

The WorkPlace
Southwestern Connecticut's Regional Workforce Development Board
Board of Directors Meeting
March 15, 2019

MEMBERS PRESENT

Acosta Yecenia, DSS
Alvarado Frank, SBA
Bailey Leon, Community Foundation Gtr New Haven
Bentley Larry, Consultant
Bogen Arthur, CT Brownfields
Broadie Paul, HCC
Burgard Mary, BESB
Fuda Victor, CT DOL
Gill Fred, MTA Metro North Railroad
Gold Lindy-Lee, DECD
Hoekenga Craig, MPI

Holcomb Doug, Gtr Bpt. Transit
Hudson Celina, Citi Bank
Iannucci Richard, Port 5 Veterans
Levinson David, NCC
Loeser John, IBM
McSpedon Matthew, JCMorgan Chase
Oddo Jim, Frontier Communications
Peralta Ramon, Peralta Design
Rafael Cindy, Dept. Of Rehab Services
Saffran Larry, Stelray Plastic Products
Sheahan Margaret, Mitchell & Sheahan
Sportini Thomas, IBEW Local 488 JATC
Watson Debra, Peoples United Bank NA

OTHERS PRESENT:

Alvarez Cynthia, Literacy Volunteers
Andrews Cowlis, CT DOL
Barclay Joyce, The WorkPlace
Bartoli Maria, The WorkPlace
Becker Allison, The WorkPlace
Bevacqua William, IMA Metal Finishing
Bissell Ben, The WorkPlace
Bolden Anthony, New Haven Job Corps
Bowens Genise, The WorkPlace
Bradley Dennis, State Senator
Brighindi Millie, The WorkPlace
Brooks Desiree, The WorkPlace
Burton Jack, The WorkPlace
Carbone Joseph, The WorkPlace
Charpentier Mark, The WorkPlace
Chavez Richard, DOL/ETA
Clouet Christopher, Shelton Public Schools
Collins Marilyn, Literacy Volunteers
Cronin Kelly, Literacy Volunteers
Deamico Bernadette, The WorkPlace
DeLeon Krystal, The WorkPlace
DeMattia Donna, The WorkPlace
DeValle Vivian, The WorkPlace
Douglas Maurice, The WorkPlace
Downes Vernon, The WorkPlace
Dunsby Adam, F. S. Town of Easton
Frankel Dan, P2E
Ferguson, Monette, ABCD
Garcia Yvette, The WorkPlace
Gutz Lilean, Mercury

Hansen Debra, VRAE
Hildago Patricia, The WorkPlace
Hodge Ray, The WorkPlace
Hopkins Karen, The WorkPlace
Jackson Angela, The WorkPlace
Jones Desiree, The WorkPlace
Kelman Lauren, The WorkPlace
Kowalski Paul, N.H. Health
Krause Nadine, Holberton School
Laryea Kenneth, The WorkPlace
Lawrence Lyn. CT DOL
Leone Carlo, The WorkPlace
Lewis Sarah, The WorkPlace
Lisher Jim, Career Resources, Inc.
Long Tom, The WorkPlace
Lopez-Cordone Eileen, UI Holdings
Maignan Sandy, P2E
Makela-Johnson Libby, The WorkPlace
Martens Hollis, Life Bridge
Matorelli Christina, The WorkPlace
McCarthy Mike, The WorkPlace
McLaughlin Craig, DOL/ETA
McNair Cynthia, The WorkPlace
Morgan Mike, The WorkPlace
Mucherino Elaine, The WorkPlace
Napier Diana, The WorkPlace
Natalino Arthur, Barrington Media Group
Nieves Carmen, The WorkPlace
Pacowta Mike, The WorkPlace
Parkmond Adrienne, The WorkPlace

Perry Megan, The WorkPlace
Peters Edith, P2E
Pizzaro Jose, The WorkPlace
Proto Dennis, Ansonia Public Schools
Pryce Natalie, Pryceless Consulting
Rietano Joe, Career Resources, Inc.
Robinson Don, The WorkPlace
Robinson-Patton Cathy, The WorkPlace
Sandstrom Lisa, Literacy Volunteers
Santilli Vince, Homes for the Brave
Savage Nordia, The WorkPlace
Sento Brett, The WorkPlace
Serrato Ramon, New Haven Job Corps
Sheehy Bob, P2E
Simmons Caroline, State Representative
Slaughter James, Park City Communities

