

**Public Meeting of the Union County Workforce Development Board**  
**Warinanco Sports Center, 1 Park Drive, Roselle, NJ 07203**  
**9:00AM Wednesday, July 26, 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 (Melissa Lespinasse)  
James R. Brady, The Savor Group  
Curry Bucu, Trinitas Regional Medical Center  
Richard Capac, Crowne Property Management  
Jessica Cohen, Bristol-Myers Squibb  
Gloria Dunham, Qunnection Management  
Edward Faver, Division of Vocational Rehabilitation Services  
Bernadette Griswold, Community Access Unlimited (Sandra Lynch)  
Dr. Margaret McMenamin, Union College of Union County, NJ (Dr. Lisa Hiscano)  
Erich Peter, Union County Economic Development Corp  
Alan Rutan, Rutan Mechanical LLC  
Gwen Ryan, Union County Vocational Technical School (Janet Behrman)  
Teresa Soto-Vega, PROCEED  
Morgan Thompson, Prevention Links  
Roshan White, UA Local 24 Plumbers

**Board Members Absent:**

Juanito Chiluisa, NJ Department of  
Melynda Disla, Gateway Family YMCA  
Kelly Drakeford Ledet, Kean University  
Daryl Palmieri, Union County Schools K-12  
Courtney Villani, Villani Bus  
Paul Belardo, KML Carpenters  
Tina Earley, American Water  
Salvador Garcia, MAS Development Group  
Edwin Gomez, Barcode Elizabeth  
Richard Malcolm, Ironworkers Local #11

**Conflict Counsel:**

Neil Bernardo Esq.

**County of Union:**

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, Union County American Job Center  
Carolina Marin, Union Job American Job Center  
Nasrene Mondol, Union Job American Job Center  
Latoya Bennett, Youth Forward  
Jasmine Sowah, Youth Forward

**Guests:**

Isaias Rivera, Union College of Union County, NJ  
Steve Anglin, WeSolar CSP

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**Important Highlights from the July 26, 2023 Meeting:**

**1. Enhancing Performance Data and Metrics:**

- a. Develop a comprehensive strategy for increased client engagement and funding utilization.
- b. Increase successful participant exits while maintaining high performance rates.
- c. Implement real-time data capture for up-to-date program performance.
- d. Ensure data are (AOSOS, Union County Works, and FutureWorks) accurately aligned.
- e. Convert reportable individuals to participants and accurately credit successes.
- f. Utilize data-driven approach to showcase progress for funding requests.
- g. Evaluate individual staff goals' impact on program performance and participant outcomes.

**2. Strengthening Engagement Strategies and Outreach:**

- a. Align efforts with the strategic plan for program effectiveness.
- b. Implement proactive outreach strategy to engage more clients.
- c. Collaborate with nonprofits for enhanced community engagement.
- d. Define clear metrics for participant success, focusing on employment outcomes.
- e. Evaluate progress of streamlined procedures and virtual platform.
- f. Foster ongoing communication with partners for improved program delivery.
- g. Explore supportive services solutions to bridge the gap between client needs and resources.
- h. Continuously assess job fair effectiveness in engagement and outcomes.

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

V. **Approval of the Minutes**

The minutes of the June 21, 2023 meeting were presented for a vote.

**BOARD  
ACTION**

**Stan Robinson Jr.** made a motion to approve the meeting minutes for June 21, 2023. **James Brady** seconded the motion. The motion was approved unanimously.

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

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Director Rivera opened the meeting by emphasizing the importance of the 33rd anniversary of the American Disability Act, focusing on its relevance to community service and workforce improvement. Director Rivera mentioned the collaboration between the Union County Workforce Development Board Disabilities Committee and the Board of County Commissioners, who conducted an employer survey to enhance engagement with the business community and address challenges and opportunities.

Director Rivera discussed an invitation from United States Department of Labor's Employment and Training Administration to participate in an event in Philadelphia to discuss the workforce investment vision for 2030. Director Rivera mentioned the event brings together selected representatives from Region One, spanning 10 states across New Jersey, through Maine.

Director Rivera mentioned Robert Croom and Debbie Ann Anderson's request for technology upgrades. Director Rivera highlighted the approval from the New Jersey Department of Labor to invest \$92,000 in computers. The technology upgrades will benefit staff and clients.

