



**NORTHWEST REGIONAL  
WORKFORCE INVESTMENT BOARD**  
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**EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE MEETING MINUTES**

**Wednesday, July 7<sup>th</sup>, 2021 at 8:00 AM**

**VIA Virtual Conference Video Call at:**

<https://zoom.us/j/99964712466?pwd=YlhUblhDMjRUMDEySXF2QW5CZFp0QT09>

Meeting ID: 999 6471 2466

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***Participating: M. Hayden, W. Pizzuto, B. Dupont, J. Ryan, J. Wrinn, G. LaCapra, J. Vrabely, G. Pisani (Chair), F. Spagnolo, S. Mertz.***

***Meeting Commenced at 8:01 AM.***

- 1. Approval of Executive Committee Meeting Minutes from June 2<sup>nd</sup>, 2021**  
A motion to approve was made by J. Ryan and seconded by G. LaCapra. Motion approved.
- 2. Approval of CYEP Summer Youth Employment Contract:**
  - a. Boys & Girls Club of Greater Waterbury - \$27,784.28**  
A motion to approve was made by W. Pizzuto and seconded by J. Ryan. Motion approved.
- 3. Approval of 2<sup>nd</sup> Year Contract with CareerPath Mobile, LLC for \$15,200.00**  
A motion to approve was made by W. Pizzuto and seconded by G. LaCapra. Motion approved.
- 4. CFO Recommendation of Insurance Provider Group for services as Insurance Broker**  
A motion to approve was made by J. Wrinn and seconded by W. Pizzuto. Motion approved.



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### 5. Deputy Director Update

M. Hayden advised the committee that the NRWIB has faced nearly a \$1,000,000.00 budget cut, (\$800,000.00 of WIOA funds AND \$200,000 JFES funds), and unfortunately, on June 25<sup>th</sup>, 2021, the NRWIB laid off eleven people. M. Hayden expressed his sentiments about the situation, as he knew the staff members on both a professional and personal level for many years. The lay offs also affected many NRWIB staff members, as many of them worked with those individuals for multiple years and formed friendships throughout that time. There has been a lot of anger, sadness, and frustration around the office. C. Awwad and M. Hayden worked tirelessly to explore every option to try and keep every staff member employed, but unfortunately, ultimately there was too large of a budget cut to avoid the layoffs. Other workforce boards and even the Office of Workforce Strategy (OWS) attempted to work with and assist the NRWIB to avoid having to lay off staff, but there just was not enough funding available to fill the void created by the budget cut.

W. Pizzuto asked M. Hayden if there would be any more layoffs and M. Hayden responded that he hopes not, as S. Mertz is trying her hardest to balance the budget, and the NRWIB is faced with making a lot of decisions without a lot of money. It is unfortunate that the budget is based off a 2-year lookback, as two years ago the economy in Connecticut was thriving and there was a low unemployment rate. Presently, the unemployment rate is at approximately 8-9%, and unfortunately, individuals and companies are struggling. Two of the eleven staff members that were laid off were peer navigators working under the Opioid Grant, and unfortunately their grant was not extended in time. If/when the grant is extended, and with the DOL's permission, the NRWIB hopes to bring one of those individuals back to work, as the other has already found employment, due to the opioid crisis being so high and peer navigators being in demand.

On a positive note, M. Hayden announced to the committee that the NRWIB was awarded the CARES II funds in the amount of \$896,237.50 from the OWS/DECD. The NRWIB will be focusing on CDL training, healthcare, environmental remediation, and childcare. This will allow the workforce board to put some money back onto the streets and get individuals trained. Senator Murphy's office contacted the NRWIB regarding funds in the amount of \$650,000.00 for training purposes, and the workforce board is thankful for the opportunity and hopes for some good news pertaining to those funds in the next couple of weeks.

M. Hayden updated the committee on the organizational restructure of the NRWIB. Over the last few months, the senior staff at the workforce board have attempted to restructure the way things operate. C. Awwad felt that many tasks were getting bottlenecked with her own, and being the leader that she is, she has always been on top of everything. The goal of the restructure is to relieve her of extra responsibilities and redistribute them to M. Hayden and other appointed supervisors, including CFO, S. Mertz, Director of Strategic Planning and Development, Genny Fonseca, and Manager of Workforce Programs, James Amis. Those three supervisors will report directly to M. Hayden, and M. Hayden will report directly to C. Awwad, so that she does not constantly have fifteen people all reporting to her about multiple issues. This



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will allow C. Awwad to focus on her top priorities, such as dealing with legislation, OWS, the Next Gen Partnership, etc., and the bigger issues that the NRWIB faces. This will also allow M. Hayden to focus more on the day-to-day responsibilities of the workforce board. The new restructure has worked out well for the NRWIB thus far, and M. Hayden believes this new system will be extremely beneficial for everyone in the organization.

J. Wrinn asked M. Hayden if C. Awwad would still be participating on the Executive Committee, and M. Hayden confirmed that she will, she was just on vacation at the time.

W. Pizzuto commented that it must be a very unnerving time for all the staff members at the NRWIB, to have such a shake-up in the office. W. Pizzuto asked M. Hayden if he anticipated any re-hiring of some of the staff members that were laid off, if the NRWIB were to receive some funding back. M. Hayden responded that the individuals that were laid off worked for Career Resources, Inc., and currently the NRWIB is doing the best it can with the limited funding that is available. M. Hayden commented that if the NRWIB were to receive any additional funding, the organization would try to possibly re-hire some of the positions that were eliminated. M. Hayden re-iterated that it has been an extremely difficult time for everyone, and of course if given the opportunity, the workforce board would not be against possibly re-hiring a few of those individuals, especially in anticipation of the month of September, when the extra \$300.00 of the pandemic relief funds will end, and a high level of traffic is expected into the building. M. Hayden expects the NRWIB to be extremely busy at that time with folks seeking training and employment.

### **6. Finance Update**

S. Mertz advised the committee that included in their agenda backup documentation was the Profit and Loss Budget vs. Actual through May. That was the last month that was completed. The finance team is currently working on June and year-end adjustments in preparation for grant closeouts and the audit. The engagement letter has been signed with Mahoney-Sabol, and the NRWIB is on track for the audit in late September/early October.

### **7. Other Business**

No other business was discussed.

### **8. Adjournment**

A motion to adjourn was made by J. Ryan and seconded by J. Wrinn at 8:22 A.M. Motion approved.