Thompson Jade, The WorkPlace
Thornberg Daniel, Aced My Interview
Tyma Alan, Ryan & Tyma
Vermont Carolyn, Mayor Ganim's Office
Vitale Angelo, The WorkPlace
Vizcarrondo Celia, The WorkPlace
Weintraub Betty, CHEFA
Williams Pandora, The WorkPlace
Wingo Kevin, Urban League
Zaremby Joel, The WorkPlace

The quarterly meeting of The WorkPlace Board of Directors was held at Housatonic Community College, 900 Lafayette Boulevard, Bridgeport, Connecticut. Leon Bailey called the meeting to order at 8:16 a.m. and welcomed everyone to the Board meeting. Mr. Bailey introduced State Representative Caroline Simmons who represents the 144th District in Stamford. She also has a long history with the Women's Business Development Council. She is the House Chair of the Commerce Committee.

State Representative Simmons strongly supports job growth and workforce development as we continue to recover from the recession after having lost 120,000 jobs. She is most passionate in supporting job creation. State Representative Simmons discussed the items they are working on now in Hartford. As Co-Chair of the Commerce Committee there are 3 priorities they are currently working on:

1. Supporting entrepreneurship and start-ups to make it easier to do business in Connecticut.
2. Workforce Development. To make sure CT has graduates with the skills needed to get a job.
3. Better Marketing. Market our state as a positive place to do business.

Representative Simmons noted the General Assembly passed a couple of Bills:

- The Angel Investor Tax Credit Program that allows small businesses that are in business for less than 10 years with less than \$20 million in revenue to hire Connecticut employees who can be eligible for the Angel Investor Program. Priority for minority-owned, veteran businesses as well as businesses owned by individuals with disabilities.
- A bill was passed which requires school counselors to provide better information to students interested in manufacturing.

Mr. Bailey introduced State Senator Dennis Bradley: Deputy Majority Leader, Chair Housing Public Safety & Security; Vice Chair of Planning & Development and a member of Appropriations, General Law; Judiciary.

State Senator Bradley stated it was an extreme honor to be at today's meeting. He stated he shares the passion of the mission of The WorkPlace to make sure that people have a job but a job

that allows them to move into the economic system of America with dignity. What The WorkPlace does is just that. It gives the sense of dignity to every American regardless of their race or creed and to keep the dream of America alive. State Senator Bradley noted that he sat on the Bridgeport Board of Education for three years. The BOE has tremendous opportunities, programs and money to do things and people are not taking advantage of them. There is a breakdown of our school system but there is a solution. The WorkPlace is offering many of these solutions such as Dress for Success, YouthBuild, etc. We must look at reality and say we can fix this.

PRESIDENTS REPORT:

Mr. Carbone acknowledged First Selectman Adam Dunsby of Easton who is a regular attendee of our meetings. Mr. Carbone noted that State Representative Simmons' remarks were positive and energizing.

TRIBUTES:

David Levinson:

David Levinson has been President of Norwalk Community College for 15 years and a Board member since 2009. He will be thought of as a legend. He came to NCC with much spirit and enthusiasm for the future. He is a man of the community. Everyone at NCC had to be involved. He inspires, builds up and engages those in the corporate region. He made and developed programs that made NCC a resource to the community. He will be retiring soon and will be returning to Boston. His leadership has made us better. We wish him well on his retirement.

Fred Gill:

Fred Gill is the HR Business Manager at Metro North Railroad and is a member of our Board. He had the thought years ago to engage community colleges in serving the jobs at Metro North. Twelve years ago, he developed a program with GWCC as the workforce was changing at Metro North. He worked with instructors at GWCC to construct programs so graduates of the program could qualify for high ranking jobs at Metro North. He has been an active participant in the community. At Metro North he has hired 150 employees every year. He will be retiring from Metro North after 35 years of service. As he transitions to GWCC he will be developing railroad curriculum for prospective students. We wish him well in this new endeavor.