Turning to the project management timeline, Director Rivera reviewed progress through May, June, and July, noting alignment with previously established schedules. Director Rivera mentioned future projects which include the development of the memorandum of Understanding and Infrastructure agreement.

Director Rivera presented performance data from American Job Centers, indicating strong progress across measures but noted this was due to the low number of exited participants. Director Rivera mentioned the New Jersey Department of Labor has criticized the number of clients exiting despite exceeding the target performance percentage. Additionally, Director Rivera provided an example of the youth performance outcome which shows a performance rate of 121% under measurable skills gains, but that only counts 39 out of 48 participants that were exited. Director Rivera noted the pandemic's impact on client flow as a challenge for the centers.

Chairman Tasharofi asked if the criticism from the New Jersey Department of Labor is because the number is low, the performance can be skewed because we have low numbers and we have a high success rate with those low numbers, but if you have larger numbers, that performance rate could be coming down. Director Rivera agreed with Chairman Tasharofi's statement. Director Rivera added that the state has noted local areas are not contributing as much to the overall performance of the state due to the low number of exited participants.

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Director Rivera went on to explain that the Union County Workforce Development Board needs to be cognizant of the cost per participant.

Director Rivera went on to explain that the American Job Center can pass all the performance measures, but at what cost. There needs to be a focus on what does it cost the American Job Center to place participants into employment. Director Rivera mentioned that while the American Job Center is passing all the performance measures the New Jersey Department of Labor is asking all areas to increase their numbers to contribute to the overall success of the of the state.

Dr. Lisa Hiscano asked if the discussion at the state is about increasing recruitment of eligible participants into the programs to increase the numbers and is this applicable for all programs? Director Rivera mentioned it is not so much the recruitment but more about the exit and the success rate of those exiting participants.

Stan Robinson Jr. asked if the Workforce Development Board has a sense of how other counties are doing in terms of exiting percentages and if it's a problem across the state or unique to Union County. Director Rivera mentioned he will email the performance data for the other counties to the board members.

Gloria Dunham asked if the performance was based on timeline or the cost associated and was it costing us a lot more money to get those individuals out and based on dollar amounts. Director Rivera deferred the question to Melissa Lespinasse who discussed stackable credentials and the ongoing process of tracking exiting individuals in terms of fourth quarter data, which was due that day. Melissa Lespinasse mentioned that although the numbers weren't final, she the American Job Center staff had been actively following up with individuals who were exiting and monitoring their credentials. They were also assessing additional needs that might arise as customers exited from various programs. Melissa also addressed foot traffic, both those entering the facility and those having a positive One Stop experience.

Director Rivera explained that individuals who come in for services, such as using computers for job searches or attending job fairs, should be considered reportable individuals. The goal is to capture these individuals' data and track their outcomes, particularly if they transition to finding a job. Director Rivera expressed concern that many successful outcomes from job fairs might be going unreported due to a potential data gap.

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Dr Hiscano asked if the need was to create a process in converting reportable individuals into participants and then properly exiting them from the system to ensure that their successes are properly credited to the program. Director Rivera pointed out that if this data bridge is not established, the program may not receive credit for positive outcomes, even if they contributed to those outcomes indirectly. Director Rivera mentioned that attention needs to be paid to prevent data bleed and enhance the program's effectiveness, ultimately benefiting Union County.

James Brady asked how low are the numbers and what metric is used to determine the information. Director Rivera explained that the metric used to determine the performance is based on the numerator and denominator which represents the number of participants exited and the number of participants placed in jobs. Director Rivera mentioned the low numbers represented is not an indication of the number of people being served because we serve more than the numbers represented but the question is why is the data so low.

Chairman Tasharofi noted it seems as if we were spending a lot of money but were getting very little results on paper.

Dr Lisa Hiscano asked if the credentials and measurable skills gains performance rate only reflected individuals who have exited the system and is not someone in progress. Melissa Lespinasse mentioned that benchmarks are entered into the system but performance only counts when the participant is exited from the system.

Amy Wagner asked if the New Jersey Department of Labor would consider changing the benchmarks to match what they want because it seems they are not satisfied with the benchmarks the county is exceeding. Director Rivera mentioned there was no discussion on that.

