



MINUTES

EWIB Board of Directors Hybrid Meeting

Tuesday, November 25, 2025

8:00 a.m.

Members Present:	Ray Coombs, Jr.; Jessica Corneau; Ginger Frasca; Thayne Hutchins; David Jarvis; Chris Jewell; Mary Ellen Jukoski; Susan Kocaba; Linda Ladas; Liz Li; Andrew McKillop; Daniel Mello; Mike Phelps; Caleb Roseme; Dina Sears-Graves; Jessica van der Swaagh & Paul Whitescarver.
Staff Present:	Michael Nogelo, Guy Saporito, Carol LaBelle & David Allard.
Others Present:	Tom Abate; Dave Bechtel; Tony Benoit; Mary Ann Chinatti; First Selectman Kevin Cunningham; Gumwatty Garcia; Kristin Hempel; Lyn Lawrence; Erin McBride; Mary Ellen McCarron; Rep. Tammy Nuccio; Yamarie Perez; Denise Spellman; Tabitha Tinnel; Kelli Vallieres & Cyndi Wells.

CALL TO ORDER

Chair Chris Jewell called the meeting to order at 8:00 a.m.

Chair Jewell held a moment of silence to remember State Rep. Kevin Ryan, who died on November 23.

PUBLIC COMMENT

Following roll call, Chair Jewell thanked Mike Phelps of Sonalysts for his years of service as an EWIB Board member and Treasurer, and wished him well in his retirement.

ACCEPTANCE OF PREVIOUS MINUTES

A **MOTION** was made to accept the minutes of the September 23, 2025 EWIB Board of Directors meeting (*JARVIS/PHELPS*).

Action: Unanimously approved.

CORRESPONDENCE

EWIB President/CEO Michael Nogelo highlighted the following items:

- **CT Workforce Development Council (CWDC) Memo** – The CWDC sent a memo to CT's federal legislators responding to the *America's Talent Strategy* released by the U.S. Departments of Labor, Education, and Commerce in August. The memo described how CT's public workforce system aligns with the pillars of the national strategy and showed how workforce investment provides a strong return for the local, state, and national economies.
- **Industry-Driven Skills Training Fund Award** – The CT Department of Labor (CTDOL) was notified that it has been awarded \$8 million from the U.S. Department of Labor (USDOL) *Industry-Driven Skills Training Fund*. CT was one of four states to earn the maximum award. EWIB will utilize the approximately \$1.5 million it expects to receive from CTDOL to expand on-the-job training and incumbent worker training in healthcare and manufacturing.

CHAIR'S/PRESIDENT'S REPORT

- **EWIB Board Resolution 25-09** – Mr. Nogelo presented a Board resolution to authorize EWIB to enter into a contract with CTDOL to execute EWIB's portion of the *Industry-Driven Skills Training Fund* grant project.

A **MOTION** was made to approve EWIB Board Resolution 25-09 (*SEARS-GRAVES/JUKOSKI*). **Action:** Unanimously approved.

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- **Manufacturing Pipeline Initiative (MPI) Expansion** – Mr. Nogelo said EWIB has been preparing EWIB and its American Job Center (AJC) partners for the increased MPI participant volume expected from Electric Boat (EB) hiring increases. EWIB has also been working with EB and EWIB's MPI training partners on plans to increase MPI training capacity. The Maritime Industrial Base approved over \$3 million for infrastructure to expand pipeline training capacity in CT and Rhode Island. EWIB shared with EB the projected cost for EWIB to run the expanded MPI for the next three calendar years and told EB that the MPI would be forced to pause in late winter or early spring 2026 without the additional funding that EB is now working to secure.
- **CT Youth Employment Program (CYEP) Funding** – Mr. Nogelo updated the Board on efforts to change the methodology for allocating CYEP funding among the five workforce regions. A bill put forth by CTDOL (the CYEP administrator) during the 2025 legislative session to shift from the current fixed and arbitrary methodology to a formula based on data about youth needs in each region did not advance. After the session ended, CTDOL worked with the five workforce boards, individually and collectively, to develop a new formula. In October, however, CTDOL told the boards that it had “decided to not pursue the legislative proposal change” during the 2026 session.

Mr. Nogelo has since urged CTDOL to push for the bill during the 2026 session for two reasons: 1) The CYEP line item is scheduled to increase by \$2.5 million in FY27, which would mitigate the fiscal impact on the regions whose shares would decline under the formula; and 2) The existing system is not based on need, so it should be fixed as soon as possible. CTDOL said they were open to pushing for the bill next session only if all five boards supported the change. Mr. Nogelo suggested that CTDOL leadership would be necessary to fix the flawed allocation system.

Mr. Nogelo responded to questions and comments by noting that: 1) Eastern CT currently receives 10% of the CYEP funding and would receive 14% under the new formula – a difference of approximately \$400,000 in FY27 that would allow 100-150 more Eastern CT youth to receive paid work experience in summer 2026; 2) Legislation to fix the allocations would not require additional funding; 3) Board members who want to advocate for CTDOL to push for the bill during the 2026 session should contact their local elected officials and state legislators.
- **EWIB Staffing & Succession Planning** – Mr. Nogelo reported that: 1) Effective in January, EWIB Program Manager Melissa Laws will be promoted to Senior Manager, focused on leading EWIB's core AJC programs; 2) EWIB has posted a Programs and Executive Support Specialist position to assist with the MPI and executive assistant functions; and 3) On January 1, EWIB Senior Director of Programs and Special Projects Carol LaBelle will shift to a full-time advisory role in support of Ms. Laws, Director of Operations David Allard, and the rest of the EWIB team.

