Public Meeting of the Union County Workforce Development Board
The Hill Tavern, 3 Golf Dr, Kenilworth, NJ 07033
9:00AM Wednesday, July 29, 2026
MEETING MINUTES

Board Members Present
Caroline Aubrey, The Aubrey Group
Debbie Ann Anderson, Union County Department of Human Services (Melissa Lespinasse)
Paul Belardo, KML Carpenters
Matthew Beyerstedt, The Mills at Jersey Gardens
James R. Brady, The Savor Group
Juanito Chiluisa, NJ Department of Labor-Employment Services
Craig Coughlin, Kean University (Ayisha Mapp)
Melynda Disla, Gateway Family YMCA
Gloria Dunham, Qunnection Management
Danielle Johnson, JCT Solutions
Kate Kerpchar, BFI
Valerie Kerrigan, Division of Vocational Rehabilitation Services
Timothy McConway, Steamfitters Local 475
Dr. Margaret McMenamin, UCNJ, Union College of Union County, NJ (Dr. Lisa Hiscano)
Erich Peter, Union County Economic Development Corp (**Vice President**)
Stan Robinson Jr., SHR Marketing, LLC (**Chair**)
Gwen Ryan, Union County Vocational Technical School
Teresa Soto-Vega, PROCEED (Srabanti Sarkar)
Dr. Kamran Tasharofi, Union County Healthcare Associates
Morgan Thompson, Prevention Links (Dominique Garrett)
Joseph Venezia, Colliers Engineering & Design
Roshan White, UA Local 24 Plumbers

Board Members Absent:
Bernadette Griswold, Community Access Unlimited
Richard Capac, Crowne Property Management (**Secretary**)
Courtney Villani, Villani Bus
Curry Bucu, Trinitas Regional Medical Center
Daryl Palmieri, Union County Schools K-12
Antonietta LaVecchia, UPS Store
Hillary McCarron, Port Authority of New York and New Jersey
Alan Rutan, Rutan Mechanical LLC

General Counsel:
Kraig Dowd, Weber Dowd Law

County of Union:
Ed Oatman, County Manager
Amy Wagner, Deputy County Manager
Lourdes Leon, Union County Commissioner
Antonio Rivera, Workforce Development Board

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Meredith Barracato, Workforce Development Board
Gina Tuesta, Workforce Development Board
Dan Varady, Workforce Development Board
Lillian Roman, Union County American Job Center
Jeffrey Jackson, UC Department of Human Services
Rhonda McClain, Union County Division of Social Services

Guests:
Christina Lorenzo, NJ Department of Labor
Dr. Anne Marie McNamara, Union County Vocational Technical School
Patty Banks, Plainfield Public Library
Scott Kuchinsky, Plainfield Public Library
Marie Alston, United Way of Greater Union County
Tammy Molinelli, Bergen County Workforce Devolvement Board
Ivonne DelCarpio-Zaki, Bergen County One Stop Operator
Mary Adelman, UCEDC

I. **Call to Order & Welcome**
The public meeting of the Union County Workforce Development Board was called to order at 9:00 a.m. by Stan Robinson Jr., Chairman. Chairman Robinson welcomed board members, county staff, partners, and guests.

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 2026 ANNUAL MEETING SCHEDULE TO THE NEWSPAPERS CIRCULATING WITHIN THE COUNTY OF UNION AND DESIGNATED TO RECEIVE SUCH NOTICE, AND BY POSTING THE YEAR 2026 ANNUAL MEETING SCHEDULE IN THE COUNTY COURT HOUSE, THE UNION COUNTY WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT BOARD WEBSITE, AND BY FILING THE YEAR 2026 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 and two of these minutes.

Chairman Robinson asked everyone to introduce themselves and their occupation. Chairman Robinson welcomed all attendees and special recognition was given to new Board members Matt Beyerstedt and Kate Kerpchar, who were welcomed to the Workforce Development Board.

V. **Approval of the Minutes**

The minutes of the **April 22, 2026** meeting were presented for a vote.