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

**Resolution No. 2023-20:**

**Resolution of the Union County Workforce Development Board Concurring with the Decision of the Executive Committee to Authorize the Extension of the Contract Period for the Provision of Work First New Jersey Programs.**

Director Rivera mentioned that an executive committee meeting was held to authorize the approval extending the contract with the existing

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WorkFirst New Jersey vendors so they can continue to provide services to the WorkFirst New Jersey clients.

**BOARD  
ACTION**

Chairman Tasharofi requested a motion to approve **Resolution No. 2023-20**. **Teresa Soto Vega** made a motion to approve **Resolution No. 2023-20**. **James Brady** seconded the motion. The motion was approved unanimously.

Dr. Lisa Hiscano and Dr. Kamran Tasharofi abstained from **Resolution No. 2023-20**.

**Resolution No. 2023-21:**

**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.**

Neil Bernardo Esq. an associate of Craig Dowd, addressed the board members. Neil Bernardo Esq. reminded everyone that if they plan to abstain from voting on any resolution due to a conflict of interest, they should also avoid engaging in discussions or asking questions related to the motion. And the reason for that is to avoid the possibility that the decision could be vulnerable to being challenged because somebody you know, even if they didn't vote could have influenced the decision-making process in any way. This is to prevent potential challenges to the decision's integrity, as per New Jersey State Department of Labor's guidelines. Compliance with these guidelines is important to avoid complications and helps everyone stay above board.

Dr. Lisa Hiscano and Dr. Kamran Tasharofi abstained from **Resolution No. 2023-21**.

**BOARD  
ACTION**

Chairman Tasharofi requested a motion to approve **Resolution No. 2023-21**. **James Brady** made a motion to approve **Resolution No. 2023-21**. **Gloria Dunham** seconded the motion. The motion was approved unanimously.

**Resolution No. 2023-22:**

**Resolution of the Union County Workforce Development Board Adopting the Program Year 2023 Union County Workforce Development Area Budget.**

Director Rivera reviewed slides which depicted the breakdown of the recently received budget from the New Jersey Department of Labor. The budget for this year was presented as \$5.9 million. A comparison between program year 2023 and program year 2022 allocations was shown, indicating reductions in funding

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of \$190,000 for Adult and Dislocated Worker, \$420,000 for TANF and \$131,000 for general assistance, totaling \$746,000. Director Rivera noted this decrease was attributed to not fully utilizing funds in relation to the number of clients served and local resources. Director Rivera discussed the approach from the New Jersey Department of Labor which consisted of holding local areas accountable and adjusting funding accordingly. Director Rivera emphasized the need for the American Job Center to actively engage more clients, collaborate with nonprofits, and involve Union County to ensure successful community engagement moving forward. Director Rivera noted there was a positive note that an additional \$142,000 was received for youth allocations compared to the previous year.

Erich Peters asked what is the main driver why we're not spending money, is it this number of people coming into the program, is it getting them through the program or is it timely billing. Director Rivera noted it was all of those factors in addition to others. Director Rivera went on to mention that the American Job Center underwent a significant transition since the onset of the pandemic. A new director was appointed, following the installation of a previous director. These changes were acknowledged as substantial setbacks in terms of progress. Dealing with intricate federal programs posed a challenge, and it was emphasized that building a comprehensive understanding of these programs takes years of effort. Director Rivera mentioned that the American Job Center should refer to the existing strategic plan as a playbook, rather than attempting to formulate new strategies. The plan had already been established, and the focus should be on executing it effectively. It was highlighted that the responsibility of implementing the playbook rested with the American Job Center itself with the support of the Workforce Development Board and his office.

James Brady ask how does the Workforce Development Board get back to were they were before the reduction of the \$420,000? Director Rivera mentioned that the New Jersey Department of Labor has indicated upcoming funding opportunities. The commitment involves generating creative concepts and providing notices for grant opportunities to apply for. Pursuing these competitive bidding options would require increased efforts from the Workforce Development Board.

