

The WorkPlace
Southwestern Connecticut Regional Workforce Development Board
Board of Directors Meeting
March 19, 2021

MEMBERS PRESENT

Acosta Yecenia, DSS
Alvarado Frank, Small Business Admin.
Bailey Leon, Comm. Fndtn Gtr New Haven
Bentley Larry, Consultant
Burgard May, BESB
Carbone Bing, Modern Plastics
Feldman Gary, US Computer Connection
Ferguson Monette, ABCD
Fuda Victor, CT DOL
Gill Fred, Gateway CC
Gold Lindy-Lee, DECD

Grabinski Joe, Sikorsky
Loeser John, Small Business Consultant
Lohr Jim, Carpenters Labor Mgmt Program
Morgan David, TEAM, Inc.
Oddo Jim, Exec. Search Professionals
Oppel Win, Ad-Merica
Seebeck Matt, SoNo Collection
Sheahan Margaret, Mitchell & Sheahan
Silverstone Bruce, Silverstone Consulting
Smith Dwayne Dr., CEO Housatonic CC
Watson Debra, People's Bank

OTHERS PRESENT:

Alicia Esley, The WorkPlace
Amacechi Nneanata, The WorkPlace
Arboleda Samantha, The WorkPlace
Arruda Christine, The WorkPlace
Balut T
Baptiste Christine, The WorkPlace
Barcley Joyce, The WorkPlace
Bartolomey Luis, The WorkPlace
Bartoli Maria, The WorkPlace
Barton Beth, The WorkPlace
Battle Stewart, The WorkPlace
Becker Allison, The WorkPlace
Benzant Constanza, The WorkPlace
Bissell Ben, The WorkPlace
Borer R
Brady Janet, The WorkPlace
Breedon Paula, The WorkPlace
Brighindi Millie, The WorkPlace
Brooks Desiree, The WorkPlace
Brum Patricia
Bryant Rhaeshetta, The WorkPlace
Burgos Lori, The WorkPlace
Chelsea Burke
Butler Andrea, The WorkPlace
Campos Rosalie, The WorkPlace
Carbone Joseph, The WorkPlace
Carroll Tim, The WorkPlace
Charpentier Mark, The WorkPlace
Colon Jennifer, The WorkPlace
Costa Beth
Crawford Dianna, The WorkPlace
Cruz Michelle, The WorkPlace
Daniels James, The WorkPlace

DeMarco Tim, The WorkPlace
DeMattia Donna, The WorkPlace
Diaz Trayvon
DiBacco Joe, Ansonia Public Schools
Douglas Maurice, The WorkPlace
Downes Vernon, The WorkPlace
Dunleavy Mary, The WorkPlace
Edelstein Jane, The WorkPlace
English Carol
Falkowski Gloria, The WorkPlace
Ferreira Jane, Mercy Learning Ctr
Franqui Marie, The WorkPlace
Freeman Janeene
Foster Ruby, The WorkPlace
Frost Robert, The WorkPlace
Furey Angie, The WorkPlace
Furness Dean, The WorkPlace
Galassi Jason, The WorkPlace
Galletti Jennifer, TheWorkPlace
Garcia Yvette, The WorkPlace
Garcia Judy
Gerena Hailey, The WorkPlace
Gibbs Michelle, The WorkPlace
Giegengack Theresa
Glazier Cal, The WorkPlace
Gomez Joan
Gopian Al, The WorkPlace
Green Aikayla, The WorkPlace
Green Dustin, The WorkPlace
Grota Justin, The WorkPlace
Hailey Gloria, The WorkPlace
Harris Elra, The WorkPlace
Harris Gwen, Career Resources, Inc.

