

**Public Meeting of the Union County Workforce Development Board**  
**Warinanco Sports Center, 1 Park Drive, Roselle, NJ 07203**  
**9:00AM Wednesday, June 21, 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  
Juanito Chiluisa, NJ Department of Labor  
Richard Capac, Crowne Property Management  
Melynda Disla, Gateway Family YMCA  
Gloria Dunham, Qunnection Management  
Edward Faver, Division of Vocational Rehabilitation Services  
Kelly Drakeford Ledet, Kean University (Dr. David Jefferson Jr)  
Jessica Cohen, Bristol-Myers Squibb  
Dr. Margaret McMenamin, Union College of Union County, NJ (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  
Morgan Thompson, Prevention Links  
Courtney Villani, Villani Bus

**Board Members Absent:**

Paul Belardo, KML Carpenters  
Tina Earley, American Water  
Salvador Garcia, MAS Development Group  
Edwin Gomez, Barcode Elizabeth  
Bernadette Griswold, Community Access Unlimited  
Jenny Davis Toth, Port Authority of New York & New Jersey  
Richard Malcolm, Ironworkers Local #11  
Roshan White, UA Local 24 Plumbers

**Conflict Counsel:**

Kraig M. Dowd Esq.

**County of Union:**

Sergio Granados, Union County Commissioner  
Ed Oatman, Union County Manager  
Amy Wagner, Department of Economic Development  
Lisa Bonanno, Workforce Development Board  
Antonio Rivera, Workforce Development Board  
Meredith Barracato, Workforce Development Board

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Gina Tuesta, Workforce Development Board  
Robert Croom, American Job Center  
Carolina Marin, American Job Center  
Lillian Roman, American Job Center

**Guests:**

Isaias Rivera, Union College of Union County, NJ  
Scott Kuchinsky, Plainfield Public Library  
Colleen Connell, Plainfield Public Library  
Juanita Vargas, United Way of Greater Union County  
Anne Marie McNamara, Union County Vocational Technical School

**I. Call to Order & Welcome**

The meeting was called to order by Dr. Kamran Tasharofi, Chairman Workforce Development Board, at 9:05 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 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

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and guests were acknowledged on the record, as reflected on page one of these minutes.

V. **Approval of the Minutes**

The minutes of the April 19, 2023 meeting were presented for a vote.

**BOARD  
ACTION**

**Stan Robinson Jr.** made a motion to approve the meeting minutes for April 19, 2023. **James Brady** seconded the motion. The motion was approved unanimously.

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

Director Riviera began the presentation by noting Jessica Cohen was present via Zoom. Director Riviera noted all board members were sent the Zoom link to the meeting in case they would like to follow the presentation along on their personal devices. Director Riviera briefed everyone on the Workforce Development Board timeline which include the development of the strategic plan, the development of policies and the participation of New Jersey Department of Labor fiscal and programmatic monitoring request. Director Riviera asked that all board members participate at the July 26, 2023 board meeting, where the board will be voting on the new contract period for American Job Center. He added the request for proposal is due on Friday June 23, 2023 and the Chairman is working with the Evaluation Committee and will review all proposals submitted. Director Riviera added that the once the proposals are reviewed and approved, then the Workforce Development Board will extend a contract, begin monitoring the contracts and begin discussions for the Memorandum of Understanding/Infrastructure Agreement. Director Riviera ended the presentation by noting that as of June 21, 2023 the New Jersey Department of Labor had not provided the Workforce Development Board the notice of award for funding. As a result of not having a notice of award, the Workforce Development Board is unable to approve a budget. Ed Oatman asked if the reason for the lack of notice of award had to do with the fact the state budget hasn't been approved. Director Riviera confirmed that was the reason why no notice of award has been issued.

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

**Resolution No. 2023-12:**

**Resolution of the Union County Workforce Development Board Authorizing Program Year 2021 Workforce Development Area Budget Indirect Expenses.**

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**BOARD  
ACTION**

Chairman Tasharofi requested a motion to approve **Resolution No. 2023-12**. **Teresa Soto Vega** made a motion to approve **Resolution No. 2023-12**. **Richard Capac** seconded the motion. The motion was approved unanimously.

**Resolution No. 2023-13:**

**Resolution of the Union County Workforce Development Board Authorizing Program Year 2022 Workforce Development Area Budget Indirect Expenses.**

**BOARD  
ACTION**

Chairman Tasharofi requested a motion to approve **Resolution No. 2023-13**. **Hilary McCarron** made a motion to approve **Resolution No. 2023-13**. **Stan Robinson Jr.** seconded the motion. The motion was approved unanimously.