ECONOMIC TRENDS (CHART) DEC'16 - DEC'18):

Mr. Carbone noted that this chart measures the change over a 2-year period in our 20-town region. The Unemployment Rate in December 2018 was 3.3% but is somewhat deceiving. The rate remains low but at the same time there are many who are unemployed in this region. Most jobs created since the end of the recession are low wage jobs. The Labor Force increased by only 1%. These numbers are weak and do not compare to the numbers we had 10/15 years ago. The quality of jobs is the key. Over 40% of jobs were low wage and this does not help the region's economy. This does not bring about the best of opportunities for Americans in the future.

A SKILLS GAP:

Mr. Carbone mentioned at our last meeting he brought up the subject of a skills gap. He had doubts about this earlier but not now. It is the most serious barrier that we have. He has been on the road numerous times meeting with employers whose concerns are the skills gap. Mr. Carbone discussed an article, "Is There Really a Skills Gap 2018" by the National Association of Colleges and Employers. Between 2008 and 2013, millions of jobs were lost during the recession and then

recovered in the modest post-recession. At the end of this period, 4.4 million fewer jobs were held by individuals with less than a bachelor's degree, 4.3 million more jobs were held by workers with at least a bachelor's degree. Between 2013-2018, approximately 10.6 million jobs were added to the economy. Of these, 71% went to individuals with a college degree.

2018 SURVEY OF CONNECTICUT BUSINESSES – PREPARED BY CBIA:

Mr. Carbone reported that of the businesses surveyed, 39% expected to be in a growth mode. They are addressing the worker shortage by:

- Investing in recruiting and training initiatives.
- From 2020 – 2023, 22% of businesses expect to lose 16% or more of their current workforce to retirement.
- 9% expect to lose 46% or more of their workers in this period.

Currently, companies are making the greatest investment in:

- Employee training – 21%
- New technology – 18%
- Recruiting qualified workers – 15%

EMPLOYER ROUNDTABLES ON THE SKILLS GAP:

Mr. Carbone noted that four roundtables were held with business leaders on how they are responding to the talent shortage. Representation was well attended by a diversified group of businesses. There was a list of items to add to our action items. What came across from each roundtable was loud and clear – the need for critical thinkers. By the year 2040 the number of Connecticut residents age 65+ is on a pace to increase by 57% and the working age population is projected to grow less than 2%. Over the last several years the birth rate has gone down, and we are losing population. Critical thinking is the ability to analyze information objectively and make a reasoned judgement. Good critical thinkers draw conclusions from a set of information and determine if it is useful or less useful to solve a problem. The supply is not meeting the demand, and this is our challenge.

PERCENT UNEMPLOYED OVER 27 WEEKS:

Mr. Carbone discussed the issue of older workers. We see bias in the way employers are conducting their business. According the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, there has been a shift in the percentage of people unemployed for more than 27 weeks. In December 2018, 49.7% of people unemployed for more than 6 months were over 45. This is up from 41.1% in 2013. At the same time, the percentage of people unemployed 6 months in younger age groups declined.

OLDER WORKER DISCUSSION:

Mr. Carbone indicated that we will be going on the road again. We will have roundtable discussions with partner agencies such as AARP, Department of Aging, support organization and program participants. We will have two forums in Connecticut, possibly one in Rhode Island and Washington, DC. We have good partners, Senator Chris Murphy, Congressman Jim Himes and Congresswoman Rose DeLauro. P2E is the most successful program for the long term unemployed. The program continues to grow and has become a national program.

- **P2E Connecticut**
 - During the last program year 277 individuals out of 360 were at least 50 years old or 76.9% with and 80% placement rate with an average salary of \$49,920.
- **P2E Rhode Island**
 - In July we received a second round of funding from the Governor's Workforce Board in the amount of \$500,000. Programming is exclusively serving job seekers over 50.

OUR COURSE OF ACTION:

Mr. Carbone stated that we must be ready as an institution to prepare our people to be job-ready. We will redesign the structure of The WorkPlace from entry level on up, but we also have to:

- Support legislation to expand apprenticeships, credentials needed.
- Work with Adult Ed to expand GED, language and tech prep programs.
- Leverage CT P2E as a resource.
- Support legislation to provide incentives to grow employer investment in training.
- Advocate for older Americans facing age discrimination and youth battling barriers to employment.

