**YONKERS WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT BOARD**

**MINUTES OF THE QUARTERLY MEETING**

**Held on January 18, 2024**

**Board Members Present: Excused Board Members: WDB Staff Present:**

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| William Mascetta  Stainer Akahoho  Sara Brody  Don Brown  Nicholas D’Angelo  Gina Gaines  Reginald Joseph Jr.  Juanquin Rogers on behalf of Charlie Knight  Melvina Lathan  Atul Sheffey  Masha Turchinsky  Camille Valentin | Anthony Ascencao  Laurel Birkett  Mark Corpas  Taryn Duffy  Churchill Egone  Ramona Fuentes  Charlie Knight  Kris Komorowski  Susan Naber  Donald Quadrino  Dr. Amir Rabadi  Felderi Santiago | Sean McGrail, Executive Director  Chanele Harris, Executive Assistant  George Varkey, Fiscal Office  **Career Center Staff:**  Barbara Saunders, Business Liaison  **Guest:**  Joe Cotter |

1. **Welcome – Introductions/Roll Call**

Mr. Mascetta called meeting to order at 10:00a.m. Mr. Mascetta opened the floor for introductions. Mr. Stainer and Ms. Lathan introduced themselves to the Board.

1. **Voting Items**

Acceptance of September 21, 2023 Meeting Minutes. The September 21, 2023 Board meeting minutes were emailed in advance to Board members.

Mr. Mascetta made a motion to accept the. Ms. Brody made a motion to accept the September 21, 2023 meeting minutes. The motion seconded by Mr. Brown and unanimously approved as submitted.

**Revised Fiscal Policy**

Mr. Varkey explained the revision to the policy which will permit administrative revenue to be used interchangeably on programs provided that it meets the program requirements.

Mr. Mascetta made a motion to accept the Revised Fiscal Policy. Ms. Brody made a motion to accept the Revised Fiscal Policy. The motion seconded by Mr. Joseph Jr. and unanimously approved as submitted.

**Revised On-the-Job Training (OJT) Policy**

Mr. McGrail informed the Board of two changes. The minimum wage change from $12.00 per to the current minimum change to $16.00 per hour. The other change was reimbursement rate from 50% to 75% of total wages earned and upon approval of the Yonkers Workforce Development Board and Executive Director a percentage of the OJT may increase in the event of a national disaster such as a pandemic. During the pandemic we didn’t have this update and DOL is us for not having this 50% of the 75%.

Mr. Mascetta made a motion to accept the Revised On-the-Job Training (OJT) Policy. Mr. Joseph Jr. made a motion to accept the Revised On-the-Job Training (OJT) Policy. The motion seconded by Ms. Brody and unanimously approved as submitted.

**Revised Individual Training Account (ITA) Policy**

Mr. McGrail informed the Board of two ITA changes. We want to change the poverty income guideline from 200% to 400% to meet the needs of the economically challenged or middle class poor. When we created the ITA policy 10 years ago, the maximum funding was $7,000.00 per person. Due to inflation and cost rising we want to change the maximum funding to $15,000.00 for example to accommodate increase in health field training.

**Ms. Gaines:** How did you make the determination as to what level you would move it to?

**Mr. McGrail:** Looking at our previous years funding, especially during the pandemic. We trained the people from the ambulance core costing around $15,000.00 – $16.000.00 per person to help the business because at the time of the pandemic the business couldn’t hire new staff. This helped the business stay afloat and give an opportunity sustain their current and give them a better opportunity to a career path. At the time the cost was $7,000.00 for 26 people which is why we are revising our policy to better serve the community. Anything above $15,000.00 would require Board approval.

**Mr. Brown:** Is it $15,000.00 per training or person? If the youth want to take two trainings $7,000.00 per training can they? If they want to take security guard training and phlebotomy training in the same year and they didn’t spend the maximum amount can they take another training?

**Mr. McGrail:** One training per person a year. If someone wants to change their career and take another training then we can look at that.

**Ms. Harris:** The Youth contract is different from the OJT contract. The $15,000.00 is a maximum amount in the revised OJT contract per person. If the youth want to take phlebotomy training they can, but they cannot take two trainings totaling $15,000.00. The work experience funds are used for youth training and can pay the expense of the training the youth desire.

**Ms. Brody:** Can you give an example of the 200% verse 400% poverty level?

**Ms. Harris:** For example, under the 200% poverty guidelines for a family of four the income cannot exceed $48,000.00. Under the 400% poverty guidelines for a family of four the total family income cannot exceed $58,000.00. The total family members and income within the household determines eligibility. The 400% will allow more income than the 200% which can likely make the individual eligible for training. I will email the poverty guidelines to the Board.

