

**Oyster Bay-North Hempstead-Glen Cove Local Workforce Development Board
Meeting Minutes
(For Board Meeting on Tuesday, July 16, 2024)**

**Meeting Location: Town of Oyster Bay, Town Hall South,
977 Hicksville Road, Massapequa, NY 11758**

MEMBERS ATTENDED

Nicole Groder	Michael Todisco	Matthew Berger
Michael Spinelli	Douglas Kowalczyk	Jon Siskind
May-Whei Lin	Jay Fund	Phil DePaul
William Kurz	Nick Spinelli	Edward Eisenstein
Veronica Rose-Craig	Donald Kurz	
Sunita Manjrekar	Glen Wolther	

**NON-MEMBERS
ATTENDED**

Shital Patel	Linda Scalera	Kaylee Agostinello
Mariam Aragon	Dawn Nolan	Gail Paraninfo
Phil Fortuna	Sandra Bleckman	

ABSENT MEMBERS

Anthony Porcelli	Martin Murphy	Mario Martinez
Ryan Scholotter	Nicholas Appice	Barry Greenspan
Keith Sperling	Walter Markowitz	Parsa Karimi
Maria Themistocleous-Frey	Tom Bruno	Theresa Regnante
Jeffrey Johnson	Anthony Porcelli	Edmund Koepfel
Elvira Lovaglio-Duncan	Michael Fitzgerald	Gemma DeLeon-LoPresti

I. Welcome and Introduction

The meeting was called to order by the Oyster Bay-North Hempstead- Glen Cove Local Workforce Development Board (LWDB) Chairperson, William Kurz, on July 16th, at 9.M. Chairperson Kurz welcomed everyone in attendance.

II. Introduction & Announcement of New Board Members

Chairperson Kurz began the meeting by requesting that all present introduce themselves.

III. LWDB Director's Opening Remarks/WIOA Update

Ms. Oliva began by welcoming all present and began updating board members on the status of the Reauthorization of the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA).

She explained that the Senate released a draft WIOA bill on June 21, 2024, and that there were 4 Key points:

1. No Training Mandate: She explained that the draft does not impose specific spending requirements on training services, which is a major improvement over the previous House passed WIOA proposal which contained a 50% training mandate for all title 1 Adult and Dislocated Worker funds.

2. Re-designation of Local Workforce Areas: Ms. Oliva said that the draft increases the authority of State Governors to restructure local workforce development areas (LWDAs), which is of great concern. Chairperson Kurz asked if that meant that the current LWDA's would change the size of the Board, to which, Gail Paraninfo, One-Stop Operator, replied that local workforce development areas could potentially be consolidated into one for each region.

3. Statewide Funding Allocations: The draft permits states to reserve an extra 10% of Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) funding for statewide initiatives. However, this allocation could potentially reduce funds available for local needs.

4. Funding Approach: The draft employs ambiguous language regarding funding levels, granting greater discretion to appropriations leaders. Additionally, it suggests utilizing H-1B visa fees to support individual training accounts. Ms. Oliva explained that there's a concern about whether enough resources will be allocated.

IV. Acceptance of the April 4, 2024 Meeting Minutes

Chairperson Kurz requested a motion to accept the minutes from the LWDB Meeting of April 4, 2024. The motion was made by Ed Eisenstein, Vice Chairman, and seconded by Jay Fund.

V. New York Power Authority, Workforce Development Initiatives Presentation

Mr. Kurz invited Sandra Bleckman, NYPA, Workforce Development Project Director, to speak about NYPA initiatives. Ms. Bleckman explained that clean energy has become a priority due to the shift toward renewables, and the New York Power Authority recognized the skills gap as an opportunity to invest in workforce development. She indicated that the New York State budget identified up to 25 million dollars to invest in workforce opportunities. \$9M has been allocated to NYSDOL (Office of Just Energy Transition) and 5 million to NYDOL to create Clean energy and pre-apprenticeship trainings, which also includes wraparound (supportive) services. Ms. Bleckman highlighted that wraparound services are crucial because many students are motivated but unable to complete programs due to significant barriers. Ms. Bleckman continued that \$4M will be provided through NOAs to local workforce development boards to fund some of this training with the goal of transitioning workers into clean energy. Ms. Bleckman has also advocated for a “build a Bridge” program to equip students with the necessary skills for academic success. Funding is available for English language learners, presenting a significant opportunity because these funds are not highly specified, unlike typical federal and DOL funds.

