



## MINUTES

### EWIB Board of Directors Hybrid Meeting

Tuesday, November 26, 2024

8:00 a.m.

**Members Present:** Nereida Braasch; Ray Coombs, Jr.; Jessica Corneau; Thayne Hutchins, Jr.; David Jarvis; Chris Jewell; Susan Kocaba; Linda Ladas; Liz Li; Andrew McKillop; Courtney Murphy; Michael O'Connor; Michael Phelps; Eric Protulis; Caleb Roseme; Dina Sears-Graves; Jessica van der Swaagh & Paul Whitescarver.

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

**Others Present:** Dave Bechtel; Tony Benoit; Mary Ann Chinatti; Christine Conley; John Glover; Ayanti Grant; Kristin Hempel; Nancy Knutson; Lyn Lawrence; Erin McBride; Yamarie Perez; Denise Spellman; Kelli-Marie Vallieres; & Cyndi Wells.

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#### CALL TO ORDER

Chair Chris Jewell called the meeting to order at 8:01 a.m. and welcomed new Board member Dina Sears-Graves from the United Way of Southeastern Connecticut.

#### PUBLIC COMMENT

None.

#### ACCEPTANCE OF PREVIOUS MINUTES

A **MOTION** was made to accept the minutes of the September 24, 2024 EWIB Board of Directors meeting (**MICHAEL O'CONNOR/DAVID JARVIS**). **Action:** Unanimously approved.

#### CORRESPONDENCE

- **Governor's Workforce Council (GWC) Presentation** – EWIB President/CEO Michael Nogelo and other Connecticut (CT) workforce board leaders presented at the November 14 GWC meeting. Each workforce board shared information on regional and statewide programs and initiatives – such as EWIB's high school pipeline programs and the Connecticut Youth Employment Program – that support the 119K Commission on At-Risk and Disconnected Youth's goals to cut in half the number of disconnected or at-risk CT 14-26-year-olds.
- **Northeast CT Healthcare Career Expo** – David Allard reported on the November 8 Northeast CT Healthcare Career Expo held at CT State-Quinebaug Valley in partnership with the Eastern CT Healthcare Partnership (ECHP) and EWIB. 120 students from nine high schools attended and 18 organizations participated, including employers and education partners. The ECHP will plan a Southeast CT healthcare career expo in April 2025 in partnership with the Greater Norwich Area Chamber of Commerce.

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*Our Core Values: Partnership - Innovation - Accountability - Efficiency - Continuous Improvement*

- **EASTCONN Mobile Manufacturing Lab Ribbon Cutting** – On October 11, Mr. Nogelo spoke at the ribbon-cutting ceremony of EASTCONN’s new Mobile Manufacturing Lab, which promotes modern manufacturing careers by bringing hands-on experiences to regional middle schools. EWIB helps fund the mobile lab.
- **Early Childhood Education (ECE) Grant Denial** – EWIB and the Thames Valley Council for Community Action partnered with EASTCONN to apply for a grant to develop a regional plan to address ECE workforce shortages and job quality issues. The U.S. Department of Labor did not select the application for one of the eight grants out of 92 responsive applications. EWIB continues to explore other opportunities to support ECE workforce development.

### **GOVERNOR’S WORKFORCE COUNCIL (GWC)/OFFICE OF WORKFORCE STRATEGY (OWS) REPORT**

Chief Workforce Officer Kelli-Marie Vallieres from OWS shared the following recent OWS highlights: a) 30 states visited CT for the National Governor’s Association (NGA) Workforce Symposium, which highlighted best practices including EWIB’s Manufacturing Pipeline Initiative (MPI); b) CT earned a Results for America “2024 Invest in What Works State Standard of Excellence” silver recognition, placing CT among the top seven states for “using data and evidence to produce better, more equitable results for their residents”; c) Career ConneCT continues to attract many registrants, enroll many people in training, and place more people in jobs, with a focus on underserved populations. OWS is pursuing sustainability funding and working to support the many registrants who have not enrolled in Career ConneCT training; and d) OWS will host the 3<sup>rd</sup> Annual Regional Sector Partnership (RSP) convening at Central CT State University on January 10, 2025.

### **CHAIR’S/PRESIDENT’S REPORT**

- **Workforce Innovation Opportunity Act (WIOA) Funding Update** – Guy Saporito reported on two efforts to offset reductions to EWIB’s FY25 WIOA allocation: 1) At EWIB’s request, the GWC recently approved WIOA customer training and support services as allowable uses of WIOA Governor’s Reserve funding; and 2) EWIB submitted an application to the M&T Bank Charitable Foundation for funding for support services to address participant barriers to training and employment.

