

**The WorkPlace**  
**Southwestern Connecticut's Regional Workforce Development Board**  
**Board of Directors Meeting**  
**December 20, 2019**

**MEMBERS PRESENT**

Bailey Leon, CFGNH  
Bentley Larry, Consultant  
Bolden Anthony, New Haven Job Corps  
Burgard Mary, BESB  
Cory Thomas, CSCU  
DeMarco Julie, Bigelow Ctr For Sr Activities  
Falcon Clodomiro, Falcon, Vargas Group  
Feldman Gary, US Computer Connection  
Fuda Victor, CT DOL  
Gill Fred, MTA Metro North Railroad  
Gold Lindy-Lee, DECD  
Holcomb Doug, Gtr Bpt. Transit

Johnson Aresta, University of Bpt.  
LaBella Michael, TD Bank  
Loeser John, IBM  
Lopez-Cordone Eileen, Avangrid  
Mancini Sabrina, CT Dept. Of Education  
McSpedon Matthew, JPMorgan Chase Bank  
Morgan David, TEAM, Inc.  
Oddo Jim, Exec. Search Professionals  
Proto Mike, Prestige Industrial Finishing  
Rafael Cindy, DRS  
Richards Loni, Service After Service  
Sheahan Margaret, Mitchell & Sheahan

**OTHERS PRESENT:**

Allen Russell  
Alvarez Janelle, The WorkPlace  
Amaechi Nneanata, The WorkPlace  
Arboleda Samantha, The WorkPlace  
Barclay Joyce, The WorkPlace  
Bartoli Maria, The WorkPlace  
Battle Stewart, The WorkPlace  
Becker Allison, The WorkPlace  
Bingham Michael, N.H. Biz  
Bissell Ben, The WorkPlace  
Blanco Melanie, The WorkPlace  
Brady Janet, The WorkPlace  
Brighindi Millie, The WorkPlace  
Brooks Desiree, The WorkPlace  
Brown Marcus  
Chris Bruhl  
Burgos Lori, The WorkPlace  
Burton Jack, The WorkPlace  
Carbone Joseph, The WorkPlace  
Carbone Ron  
Carbone Tony  
Charpentier Mark, The WorkPlace  
Costello Lauren, TJEL  
Crawford Dianna, The WorkPlace  
Cruz Johnny, P2E  
Cruz Michelle, The WorkPlace  
Deamico Bernadette, The WorkPlace  
Delgado, Rafael, P2E  
DeLeone Krystal, The WorkPlace

DeMarco Tim, The WorkPlace  
Dennis Ricky, The WorkPlace  
Denton James, Bpt. Public Schools  
Douglas Maurice, The WorkPlace  
Edelstein Jane, The WorkPlace  
Ferreira Jane, Mercy Learning Center  
Fesik Josh, The WorkPlace  
Frassinelli Fred  
Fuentes Miguel, UBC  
Garcia Yvette, The WorkPlace  
Hodge Ray, The WorkPlace  
Hopkins Karen, The WorkPlace  
Jackson Angela, The WorkPlace  
Johnson Arnold, The WorkPlace  
Johnson Ebony, The WorkPlace  
Gary Kelman  
Kelman Lauren, The WorkPlace  
King Corey, The WorkPlace  
Kordowski Michael, CTDOL  
Laryea Kenneth, The WorkPlace  
Latham-Magee Stephanie, The WorkPlace  
Lawrence Lynn, CT DOL  
Leichtman, Jeff, BRBC  
Leon Nestor, The WorkPlace  
Llanos Angie, The WorkPlace  
Lopez Lily, Citi Bank  
Long Tom, The WorkPlace  
Mantilia Robert, Mantilia Mgmt Group  
Makela-Johnson, Libby, The WorkPlace