Ms. Bleckman highlighted the anticipated skills gap faced by students from disadvantaged communities who pursue clean energy jobs, noting students will require proficiency in advanced math, chemistry, and related subjects. She further emphasized the importance of mentorship and raising awareness about clean energy careers, and that many students remain unfamiliar with the diverse career paths available, and it can be challenging for a single career counselor to possess comprehensive knowledge across all fields.

Ms. Bleckman encouraged everyone to consider the transition to clean energy. She emphasized the goal of impacting students by exploring careers in HVAC, solar panel installation, and transitioning traditional skills like carpentry to green construction through appropriate credentials.

Jon Siskind asked about the source of the \$25 million in funding. Ms. Bleckman clarified that NYPA is obtaining it from the state budget, with \$9 million going to NYSDOL. The funds may also support additional programs and focus on aiding disadvantaged communities and reskilling workers transitioning from fossil fuels.

Chairman Kurz inquired about the board’s specific involvement in accessing the funding. Ms. Bleckman explained that NYSDOL would likely issue funding directly to workforce development boards. Alternatively, interested parties can apply through the RFP or grant program, depending on the nature of their program. Additionally, guidance is being prepared to help determine eligibility and the application processes. The pre-bid session is scheduled for Thursday.

Jay Fund asked about the types of jobs NYPA is targeting and raised concerns about funding long apprenticeships for low-income individuals. Ms. Bleckman responded by highlighting shorter, 15-week micro-credential programs that prepare individuals for various credentials and bridge the gap to college readiness. The focus is on building advanced skills for workforce entry, such as clean energy credentials and fundamentals classes.

Jay Fund asked if there was a relationship between PSE&G and NYPA. Ms. Bleckman responded yes, and that the clean energy training program participants would not be limited to working solely at PSE&G. The program aims to equip them for various roles, whether in HVAC or Cybersecurity, as long as it relates to the energy field, is also relevant. Clean energy encompasses a wide range of opportunities beyond specific jobs like solar panel installation. For instance, IT professionals can gain credentials related to clean energy, while HVAC experts can learn about working in LEED-certified green buildings.

VI. Update on the Youth Program

Youth coordinator, Phil Fortuna, explained that both Career and Employment Options and the North Hempstead, Yes We Can Center have both begun contracts to provide youth services. Career and Employment Options have already started onboarding kids, and a comprehensive meeting with Yes We Can is scheduled to discuss policies and paperwork. Additionally, the Summer Youth Employment Program (YEP) through the Office of Temporary and Disability Assistance (OTDA) recently launched. Phil mentioned he is working on payroll for 60 kids, facilitating work experiences between the YEP Program and Career and Employment Options. While five kids are already on payroll from Career and Employment Options, they aim to add ten more. Phil also shared success stories, including one where a student faced challenges due to car trouble but ultimately secured a job as an auto mechanic due to WIOA Supportive Services. Funding. WIOA Supportive Services, like assistance with transportation or childcare, allow youth to successfully participate in WIOA career and training activities that are vital to entering or re-entering the workforce.

Phil explained the success of the Youth Program is attributed to the hard work of partnered providers, including Nassau BOCES, Career and Employment Options, and United Way. United Way has recently onboarded a few out-of-school kids, and plans are underway to provide them with work experiences in the coming months. Additionally, there's an exciting idea related to under-enrollments that will be shared at the next meeting. Career Employment Options now has new ownership and a dedicated director of operations, Anthony Farrara. Their energy and experience aim to enhance the program's already positive reputation.

Additionally, Phil said recent outreach efforts through Career Center staff stationed at the Town of Oyster Bay's, Music Under the Stars, has aimed to promote Youth programs and other WIOA programs we provide, which we hope will lead to an increase of more out-of-school-youth participants.

Phil DePaul asked how a local employer can become involved to provide more support and engage with the Youth program. Phil Fortuna responded that they can either reach out to him or to one of the providers.

Chairman Kurz asked if the Music Under the Stars events are located solely in the Town of Oyster Bay to which Phil replied, yes. Mr. Kurz proposed broadening our outreach to include events within the Town of North Hempstead and the City of Glen Cove since the goal is to

enhance our impact and reach more people; the board agreed. Michael Spinelli suggested that we should also conduct our youth outreach at events like the car show, which is loaded with those in this demographic. Board members agreed.

Phil then directed the attention of members to the In-School Youth flyers created by United Way and Career and Employment Options, and encouraged attendees to pick up a flyer and share it within their networks.

VII. Program Year 2024 WIOA Funding Levels/Notice of Obligational Authority

Gail Paraninfo, One-Stop Operator, began with an update on WIOA funding, and explained that our two Career Centers offer occupational training, work-based training, workshops, job fairs, computer labs and career counseling, which are all available to aid in preparing job-seekers for employment.