A **MOTION** was made to approve EWIB Board Resolution 24-16 as presented, which authorizes EWIB to enter a contract with the CT Department of Labor (DOL) for \$125,000 of WIOA Governor’s Reserve funding (**PAUL WHITESCARVER/MICHAEL O’CONNOR**). **ACTION:** Unanimously approved.

- **American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) Grant Extensions** – Carol LaBelle reported that OWS received no-cost extensions for two ARPA-funded grants that fund EWIB activities: 1) EWIB’s statewide Career ConneCT manufacturing project has been extended to serve participants for an additional year (through June 30, 2026); and 2) EWIB’s Good Jobs Challenge (GJC) youth pipeline and RSP project has been extended for an additional year (through June 30, 2026).

### **COMMITTEE REPORTS**

- **Eastern CT Healthcare Partnership (ECHP)** – Dave Bechtel reported that the ECHP hosted Congressman Joe Courtney at its October 25 meeting. The ECHP continues to: a) plan annual Healthcare Career Expos in the Northeast and Southeast; b) support EWIB’s Youth Healthcare Pipeline Initiative (YHPI); and c) support implementation of the new St. Joseph’s University Master of Social Work (MSW) program in Eastern CT. The ECHP will facilitate employer member policy discussions ahead of the legislative session and will develop a Congressionally Directed Spending (CDS) application to support its members’ workforce development priorities. Board members expressed interest in the ECHP’s exploration of employers offering childcare as a benefit.
- **Eastern Advanced Manufacturing Alliance Regional Sector Partnership (EAMA RSP)** – EAMA RSP Director Tony Benoit reported that the RSP met on October 16. The EAMA RSP supported a September 26 Manufacturing Expo at Dodd Stadium attended by over 900 high school and middle school students and 18 employers. The EAMA RSP held a networking event in October that featured tours of SPIROL and the CT State-Quinebaug Valley Advanced Manufacturing Center. EAMA RSP also hosted a Cybersecurity Necessities for Manufacturers workshop taught by seCTer’s CT APEX program at the Montville American Job Center (AJC) on October 22.
- **Nominating Committee** – Chair Jewell put forth the following slate of EWIB Board Officers for calendar year 2025:
  - **Chair:** Christopher Jewell
  - **Vice Chair:** Thayne Hutchins, Jr.
  - **Secretary:** Caleb Roseme
  - **Treasurer:** Michael Phelps

A **MOTION** was made to approve the 2025 EWIB slate of Officers, as presented (*DAVID JARVIS/MICHAEL O'CONNOR*).

**ACTION:** Approved, with Jewell, Hutchins, Roseme, and Phelps abstaining.

- **Executive Committee** – Mr. Nogelo said one of EWIB's top priorities this year is a timely procurement and negotiation of AJC services to start on July 1, 2025. EWIB procures WIOA and Jobs First Employment Services (JFES) providers every four years. Board committees lead the procurement process with support from EWIB staff. Mr. Nogelo reviewed the procurement work plan and the AJC service delivery landscape and noted that the landscape would change dramatically if the recent bicameral, bipartisan agreement on a federal bill to reauthorize WIOA becomes law. The Executive Committee recommended creating an Ad Hoc Procurement Committee and potential committee members to lead the procurement of services for adults. The EWIB Youth Committee will be called upon to lead the procurement of services for youth. All Board members are welcome to volunteer for a committee.

A **MOTION** was made to approve November 1, 2024 Executive Committee report, as presented (*MICHAEL O'CONNOR/ DINA SEARS-GRAVES*). **ACTION:** Unanimously approved.

### **OLD BUSINESS**

None.

### **NEW BUSINESS**

Board member Michael O'Connor announced his plans to retire from Dominion Energy on January 1, 2025 and to step down from the EWIB Board at that time. Mr. O'Connor said he would recommend another Dominion leader for nomination to the EWIB Board.

Chair Jewell thanked Stephanie Wisniewski, who will leave EWIB on December 2, 2024, and wished her well in her new adventure. Ashley Stimpson will join EWIB as the new Strategic Executive Assistant on December 9, 2024.

Board members were reminded to complete and submit the Board member information sheet and annual conflict of interest statement.

### **MEETING SURVEY & ADJOURNMENT**

Chair Jewell asked participants to complete a brief online meeting satisfaction survey. The next Board meeting will be held January 28, 2025.

A **MOTION** was made to adjourn the meeting (*DINA SEARS-GRAVES/MICHAEL O'CONNOR*). **ACTION:** Unanimously approved.

The meeting was adjourned at 9:20 a.m.

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