

**The WorkPlace**  
**Southwestern Connecticut's Regional Workforce Development Board**  
**Board of Directors Meeting**  
**June 17, 2022**

**MEMBERS PRESENT**

Acosta Yecenia, CT Dept. of Social Services  
Bailey Leon, Comm. Fndtn Gtr New Haven  
Burgard Mary, Vocation Rehabilitation  
Carbone Bing, Modern Plastics  
Coley Thomas, CSCU  
DeMarco Julie, Bigelow Ctr For Sr Activities  
Feldman Gary, US Computer Connection  
Ferguson Monette, Alliance for Community  
Empowerment  
Fuda Victor, CT DOL  
Gold Lindy-Lee, DECD  
Holcomb Doug, Greater Bridgeport Transit  
Hopkins Meghan, Operations Inc.

Lohr Jim, Carpenters Labor Mgmt Program  
McSpedon Matthew, Middle Market Banking  
Morgan David, Team Inc.  
Oddo Jim, Exec. Search Professionals  
Proto Mike, Prestige Industrial Finishing  
Rafael Cindy, DRS  
Russo Nicole, Microboard Processing Inc.  
Silverstone Bruce  
Sheahan Margaret, Mitchell & Sheahan  
Truini Brian, UFCW 371  
Watson Debra, People's Bank

**OTHERS PRESENT:**

Acevedo Liz, The WorkPlace  
Aird Enola, Community Healing Network  
Alcantara Christine, The WorkPlace  
Amacechi Nneanata, The WorkPlace  
Amarante J.  
Ameri Rachelle, The WorkPlace  
Arboleda Samantha, The WorkPlace  
Artes DiaMond, The WorkPlace  
Aerruda Christine, The WorkPlace  
Baldwin J.  
Baptiste Christine, The WorkPlace  
Barclay Joyce, The WorkPlace  
Bartolomey Luis, The WorkPlace  
Bartoli Maria, The WorkPlace  
Becker Allison, The WorkPlace  
Benzant Constanza, The WorkPlace  
Bissell Ben, The WorkPlace  
Breden Paula, The WorkPlace  
Brewster Nicole, The WorkPlace  
Brooks Desiree, The WorkPlace  
Bryant Rhaeshetta, The WorkPlace  
Burke Chelsea, The WorkPlace  
Burton Jack, The WorkPlace  
Butler Andrea, The WorkPlace  
Camacho Maria, The WorkPlace  
Campos Rosalie, The WorkPlace  
Carbone Joseph, The WorkPlace  
Carroll Tim, The WorkPlace  
Chairaluce Danielle, Chapel Haven

Colon Jennifer, The WorkPlace  
Corey Adrene, The WorkPlace  
Crawford Diane, Career Resources, Inc.  
Cruz Michelle, The WorkPlace  
Daniels James, The WorkPlace  
Deamico Bernadette, The WorkPlace  
DeLeon Krystal, The WorkPlace  
DeMarco Tim, The WorkPlace  
DeMattia Donna, The WorkPlace  
DiLeo Carmen, Career Resources, Inc.  
Douglas Maurice, The WorkPlace  
Downes Vernon, The WorkPlace  
Edelstein Jane, The WorkPlace  
English Carol, The WorkPlace  
Falkowski Gloria, The WorkPlace  
Fernandez Barbara  
Foster Ruby, The WorkPlace  
Franqui Marie, The WorkPlace  
Frost Robert, The WorkPlace  
Furey Angie, The WorkPlace  
Furness Dean, The WorkPlace  
Galletti Jennifer, TheWorkPlace  
Garcia Yvette, The WorkPlace  
Gerena Hailey, The WorkPlace  
Ginsberg Will, CFGNH  
Green Aikayla, The WorkPlace  
Gibbons Michelle, The WorkPlace  
Giegengack Theresa  
Glazier Cal, The WorkPlace