Matorelli Christina, The WorkPlace  
Mazzonna Barbara, Justice Education Ctr  
McCarthy Mike, The WorkPlace  
Mondesir Monthauny  
Moran Garrett, Gov's Workforce Council  
Montes Grixaliz, The WorkPlace  
Morrison L. Klein, Morrison Group  
Nieves Carmen, The WorkPlace  
Parkmond Adrienne, The WorkPlace  
Peralta Ramon, Peralto Design  
Perry Megan, The WorkPlace  
Pharr Bernie, The WorkPlace  
Proto Dennis, Ansonia Public School  
Robinson Don, The WorkPlace  
Robinson-Patton Cathy, The WorkPlace  
Rogers Antoinette, The WorkPlace  
Rule Shannon, The WorkPlace  
Sandstrom Lisa, Literacy Volunteers  
Santilli Vince, Homes for the Brave  
Sarro Mario, The WorkPlace  
Seebeck Matthew, SONO Collection

Sistrunk Kendall, The WorkPlace  
Szymanski John, The WorkPlace  
Thompson Jade, The WorkPlace  
Ticky Jimmy, Congressman Himes' Office  
Turner Danielle, CRI  
Tusweet Charles,  
Venditti Debbie, The WorkPlace  
Venditti Gino, The WorkPlace  
Vermont Carolyn, Mayor Ganim's Office  
Vizcarrondo Celia, The WorkPlace  
Wade Douglas, Wade Dairy  
White Marlon, P2E  
Williams Terri, The WorkPlace  
Wynter Nigel, The WorkPlace  
Young Willie, The WorkPlace  
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, Chair, called the meeting to order at 8:21 a.m. Mr. Bailey introduced the guest speaker, Matt Seebeck, Senior General Manager of SoNo Collection – Brookfield Properties.

Mr. Seebeck thanked The WorkPlace and the Board of Directors for inviting to him to speak at today's meeting.

### **REAL ESTATE IN THE 21<sup>ST</sup> CENTURY:**

Mr. Seebeck noted that 72% of customers prefer to touch and feel products prior to purchasing. Traffic and sales are growing in Class A shopping centers throughout the United States and anchor stores are looking for the best locations. Catalog sales represent 10% of retail sales. In reviewing retail square footage per capita, the US the square footage is \$24 a square foot. Digitally native brands are making a brick and mortar footprint. Location is most important. Intersections of major thoroughfares, and ample parking are tailored to the market. Norwalk is an ideal location. I-95 has 167,00 vehicular traffic per day and a large workforce. We have a relationship with Nordstrom and Bloomingdales who have been looking for the opportunity to venture in the Southwest community for over 20 years. SoNo eliminated the Food Court (under-utilized), and are partnering with students on a soft seating concept.

### **WORKFORCE:**

Job Creation:

Phase 1:

- 184 new full-time employees created by the project
- 389 new construction jobs created

Phase 2:

- 2,220 full-time construction jobs available dedicated to the site for 29 months

- Additional 250 permanent construction jobs – on-going

Phase 3:

- Over 1,100 new retail roles direct to the site

Educational Partnerships – Norwalk Community College - NRF customer service and sales representative certification.

Apprenticeship Program – placing students and out-of-work labor into trade programs – carpentry union.

### **PRESIDENT’S REPORT:**

Mr. Carbone thanked all for being at today’s meeting. To all our community partners and businesses, those of The WorkPlace who make The WorkPlace work, thank you for your service.

### **TRIBUTES:**

Mr. Carbone has the distinct pleasure at every meeting to pay tribute and recognize outstanding people, businesses and those in workforce development who have done extraordinary things in our community.

### **CHRISTOPHER P. BRUHL, PRESIDENT/CEO OF THE BUSINESS COUNCIL OF FAIRFIELD COUNTY:**

Several weeks ago, Mr. Carbone learned that Mr. Bruhl would be leaving the Business Council. This is not a retirement but Mr. Bruhl will move from one career to another. He is an extraordinary leader. Under Mr. Bruhl’s leadership changes and innovations were made and among them were education and ways of lifting people in the community. Mr. Carbone has worked with him on different issues and he always lent his help, experience and knowledge. He has helped make The WorkPlace better. He held us to a high standard, and we have worked hard to measure up to this. Mr. Carbone thanks Mr. Bruhl and wished him well in the future.

