



MINUTES

EWIB Board of Directors Hybrid Meeting

Tuesday, May 21, 2024

8:00 a.m.

Members Present: Nereida Braasch; Jim Butler; Ray Coombs, Jr.; Jessica Corneau; Patricia Feeney; Nicole Galo; David Jarvis; Chris Jewell; Mary Ellen Jukoski; Susan Kocaba; Linda Ladas; Liz Li; Michael O'Connor; Michael Phelps; Eric Protulis; Caleb Roseme; & Paul Whitescarver.

Staff Present: Michael Nogelo, Guy Saporito, Carol LaBelle, David Allard & Stephanie Wisniewski.

Others Present: Tony Benoit; Kevin Cunningham; Kristin Hempel; Nancy Knutson; Andrea Messenger Wright; Rep. Tammy Nuccio; Sen. Cathy Osten; Denise Spellman; Kelli-Marie Vallieres; Cyndi Wells; Leslie White; & Angelina Zabbo.

CALL TO ORDER

Chair Chris Jewell called the meeting to order at 8:01 a.m. and thanked Board members Jim Butler and Pat Feeney for their many years of service on EWIB's Board and wished them well in their retirement.

PUBLIC COMMENT

None.

ACCEPTANCE OF PREVIOUS MINUTES

A **MOTION** was made to accept the minutes of the March 26, 2024 EWIB Board of Directors meeting (**BUTLER/JUKOSKI**).

Action: Unanimously approved.

CORRESPONDENCE

EWIB President/CEO Michael Nogelo covered the following items:

- **Healthcare & Manufacturing Expos** – The Greater Norwich Area Chamber of Commerce partnered with EWIB and EWIB's regional sector partnerships (RSPs) on recent healthcare and manufacturing expos. The healthcare expo involved 22 employers and 156 students from eight schools. The manufacturing career fair saw 18 manufacturers meet with 145 students from eight high schools.
 - Chair Jewell commented that students at the manufacturing expo were well-prepared and noted that Congressman Joe Courtney made an appearance.
- **WIOA Reauthorization** – An April 9 CT Mirror article discussed passage by the U.S. House of the A Stronger Workforce for America (ASWA) Act on a bipartisan basis to reauthorize the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA). EWIB has identified promising components of the legislation but remains concerned about the ASWA's

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requirement that 50% of WIOA Adult and Dislocated Worker funding be spent on training. EWIB will continue to communicate with congressional staff about ways to get congress the emphasis on training they want while protecting local workforce boards' ability to fund infrastructure needs and customer support services.

- **CNA Bootcamp of CT** – On April 25, EWIB staff and partners went to Danielson with Congressman Courtney to visit the CNA Bootcamp of CT. CNA Bootcamp works with American Job Center (AJC) partners to connect their students to AJC career and employment services and to qualify some students for WIOA training funds. The current cohort consists of nine recent Haitian immigrants from Norwich who attend a CNA Bootcamp class and take English language classes at Norwich Adult Ed. Angelina Zabbo, Owner of CNA Bootcamp, shared her story about how she started CNA Bootcamp to meet a need she saw for jobseekers and employers, about the work she is doing, and about how the partnership EWIB coordinates has supported her work.
 - Chair Jewell congratulated Ms. Zabbo on addressing a need she saw, on giving people an opportunity for a career, and on embracing EWIB's principles of collaboration and demand-driven training.

GOVERNOR'S WORKFORCE COUNCIL (GWC) REPORT

Kelli-Marie Vallieres, Office of Workforce Strategy (OWS), shared the following recent OWS highlights: a) Career ConneCT has had 22,000 visitors to the portal, about half of whom have completed the assessment and 4,500 of whom are in job training programs; b) secured funding from The Connecticut Project for a planning grant to explore opportunities to better integrate cross agency performance data management platforms; c) a transportation study planning request for proposal (RFP) is ongoing to determine the need for a flexible transportation fund and a legislatively mandated planning project is ongoing to study a career accelerator fund as a way to assist those not eligible for WIOA; d) the State strategic plan is in the final feedback stages. The plan will be launched September 12 at the GWC meeting; and e) the National Governors Association (NGA) selected Connecticut to host the fall NGA symposium to be held October 30 - November 1, which will showcase EWIB's Manufacturing Pipeline Initiative (MPI).

CHAIR/PRESIDENT'S REPORT

Chair Jewell stated the report will be covered during the Executive Committee meeting report.

COMMITTEE REPORTS

- **Executive Committee** – Chair Jewell reported that the Committee met on May 13. The Board was updated on the following:
 - **2024-2028 WIOA Local Plan** – Carol LaBelle reviewed the executive summary of the WIOA Local Plan that covers July 1, 2024 to June 30, 2028. Highlights include how the regional workforce system meets WIOA requirements, how our plan aligns with the State plan and how we streamline services with our partners. The new plan includes no significant changes from the previous plan and the draft plan is open for public comment and available to view on EWIB's website.
 - **WIOA One Stop Certification** – Ms. LaBelle reviewed the description of One Stop Certification. At least once every three years, workforce boards must assess how well the AJCs deliver services using criteria established by federal policy. The review must certify that the WIOA core program services are available and accessible at the AJCs. There are no anticipated issues with the certification of the three Eastern CT AJCs.
 - **EWIB Cost Allocation Plan** – Guy Saporito stated that the fiscal year (FY) 2025 Cost Allocation Plan has no changes to the previously approved FY24 plan.
 - **FY24 Budget Review** – Mr. Saporito provided an overview of the status of the current fiscal year's budget, noting that overall expenditures are projected to come in under budget.
 - **FY25 Revenue Availability Projections** – Mr. Saporito reviewed EWIB's projected FY25 revenue availability, currently forecasted at ~\$24.4 million. The forecast will be revised over the next quarter to reflect the close of FY24 and the execution of pending contracts.