GOVERNOR NED LAMONT:

Mr. Carbone noted that the workforce issues he has spoken about today are also on Governor Lamont's radar. The Governor is frustrated in that legislators are not talking with each other to find solutions to this problem. He is committed to solve this problem and he will use his political capital to make things happen. He has a great team at DOL: Kurt Westby, Commissioner, Daryl Dudzinski, Deputy Director and Dante Bartolomeo, Deputy Commissioner.

TRIBUTE TO YOUTHBUILD:

The WorkPlace was awarded \$1.1 million dollars from the US Department of Labor to continue YouthBuild Bridgeport. We will serve 65 youth over the next 2 years. This award is based on a good record of performance in the past. Mr. Carbone thanked Carmen Nieves, Manager of YouthBuild, and her staff for the great job they are doing.

GRANTS FOR CONNECTICUT WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT:

Mr. Carbone stated that the purpose of this grant is to help drive economic and employment growth in the state. Several weeks ago, Mr. Carbone attended an announcement at the State Capital where The Connecticut Health & Educational Facilities Authority (CHEFA) announced that the Workforce Development Council will receive a \$500,000 grant to support the 5 Workforce Development Boards. Each will receive \$100,000. This award will allow us to continue our holistic approach at our AJCs. The grant funds will support:

- Job training for hard-to-employ individuals.
- Training stipends designed to enable low-income individuals to complete short-term job training programs.
- Flexible funding pools at each WDB for payments to cover emergency, job-related cost.

Mr. Carbone noted that Betty Sugerman-Weintraub, of CHEFA, has been working on this concept for years. Mr. Carbone introduced Ms. Weintraub and expressed his many thanks to her.

NEW CAREER COACH:

Mr. Carbone announced that The WorkPlace has a new Career Coach. We don't have the Coach at the present time as it is being "wrapped". We have 2 sponsors: KeyBank and UI Holdings (Avangrid). We will have it parked in an area for all to see at our June Board of Directors meeting. The kick-off event will be held in the spring.

DRIVEN TO SERVE:

Mr. Carbone noted that at every Board of Directors meeting he shows the results of our entrepreneurial approach to our business. We can document that over 80,000 people in our region have had one form of service or another. This approach to our work has brought in \$204,893 million dollars. Our growth since March 2018 was +\$27,245,000 (15.3%.) Mr. Carbone stated that we cannot do this alone and thanked everyone for being a part of this.

TOAST TO SUCCESS:

Mr. Carbone announced that our fundraiser for DFS will be held on May 23rd at 5:30 p.m. at the Patterson Club in Fairfield. Mr. Carbone encouraged support for this event through a sponsorship or tickets. Mr. Carbone thanked our Board Members, community partners, funders, elected officials and staff. What we have done is what you have allowed us to do.

BUSINESS:

BOARD OF DIRECTORS MEETING MINUTES

On a motion made and seconded, the Board of Directors unanimously approved the minutes of the December 21, 2018 Board of Directors meeting.

NOMINATION TO THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS:

- Anthony Bolden, Director of the New Haven Job Corps

On a motion made and seconded, the Board of Directors unanimously accepted the nomination of Anthony Bolden as a member of the Board of Directors.

P2E PANEL DISCUSSION

Tom Long noted that over the years we have heard Joe Carbone mention the great staff, programs and partners we have but the key element is to get participants who are dedicated to advance and move forward in their lives.

Mr. Long introduced the four panelists from our P2E Program:

- Dan Frankel, Shelton
- Bob Sheehy, North Haven
- Sandy Maignan, Bridgeport
- Edith Peters, Hamden

Mr. Long posed questions to the panelist regarding their experiences and challenges in going through the program. Mr. Long thanked the panelists and stated just how proud we are of their accomplishments.

AJOURNMENT: There being no further discussion, the meeting was adjourned at 9:38 a.m.

The next Board of Directors meeting will be held on June 21, 2019.

Respectfully submitted, Mildred Brighindi, Executive Secretary