

Buffalo and Erie County Workforce Investment Board  
Meeting Minutes

DATE, TIME: October 26<sup>th</sup>, 2021, 9:00 AM

LOCATION: Zoom and BECWIB Conference Room

ATTENDEES: Julius Adams, Jomo Akono, Mary Margaret Aprile, Fred Boheim, Cheryl Byrne, John Cappellino, Steven Davis, Phyllis D'Amico, Charles G. Jones, Jr., Tracy Jordan-Cardwell, Joseph Hanna, Thomas Kim, Michael Martin, Dennis Martinez, Brenda McDuffie, Elizabeth Miller, Robert Mootry, Jr., Scott Pallotta, Patricia Riegle, April Sanders and Myrna Young

EXCUSED/ ABSENT: D. Sylvester Dihaan, Andrew Federick, Cory Haqq, Brian Manley, Oswaldo Mestre, Jr., Silvia Morales-Fakler, Spencer Murray, Bridget Russo, David Sullivan, Ted Walsh, Jr. and Ralph Salerno

STAFF ATTENDEES: Leslie Ayer, Kit Brown, Jessica Corrigan, Mark Cosgrove, David Kaczor, Bukola Mallia, Francine Nicholas, Minesh Patel, Mauricio Perez, Joseph Ricchiazzi, Anthony Scello, Russell Sferlazza, John Slenker, Lavon Stephens, Geoffrey Szymanski

GUESTS: Vincent Trippi of Cassadaga Job Corps Academy

TOPIC	DISCUSSION	ACTION
Call to Order	Mr. Jones called the meeting to order at 9:03 AM and verified a quorum was present.	
1. Executive Director's Report	Mr. Szymanski introduced the new Erie County Healthcare Careers (EHC) program which is replacing the Health Profession Opportunity Grant (HPOG). County Executive Poloncarz and the Erie County Legislature have decided to utilize \$1.6 million from the American Rescue Plan Act funding to continue the program. Mr. Szymanski announced BECWIB/WDC has been awarded \$50,000 to overhaul the Workforce Buffalo website through a new federal grant, the CAREERS Grant, which is also an American Rescue Plan Act program. Mr. Szymanski introduced the Gun Violence Prevention (GVP) initiative which was hastily created by former NYS Governor Cuomo. BECWIB/WDC was awarded \$2.65 million to reach 530 eligible City of Buffalo youth within ten zip codes. Mr. Szymanski explained he directed the team to put out a Request for Proposal (RFP) for this program because of the time restraints and he furthered that four agencies accepted the challenge: The Service Collaborative of WNY, Buffalo Urban League, Catholic Charities and 4Ward Inclusion Consulting. Mr. Szymanski also presented the Request for Qualifications (RFQ) for Legal Services, which he directed be advertised upon noticing it had been eight years since BECWIB/WDC solicited legal representation. Mr. Szymanski recommended the board consider Hurwitz & Fine, P.C. to be the BECWIB/WDC legal counsel as they were the majority number one pick among the Review Committee. Mr. Szymanski also announced the BECWIB Local Plan has been reviewed by the New York State Department of Labor (NYS DOL) and found to be in compliance with the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA). Mr. Szymanski also welcomed new Special Assistant Kit Brown to the team. Mr. Szymanski answered a question about remaining GVP funds and how they will be directed, indicating that WIB staff are going back to the drawing board and looking for new proposals. He also answered a question about the plan in place for the website and if a timeline has been established, indicating plans are still in the process of being drawn up and suggestions are welcome.	<p data-bbox="1052 1759 1477 1854"><b>Motion to approve the minutes from the June 22<sup>nd</sup>, 2021 meeting was led by Ms. McDuffie and seconded by Mr. Mootry. All were in favor. Motion carried.</b></p>
2. Minute Approval for June 22 <sup>th</sup> , 2021 Meeting		