- Chair Jewell noted how federal American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) funding has caused the federal portion of EWIB's revenue to temporarily exceed the State portion. Mr. Saporito noted the importance of State support for the MPI, led by Senator Cathy Osten.
- **Board Resolution Recommendations** – The Executive Committee recommended 14 resolutions for Board approval. Mr. Nogelo provided an overview of Board Resolutions EWIB-24-02 through EWIB-24-15. Most resolutions are contracts for recurring funding. Other resolutions relate to a new multi-year contract with the Connecticut Department of Labor for an Equitable Transition Model grant award, the pending Congressionally Directed Spending (CDS) application, authorization for the Executive Committee to approve new contracts on behalf of the Board during the Board's summer recess, and submission of the WIOA Local Plan and WIOA One-Stop Certification.
- **FY25 Goals & Objectives** – Mr. Nogelo shared proposed goals and objectives for FY25 that build on EWIB's mission, vision, and core values. The goals are: 1) Maintain financial capacity & efficiency, 2) Achieve performance accountability benchmarks for AJC programs, 3) Expand manufacturing & healthcare talent pools in response to industry need, 4) Maximize the impact of manufacturing & healthcare RSPs, and 5) Enhance and expand manufacturing & healthcare youth workforce pipeline programs.
 - Chair Jewell asked about EWIB's capacity to track employment retention. Ms. LaBelle said tracking retention is only required and resourced for some programs, such as WIOA. Mr. Nogelo noted that the CDS application submitted in April includes funding for an evaluator to examine MPI retention.
- **FY25 Operating Budget Recommendation** – Mr. Nogelo reviewed the recommended budget for FY25, which reflects an increase of 2.67% from this year's budget. The staff salaries line includes a recommended hire in January 2025 for a new position focused on finance and operations. The recommended budget also includes small technology investments to increase staff efficiency, an increase to the professional services and consultants line item for grant writing support to pursue sustainability funding and a cybersecurity assessment, and videos of customer success stories.
 - Chair Jewell added that the proposed budget includes a pool for merit increases for applicable staff.
 - Board members and staff agreed that effectively serving workers and employers is the most effective way to increase awareness of EWIB's brand.
- **FY24 Recap** – Chair Jewell reviewed a list of accomplishments EWIB has achieved over the past fiscal year. Highlights include: 1) Updated its vision and mission statements and formally articulated core values, 2) On track to deliver a record 90 MPI cohorts and train 1,100 people, 3) Expanded and enhanced the Youth MPI and Youth Healthcare Pipeline Initiative (YHPI), 4) Grew manufacturing and healthcare RSPs, and 5) Served over 500 young people through the Summer Youth Employment Program.

A **MOTION** was made to accept the May 13, 2024 Executive Committee report, including approving the Cost Allocation Plan, EWIB Board Resolutions EWIB-24-02 through EWIB-24-15, the FY25 goals and objectives, and the FY25 Operating Budget as presented. **(BUTLER/WHITESCARVER). ACTION:** Unanimously approved.

- **Eastern Advanced Manufacturing Alliance (EAMA) RSP** – EAMA RSP Director Tony Benoit reported that the full RSP met on April 17 and welcomed three new members. An employer instant poll revealed that training is the number one concern for members. The Youth Pipeline Working Group will create an online catalog of youth activities for schools and employers. The Business to Business Working Group focuses on improving connections with suppliers and customers in Connecticut. On May 15, The Lee Company hosted a successful EAMA RSP networking event. On April 3, EAMA RSP hosted a webinar about second chance hiring featuring Jaqueline Gallo of Pursuit Aerospace.
 - Paul Whitescarver stated that seCTer's CT APEX Accelerator grant program can help EAMA RSP members secure government contracts.

- **Eastern CT Healthcare Partnership (ECHP)** – David Allard reported that the full ECHP convened on April 19 and welcomed Mike Davis from Hartford HealthCare as a new ECHP Co-Chair. At the April 19 meeting, Norwich Free Academy highlighted their healthcare pathway program and Eastern CT State University presented on its new Registered Nurse program. Action teams will continue to meet over the summer and the full partnership will meet again in October.
 - Liz Li stated that employers attending the April 19 meeting were focused on the youth pipeline and how to get more high schools involved.

OLD BUSINESS

None.

NEW BUSINESS

None.

MEETING SURVEY & ADJOURNMENT

Chair Jewell asked participants to complete a brief online meeting satisfaction survey. The next Board meeting will be held September 24, 2024.

A **MOTION** was made to adjourn the meeting (*BUTLER/WHITESCARVER*). **ACTION:** Unanimously approved.

The meeting adjourned at 9:33 a.m.

Meeting minutes respectfully submitted for EWIB Secretary Caleb Roseme by Strategic Executive Assistant Stephanie Wisniewski.