### **GOVERNOR’S WORKFORCE COUNCIL:**

Several weeks ago, Governor Lamont appointed Garrett Moran as the Chair of the Governor’s Workforce Council. This Council replaces the Connecticut Employment and Training Commission (CETC). Mr. Garrett has a tough job ahead of him, but he is big on planning. Mr. Carbone is confident that Mr. Moran is focused on the end result for Governor Lamont.

### **MOMENTS THAT CHANGED THE TRAJECTORY OF OUR WORK:**

In the past 20 years, we have embraced the change within our economy, regional demographics and a host of other issues. A year ago, when the recession was over, we had to reinvent ourselves. We have done this several times, including WIRED and P2E..

### **WIRED PROGRAM – PARTNERED WITH WESTCHESTER COUNTY – 13 YEARS AGO:**

WIRED was a federal initiative to encourage “Workforce Innovation in Regional Economic Development”. Our regional partnership was selected to be a part of a national demonstration project. In 2007, after reviewing an analysis of potential synergies across SWCT and New York, the CT-based leadership group voted unanimously to extend the invitation to Westchester and Yonkers to join us as partners. We crossed the line from one state to another. We still have some active programs. It had an impact on the nation.

## **PLATFORM TO EMPLOYMENT:**

In 2011 we started P2E as a privately funded pilot to explore means to support a new population of unemployed. Long term unemployment was a national issue with few people who cared. P2E had proven results that took P2E across the country and brought partnership with national foundations. Our work contributed to an employer prohibition of publishing job vacancy ads that discriminate against the long-term unemployed and a White House Summit on the topic.

## **A LOOK BACK AT THE DECEMBER 2018 ECONOMIC UPDATE:**

### **KEY THEMES:**

- An acute skill shortage in our market, not just people but critical thinkers.
- Worsening job creation inequality is key and growing
- Training services were not keeping up with the marketplace. Programs not responding in a way they need to respond.

### **SKILL SHORTAGE – ENGAGING EMPLOYERS:**

Connecticut has a job ready, critical thinker shortage which poses a great threat to recovery. Over the past 10 years Connecticut employment in Leisure & Hospitality is up 30% and Health Care and Social Assistance has grown 17%. At the same time employment in Manufacturing is down 21% and Financial Activities is down 7%. We have had conversations with business leaders about responding to the talent shortage. Proposed employer service initiatives include a Manufacturing Academy, to act as a hub for coordinating training. Proposed management of customized training solutions for employers. Engage Staffing works with employers to design a recruiting and outreach strategy to attract skilled workers.

### **SHRINKING MIDDLE CLASS – Supporting Diverse Populations:**

Connecticut's recovery is creating a smaller, less inclusive middle class. At our American Job Centers along with our Coach, we see 28,000 – 32,000 customers. At our AJCs it is not just finding customers with a job but with a career, and finding ways for customers to continue their education and address any barriers to employment.

### **RESPONSIVE MANAGEMENT:**

Mr. Carbone reported that we are re-shaping The WorkPlace for the first time in many years. We currently have 200 employees and are operating in many states. Our budget has increased by 50% in the last 4 years with SCSEP.

- Executive level changes with the creation of 4 new Vice Presidents and 2 Directors with a greater focus on performance monitoring and human resources.
- Reorganization of Youth Programs and expansion of services offered through our new Career Zone.
- Creation of centralized Business Services aligned with our Engage Staffing project.
- Focus on operational enhancements in the Health Career Academy, MaturityWorks and Re-entry programs.

### **CONTROLLING OPERATIONAL COSTS:**

Mr. Carbone has indicated our long-term planning to gain control over the expense to lease space and to find ways to turn it into something positive. We will be moving to our new location (1000 Lafayette Boulevard) that will save approximately \$800K over 10 years. Every dollar that is spent on our rent is less money for our programs.

### **VIRGINIA JOB CENTER OPERATIONS AND YOUTH SERVICE:**

Mr. Carbone reported that we had a major expansion and major improvements in Virginia. We have contracts with four Workforce Boards in Virginia. During 2019, we have won several competitions for workforce development projects including One Stop operations, Youth programming and an Innovation and Opportunity Center.