**Resolution No. 2023-14:**

**Resolution of the Union County Workforce Development Board Authorizing the Transfer of Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) Expenses from Program Year 2022 to Program Year 2021.**

Hilary McCarron asked for clarification as to why the resolution dates were backwards. Director Rivera mentioned the New Jersey Department of Labor allows for the Workforce Development Boards to swap expenses from current year to the previous year to open available funds during the current year. Sergio Granados and Chairman Tasharofi provided additional clarification. Amy Wagner added that this practice happens every year and hopefully the funding will be spent the upcoming year to avoid having to transfer the funding.

**BOARD  
ACTION**

Chairman Tasharofi requested a motion to approve **Resolution No. 2023-14**. **Alan Rutan** made a motion to approve **Resolution No. 2023-14**. **Stan Robinson Jr.** seconded the motion. The motion was approved unanimously.

**Resolution No. 2023-15:**

**Resolution of the Union County Workforce Development Board Awarding a Contract for the Provision of An Affiliate American Job Center Site Provider for Career Services to Adults and Dislocated Workers under the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act.**

**BOARD  
ACTION**

Chairman Tasharofi requested a motion to approve **Resolution No. 2023-15**. **Teresa Soto Vega** made a motion to approve **Resolution No. 2023-15**. **Richard Capac** seconded the motion. The motion was approved unanimously.

**Dr. Lisa Hiscano** and **Dr. Kamran Tasharofi** abstained from Resolution No. 2023-15.

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**Resolution No. 2023-16:**

**Resolution of the Union County Workforce Development Board Authorizing a Close-Out Agreement and the issuance of final payment for services rendered pursuant to the Uniform Administrative Requirements, Cost Principles, and Audit Requirements for Federal Awards.**

**BOARD  
ACTION**

Chairman Tasharofi requested a motion to approve **Resolution No. 2023-16**. **Stan Robinson Jr.** made a motion to approve **Resolution No. 2023-16**. **Gloria Durham** seconded the motion. The motion was approved unanimously.

Dr. Lisa Hiscano asked if the close out resolution is a new requirement and will this happen with every contract moving forward. Director Rivera mentioned the close out is a federal requirement and Workforce Development Boards are required to close out the agreement identifying the contract is closed, this is the amount that is owed at the end of contract period and no additional extensions or transfers will be completed.

Amy Wagner asked if board members on the Zoom call can vote using the chat feature. Director Rivera said yes, Zoom participants can cast their vote online.

**Dr. Lisa Hiscano** and **Dr. Kamran Tasharofi** abstained from Resolution No. 2023-16.

**Resolution No. 2023-17:**

**Resolution of the Union County Workforce Development Board Authorizing the Implementation of a Temporary Budget.**

Director Rivera mentioned that since the New Jersey Department of Labor has not issued a notice of award to any of the local areas the creation of the temporary budget is required to cover all the operations from July 1, to September 1, 2023 utilizing carry over funding to cover expenses. Director Rivera added that once the Workforce Development Board receives the notice of award, then the charges will be reversed out. Director Rivera added that the temporary budget covers all the salary and fringe benefits of staff for the specific time period.

Erich Peter asked if the fringe benefits were normal because they seem high. Director Rivera mentioned that the fringe benefits is standard.

**BOARD  
ACTION**

Chairman Tasharofi requested a motion to approve **Resolution No. 2023-17**. **James Brady** made a motion to approve **Resolution No. 2023-17**. **Stan Robinson Jr** seconded the motion. The motion was approved unanimously.

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**Debbie Ann Anderson** abstained from Resolution No. 2023-17.

**Resolution No. 2023-18:**

**Resolution of the Union County Workforce Development Board Authorizing the County of Union to Continue Providing Necessary AJC Services Pending the Award of a New Contract.**

**BOARD  
ACTION**

Chairman Tasharofi requested a motion to approve **Resolution No. 2023-18**. **James R. Brady** made a motion to approve **Resolution No. 2023-18**. **Juanito Chiluisa** seconded the motion. The motion was approved unanimously.

Director Rivera mentioned that this resolution supports Resolution No. 2023-17, and ensures the services will continue to be provided although there is no notice of award. Kraig M. Dowd Esq, Conflict Counsel, mentioned this resolution is a companion resolution, which authorizes that services continue to be delivered as a way to bridge the gap.