Gopian AI, The WorkPlace  
Grota Justin, The WorkPlace  
Hailey Gloria, The WorkPlace  
Harris Elra, The WorkPlace  
Harris Gwen, Career Resources, Inc.  
Harris Michelle, The WorkPlace  
Harris Ken  
Hodge Ray, The WorkPlace  
Hopkins Karen, The WorkPlace  
Jackson Angela, The WorkPlace  
James Juanita, FCCF  
Johnson Arnold, The WorkPlace  
Johnson Ebony, The WorkPlace  
Joyce Kara, The WorkPlace  
Kearse Carrie, The WorkPlace  
Keel Deb, The WorkPlace  
Kelman Lauren, The WorkPlace  
King Corey, The WorkPlace  
Kleiner Thom  
Lathem-Magee Stephanie, The WorkPlace  
Lawrence Lyn, CT DOL  
Lazaro Karen  
LeDuc Kimberly, The WorkPlace  
Lee Sean, The WorkPlace  
Leon Nestor, The WorkPlace  
Leone Carlo, The WorkPlace  
LeBron Amanda, The WorkPlace  
Lewis Sarah, The WorkPlace  
Lignore Maria, Career Resources, Inc.  
Lisher Jim, Career Resources, Inc.  
Llanos Angie, The WorkPlace  
Long Tom, The WorkPlace  
Madden Shelly  
Makela-Johnson, Libby, The WorkPlace  
Malony Lisa, The WorkPlace  
Martorelli Christina, The WorkPlace  
McCarthy Mike, The WorkPlace  
McCrae Pam, Life Bridge  
McGinnis Monica, The WorkPlace  
McNeil Desiree, The WorkPlace  
Mendez Tykeisha, The WorkPlace  
Miniman Jennifer, The WorkPlace  
Montes. Grixaliz, The WorkPlace  
Morgan Mike, The WorkPlace  
Mountain John, The WorkPlace  
Mucherino Elaine, 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  
James Page, UB  
Paleologos Celeste, The WorkPlace  
Parkmond Adrienne, The WorkPlace  
Patton Cathy, The WorkPlace  
Patton Rory, The WorkPlace  
Payton Charmaine, The WorkPlace  
Peeler Donna, Career Resources, Inc.  
Pelletier Gayle, The WorkPlace  
Perez Gloria, The WorkPlace  
Perez Jose  
Perry Megan, The WorkPlace  
Pham Mai, The WorkPlace  
Pizzaro Jose, The WorkPlace  
Porter Angela, The WorkPlace  
Proto Dennis, Ansonia Public School  
Robinson Don, The WorkPlace  
Rojas Alejandro, The WorkPlace  
Roman Tracey  
Romano Fran, The WorkPlace  
Rule Shannon, The WorkPlace  
Russell Andrew, The WorkPlace  
Russo Nicole, Microboard Processing  
Sampson Tracy, The WorkPlace  
San Roman Teresa, The WorkPlace  
Santiago Priscilla, The WorkPlace  
Sarro Mario, The WorkPlace  
Savage Nordia, The WorkPlace  
Sementilli Lisa, CT DOL  
Shepard Sylvia  
Shuster Ben, The WorkPlace  
Smith Honda  
Stokes Mike, The WorkPlace  
Sutton Matt  
Taylor Therman, The WorkPlace  
Thornberg Dan, Aced My Interview  
Tiller Anna, The WorkPlace  
Toti Cynthia, The WorkPlace  
Tripodi Bill  
Troutman R.  
Turner-Young, Diane, Comm. Healing  
Vandiver Ashley, The WorkPlace  
Venditti Debbie, The WorkPlace  
Venditti Gino, The WorkPlace  
Vermont Carolyn  
Vitale Angelo, The WorkPlace  
Watson Shirl, The WorkPlace  
White Maurice, The WorkPlace  
Williams Janet, The WorkPlace

Williams Pandora, The WorkPlace  
Williams Terri, The WorkPlace  
Wright Bethany, The WorkPlace  
Wynter Nigel, The WorkPlace

The quarterly meeting of The WorkPlace Board of Directors was held via a Zoom Meeting. Leon Bailey called the meeting to order at 8:15 a.m. then he turns the meeting over to Joe Carbone for the President's report.

