



MINUTES

EWIB Board of Directors Hybrid Meeting

Tuesday, January 27, 2026

8:00 a.m.

Members Present: Susan Adams; Peter Baker; Hannah Belmont (for Ray Coombs, Jr.); Nereida Braasch; Francheska Cordero; Jessica Corneau; Ginger Frasca; Nicole Galo; Thayne Hutchins; David Jarvis; Chris Jewell; Mary Ellen Jukoski; Andrew McKillop; Daniel Mello; Sean Morrone (for Courtney Murphy); Eric Protulis; Tina Rice (for Liz Li); Caleb Roseme; and Dina Sears-Graves.

Staff Present: David Allard; Melissa Laws; and Michael Nogelo.

Others Present: Dave Bechtel; Tony Benoit; Deanna Chapparo; Mary Ann Chinatti; First Selectwoman Tina Falck; Kristin Hempel; Rep. Tammy Nuccio; Carrie Pederson; Kelli Vallieres & Cyndi Wells.

CALL TO ORDER

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

Chair Jewell welcomed new Board members Thomas Abate, Peter Baker, and Francheska Cordero.

PUBLIC COMMENT

None.

ACCEPTANCE OF PREVIOUS MINUTES

A **MOTION** was made to accept the minutes of the November 25, 2025 EWIB Board of Directors meeting (**JUKOSKI/MCKILLOP**). **Action:** Unanimously approved.

CORRESPONDENCE

EWIB President/CEO Michael Nogelo highlighted the following items:

- **2026 CT Workforce Summit** – The Workforce Summit Planning Committee did not select a proposal by the Eastern Advanced Manufacturing Alliance Regional Sector Partnership (EAMA RSP) and EASTCONN for a breakout session. Kelli Vallieres noted that the Planning Committee, comprised of representatives from a range of organizations, used objective criteria to select eight of the 40 proposals.
- **U.S. Department of Labor (USDOL) Appropriations Bill** – On January 20, federal congressional leaders released a bipartisan appropriations bill to fund several federal agencies, including USDOL, through September 30, 2026. The agreement would essentially flat fund the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA). The House passed the bill on January 22, and the Senate is expected to vote on it soon.
- **CT Youth Employment Program (CYEP) Allocations** – On December 11, 2025, the CT Department of Labor (CTDOL) notified CT's five regional workforce boards that it would advance legislation to fix the flawed CYEP funding allocation methodology during the 2026 legislative session if the boards unanimously supported doing so. Four boards, including EWIB, expressed their support. Capital Workforce Partners expressed its support for fixing the methodology, but not during the 2026 session. CTDOL therefore decided not to pursue the change in 2026. Mr. Nogelo thanked Board members for their advocacy in support of the legislation to fix the allocation methodology.

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

- Chief Workforce Officer Kelli Vallieres shared the following OWS highlights: a) The CT Workforce Summit will take place at the CT Convention Center in Hartford on April 2; b) The annual RSP Convening on January 12 focused on work-based learning; c) OWS has established a pathway for EWIB to transfer ownership of the Career ConneCT portal to the State when the Career ConneCT grant ends on June 30; d) OWS will soon release public service announcements encouraging skills-based hiring and second-chance hiring; e) Career ConneCT has exceeded its training enrollment and completion goals and is 97% of the way to its employment goal; and f) OWS intends to allocate a portion of the \$10 million Workforce Innovation & Sustainability bond fund to programming.