Chairman Tasharofi emphasized the need to demonstrate an increase in the numerical data and then by showcasing substantial progress, the Workforce Development Board can confidently present the results and substantiate the request for increased funding. Director Rivera noted that the reason why there was an increase of \$142,000 in additional funding for youth was because all of



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the youth money was spent last year, but there was a concerted effort and a focus on making sure that that effort takes place by the American Job Center.

Amy Wagner noted that the reduced funding situation extended beyond Union County, as other counties had also experienced substantial reductions. She mentioned it's important to acknowledge that this approach was being applied universally, with budget cuts affecting all areas. Additionally, the absence of job requirements for TANF recipients during the pandemic had contributed to decreased participation, as individuals were not obligated to adhere. However, this circumstance has changed, and the reintroduction of these requirements is expected to positively impact engagement. She agreed with Antonio Rivera's recommendation for a more assertive outreach strategy for these programs.

Director Rivera proceeded to discuss program year 2023 budget. The proposed budget encompassed various aspects, including administration, operations, and American Job Center Career Services. During the current year, \$2.2 million had been allocated for personnel linked to the American Job Center, a notable increase from the prior \$2 million. The increased budget is aimed to provide adequate resources for hiring suitable personnel to deliver client services effectively. Director Rivera went further on to explained that the New Jersey Department of Labor, is requiring a minimum of 40% of resources to be invested in direct client services. While the precise figures for the recently received budgets were pending due to the recent notification, it's important to mention that additional funds, around one million, were available from the program year 2022. However, these funds were earmarked specifically for participant services and couldn't be utilized for personnel salaries or fringe benefits. Director Rivera noted that, even prior to this budget stipulation from the New Jersey Department of Labor, the Workforce Development Board had consistently allocated around 40-50% of the budget to participant services, illustrating a dedication to impactful services that extended beyond mere compliance with budgetary requirements.

**BOARD  
ACTION**

Chairman Tasharofi requested a motion to approve **Resolution No. 2023-22**. **Alan Rutan** made a motion to approve **Resolution No. 2023-22**. **Stan Robinson Jr.** seconded the motion. The motion was approved unanimously.

**Resolution No. 2023-23:**

**Resolution of the Union County Workforce Development Board Awarding a Contract for the Provision of An Affiliate American Job Center Operators for Work First New Jersey Services.**

Dr. Lisa Hiscano and Dr. Kamran Tasharofi abstained from **Resolution No. 2023-23**

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**BOARD  
ACTION**

Chairman Tasharofi requested a motion to approve **Resolution No. 2023-23**. **Teresa Soto Vega** made a motion to approve **Resolution No. 2023-23**. **Richard Capac** seconded the motion. The motion was approved unanimously.

**Resolution No. 2023-24:**

**Resolution of the Union County Workforce Development Board Awarding a Contract for the Provision of the One Stop Operator (American Job Center Operator) of Comprehensive One Stop Career Center Services.**

Neil Bernardo Esq. recapped the procurement process for the board members. He explained that due to state requirements, the procurement process was divided into three separate parts. The three resolutions are for different aspects: one for the job center operator, another for Career Services catering to adult and dislocated workers, and the third for youth services. The timeline for the process is as follows: The RFP was officially issued on May 24. After its release, queries were received and responses were posted, leading up to the deadline on June 23. One proposal was received, and it came from Union County Department of Human Services.

Neil Bernardo Esq. continued to explain despite the extensive nature of the proposal, with over 500 pages akin to a phonebook, the evaluation committee invested significant time and effort in reviewing it. Ultimately, they recommended awarding the contract to the Union County Department of Human Services for all three resolutions. Their thorough evaluation led them to conclude that this was the best course of action. The committee's diligence is worth acknowledging, as they managed to navigate the complex proposal and reach a well-informed decision. Thus, the proposal from Union County Department of Human Service is the sole submission for these services, and the evaluation committee's endorsement applies to all three instances.

Chairman Tasharofi mentioned the evaluation entailed a comprehensive analysis ensuring the proposal's adherence to these criteria. Every section was closely examined, assessed, and recorded using the evaluation forms. The result indicates that the proposals adequately fulfill all the specified request for proposal prerequisites.

Melissa Lespinasse abstained from **Resolution No. 2023-24**.

**BOARD  
ACTION**

Chairman Tasharofi requested a motion to approve **Resolution No. 2023-24**. **Stan Robinson Jr.** made a motion to approve **Resolution No. 2023-24**. **Gloria Durham** seconded the motion. The motion was approved unanimously.