**Mr. Mascetta:** Let me restate the Fiscal Policy vote to the Board members just joining the meeting to clarify for the record between the Fiscal Policy and Yonkers Workforce Development Area Program Year 2023 –Budget –For Board Approval Fiscal Year 2024 07/01/2023 – 06/30/24 vote on the Fiscal Policy.

**Mr. McGrail:** Any funds we have that are administrative funds we want to use them for any programs. If there is an excess of administrative funds and there is someone that doesn’t fit under WIOA structure we can use those funds to put them through training.

**Mr. Mascetta:** The flexibility will allow to address the needs of the community.

Mr. Mascetta made a motion to accept the Revised Individual Training Account (ITA) Policy. Ms. Brody made a motion to accept the Revised Individual Training Account (ITA) Policy. The motion seconded by Mr. Sheffey and unanimously approved as submitted.

**Year Round Youth Program Stipend Policy**

**Mr. McGrail:** We did not have a Stipend Policy.The policy will allow a fixed small payment to the youth of the Year Round Program.

**Ms. Turchinsky:** My understanding of a stipend is a set amount. Are we saying the $16.00 is a set amount per hour?

**Ms. Harris:** Yes. Under the WIOA Brief it allows incentives for certain services/activities. The stipend gives the youth sub-recipient/subcontractors an opportunity to keep the youth engaged by providing other services/activities and spend their budget.

**Mr. Mascetta:** How have you identified this in their contracts?

**Ms. Harris:** The incentives are discussed in the WIOA Brief which is a guideline provided to both sub-recipient/subcontractors. The Stipend Policy is not a definition in the contract, but will be added as an addendum in next year’s contract. We will provide both sub-recipient/subcontractors with the policy with specific language “at the current minimum wage not to exceed $600 per month”.

**Ms. Gaines:** Can we make the change to say the current minimum wage?

**Mr. Mascetta:** Yes, it will be as an addendum and added to next year’s contract.

**Ms. Turchinsky:** This year’s workforce updates have been a big shift and change. I have personally called Chanele for clarification and so have my staff. I would like it on the minutes my appreciation for the extra effort it has taken Chanele to navigate this very complex and onerous challenge. This has not been a small change and it’s been a lot for our staff to understand. Thank you for being very patient and explaining everything to our team.

**Mr. Brown:** I want to second that. Chanele and I talk a lot and my staff calls her a lot as well. WIOA has been very tough to navigate this year. So I want to say thank you Chanele for that.

**Mr. Mascetta:** What’s encouraging about the two comments is that everyone is talking and not just texting.

**Mr. Rogers:** On behalf of Ms. Knight and the YWCA Chanele has been very helpful and I agree with both comments.

Mr. Mascetta made a motion to accept the Year Round Youth Program Stipend Policy. Ms. Brody made a motion to accept the Year Round

Youth Program Stipend Policy. The motion seconded by Ms. Turchinsky and unanimously approved as submitted.

**Year Round Youth Program 3 Goals**

**Ms. Harris:** Under the Year Youth Program YCAP and the YWCA have three goals to meet High School Diploma, Occupational Skills Training and Employment. In review of previous minutes, prior to my employment, there were always three goals. For the record, I want to make sure we are current with the program guideline goals which are High School Diploma, Occupational Skills Training and Employment. Working with YCAP and the YWCA, Linda Patterson made sure the program goals were being met. There are also 14 Elements that NYSDOL requires as a service to each participant of the program. The goals and the elements go hand in hand.

**Mr. Mascetta:** If we have it on record are we confirming what the goals are?

**Ms. Harris:** Correct, we are confirming the goals.

Mr. Mascetta made a motion to accept the Year Round Youth Program 3 Goals. Mr. Brown made a motion to accept the Year Round Youth Program 3 Goals. The motion seconded by Ms. Valentin and unanimously approved as submitted.

**Yonkers Workforce Development Area Program Year 2023 –Budget –For Board Approval Fiscal Year 2024 07/01/2023 – 06/30/24**

Mr. Mascetta made a motion to accept the Yonkers Workforce Development Area Program Year 2023 –Budget –For Board Approval Fiscal Year 2024 07/01/2023 – 06/30/24 with revisions. Ms. Brody made a motion to accept the Yonkers Workforce Development Area Program Year 2023 –Budget –For Board Approval Fiscal Year 2024 07/01/2023 – 06/30/24 with revisions. The motion seconded by Ms. Gaines and unanimously approved as submitted.

**Ms. Brody:** I have a question. I know Lillian isn’t here and we talk a lot regarding OJT’s and incumbent workers. The increase in the OJT’s, does that mean that we can use the OJT funding for people whose salaries are increasing who have been through the program or is it only referencing new employees/new hires?