Harris Michelle, The WorkPlace
Hebert Cindy, The WorkPlace
Holtkamp Ashley, The WorkPlace
Hopkins Karen, The WorkPlace
Hopkins Meghan, OperationsInc.
Hopson Tanesha, The WorkPlace
Hull Suzette
Alex Johnson, Capital WF Partners
Jackson Angela, The WorkPlace
Johnson Arnold, The WorkPlace
Johnson Ebony, The WorkPlace
Johnson Kim
Johnson Tiffany
Kearse Carrie, The WorkPlace
King Corey, The WorkPlace
Lathem-Magee Stephanie, The WorkPlace
Lawrence Lyn, CT DOL
Laryea Ken, The WorkPlace
Lazaro Karen
Lee Sean, The WorkPlace
Leon Nestor, The WorkPlace
Levesque Paul
Lewis Sarah, The WorkPlace
Lisher Jim, Career Resources, Inc.
Llanos Angie, The WorkPlace
Long Tom, The WorkPlace
Lugo Henry
Madden Shelley, The WorkPlace
Makela-Johnson, Libby, The WorkPlace
Malony Lisa, The WorkPlace
Mari Barbara
Martin Sharon
Martorelli Christina, The WorkPlace
McCarthy Mike, The WorkPlace
McNeil Desiree, The WorkPlace
Medina Victoria, The WorkPlace
Miller Lewis
Miniman Jennifer, The WorkPlace
Montes. Grixaliz-Rodriguez, The WorkPlace
Morgan Mike, The WorkPlace
Mountain John, The WorkPlace
Mucherino Elaine, The WorkPlace
Munn Todd, The WorkPlace
Napier Diana, The WorkPlace
Nicholas-Xavier Taylor, The WorkPlace
Nieves Carmen, The WorkPlace
Numbers Nelson, The WorkPlace
O'Brien Patricia, The WorkPlace
Pacowta Mike, The WorkPlace
Page James, UB
Paleologos Celeste, The WorkPlace
Parkmond Adrienne, The WorkPlace

Patton Cathy, The WorkPlace
Patton Rory, The WorkPlace
Payron C.
Pelletier Gayle, The WorkPlace
Peralta Ramon, Peralta Design
Perez Gloria, The WorkPlace
Perez Joselito, The WorkPlace
Perez Lawrence
Perry Elizete
Perry Megan, The WorkPlace
Pizzaro Jose, The WorkPlace
Porter Angela, The WorkPlace
Proto Dennis, Ansonia Public School
Proto Mike
Robinson Don, The WorkPlace
Rojas Alejandro, The WorkPlace
Romano Fran, The WorkPlace
Roux Paula, State of Mass.
Rule Shannon, The WorkPlace
Russell Andrew, TheWorkPlace
Russo Nichole, MPI
Sampson Tracy, The WorkPlace
San Roman Teresa, The WorkPlace
Santiago Priscilla, The WorkPlace
Sarro Mario, The WorkPlace
Shuster Ben, The WorkPlace
Smith Stephanie
Smith Jon
Stokes Mike, The WorkPlace
Sutton Matt
Szymanski John, The WorkPlace
Taylor Christine
Taylor Therman, The WorkPlace
Thornberg Dan, Aced by Interview
Toti Cynthia, The WorkPlace
Venditti Debbie, The WorkPlace
Venditti Gino, The WorkPlace
Vermont Carolyn
Villano Bill, Workforce Alliance
Vitale Angelo, The WorkPlace
Vizcarrondo Celia, The WorkPlace
Wade Douglas, Wade Dairy
Walker Toni, Representative
Watson Shirl, The WorkPlace
White Maurice, The WorkPlace
Wilderman Scott, Career Resources, Inc.
Williams Janet, The WorkPlace
Williams Pandora, The WorkPlace
Williams Terri, The WorkPlace
Wrenn Regina
Wynter Nigel, The WorkPlace
Zaremy Joel, The WorkPlace

The quarterly meeting of The WorkPlace Board of Directors was held via a Zoom Meeting. Leon Bailey, Chair, called the meeting to order at 8:19 a.m.

Mr. Carbone welcomed and thanked everyone for their attendance at today's meeting.

PRESIDENT'S REPORT:

TRIBUTES:

Mr. Carbone stated that he has the privilege at every meeting to pay tribute to those who have done outstanding work in our region.

CURTIS O. LAW:

Mr. Law was a Board member between 2014-2019. He passed away on January 15, 2021. He was the Director of the Norwalk Housing Authority and served in the capacity for 43 years. Mr. Law was an extraordinary man; loyal, honest and humble. We will miss him.

BY THE NUMBERS:

Mr. Carbone noted that it has been one year since the shut-down. We had only 2 weeks to transition. Mr. Carbone paid tribute to our entire staff during this time. When we can meet, all will be acknowledged and commended.

