolution No. 2023-05. Courtney Villani** seconded the motion. The motion was approved unanimously.

Resolution No. 2023-06:

Resolution of the Union County Workforce Development Board Authorizing the Use of Competitive Contracting Procedures for the Procurement of an Affiliate American Job Center Site Operator for the Simon Youth Academy under the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act.

Director Rivera mentioned this resolution is to issue a request for proposal for affiliate services for the Simon Youth Academy. James Brady mentioned he attended the Simon Youth Academy graduation last June and encourages everyone to attend the graduation this year.

**BOARD
ACTION**

Chairman Tasharofi requested a motion to approve **Resolution No. 2023-06. Jenny Davis Toth** made a motion to approve **Resolution No. 2023-06. Erich Peter** seconded the motion. The motion was approved unanimously.

Gwen Ryan and **Daryl Palmieri** abstained from Resolution No. 2023-06.

Resolution No. 2023-07:

Resolution of the Union County Workforce Development Board Authorizing the Use of Competitive Contracting Procedures for the Procurement of an Affiliate American Job Center Site Provider for Career Services to Adults and Dislocated Workers under the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act.

Director Rivera mentioned this resolution is to issue a request for proposal for affiliate American Job Center site to provide career services to adult and dislocated workers.

**BOARD
ACTION**

Chairman Tasharofi requested a motion to approve **Resolution No. 2023-07. Stan Robinson Jr.** made a motion to approve **Resolution No. 2023-07. Gwen Ryan** seconded the motion. The motion was approved unanimously.

Dr. Lisa Hiscano and **Dr. Kamran Tasharofi** abstained from Resolution No. 2023-07.

Resolution No. 2023-08:

Resolution of the Union County Workforce Development Board Authorizing the Use of Competitive Contracting Procedures for the Procurement of Affiliate American Job Center Operators for WorkFirst New Jersey Services.

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Director Rivera mentioned this resolution is to issue a request for proposal for WorkFirst New Jersey services that start on July 1, 2023 but the Workforce Development Board has made a commitment to issue the request for proposal in a timely matter.

**BOARD
ACTION**

Chairman Tasharofi requested a motion to approve **Resolution No. 2023-08. James R. Brady** made a motion to approve **Resolution No. 2023-08. Gwen Ryan** seconded the motion. The motion was approved unanimously.

Dr. Lisa Hiscano and **Dr. Kamran Tasharofi** abstained from Resolution No. 2023-08.

Resolution No. 2023-09:

Resolution of the Union County Workforce Development Board Authorizing the Use of Competitive Contracting Procedures for the Procurement of an Affiliate American Job Center Operator for Workforce Learning Link Services.

Director Rivera mentioned this resolution is to issue a request for proposal for Workforce Learning Link services.

**BOARD
ACTION**

Chairman Tasharofi requested a motion to approve **Resolution No. 2023-09. Juanito Chiluisa** made a motion to approve **Resolution No. 2023-09. Courtney Villani** seconded the motion. The motion was approved unanimously.

Resolution No. 2023-10:

Resolution of the Union County Workforce Development Board Certifying the Union County American Job Center.

Meredith Barracato discussed the American Job Center certification process which includes an evaluation of services, a self-assessment, quality benchmarking tool, Disability/ accessibility and grievance/complaint and equal opportunity documentation. Dr. Lisa Hiscano asked if the American Job Center has met all the criteria in the evaluation? Director Rivera mentioned that the American Job Center did meet the criteria and all affiliate partners will need to be evaluated and certified by the Workforce Development Board. The information for the evaluation is located in the Google drive. James Brady asked how does the Workforce Development Board know if the information received is better than that of last year. Director Rivera referenced the previous Workforce Development Board meeting which reviewed the American Job Center evaluation.

**BOARD
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Chairman Tasharofi requested a motion to approve **Resolution No. 2023-10. James R. Brady** made a motion to approve **Resolution No. 2023-10. Courtney Villani** seconded the motion. The motion was approved unanimously.