**Mr. McGrail:** It’s new, but we can also incumbent but we have a restriction on incumbent workers.

**Ms. Brody:** Still. I am struggling because of it.

**Mr. McGrail:** I understand. We have the money available, but we can’t go beyond 20% for incumbent workers. The rules and regulations are so specific. When we get audited our audits are two years back so were trying to stay ahead of everything.

1. **Fiscal Report - George Varkey, Fiscal Officer**

Mr. Varkey discussed the revised Yonkers WDA PY 2023 Budget by Program Fiscal Year 2024 07/01/23 – 06/30/24 and Yonkers Workforce Development Area Program Year 2023 –Budget –For Board Approval Fiscal Year 2024 07/01/2023 – 06/30/24 which reflect the added Youth Employment Program funds, TANF funds and $13,000.00 rent increase from NYSDOL.

1. **Career Center Report - Executive Director, Sean McGrail**

Mr. McGrail discussed the changes to the policies to assure they are aligned with NYSDOL rules and regulations, updates to current minimum wages and dollar amounts for programs.

1. **Program Report, Chanele Harris**

Executive Assistant / YCC Manager / SYEP Coordinator / YEP Coordinator / GVP Coordinator / Interim Youth Services Coordinator

1. **New Business – Yonkers Workforce Trade School Presentation**

Guest Speaker Mr. Joe Cotter

**Ms. Harris:** I met Mr. Joe Cotter at the Social Impact Content Film School (S.I.C. Film School), the world’s first hologram studio. S.I.C. Film School was giving a holographic presentation to the Deputy Mayor of NYC and the NYC Department of Education. S.I.C. Film School is partnering with NYC to open mental health rooms in the public schools.

Mr. Cotter and I were standing on the holographic platform when one of the Youth Employment Program interns, who taught himself how to use the AI software and works with the founder of S.I.C. Films, Mr. Hezues R, hit a switch and created our hologram.

In that moment we realized the impact of creating a training school for the Yonkers community and how it would change their social and economic well-being of the community. Yonkers is the third largest city in NYS. With the help of philanthropist and corporate sponsors, the goal is to offer training classes at Rising Ground on Hawthorne and Valentine Avenue such as AI training through IBM, Microsoft or Google, Advanced Mechanical Engineering with Ford or Mercedes, HVAC, Digital Fiber training in partnership with Con Edison, Carpentry and a Culinary School. The training location would be easily accessible for Yonkers, Bronx and other lower Hudson Valley residents.

**Mr. Cotter:** I heard you all complementing Chanele. Chanele is a tiger and great ambassador for the Yonkers Workforce Development Board. She expressed the idea we

discussed was a discussion within YWDB. Although we met spontaneously, we met a few times and started sharing ideas of opening a Workforce Trade School in Yonkers.

I think communities and all areas are struggling with training the workforce. There is a big gap from high school workforce. Our company is doing a workforce center in Ulster County in the old IBM building in Kingston, a project with SUNY Ulster and SUNY New Paltz. NYC Mayor Adam is connecting with us to include the training in NYC. Sponsors and employers are building training centers in the schools guaranteeing a pathway to work.

Today’s presentation will show the Rising Ground location and what the training classes will look like. We’re building a Yonkers School for Film and Digital Media to encourage diversity in the film industry at Rising Ground in September 2024. The school is not a replacement of Saunders, but a film and Digital Media School leading to an increase in trade needs and post-secondary education is the youth decides. NYU and Syracuse will be managing the curriculum of the school. If you graduate from the high school you will be given a job or preference to NYU or film school. NYU will also have a satellite campus at the Rising Ground site.

**Mr. Mascetta:** Discussed the programs offered at Saunders High School, the drop in young adults enrolling in college, an increase in trade enrollments and the Valhalla BOCES location and the dialogue with the Department of Education.

**Ms. Harris:** Thank you for listening to our presentation! You can access the links to view the holographic experience and support of Mayor Spano.

<https://bronx.news12.com/sic-film-school-in-yonkers-opens-hologram-studio-to-serve-youth-and-education>

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4PlnFJ2PfPU>

**Mr. Mascetta:** I want to announce Mr. D’Angelo’s retirement and thank you for your service to the community and the Yonkers Workforce Development Board.

Thank you Chanele. She’s wearing six or maybe seven hats, so I want to say thank you for all you do.

Mr. Mascetta was excused prior to the meeting ending so Mr. McGrail made a motion to adjourn the meeting. Ms. Valentin made a motion to adjourn. Mr. Brown made second motion to adjourn. Meeting adjourned at 11:30 AM.