**Debbie Ann Anderson** abstained from Resolution No. 2023-18.

VII. **American Job Center Report**

Robert Croom 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 discussed the performance measure which show passing performance for all categories except youth credentials received and measurable skills gained. Robert Croom mentioned that since the performance software has a lag they anticipate the goal will be met since it is the end of the school year and many students will be graduating or moving ahead in grade levels.

Robert Croom discussed the Expungement Job Fair that was held on Thursday, April 20, 2023 at Warinanco Sport Center. Robert Croom noted the event had over 600 individuals register and over 300 people attend, and 136 had their records expunged including 66 American Job Center clients. Sergio Granados provided details about the day events and thanked the Workforce Development Board members who were the driving force behind the idea. Sergio Granados noted the success of the event and the overwhelming need that required them to turn individuals away due to capacity. Debbie Ann Anderson mentioned that many counties have looked to Union County to see how they can do something similar in their areas. Dr. Lisa Hiscano asked how long does it take after they have had their record expunged to then be eligible

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for Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act services. Robert Croom mentioned the American Job Center currently works with various reentry organizations. Director Rivera noted that Adult funding can be used for the reentry population. Gloria Durham asked if the American Job Center can host semiannual expungement job fairs. Robert Croom mentioned the plan is to have the job fair quarterly. Dr. David Jefferson Jr asked if the American Job Center would consider hosting the event at Kean University which can offer a larger event space to meet the need. Robert Croom mentioned they would consider a larger space especially now that more attorneys are asking to participate at the next event. James Brady asked how long does it take between expungement and background checks. Robert Croom explained there is a backlog on the process and it depends on the individual case. Sergio Granados mentioned that lawyers will not only help them on the day but will follow the case along to ensure their situation is resolved. Carolina Marin mentioned that some of the customers have already gotten their expungement letters and out of the 40 candidates in the hiring process since the FedEx hiring event 35 have already passed the background checks and should be starting soon.

Robert Croom reviewed the services offered through Youth Forward program which assisted the youth with mentoring, educational services and leadership skills. Robert Croom asked Juanito Chiluisa to discuss the Employment Service updates. Juanito Chiluisa mentioned they have provided services to over 5000 clients seeking jobs. Robert Croom asked Ed Faver to provide an update for the Division of Vocational and Rehabilitation Services. Ed Faver mentioned his department has had over 700 new applications this year. He added that the agencies mission has changed and they are looking to provide more high-quality placements and as a result have lowered performance goals and follow the client for 5 quarters after placement.

Chairman Tasharofi requested an explanation from Robert Croom regarding the costs associated with training and placement services for dislocated workers. Robert Croom responded by stating that the American Job Center can allocate up to \$5000.00 per customer, with the schools being responsible for providing documentation showing client attendance. Debbie Ann Anderson added that each client has an individualized plan with specific benchmarks that vendors must meet. Following the training grant completion, the American Job Center covers the expenses for licenses and other supportive services to ensure successful job placement.

Robert Croom then discussed the outcomes of a recent small business seminar, highlighting the limited availability of similar services in other counties compared to those provided by the American Job Center. Debbie Ann Anderson

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emphasized the importance of the Workforce Development Boards' guidance and the strategies set forth by Antonio Rivera in the strategic plan. She noted that these enable the American Job Center to think innovatively, meet clients where they are, and provide them with the necessary resources.

Chairman Tasharofi emphasized the significance of connecting job-seeking clients with various board members representing industries such as healthcare, transportation, and construction, who are actively seeking employees. Juanito Chiluisa offered his contact information (908) 965-3929/ (908)-965-3949 to the board members in need of employees, as Employment Services has a pool of job seekers that can be connected with potential employers. Debbie Ann Anderson stressed the need for coordination and collaboration with partners to establish a streamlined system for matching job seekers with employers and managing job orders.

VIII. **Old Business**

No Comments

IX. **New Business**

Gloria Durham mentioned she participated in an informational session with, Doppelmayr, who is providing air train services and will be looking for employees such as welders and truck drivers in the near future. Sergio Granados suggested hosting a job fair for those specific occupations.

X. **Public Comments**

No Comments

XI. **Adjournment**

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

**Meeting Schedule:**

**9:00 AM, Wednesday, July 26, 2023 9:00am**

**Location:**

The Hill Tavern, 3 Golf Dr, Kenilworth, NJ 07033