CHAIR'S/PRESIDENT'S REPORT

- **Staffing Update** – Mr. Nogelo reported that EWIB recently made an employment offer for its Programs and Executive Support Specialist position, which will primarily support Manufacturing Pipeline Initiative (MPI) expansion and provide executive and administrative support.
- **MPI Funding Status Update** – Mr. Nogelo said EWIB and its MPI partners are doing their part to meet expanded Electric Boat (EB) hiring needs, as ten MPI classes launched in January. The Maritime Industrial Base (MIB) recently told EB it will provide tuition funding for MPI classes scheduled for March and April, and EB is optimistic MIB will provide a second installment to cover May and June tuition. EB does not believe MIB funding can support other essential MPI costs (e.g., support services, stipends). Without additional funds to cover these costs, EWIB expects its existing FY26 MPI funding (State General Fund and Career ConneCT) to exhaust in April. EWIB must preserve sufficient MPI funding to meet the training needs of other EAMA RSP member companies. EWIB will work with EB, federal and state legislators, and other potential funding partners to avoid a program disruption prior to June 30 and to develop a long-term funding approach to support projected hiring needs over the next two to three years. Sean Morrone said EB leaders are advocating for the funding the MPI needs to continue to meet industry demand.
- **Career ConneCT Sole Source Agreement** – Mr. Nogelo shared his January 22 memo to Kelli Vallieres regarding EWIB's sole source agreement with OWS. EWIB achieved the main objective of the sole source agreement, as it scaled the MPI portal into a statewide Career ConneCT intake and assessment system that has served more than 43,000 registrants. The Business Intelligence (BI) component of the agreement depends on data and systems controlled by OWS and CTDOL. The State has not completed the actions required for EWIB to complete BI reporting. EWIB repeatedly documented these dependencies and risks with OWS. The agreement protects EWIB from responsibility when a deliverable cannot be completed because of factors outside its control. EWIB and its subcontractors have invested significant time and resources preparing to complete BI reporting and remain ready to complete BI reporting if the State completes the required actions.

Dr. Vallieres affirmed that EWIB has worked tirelessly to fulfill the terms of its contract around data and stated that no one has been at fault for the issues with the State management information system. The OWS data team has thoroughly analyzed Career ConneCT data. Wage data is currently unavailable but should become available by September 2026 thanks to a partnership with DataLinkCT mandated by Public Act No. 25-119.

- **Labor Market Insights** – Mr. Nogelo presented information related to: a) the current “low-hire, low-fire” labor market; b) the recent American Job Quality Study by Gallup and Jobs for the Future; c) why the trajectory of the stock market and the labor market diverged from 2022 to 2025; and d) public investment in the U.S. workforce system in both a global context and a historical context.

COMMITTEE REPORTS

- **Executive Committee** – Committee Chair Jewell reported on the Executive Committee's January 8 meeting. Mr. Nogelo (filling in for CFAO Guy Saporito) reviewed EWIB's FY25 Independent Auditor's Report by Doherty, Beals, & Banks, P.C., and informed the Board that the audit contained no findings or concerns. For the fiscal year ending June 30, 2025, EWIB had \$16.4M in revenue (just below its record-setting FY24 revenue) and general and administrative costs equaling 3.99% of agency-wide expenditures. Chair Jewell expressed appreciation for another fiscally responsible year and another good audit and offered to share the audit report with any Board members.

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Chair Jewell reported that the Executive Committee also discussed MPI funding and coordination. Mr. Nogelo said he met with Sen. Cathy Osten, Rep. Derrel Wilson, and the Governor's Chief of Staff, Matt Brokman, in November to discuss: a) MPI; and b) CTDOL's reluctance to fix the flawed CYEP funding allocation methodology.

A **MOTION** was made to accept the January 8, 2026 EWIB Executive Committee report, as presented (**JUKOSKI/CORNEAU**). **ACTION:** Unanimously approved.

- **Eastern CT Healthcare Partnership (ECHP)** – Dave Bechtel reported that: a) roughly 100 students from eight high schools participated in a Healthcare Career Expo in November; b) the Healthcare Education, Attraction, and Training (HEAT) team met in December to focus on strengthening the healthcare workforce pipeline; c) the Policy team will host – in conjunction with CT's other three healthcare RSPs – a dialogue with State legislators on February 6; and d) the Quality of Life team will focus on upskilling incumbent workers and helping employer members integrate artificial intelligence tools to maximize efficiency.

Dina Sears-Graves recommended sharing the ECHP policy agenda with the two regional health collaboratives.

- **EAMA RSP** – Tony Benoit reported that: a) employers who attended the December 17 EAMA RSP meeting shared that worker wellness and development are top current priorities and that many companies experienced a slow first half of 2025 but a strong second half of the year; b) EAMA RSP was represented at the statewide RSP Convening; c) he participated in a “solutioning workshop” hosted by the Submarine Workforce and Industrial Base in December; d) he sits on the Eastern CT Defense Industry Community Partnership, a CT Department of Economic and Community Development initiative to facilitate collaboration between EB and community groups; and e) the Business 2 Business working group will sponsor a member meet-up event at Acme Wire Products in March.

OLD BUSINESS

None.

NEW BUSINESS

None.

MEETING SURVEY & ADJOURNMENT

Chair Jewell asked attendees to complete a meeting satisfaction survey. The next Board meeting is on March 31, 2026.

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

The meeting adjourned at 9:16 a.m.

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

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