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**Resolution No. 2023-25:**

**Resolution of the Union County Workforce Development Board Awarding a Contract for the Provision of Comprehensive One Stop Career Center Services to Adults and Dislocated Workers.**

Melissa Lespinasse abstained from **Resolution No. 2023-25.**

**BOARD  
ACTION**

Chairman Tasharofi requested a motion to approve **Resolution No. 2023-25.** **James Brady** made a motion to approve **Resolution No. 2023-25.** **Stan Robinson Jr** seconded the motion. The motion was approved unanimously.

**Resolution No. 2023-26:**

**Resolution of the Union County Workforce Development Board Awarding a Contract for the Provision of Comprehensive One Stop Career Center Services to Youth.**

Melissa Lespinasse abstained from **Resolution No. 2023-26.**

**BOARD  
ACTION**

Chairman Tasharofi requested a motion to approve **Resolution No. 2023-26.** **James R. Brady** made a motion to approve **Resolution No. 2023-26.** **Juanito Chiluisa** seconded the motion. The motion was approved unanimously.

**Resolution No. 2023-27:**

**Resolution of the Union County Workforce Development Board Authorizing the Use of Budget Account Numbers by the Union County Department of Human Services as the American Job Center Operator and as the Provider of Comprehensive Career Services.**

Director Rivera mentioned the purpose of the resolution is to authorize funding for the accounts and what the distribution for those accounts are.

Melissa Lespinasse abstained from **Resolution No. 2023-27.**

**BOARD  
ACTION**

Chairman Tasharofi requested a motion to approve **Resolution No. 2023-27.** **James R. Brady** made a motion to approve **Resolution No. 2023-27.** **Juanito Chiluisa** seconded the motion. The motion was approved unanimously.

**American Job Center Report**

Robert Croom began to review the slides which showed information on customer services delivered, training enrollments, youth services, Workforce Innovation Business Center, Title II program, Employment Services, and business

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development team updates. Robert Croom emphasized on how his team is working extremely hard and it has been a real lift even for himself. Robert Croom noted the numbers reflected from FutureWorks are starting from 2020, some including 2021, which are pandemic numbers and they are in the process of closing out. He added that he is trying to encourage his team to close this gap and to close these circles with these customers engaging a lot more. He expects that moving forward, these numbers will increase. Robert Croom noted that after a quick search a lot of the numbers reflected are a trend throughout the state.

Erich Peters asked Robert Croom if the American Job Center has had discussion about the numbers being a concern, and have they thought about putting internal goals on the number of people they want to get through the program. Robert Croom discussed their efforts to bring accountability and improvement to the American Job Center. They have implemented goals for all team members, from clerical staff to administrators, resulting in some staff leaving due to the increased standards. The American Job Center has undergone a complete revamp, ensuring all staff are educated on services and standards through the Workforce180 training provided by the Workforce Development Board. Robert Croom emphasized the importance of uniformity and smarter data capture. Robert Croom noted that the data reported on FutureWorks slide are old numbers. They're not actually current of what's happening today.

Robert Croom added one of the major changes was having all the career counselors entering the credentials into the database as opposed to only having one person do it. They have made changes to enhance customer engagement, track job fair attendees, and retain participants who are genuinely seeking employment, rather than just benefits. As a result of this they are now asking every person that enters a job fair to fill out an intake form so they are counted as reportable individuals. Robert Croom mentioned his team is now more engaged and transparent, conducting follow-ups and case conferences to ensure progress. Despite the challenges, the American Job Center has made significant progress since his arrival.

Morgan Thompson asked if the challenge is retaining participants what is the role of supportive services and if a more robust sort of approach to supportive services can be developed. Robert Croom highlighted the key focus areas of retaining and attracting the right participants for the program. Robert Croom mentioned that some participants are primarily interested in extending their ABT benefits rather than seeking employment, prompting the need for clarity and proper targeting. Robert Croom discussed various strategies which include transparent communication with customers from the start, clarifying program requirements, and ongoing engagement to ensure alignment with program

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goals. Robert Croom mentioned his team has been actively involved in guiding participants, with increased transparency, follow-ups, and case conferences. This proactive approach has shown significant progress and improvement since the inception of the program.