- 400+ Chromebooks and laptops distributed
- 168,356 impressions from Google Ads
- 1,000+ Zoom meetings
- \$1,844,000 raised in Fee-for-Service Ventures
- 81% YouthBuild participants receiving a degree or certificate
- 9 Grants won this year
- 68 employees moved to 1000 Lafayette Boulevard

NATIONAL, CONNECTICUT AND REGIONAL UNEMPLOYMENT – 3/19 – 4/20 – 1/21 (CHART):

Mr. Carbone stated that Connecticut is lacking.

- **NATIONAL:** Unemployment rate is 6.3%
- **CONNECTICUT:** Unemployment rate is 8.1%
- **SWCT:** Unemployment rate is 8.9%

AMERICAN RESCUE PLAN:

Mr. Carbone applauds the leadership of President Biden. President Biden signed into law the Plan one week ago.

- Federal Unemployment Compensation benefits through the Pandemic Emergency Unemployment Compensation (PEUC) program extends unemployment benefits through Labor Day.
- The Pandemic Unemployment Assistance (PUA) program for self-employed workers extends from 50 weeks to 79 weeks and will run through Labor Day.

DEMOGRAPHICS OF LTU THEN AND NOW: A COMPARISON BETWEEN THE COVID-19 RECESSION AND THE GREAT RECESSION:

COVID-19:

- **Age** - 44% between 20-39 years
- **Gender** - 55% female
- **Income** – 65% earned \$35K or less in the year preceding unemployment
- **Education** – 33% have only a HS Diploma & 55% have less than a Bachelors degree

GREAT DEPRESSION:

- **Age**- LTU spread evenly across age distributions, 22% between 26-35 years across the board.
- **Gender** - 55% Male
- **Income** – 24% earned \$30K or less in the year preceding unemployment.
- **Education** – All levels of education were equally represented. 18% had less than a high school degree and 17% held college degrees or higher.

DIFFERENT SUPPORTS NEEDED NOW:

- Not all jobs will return to industries such as retail, entertainment and hospitality that were decimated by the recession.
- Unemployment has hit individuals with less education harder, requiring skills training to return to work in new occupations.
- There has been a significant increase in people experiencing depression, substance abuse, domestic violence and social isolation.
- The continued shift to technology-enabled operating models, which is likely to exacerbate the recovery gap for the most vulnerable workers.

CREATING AWARENESS ABOUT THE AVOIDANCE OF LONG-TERM UNEMPLOYMENT:

Mr. Carbone has done the following:

- Published two Op-Eds on the pandemic and long-term unemployment.
- Met with regional Chief Elected Officials to provide an economic update and ask that they share the message about long-term unemployment.
- Hosted roundtables with regional safety net organizations to discuss the demand for current and future services.

WHAT HAVE WE LEARNED AND HOW HAS OUR BUSINESS CHANGED?

Mr. Carbone reported that:

- An increase in remote and tele-commuting will remain.
- Contingent worker expansion for employers to maintain a flexible workforce.
- Employers creating cultures of inclusiveness to be successful.
- New occupations, certifications created to protect employees and provide employer guidance.

APPRENTICESHIPWORKS:

Mr. Carbone noted that The WorkPlace received a \$1.9 million dollar from the State of Connecticut Department of Labor through its Apprenticeship Connecticut Initiative. This grant is for a period of 4 years. One project is in partnership with Derby Public Schools. HCC will create a manufacturing

job training program for adults residing in the Valley. Classes will begin in June and will take place in the evenings at Derby High School.

PLATFORM TO EMPLOYMENT

Mr. Carbone shared the results for program year 2019-2020 program of those trying to get back to work and are experiencing long-term unemployment across the state, including our re-entry program. The results continue to be outstanding.

ENGAGE STAFFING GROWTH:

We have relocated our WPVentures Program to Fairfield Avenue.

- 7 new staffing contracts signed over the past 30 days.
- 20 call center specialists placed for state-wide Rental Assistance Program.
- Sacred Heart University – 12 employees working concierge services for students affected by COVID-19.