BOARD ACTION

Dr. Kamran Tasharofi made a motion to approve the meeting minutes for **April 22, 2026**. **Timothy McConway** seconded the motion. The motion was approved unanimously.

VI. **UCWDB Report**

Director Rivera welcomed special guests Tammy Molinelli, Director of the Bergen County Workforce Development Board, and Ivonne DelCarpio-Zaki, Bergen County One-Stop Operator, who attended the meeting to observe the Union County Workforce Development Board's workforce development system. Director Rivera provided an overview of the extensive monitoring activities completed over the previous several months, including State Employment and Training Commission certification, procurement, governance, fiscal, policy compliance, and data validation reviews. He explained that the Board, American Job Center, and partner agencies had worked collaboratively to respond to these reviews and had submitted approximately 50,000 pages of documentation demonstrating compliance with federal and State requirements. He noted that the New Jersey Office of Internal Audit had recognized Union County as a leader in compliance due to its commitment to transparency, documentation, and strong internal controls.

Director Rivera reviewed the financial status of the workforce programs, reporting that Program Year 2024 had been successfully closed out with all available funds expended. He explained that the Adult Literacy Innovations grant would remain active through September 30, 2026, and discussed Program Year 2025 expenditures, noting that spending appeared lower than expected because of the State's first-in, first-out budgeting requirements, which required

prior-year funds to be exhausted before current-year allocations could be utilized. He also acknowledged the challenges of serving Workforce New Jersey participants with significant employment barriers while recognizing the continued efforts of the American Job Center and the Department of Human Services to connect individuals with workforce opportunities.

Director Rivera concluded his report by reviewing Program Year 2024 and 2025 performance outcomes, highlighting increases in participant enrollment and employment across the Adult, Dislocated Worker, and Youth programs. He credited the American Job Center and workforce partners for strengthening collaboration, expanding co-enrollment efforts, and improving service delivery, resulting in positive performance outcomes. Following the presentation, James Brady asked how veterans were served within the workforce system. Director Rivera and Valerie Kerrigan explained that veterans and eligible spouses remained priority populations and continued to receive priority access to workforce services, employment assistance, and training opportunities.

VII. **Resolutions of the UCWDB**

Chairman Robinson transitioned the conversation to the review the resolutions. Meredith Barracato reviewed the following resolutions.

Resolution No. 2026-10
Ratifying the Executive Committee Approval of Indirect Costs for PY24 WIOA Title I Adult, Dislocated Worker, In-School Youth, and Out-of-School Youth Programs

Director Antonio Rivera explained that the Executive Committee, with legal counsel present, had previously approved the allocation of $235,000 in allowable indirect costs to the grant, enabling the Board to fully expend Program Year 2024 funds that would have otherwise been returned to the State. He explained that indirect costs covered allowable county expenses that were not directly charged to the grant, such as security and facility-related costs.

BOARD ACTION

Chairman Robinson requested a motion to approve **Resolution No. 2026-10. James Brady** made a motion to approve **Resolution No. 2026-10. Paul Belardo** seconded the motion. The motion was approved unanimously.

Melissa Lespinasse abstained from **Resolution No. 2026-10.**

Resolution No. 2026-11
Authorizing the Issuance of an RFP for a Comprehensive One-Stop Career Center Provider for Youth Services under WIOA

Meredith Barracato explained that Resolution No. 2026-11 authorized the early release of the Request for Proposals (RFP) for Youth Services to ensure there would be no interruption in services. She noted that the RFP would support comprehensive workforce services designed to prepare both in-school and out-of-school youth for post-secondary education, employment, training, and long-term career success.

BOARD ACTION

Chairman Robinson requested a motion to approve **Resolution No. 2026-11. James Brady** made a motion to approve **Resolution No. 2026-11. Erich Peter** seconded the motion. The motion was approved unanimously.

Resolution No. 2026-12
Authorizing the Use of Competitive Contracting for an Affiliate American Job Center Provider of Out-of-School Youth Services under WIOA

Meredith Barracato explained that Resolution No. 2026-12 authorized the use of competitive contracting to release a Request for Proposals (RFP) for an Affiliate American Job Center provider to deliver services to out-of-school youth. She noted that the proposal was intended to support education, workforce training, and employment opportunities for eligible participants.