Robert Croom noted that along with Nasrene Mondol they have been actively engaging with the partners, building relationships, and explaining their supportive services. Despite the current lack of funding, they are exploring ways to leverage their partners' services to benefit their clients. Their focus is on addressing challenges like transportation issues that many of the customers face. While funding is limited at the moment, they are committed to promoting their supportive services. Their counselors are now mandated to communicate these services more effectively to clients. This approach aims to bridge the gap between what clients need and what they can provide. Robert Croom continued to mention that in their efforts to enhance efficiency, they have embarked on a tour to meet with various partners. They are promoting co-enrollment and simplifying the eligibility process by training partners to use the virtual one-stop platform. This approach allows partners to upload necessary documents, facilitating quicker eligibility determination. Their goal is to streamline procedures, eliminate unnecessary delays, and provide an easier experience for their customers.

Chairman Tasharofi commended Robert Croom for his efforts in changing the system and trying to shake things up to make it better. The Chairman noted he is looking forward to see the 2023 performance data and compare it with previous years to see how it worked out.

Gloria Dunham asked Antonio Rivera if there were still transportation funds available for the American Job Center. Director Rivera mentioned that the Workforce Development Board will be issuing a supportive services request for proposal. Director Rivera added that by issuing the request for proposal and engaging the non-profits, the American Job Center can focus on the day to day operations.

Robert Croom continued to review the presentation slides. Robert Croom mentioned that during a New Jersey Department of Labor on-site visit in June, the state commended their expungement clinic and job fair, hailing it as a best practice across the state. The state sees them as a model, and plan to collaborate with them to support other American Job Centers. Robert Croom reported that the job fairs and hiring events have drawn a total of 813 attendees this year. Of those, 44 have secured employment and 318 have not responded. These figures remain subject to change as ongoing engagement might lead to

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pending cases being resolved. Additionally, a Farmland Dairy hiring event is scheduled for August 18 at Plainfield Public Library, and they are preparing for another event with the US Marshals office in the near future.

Erich Peter asked Robert Croom to explain what a CASAS test was. Nasrene Mondol explained that a CASAS test was a math and literacy assessment used to gauge a participant's proficiency which can determine their ability to successfully complete a training course.

Robert Croom asked Jasmine Sowah to explain the youth mentoring program and discuss the Youth Forward success story. Jasmine Sowah provided details regarding the Alpha Phi Alpha mentoring program and discussed the Simon Youth Academy and Boxwood Learning Center graduates.

Gloria Dunham asked if the mentoring program can be accelerated from eight months to six and offer it twice a month? Jasmine Sowah said she can look into reducing the time for participants.

James Brady expressed his gratitude for having Robert Croom as part of the American Job Center.

VII. **Old Business**

No Comments

VIII. **New Business**

No Comments

IX. **Public Comments**

Steve Anglin, co-founder of WeSolar CSP, a Princeton-based renewable energy company, explained that he was invited by Gloria Dunham to share a quick overview of their work. WeSolar CSP focus lies in tackling the toughest-to-decarbonize sectors using concentrated solar power (CSP).

Steve Anglin highlighted his recent progress, securing contracts with three cities committed to cleaner futures, including Rutgers University. He addressed the significance of renewable energy and emphasized the funding opportunities available for underserved communities. Expressing affinity for Union County and New Jersey, he offered their expertise in tackling workforce needs in renewable energy. Steve Anglin discussed exploring job opportunities, and mentioned roles in technology (AI, predictive analytics, machine learning), healthcare, and renewable energy, including solar panel installations and sales. Steve Anglin introduced the concept of community solar and its relevance. Responding to a query from Stan Robinson Jr., Steve Anglin expanded on solar panel installations'

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demand and potential for growth, and expressed openness to collaborations and training initiatives.

X. **Adjournment**

The meeting was adjourned by Chairman Dr. Kamran Tasharofi at 10:25 am.

**Meeting Schedule:**

**9:00 AM, Wednesday, September 27, 2023**

**Location:**

The Hill Tavern  
Galloping Hill Park and Golf Course  
3 Golf Dr, Kenilworth, NJ 07033