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

Mr. Carbone noted that at every Board of Directors meeting he show results of our entrepreneurial approach to our business. This approach to our work has brought in \$262,888,000. This is a landmark amount. Our growth since June 2020 was \$39,601,000. This money is beyond our Formula Dollars. We have helped over 100,000 people with our services in one way or another. Mr. Carbone thanked the Board, Partners, Funders, Elected Officials and staff for their support.

BUSINESS:

- **MINUTES:** On a motion made and seconded the Board of Directors unanimously accepted the Minutes of the December 18, 2020 Board of Directors meeting.

NEW NOMINATION TO THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS:

Meghan Hopkins, VP Customer Success for OperationsInc.

On a motion made and seconded, the Board of Directors unanimously approved Meghan Hopkins' appointment to the Board of Directors.

OPERATIONS:

Adrienne Parkmond announced that since our December 2020 Board of Directors meeting, we have continued to grow and be creative.

Q4 PRIORITIES:

We have over 24 programs in our Operations Unit:

- **Performance**
 - Enrollments
 - Placements
- **Reporting**
- **Planning** for 21-22 Program Year
- **HR**
 - Diversity Equity and Inclusion
 - CARF Accreditation
 - Continued Staff Engagement
 - Staff Coaching
- **Grant Division – 9 Grants**

- Seek opportunities to enhance and fill the gap

UNIQUE IDEAS AND RELEVANT ACTIVITIES:

- Dress for Success Styling Boxes – with money from KeyBank.
- Workshop Offering
 - Stress and Self Care
 - Personal resiliency during uncertain times

NEW PROGRAMS:

- Youth Apprenticeship Readiness – US Department of Labor
- Apprenticeship Connecticut Initiative – State of Connecticut, Department of Labor
- Second Chance - US Department of Justice
- Environmental Job Training Program – EPA
- UniteCT – State of Connecticut, Department of Housing

UniteCT:

The goal of UniteCT is to help stabilize Connecticut's Rental Housing Market. This \$235 million dollar program will provide rental and utility payment assistance to qualified Connecticut households financially impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic. The program will financially support households up to 80% of the HUD Area Median income. The launch date is Monday, March 15th.

WorkPlace Role:

- **Call Center Operation**
 - 19 staff on board
 - Hours of Operation – Monday-Friday 8:00 a.m. – 8:00 p.m. Saturday 10:00 a.m. – 4:00 p.m.
 - Averaging 600 call per day since Monday
 - **Level 1 Partner**
 - Will provide in-person assistance to help tenants complete the application.
 - Computers, scanners, etc.
 - Career Coach
- 1-844-UNITECT**

CONGRATULATIONS AND ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS TO JOSEPH CARBONE – 25 YEARS AT THE WORKPLACE:

A letter from former Board Chair, the late Denise Taft Davidoff, dated March 20, 1996 was presented which showed the Executive Committee had approved the appointment of Joseph M. Carbone as President/COO of The WorkPlace.

Mr. Carbone has been a champion for those excluded from the American Dream. He aggressively pursues innovative ventures to grow the brand and to serve more people. He is sought after on matters of workforce development, as well as being a recognized leader within the business community. Since his arrival, he has created a workforce family where job seekers and employers know they will be heard, remembered and not forgotten. Mr. Carbone has brought many changes over these 25 years and pushes his staff to be creative.

Video congratulations were received from Congresswoman Rosa DeLauro, Connecticut State Representative Toni Walker, Cathy Awwad, Northwestern WIB and Bill Villano, Workforce Alliance.

Adrienne Parkmond stated that Mr. Carbone has given his all to The WorkPlace and for what is best for our customers. He is not only the CEO, but a friend and mentor. He challenges us to give the most to those who have the least.

Mr. Carbone thanked everyone for their kind remarks. It is a joy of his life to lead The WorkPlace. The people we serve have made a difference. We have more to do, and we will get it done. We are a team. On to the future!

A video was shown after the meeting with more congratulations and acknowledgements. Tom Long thanked Shannon Rule for putting the video together.

AJOURNMENT: There being no further discussion, the meeting was adjourned at 9:35 a.m.

The next Board of Directors meeting will be held on June 18, 2021.

Respectfully submitted, Mildred Brighindi, Executive Secretary