### **PRESIDENT'S REPORT:**

Mr. Carbone welcomes everyone to the board meeting and opens with the discussion of Juneteenth. It is a time for reflection and rejoicing. It is a time for assessment, self-improvement, and for planning the future. At the WorkPlace this is a day to look at the values to truly make a difference.

Mr. Carbone gives a tribute to Kris Hasting Lorch who passed away in April 2022. She was the President of Ally Engineering, in Bridgeport and an advocate for hiring women in manufacturing. Kris gave back to the community by serving on the boards of the Bridgeport Chamber of Commerce, The Metal Manufactures Education and Training Alliance, Manufacture CT, and the Connecticut Manufacturers Collaborative. She was instrumental in getting the Advanced Manufacturing Center at HCC established. In 2015 Kris won the American Manufacturing Hall of Fame Leadership Award.

### **THE GREAT RESHUFFLE:**

The new trend according to Gartner research, voluntary turn-over is set to remain 20% higher than pre-pandemic days. The flexibility of remote work makes it easier for professionals to leave their jobs. More opportunities to work elsewhere without having to move is becoming a big motivator. In remote workplaces, employees tend to form fewer deep relationships that prevented them from leaving in the past. One in seven jobs are remote currently.

### **NATIONAL, STATE & REGIONAL UNEMPLOYMENT:**

Job openings remain near record levels. 4.4 million Americans quit or change jobs, in April compared with 3.4 million in February 2022. Job openings still outnumber job seekers by close to two to one. Layoffs fell to an all-time low of 1.2 million, as businesses sought to keep the workers they have. Overall, the unemployment is down 37% from pre-pandemic norms.

### **Finding Talent:**

Companies are having a hard time hiring and keeping employees. The tight labor market has forced employers to sweeten their offerings in terms of benefits, pay, and flexibility.

- Shortening to work week.
- Hybrid work schedules.
- Offering retention bonuses for staying on.
- Paid time off before starting work.
- "Fast Offers" hiring on the day of the initial interview,
- Sign-on bonuses.
- Offering diverse benefit packages.
- Paying for workers to go back to school.

Our state and region labor force has been stagnant for nearly two decades. We are unable to retain local talent. Connecticut has more jobs posted than we have folks unemployed. The technological evolution is exceeding the ability of government entities to remain relevant. The CT population is one of the oldest workforces in the nation. We are uncompetitive with respect to wages, taxes, property, and the cost of living.

The skill levels are not sufficient to address employment needs which creates a classic skill gap. We are within a sight of crisis. We could face a wave of employer exits or other deciding not to come to the state or expand operations. CT problems are unique they are not the common trend we are seeing in the nation. Technology advancement is moving to fast where the government cannot keep up. The labor force in Connecticut is starting to diminish.

### **RESPONSE TO DYNAMIC CHANGE:**

- **Apprenticeship**- A pipeline of skilled, credentials workers
- **Remote Works**- Flexible, dynamic workforce without boundaries
- **Emerging Cannabis Industry**- Forecast to become one of the largest industries in the state by employment and revenue.
- **Sector Partnership**- Bringing together diverse stakeholders for common cause.

### **Apprenticeships:**

Mr. Carbone stated the WorkPlace Apprenticeship program is a clear message to the employer that our participants are people they can be invested in. We have a federal and state grant for apprenticeship, and we are in the best position to lead the program in our state. Apprenticeship will support the Teamsters/Sikorsky Summer Career Pathways Union Mentoring Program. An MOU was entered between Stamford Public School (SPS) and the North Atlantic Carpenters Training Fund to create a pathway to an apprenticeship. The partnership will provide students who enroll in SPS's "Pre-Apprenticeship and Career Pathways Program" with construction pre-apprenticeship training. Most importantly, we have \$5 million in bond funding from the state and our task is to determine the best use for these funds.