BOARD ACTION

Chairman Robinson requested a motion to approve **Resolution No. 2026-12. James Brady** made a motion to approve **Resolution No. 2026-12. Paul Belardo** seconded the motion. The motion was approved unanimously.

Resolution No. 2026-13
Adopting the UCWDB Policies and Procedures Manual Introduced by Resolution 2026-08

Prior to the vote on Resolution No. 2026-13, Director Antonio Rivera explained that the policies had been introduced at the previous Board meeting and stated that their adoption would strengthen the Union County Workforce Development Board's compliance with federal regulations, positioning the Board ahead of current State policy requirements.

BOARD ACTION

Chairman Robinson requested a motion to approve **Resolution No. 2026-13. James Brady** made a motion to approve **Resolution No. 2026-13. Tim McConway** seconded the motion. The motion was approved unanimously.

Resolution No. 2026-14
Adopting the Program Year 2026 Union County Workforce Development Area Budget under WIOA

Director Antonio Rivera explained that the proposed Program Year 2026 budget was temporary because the Workforce New Jersey funding allocation had not yet been received. He noted that the budget was being adopted to meet County budget requirements and would be revised at a future Board meeting. Director Rivera also reminded the Board that Program Year 2025 funds must be fully expended before Program Year 2026 funding could be utilized in accordance with the State's first-in, first-out funding requirements.

Melissa Lespinasse abstained from **Resolution No. 2026-14.**

BOARD ACTION

Chairman Robinson requested a motion to approve **Resolution No. 2026-14. James Brady** made a motion to approve **Resolution No. 2026-14. Dr. Tasharofi** seconded the motion. The motion was approved unanimously.

Resolution No. 2026-15
Amending Resolution 2025-05 to Revise Funding Allocations Among the Adult Literacy Innovations Program Partners

Meredith Barracato explained that Resolution No. 2026-15 amended the Adult Literacy Innovations Program funding allocations by transferring $50,000 from Workforce Advantage to the Plainfield Public Library to expand participant training opportunities.

BOARD ACTION

Chairman Robinson requested a motion to approve **Resolution No. 2026-15. James Brady** made a motion to approve **Resolution No. 2026-15 Gwen Ryan** seconded the motion. The motion was approved unanimously.

Dr. Lisa Hiscano and **Ayisha Mapp** abstained from **Resolution No. 2026-15.**

Resolution No. 2026-16
Authorizing Payment of the Annual FutureWorks BI Subscription to FutureWork Systems LLC Utilizing PY26 WIOA Data Reporting and Analysis Funds

Meredith Barracato explained that Resolution No. 2026-16 authorized the annual subscription renewal for the FutureWorks BI performance management system, which the Workforce Development Board uses to track program performance and reporting.

BOARD ACTION

Chairman Robinson requested a motion to approve **Resolution No. 2026-16. Dr. Lisa Hiscano** made a motion to approve **Resolution No. 2026-16**. **Erich Peter** seconded the motion. The motion was approved unanimously.

Resolution No. 2026-17
Adopting the Relocation Costs of Employees Policy (UCWDB-2026-324) under WIOA

Director Rivera explained that the Relocation Costs of Employees Policy was being adopted to satisfy a requirement identified during a recent State monitoring review. He noted that although the policy was unlikely to be used by the Union County Workforce Development Board, its adoption was necessary to ensure compliance with federal and State requirements.

During the discussion, Gloria Dunham asked whether any funding would be allocated under the Relocation Costs of Employees Policy. Director Rivera explained that while the policy permitted relocation costs in theory, the Board did not anticipate ever using it because it was unlikely to relocate employees. He noted that the policy was being adopted solely to satisfy a federal requirement identified during a recent State monitoring review. Dr. Hiscano asked whether the policy would be incorporated into the Board's Policy Manual, and Director Rivera confirmed that it would.

