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.

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
Breeden 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
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

Colon Jennifer, The WorkPlace
Corey Adrene, The WorkPlace
Crawford Adrene, 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
Diléo 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 Al, The WorkPlace
Grotta 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, Grihalal, 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
Payton Charmaine, The WorkPlace
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
Sampson Tracy, The WorkPlace
San Roman Teresa, The WorkPlace
Santiago Priscilla, The WorkPlace
Sarro Mario, The WorkPlace
Savage Nordia, The WorkPlace
Sementielli 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
Toth 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
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 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.

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<tr>
<th>Driven to Serve 1996-2022</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Cumulative as of:</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>Public Funding</td>
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<tr>
<td>Partner With Business and Foundations</td>
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<tr>
<td>Fee-For-Service</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>Growth Since June 2021</td>
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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 VOTES:**
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.

**ADJOURNMENT:** 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