



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

Wednesday, February 7th 2024, at 8:00 AM

Attendees: G. Lacapra, J. Ryan, Chief F. Spagnolo, J. Wrinn, W. Pizzuto, J. Vrabely, B. Dupont, P. Smithwick.

Also in attendance: S. Mertz, C. Awwad, G. Fonseca, N. Lombardi.

The meeting started at 8 am

1. Approval of Executive Committee Meeting Minutes from December 6th, 2023.

A motion to approve was made by G. Lacapra and seconded by J. Ryann. Motion approved.

2. Approval of JFES UBER reimbursement policy.

CEO C. Awwad stated that this policy was created to facilitate the spending of some of the support services to JFES clients, then transfer the responsibility back to what's called special benefits. The policy was presented to the state for review and approval.

A motion to approve was made by B. Dupont and seconded J. Ryann. Motion approved.

3. Approval of WIOA “In-School” Youth contract to “Waterbury Police Activity League”, from 03/01/2024 through 06/30/2025.

C. Awwad explained that this contract is to facilitate in-school youth programs helping disengaged and disconnected kids who are still in high school before they drop out.

A motion to approve was made by J. Wrinn and seconded by J. Lacapra. Chief Spagnolo abstained from the vote. Motion approved.

4. Approval of contract for website development for the RSPs with “3Lane Marketing, LLC” for the amount of \$81,600.00, from 02/07/2024 through 09/30/2024.



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5. Approval of contract for curriculum development for the RSP with “WiseWire, Inc” in the amount of \$77,500.00 from 02/07/2024 through 12/31/2024.

C. Awwad confirmed that these contracts were competitively procured and funded through the “Good Jobs Challenge” regional sector partnership monies. She stated that curriculum development meetings are now focusing on the mental health training program. On what concerns the website development C. Awwad assured the collaboration with the healthcare RSP which is necessary as well as participation from some of the manufacturers to utilize their input on what the website is going to look like because it is for both of them.

A motion to approve both Item 4 and 5 was made by J. Wrinn and seconded by B. Dupont. Motion approved.

6. Approval of ACI contract with MASC for Youth Manufacturing Program, in the amount of \$12,207.27 from 01/22/2024 through 04/30/2024.

C. Awwad described this contract as an after-school program being funded through the Apprenticeship Connecticut Act, including 17 youth participants after school four days a week, attending in person training at MASC in the area of manufacturing and plastic injection molding. She also confirmed reimbursement to MASC for the teaching and material expenses.

C. Awwad went on to thank PAL for assisting with the transportation thru some dedicated allocated funds.

A motion to approve was made by J. Wrinn and seconded by P. Smithwick. Motion approved.

7. Approval of contract with Learning Dynamic for staff training in the amount of \$4000.00.

C. Awwad expressed the need for this service for the calibration of the office operation, the staff will split into two different groups, to learn about time management and workflow prioritization training on February 24 and March 4.



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A motion to approve was made by W. Pizzuto and seconded by J. Lacapra. Motion approved.

8. Approval of contract with CT Dept. of Labor for ARPA Youth Program Funds in the amount of \$110,250.00, from 03/01/2024 through 09/30/2025.

CEO indicated that this contract contains additional funding to supplement some of our youth programming, to bring on youth as an employee for outreach, and include a small cohort of students to the future banker program, the goal is just to supplement the vendors with additional funds to support their current kids.

A motion to approve was made by W. Pizzuto and seconded by J. Lacapra. Motion approved.

9. Approval of NRWIB Employee Artificial Intelligence policy.

C. Awwad explained that because some staff do use AI chatbot GBT in putting some documents together, this would clarify the need to footnote the use in the development of the document, due to some guidance from tech support people as well as some guidance from the feds.

A motion to approve was made by W. Pizzuto and seconded by J. Lacapra. Motion approved.

10. Financial Updates.

CFO S. Mertz presented the Financials as of 12.31 23, she assured that reports have been filed on time and all the accounts have been reconciled. She informed that the approval of indirect cost rate 5.71% did get in, however, the next step is awaiting the final documentation and adjustments to the grant reports. S. Mertz reported the hiring of a contract specialist and a new AP payroll specialist.



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A motion to approve and place on file was made by W. Pizzuto and seconded by B. Dupont Motion approved.

11. Other Business.

CEO announced hosting a strategic planning session on February 20th in Waterbury. Attendees are to form small groups to help gather opinions about the RSP partnerships and attain insights on future intentions for the next four-year local plan.

COO G. Fonseca asserted that the event is a great initiative before presenting the local plan for a vote to the board in June, the local plan will also be posted for public comments for two weeks, after which it would be submitted to the state by the end of June.

C. Awwad reported meeting with the newly elected Mayors as well as the Danbury interim Superintendent to provide them with a comprehensive overview of the NRWIB operations. She mentioned being asked to attend at a future public hearing regarding the city purchase of the old Sacred Heart High School campus, to speak from the purview of the workforce board, she did believe in favor of that project because there's an intent to develop a comprehensive reentry workforce training center within the confines of the school building.

C. Awwad went on to report extensive collaboration with the Office of Workforce Strategy, as Jobs for the Future will come into the state funded by a group called the Connecticut Project, to do an overview of the data systems in Connecticut. She added that this was a project she has been leading statewide to try to get a comprehensive database.

She stated that she was elected to the National Board of Directors of the National Youth Employment coalition and will be traveling to Atlanta in March from the 3rd to the 5th to attend that board meeting.

Finally, C. Awwad concluded with her announcement of the Strive to Thrive Fair, a youth event at PAL that will have different career booths, VR goggles, and a very interactive worker Awareness Day, she thanked Chief Spagnolo for his collaboration and efforts in helping put this together.

12. Adjournment.

A motion to adjourn was made by J. Pisani and seconded by J. Ryann. Motion approved.

The meeting ended at 8:15 am.