GOVERNOR'S WORKFORCE COUNCIL (GWC)/OFFICE OF WORKFORCE STRATEGY (OWS) REPORT

- Chief Workforce Officer Kelli Vallieres shared the following OWS highlights: a) Career ConneCT continues to progress towards its enrollment, training completion, and job placement goals; b) OWS will lead efforts to sustain Career ConneCT strategies with funding including the \$10 million Workforce Innovation & Sustainability bond fund; c) OWS submitted a no-cost extension request to the U.S. Department of Commerce to extend CT's *Good Jobs Challenge* grant an additional year to June 30, 2027; and d) OWS is working with other CT stakeholders to prepare CT for the July 1, 2026 availability of Workforce Pell Grants, a new federal financial aid program that expands Pell Grant eligibility to students enrolled in high-quality, short-term job training programs.

COMMITTEE REPORTS

- **Nominating Committee** – Committee Chair Mary Ellen Jukoski put forth the following slate of EWIB Board Officers for calendar year 2026:
 - **Chair:** Christopher Jewell
 - **Vice Chair:** Thayne Hutchins, Jr.
 - **Secretary:** Caleb Roseme
 - **Treasurer:** David Jarvis

A **MOTION** was made to approve the 2026 EWIB slate of Officers, as presented (*SEARS-GRAVES/MELLO*). **ACTION:** Approved, with Jewell, Hutchins, Roseme, and Jarvis abstaining.

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- **Ad Hoc Procurement Committee** – Chair Jewell invited Mr. Nogelo to provide an overview of the Committee’s September 30 meeting. Mr. Nogelo reported that the Committee approved small purchase procurements for Cross Sector Consulting to continue as EWIB’s One Stop Operator and for the Northeast CT and Eastern CT Chambers of Commerce to continue providing Business Services. The Committee also reviewed proposals from, and met with leaders from, Thames Valley Council for Community Action (TVCCA) and Career Team, Inc. in response to EWIB’s request for proposals (RFP) for a contractor for EWIB’s Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) Adult and Dislocated Worker program and Jobs First Employment Services (JFES) program. After discussion, the group agreed on the merits of exploring a supplemental contract with Career Team to possibly incorporate use of some of their technology solutions, and the Committee approved a motion to award the primary contracts for both WIOA and JFES funds to TVCCA, with EASTCONN as their partner, subject to staff negotiations.

A **MOTION** was made to approve the September 30, 2025 Ad Hoc Procurement Committee report, as presented (**PHELPS/JUKOSKI**). **ACTION:** Unanimously approved.

- **Eastern CT Healthcare Partnership (ECHP)** – Dave Bechtel reported that: a) The ECHP meeting on October 24 focused on strategies to strengthen connections between healthcare employers and education and training partners; and b) The Healthcare Education, Attraction, and Training Team will meet on December 4 to discuss the ideas that came out of the ECHP meeting; c) The Policy Team will work with other CT healthcare RSPs on a policy agenda for the 2026 legislative session; and d) The Quality of Life Team will identify its next focus area.

Board members and other participants discussed several topics related to worker retention, including: a) Retention as a metric for workforce development program effectiveness, as well as efforts to address the challenges and costs associated with capturing retention data; b) The value of employers sharing their retention best practices with other RSP members; and c) High worker turnover levels within and between employers.

- **Eastern Advanced Manufacturing Alliance (EAMA) RSP** – EAMA RSP Director Tony Benoit reported that: a) Worker retention is an increasing priority for many EAMA RSP members; b) EAMA RSP held its Annual Meeting on October 22; c) The Youth Pipeline Working Group discussed challenges to provide work-based learning (WBL) to high school students during its last meeting at Bacon Academy; d) The Workforce & Outreach Working Group identified recruiting for high-skill positions as an increasing challenge; and e) EAMA RSP recently revitalized its LinkedIn page.

Board members discussed several approaches to provide manufacturing and building trades WBL to minors.

OLD BUSINESS

None.

NEW BUSINESS

Board members and other participants discussed the impact of the H.R.1 ("One Big Beautiful Bill Act") changes to work requirements for recipients of Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) benefits. Those changes are effective on December 1. Topics included clarifying changes to work requirements, how “benefits cliffs” impact work decisions for recipients of public benefits, and referral resources (including the AJCs) for recipients who face new work requirements.

MEETING SURVEY & ADJOURNMENT

Chair Jewell asked participants to complete a brief online meeting satisfaction survey. The next Board meeting will be held on January 27, 2026.

A **MOTION** was made to adjourn the meeting (**SEARS-GRAVES/PHELPS**). **ACTION:** Unanimously approved.

The meeting adjourned at 9:30 a.m.

Meeting minutes respectfully submitted for EWIB Secretary Caleb Roseme by David Allard.

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