### **REMOTE WORKS:**

Mr. Carbone noted RemoteWorks is going to have a huge impact for people with disabilities along with working moms. Remote work is moving fast and is not going away any time soon. 41 % of workers would prefer to be working remotely full-time. The typical worker equates the value of working from home to a pay raise of about 8%. We submitted applications for \$1,000,000 for a telework training program, named ProjectRISE. It will create a new remote work credential and a wellness/ resiliency model currently unexplored in the workforce development services. ProjectRISE includes rigorous outcome/ process evaluations, and the training will take place virtually. The CareerConnect telework training proposal for \$1,334,000 is pending with the state.

### **CANNABIS INDUSTRY:**

Mr. Carbone stated 17 states have now made the use of recreational marijuana legal but is still not legal federally. The Social Equity Council issued an RFP for setting up and operating a cannabis accelerator program. This will provide a cannabis industry that will focus on business development and training. We submitted a proposal for \$898,721 built on expertise through our Alliance for

Cannabis Equity (ACE). The tools, technology, events, seminars (in-person and digitally), workshops, community forums, networking events with experts, and resource-based web applications will be utilized to educate and inform participants at all levels. The WorkPlace partnered with its Workforce Development Board(WDB) colleagues across the state, in this application. In addition, we partnered with the University of Bridgeport’s Bauer Innovation Center and The Ernest C. Trefz School of Business. The proposed cost of this programming is \$898,721.

**SECTOR PARTNERSHIPS:**

**Healthcare:** TWP will manage a state-wide Healthcare initiative. It will be a significant program as healthcare has been a reliable growth engine and the worker shortage is so apparent.

**Manufacturing:** The Eastern CT Workforce Board will manage the statewide Manufacturing initiatives. Over 30 employers are currently engaged in the Southwest CT Manufacturing Partnership. The WorkPlace is currently working with employers on comprehensive skills standards manual for the top 10 shared critical occupations in the region.

**State Funding:**

- **Platform to Employment-** \$750,000 budget increase from \$3,856,334 to support state-wide programming.
- **Platform to Employment Returning Citizens-** \$750,000 in ARPA funds to serve more people through P2E Re-Entry.
- **Building Better Futures (a statewide YouthBuild like program)-** \$750,000 to support out-of-school young adults.
- **Bridgeport WorkPlace-** \$750,000 in ARPA funds to The WorkPlace.

**DRIVEN TO SERVE:**

The WorkPlace has raised \$304,051,381 since 1996 from competitive grants, corporate partnerships, and individual philanthropy. Funding fills gaps in the workforce system enabling us to serve more people, develop innovative programming and elevate the national stature of The WorkPlace. We are doing the things to fill the gaps to allow everyone a chance at the American dream.

<b>Driven to Serve 1996-2022</b>		
<b>Cumulative as of:</b>	<b>March 22'</b>	<b>June 22'</b>
Public Funding	\$266,643,000	\$274,196,027
Partner With Business and Foundations	\$12,953,000	\$13,030,788
Fee-For-Service	\$16,060,000	\$16,824,566
Total	\$295,656,000	<b>\$304,051,381</b>
Growth Since June 2021 +\$30,010,381 10.9% Growth		

Mr. Carbone would like to thank the Board Members, Community Partners, Funders, Staff and Elected Officials. This is going to be out year!

**BOARD BUSINESS:**

**Minutes:** On a motion made and seconded the Board of Directors accepted the minutes of the March 18, 2021, Board of Directors meeting.

**Board Appointments:** On a motion made and seconded the Board of Directors accepted the appointment and re-appointments to the Board.

**PARTICIPANT VOCIES:**

The WorkPlace had participants on the call to share their story. Each one is a testament to the importance of our programming and how a little help can make a difference in ones life.

Mary Ann is with the SECEP program that helps people over the age of 55 get back into the workforce. The goal and objective are to increase skill levels to get participants back to work.

Doreen Brown is a mom of 5, 3 children and 2 dogs. She is doing quality inspections. Doreen was working part time in retail and now that her children are off to school, she wanted to go back to work full time. The staff and teacher helped her tremendously. She has made her 90-day mark at her new job.

**AJOURNMENT:** There being no further discussion, the meeting was adjourned at 9:30 a.m. The next Board of Directors meeting will be held on September 16, 2022.

Respectfully submitted,  
Michelle Artis, Operations Coordinator