Ms. Paraninfo further explained that these services are funded through annual Notices of Obligational Authority (NOA) from the New York State Department of Labor (NYSDOL) which serves as the pass-through agency for local federal WIOA funds. Ms. Paraninfo clarified that we have recently received an NOA for the “New York Systems Change and Inclusive Opportunities Network (SCION) Program,” as well as the Youth Program. The NOA’s for the Dislocated Worker and Adult Grants are expected soon. She also noted that for Program Year 2024 (July 1, 2024 to June 30, 2025), our Local Workforce Development Area (LWDA) saw a 14.82% reduction in funding across all funding streams, along with many other local areas throughout New York State that also saw similar reductions. It was also noted that the PY 2024 preliminary funding for SCION is \$130,000, which supports the employment of a Disability Resource Coordinator (DRC) to better serve the needs of customers with disabilities. Kaylee Agostinello is designated the DRC for this local area.

Ms. Paraninfo explained that the amount of funding awarded for the Adult, Dislocated Worker and Youth Grants is based on a formula. Therefore, the Adult and Youth allocations are contingent on such factors as the number of unemployed individuals in areas of substantial unemployment in each local area, compared to the total number of unemployed individuals in all areas of substantial unemployment in the State. Funding is also based on additional demographics such as the excess number of unemployed individuals and the relative number of disadvantaged Adults and Youth in the local area. Dislocated Worker allocations are based on insured unemployment data, unemployment concentrations, plant closings and mass layoff data, declining industries data, and long-term unemployment data.

Gail explained:

- There is a 16.65% decrease of funding for the Youth program, with funding of \$672,436 for program year 2024.
- There is a 16.38% reduction for the Adult program: resulting in \$654,363 in funding.
- There is a 12.85% reduction for the Dislocated worker program: with funding of \$1,192,436,000. and that the dislocated worker program considers different demographics.

Ms. Paraninfo assured members that services for job seekers will continue at a normal level despite the reduction in Program Year 2024 allocations, due to the local area carrying in a substantial amount of unobligated funding from Program Year 2023.

Gail also highlighted that once WIOA Reauthorization is finalized, this may have an impact on future funding allocations.

Ms. Paraninfo announced that approval of the annual budget for PY2024 will be an item on the agenda for the September board meeting, which will be emailed out prior to the meeting, in order for members to review and provide input.

Bill Kurz asked how much funding we are short of for this program year, to which Gail responded around \$500,000 (Gail updated the deficit of funding to be \$438,226 less in PY 2024 as compared to PY 2023). Board member, Glen Wolther asked if our local workforce area is permitted to accept private donations to cover the shortfall. Gail replied that we would need to contact NYSDOL for a final determination.

Gail also mentioned that as a result of funding cuts for Program Year 2024, NYSDOL has shared information with the local areas regarding various workforce grants that could be applied for in order to compensate for the funding reductions.

1. Jon Siskind inquired whether the funding shortfall occurred before or after the carryover money, and if the amount was \$500,000? Gail responded that in April/May of 2024, our office was alerted to the reduction in funding for Program Year 2024. At the same time, based on monthly reports prepared by the fiscal unit of this office, we were made aware that we would not reach the mandatory obligation percentage of 80% for Program Year 2023 funds. Many local areas in the State were also not expected to meet this 80% obligation rate.

On another topic, there was a discussion about better outreach and the challenges in finding interested customers.

- Difficulty in attracting customers due to inadequate advertising.
- Training providers facing similar recruitment issues.
- A shift to virtual interactions as a result of the pandemic has led to career center resources being accessed less.
- Previously offered networking, job hunter clubs, and information sharing.
- Importance of in-person interactions at the career center.

To close out the meeting, May-Whei Lin highlighted the effectiveness of the Teacher Ambassador Program, facilitated by NYSDOL, which involves a 4-week program in which educators learn about the many services offered at the Department of Labor Career Centers. Their role is to promote services with staff and students within their schools.

VIII. Old Business/New Business

Glen Wolther shared his plans to open a bakery. He sought workers who didn't require specialized skills. Despite approaching AHRC with an offer to employ 30 of their clients, the proposal was

declined. He felt the board's decision seemed shortsighted, focusing on a narrow view rather than prioritizing employment opportunities for their clients

IX. Adjournment

A motion to adjourn was offered by Donald Kurz, seconded by Veronica Rose-Craig and approved by the Board. The meeting was adjourned at 10:15 A.M.