<p>3. Summary of Recommendations for Gun Violence Prevention Initiative</p>	<p>Mr. Scello elaborated on the GVP initiative, providing background and giving an overview of the four proposals received from The Service Collaborative of WNY (TSC), Catholic Charities of Buffalo (CC), Buffalo Urban League (BUL) and 4ward Inclusion Consulting (4IC). He gave the following recommendations after proposal review:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- The Service Collaborative be awarded \$299,506 with a goal of serving 100 participants at a cost of \$4,992 per participant (based on 60 participants).</li> <li>- Catholic Charities of Buffalo be awarded \$400,000 with a goal of serving 100 participants at a cost of \$5,000 per participant (based on 80 participants).</li> <li>- Buffalo Urban League be awarded \$500,000 with a goal of serving 100 participants at a cost of \$6,667 per participant (based on 75 participants).</li> <li>- 4ward Inclusion Consulting not be awarded any funds based on their proposal not meeting minimum scoring requirements.</li> </ul> <p>A question came up from Mr. Mootry regarding housing barriers for at-risk youth. Mr. Scello clarified that this funding can be used to assist with housing. There was some concern about the Youth Standing Committee not having a formal discussion prior to the meeting and Mr. Scello indicated that a Youth Standing Committee meeting could be held to discuss remaining funds. Mr. Jones complimented the WIB staff's progress under significant time constraints and noted the substantial amount of funding remaining.</p>	<p><b>Motion to ratify the recommendations for the GVP initiative was led by Ms. Riegle and seconded by Mr. Boheim. All voted in favor. Motion carried.</b></p>
<p>4. Resolution Awarding Letter of Engagement for Legal Services</p>	<p>Ms. Nicholas began by thanking Ms. Fisher for her many years of service and explained on September 2<sup>nd</sup>, 2021, BECWIB issued an RFQ for Legal Services. BECWIB published Notice in the Buffalo News, the Challenger, and with the Erie Bar Association. Although BECWIB sent emails to the Minority Bar Association of WNY and the Women's Bar Association of the State of New York - WNY Chapter, requesting that the Notice be posted to their association's website or through an e-mail blast to members, no response was forthcoming. On September 24<sup>th</sup>, 2021 the deadline for submission, BECWIB received five responses. The five legal firms that responded consisted of highly respected and qualified attorneys in the community. These five firms were Philips Lytle, LLP, Hurwitz &amp; Fine, P.C., Hodgson Russ, LLP, Feldman Kiefer and Gross Schumann. On October 7<sup>th</sup>, 2021 the BECWIB RFQ Review Committee, consisting of five members, met to review and discuss the responses received. After a robust discussion and based on the criteria in the evaluation form – required certifications, equal opportunity policy statement, attorney qualifications and experience, scope of legal services and hourly billing rates and charges for disbursements – the Review Committee determined, by majority vote, Hurwitz &amp; Fine P.C., with Joseph S. Brown, Esq. as the lead attorney, to be the best qualified to serve the legal needs of BECWIB and the WDC. Therefore, the Review Committee recommended the Board authorize BECWIB to enter into a Letter of Engagement for Legal Services with Hurwitz &amp; Fine, P.C. Ms. McDuffie indicated the record should reflect the outstanding service of Cheryl Fisher and Magavern, Magavern, Grimm, LLP and the only reason for the separation from the firm was the firm's lack of response to the RFQ for Legal Services.</p>	<p><b>Motion to ratify the Resolution awarding a Letter of Engagement for Legal Services to Hurwitz &amp; Fine, P.C. was led by Ms. Young and seconded by Ms. McDuffie. All were in favor. Motion carried.</b></p>
<p>5. First Quarter Budget Report</p>	<p>Mr. Ricchiazzi presented the Program Year (PY) 2021 1<sup>st</sup> Quarter Budget Report and indicated it has been a better first quarter as compared to last year. There has been nothing that stands out as too high or low. Total Salaries and Fringes were \$835,677, Total Operating Expenses were \$215,010 and Total Training and</p>	