Debbie Ann Anderson abstained from Resolution No. 2023-10.

Resolution No. 2023-11:

Resolution of the Union County Workforce Development Board Authorizing the use of Competitive Contracting Procedures for the Procurement of the One Stop Operator (American Job Center Operator) and Comprehensive One Stop Career Center Service Provider(s) for Adult, Dislocated Workers, and Youth Services under the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act.

Director Rivera mentioned this resolution is to issue a request for proposal for One Stop Operator and comprehensive One Stop Career services. He added the Workforce Development Board will issue one proposal but will give individuals the opportunity to apply for one of the services such as Operator or youth services. Director Rivera mentioned the Chairman will be reaching out to private sector board members to be a part of the executive committee to approve a vendor or vendors. In addition, the Workforce Development Board Director must be neutral and cannot provide any information that appears to side with any particular vendor.

**BOARD
ACTION**

Chairman Tasharofi requested a motion to approve **Resolution No. 2023-11. Juanito Chiluisa** made a motion to approve **Resolution No. 2023-11. Melynda A Disla** seconded the motion. The motion was approved unanimously.

Debbie Ann Anderson abstained from Resolution No. 2023-11.

VII. **American Job Center Report**

Robert Croom began the presentation with providing everyone a view on his iPad of the program 2021 statewide performance measures on FutureWorks which shows that Union County was inline with everyone in the state. Robert Croom then began to review the slides which showed information on customer services delivered, training enrollments, employment success stories, youth services, Workforce Innovation Business Center, Title II program and business development team updates. Robert Croom mentioned a total of 44 customers have reported entering employment for program year 2022 and review the spending distribution for training contracts. Robert Croom provided feedback for the Coach USA, Maritime, Healthcare and Diversity and Include job fair. Robert Croom added that there have been lots of outreach to ensure follow up is conducted with all individuals who have attended the job fairs. Carolina Marin

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mentioned there were nine individuals employed at the healthcare job fair and not two. Robert Croom mentioned that for the Diversity and Inclusion job fair one person was hired by the Department of Human Services and his team is currently sending out the resumes for those individuals who did not get hired. In addition, Robert Croom discussed the Expungement Job Fair that will be held on Thursday, April 20, 2023 at Warinanco Sport Center and have over 500 individuals registered to attend. Jasmine Sowah discussed the Reverse Engineering mentorship program that is a collaboration with Alpha Phi Alpha. Robert Croom asked Juanito Chiluisa to discuss the Employment Service updates. Juanito Chiluisa mentioned that since November 14, 2022 they have now opened the doors to the American Job Center and now are offering appointments for clients. Employment Services have provided services to over 900 clients who have been assisted with job leads, resume critique, and were offered referrals on various services offered. Debbie Ann Anderson asked Juanito Chiluisa how many individuals are unemployed in Union County? Juanito Chiluisa mentioned he does not have an exact number but would estimate there are about 60,000 individuals and currently there is no requirement for those individuals on employment to report for a reemployment orientation. Amy Wagner asked if the state was considering reinstating the reemployment program. Juanito Chiluisa stated he thinks for the new year the state might. Amy Wagner mentioned there has been tremendous improvement on the information provided at the meetings and thanked Robert Croom for all the initiatives that have been implemented.

VIII. **Old Business**

No Comments

IX. **New Business**

No Comments

X. **Public Comments**

Jasmine Sowah mentioned there have been great interest in the Summer Youth Employment program and currently have 100 youth signed up. Jasmine Sowah added that their program is looking for employment sites that focus on science, technology, engineering, and math. She encouraged board members to consider being a workplace site.

XI. **Adjournment**

The meeting was adjourned by Chairman Dr. Kamran Tasharofi at 10:15 am.

Meeting Schedule:

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9:00 AM, Wednesday, June 14, 2023 9:00am

Location:

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