### **PLATFORM TO EMPLOYMENT – CONNECTICUT PROGRAMS:**

Mr. Carbone announced that Cohort One for the current program year graduated on October 3<sup>rd</sup>. Seventy-nine participants completed training, with an 82% placement as of December 17, 2019. Cohort Two graduated on December 13<sup>th</sup>. Eighty-one participants completed training and 22 have already been placed. The average salary for all placements is \$51,820 and growing. P2E continues to be a model and the numbers speak for themselves. This is America's best workforce program.

### **ADAPTING P2E TO SERVE OTHER POPULATIONS- Re-Entry & Serving those with Opioid**

#### **Addiction:**

Mr. Carbone noted that P2E started with the long-term unemployed, veterans and the foreign-born. We are now doing P2E with a project funded by the Connecticut Department of Labor to serve 100 participants state-wide. The first class of 20 in the Bridgeport area started 3 weeks ago.

### **ADDRESSING THE OPIOID CRISIS IN RHODE ISLAND WITH P2E:**

Mr. Carbone mentioned that we did an experimental project funded with \$400,000 from Rhode Island's Real Pathways initiative. This was a 3-week training program customized and designed to support individuals impacted by the opioid crisis to help them overcome what they deal with every day. We had a 45% success rate.

### **OPIOID OVERDOSES IN CONNECTICUT:**

Mr. Carbone stated that people seem to think that there isn't an opioid crisis in Connecticut. There were 560 opioid-related deaths in Fairfield County between 2015-2018. In 2017, there were 955 overdose deaths involving opioid in Connecticut. Only 10 small towns in Connecticut have had no deaths from opioid overdoses in the last four years.

### **GRANTS TO ADDRESS THE OPIOID CRISIS:**

- US DOL is making \$20 million available to the states in a competitive application process.
- The WorkPlace will write the grant application on behalf of Connecticut. Approximately \$2 million over 4 years.
- Rhode Island is submitting an application that will include the P2E Recovery program we piloted this fall.
- Separately, Connecticut is releasing funds from US DOL for workforce solutions to the opioid crisis.
- We will receive \$333,000 per year for 3 years to implement the P2E Recovery program in our region.

### **DRIVEN TO SERVE - THE AGGRESSIVE PURSUIT OF FUNDING TO SERVE MORE PEOPLE:**

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 \$220,348,000 million dollars. Our growth since December 2018 was \$15,934.000.

Mr. Carbone stated that we cannot do this alone and thanked his staff, senior staff and Board of Directors for their support. We should all be proud.

**BUSINESS:**

**MINUTES:** On a motion made and seconded, the Board of Directors accepted the Minutes of the September 20, 2019 Board of Directors meeting.

**REMARKS, ADRIENNE PARKMOND:**

Ms. Parkmond announced that she was very excited to talk about our new P2E Re-Entry Program. This program kicked off just a few weeks ago at this location. The program is funded by the state of Connecticut for 2 years, and we will serve 100 participants. This 4-week program will be followed by subsidized employment. We have some participants with us today who will share their experiences and how they were impacted by our program. They can tell the Board what they have learned in class. Our program team is led by Terri Williams, VP Re-Entry, and Don Robinson, Program Manager. Ms. Parkmond introduced Antoinette Rogers and Willy Young. They shared their experiences before and after entering our program and how they chose Re-Entry. Ms. Parkmond stated that it was an honor to have everyone in class and for the hard work they have done. We already have 4 placements and 5 interviews are active. It is about their future and not about numbers. Ms. Parkmond thanked the employers who have stepped up and the entire team for their hard work.

Mr. Carbone thanked Lindy Lee Gold, DECD, who sent out information on our program, and as a result we already have 5 businesses who have called to help us.

**AJOURNMENT:** There being no further discussion, the meeting was adjourned at 9:36 a.m.

The next Board of Directors meeting will be held on March 20, 2020.

Respectfully submitted, Mildred Brighindi, Executive Secretary