BOARD ACTION

Chairman Robinson requested a motion to approve **Resolution No. 2026-17. James Brady** made a motion to approve **Resolution No. 2026-17**. **Dr. Tasharofi** seconded the motion. The motion was approved unanimously.

VIII. **American Job Center Operator's Report**
Melissa Lespinasse presented an update on the American Job Center's Integrated Service Delivery Model, explaining that the initiative was designed to transform the customer experience by moving from a program-specific, siloed approach to a client-centered model built around functional service teams. She noted that the effort reflected the collaborative work of the Operators Committee and workforce partners to create a more seamless and coordinated service delivery system.

Jeffrey Jackson explained that under the new model, participants would complete a single universal intake, be assigned a navigator to develop an Individual Employment Plan, and be connected to functional service teams based on their needs. He stated that the model emphasized warm handoffs, coordinated referrals, and ensuring participants only needed to share their story once.

Erich Peter asked whether the new approach had resulted in measurable improvements in efficiency or customer satisfaction. Jeffrey Jackson responded that the model was still in the planning phase and had not yet been implemented, although customer surveys were already being collected to

measure future outcomes. Jeffrey Jackson noted that implementation was planned for the first quarter of 2027 and that the changes were intended to improve customer service and strengthen compliance with the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA). Jeffrey Jackson noted that the integrated model utilized a shared database that allowed workforce partners to access participant information, supporting coordinated service delivery while reducing duplication of services.

IX. American Job Center Report

Melissa Lespinasse presented system-wide performance updates, highlighting increases in training services, participant assessments, Individual Employment Plans (IEPs), employment outcomes, and adult education participation across Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA), Workforce First New Jersey (WFNJ), Adult Education, and Division of Vocational Rehabilitation Services (DVRS) programs. She noted that the improvements reflected stronger collaboration among partners, increased service delivery, and continued progress toward meeting program performance goals.

Valerie Kerrigan stated that collaboration among workforce partners had improved significantly over the past year, resulting in better coordination of services, reduced duplication, and more seamless referrals for participants. Dr. Hiscano agreed, noting that increased communication among providers had reduced the need for participants to repeatedly explain their circumstances and had strengthened braided services and dual enrollment.

X. WIOA Youth Services Provider

Marie Alston presented an update on the Union County Youth Program, reporting that 63 in-school youth and 66 out-of-school youth were actively enrolled. She highlighted participant engagement in tutoring, paid work experiences, occupational skills training, GED preparation, counseling, and follow-up services. She also reported positive outcomes, including high school diploma attainment, post-secondary enrollment, occupational training certifications, employment placements, and successful partnerships with Simon Youth Academy and Union College of Union County, NJ.

Ms. Alston also highlighted the success of the Volunteer Income Tax Assistance (VITA) program, where five youth participants earned Internal Revenue Service tax preparation certifications and assisted in preparing tax returns for more than 1,000 Union County residents, helping return over $1 million in tax refunds to the community. She further announced the launch of a six-week Summer Youth Work Experience Program, providing 25 participants with paid work experience, career readiness training, and placement with local employers throughout Union County.

Chairman Stan Robinson Jr. asked for additional information about the Youth Corps and YouthBuild programs. Marie Alston explained that both programs supported youth pursuing a high school equivalency diploma while preparing for post-secondary education and careers, with YouthBuild emphasizing construction training. She noted that many participants were co-enrolled across multiple programs to provide coordinated services and expanded support.

Director Antonio Rivera added that the Simon Youth Academy operated through a partnership among the Union County Vocational-Technical Schools, the Simon Youth Foundation, and the County of Union, emphasizing that many of the program's graduating students had benefited from this collaborative effort.

XI. **Old Business**
No Comment

XII. **New Business**
No Comment

XIII. **Public Comments**
No Comment

XIV. **Adjournment**
Chairman Robinson noted there were no further business to be addressed, a motion to adjourn was made. The meeting adjourned at approximately 9:51 a.m.

Meeting Schedule:
9:00 AM, Wednesday, October 28, 2026
Location:
The Hill Tavern at Galloping Hill, 3 Golf Dr, Kenilworth, NJ 07033