<p>6. Nominating Committee Recommendations for 2021-2022 Slate of Officers</p>	<p>Support Expenses were \$353,750. 82% of the budget remains for WIOA funds. 27% of the budget remains for the Health Profession Opportunity Grant (HPOG). As HPOG ended 9/29/2021, additional closeout costs are planned to be incurred through 12/31/2021 and an update will be provided at the next board meeting. 90% of the budget remains for other grants which include Trade Adjustment Assistance (TAA) and Employment Recovery Dislocated Worker Grant (ER-NDWG). A budget modification is anticipated for next quarter.</p> <p>Ms. Young, Chairperson of the Nominating Committee, began by touching on the duties of the Nominating Committee which include recommending officers and monitoring attendance and involvement. A strong appeal was made to board members to come up with suggestions for new board members, especially in the private sector, asking the board to keep in mind the importance of diversity as well as maintaining the required balance of public and private sector members. The Nominating Committee's recommended slate of officers for 2021-2022 was presented:          Chair: Charles G. Jones, Jr.          1<sup>st</sup> Vice Chair: Fred Boheim          2<sup>nd</sup> Vice Chair: Brenda McDuffie          Secretary: Patricia Riegler          Treasurer: Robert Mootry, Jr.          Ms. Young opened the floor for nominations; none were made.</p>	<p><b>Motion to elect the 2021-2022 slate of officers as presented was made by Ms. Young and seconded by Mr. Martin. All were in favor. Motion carried.</b></p>
<p>7. 2021-2022 Conflict of Interest Disclosure Statement</p>	<p>Mr. Jones reviewed and asked board members to complete and submit the 2021-2022 Conflict of Interest Disclosure Statement.</p>	
<p>8. Erie County Healthcare Careers</p>	<p>Mr. Cosgrove elaborated on the new Erie County Healthcare Careers program (EHC). There will be notable differences between EHC and HPOG – there will no longer be a lottery style restriction and the main focus will be longer-term, higher-end trainings like Licensed Practical Nurse, Registered Nurse, Surgical Technologist and Respiratory Therapist which offer more livable wages closer to \$20/hour and above. There is a great demand for these types of healthcare workers in Western New York. The program will continue to include support in the form of childcare assistance and travel allowance. The goal in the next year is to enroll approximately 200 people in these trainings. Mr. Cosgrove opened the floor for questions but none were posed. Mr. Jones commented on the increasing need for healthcare workers and expressed his gratitude to the County for the EHC grant.</p>	
<p>9. Business Services Update</p>	<p>Ms. Corrigan introduced two new team members who recently joined the BECWIB/WDC Business Services team – Mauricio Perez joined the team as a Business Services Specialist in July 2021 and Leslie Ayer joined in September 2021 (upon the conclusion of HPOG) as a Program Coordinator which brings the total to five team members and significantly increases capacity. Ms. Corrigan shared that it has been a busy few months and everything is moving in a positive direction. Pathways Programming update: Three programs are scheduled for Program Year 2021-2022 with one additional program budgeted; Minesh Patel, Business Services Specialist – Project Manager, has worked to implement a new vetting process for training providers to ensure the highest possible outcomes. OJT update: Bukola Mallia, Business Services Specialist – Business and Workforce Development worked closely with Ms. Corrigan to revisit the process of conducting outreach for the OJT program. Because of these efforts there has been a significant increase in interest and participation around the program. There are 28 open OJT applications and two open contracts with a third to be</p>	

	<p>signed this week. Business and Partner Outreach update: The increase in team members has effected an increase in capacity with a diverse assemblage of industries served. There was a question from Mr. Akono regarding contact information for some of the specific industries being served and Ms. Corrigan agreed to get with the Business Services team to gather contact information. Ms. Corrigan opened the floor for questions but none were asked.</p>	
<p>Adjournment</p>	<p>Mr. Szymanski announced the retirement of Assistant Director and Trades Adjustment Act Coordinator David Kaczor and thanked Barbara Schaus for again coming on board to train Special Assistant Kit Brown. Mr. Szymanski thanked Mr. Kaczor and Ms. Schaus for their many years of service. Mr. Jones welcomed Special Assistant Kit Brown and thanked Mr. Kaczor and Ms. Schaus for their countless contributions to BECWIB over the years. Mr. Jones also thanked board members in attendance for their time and participation and called for a motion to adjourn.</p>	<p><b>Motion to adjourn led by Ms. Jordan-Cardwell and seconded by Mr. Mootry. All were in favor. Motion carried. Meeting adjourned at 10:00 AM.</b></p>