

Town of Hempstead/City of Long Beach Workforce Development Board

Board Meeting Minutes

June 17, 2024

I. Welcome and Introductions

The meeting was called to order by the Town of Hempstead/City of Long Beach Workforce Development Board (LWDB) Chairperson Sara Griffith at 9:34 A.M. She asked each of the attendees to introduce themselves.

II. Review of Minutes

Ms. Griffith asked the members to review the minutes from the meeting of January 31, 2024. A motion to approve the minutes was moved by Ms. Deirdre Duke, seconded by Dr. Martin Murphy, and approved by the Board.

III. In-School Youth Program Presentation

Ms. Griffith explained that HempsteadWorks had published a Request for Proposals (RFP) for In-School Youth Program Services, and she invited Elizabeth Ajasin to discuss the procurement process. Ms. Ajasin explained that the RFP was issued in March 2024, aiming to engage organizations capable of recruiting 25 youth aged 16-21 from low-income backgrounds facing barriers to employment and/or education. The selected vendor would deliver the 14 elements outlined in the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA). The contract will span two years: the first year dedicated to recruiting and serving the youth, and the second to providing follow-up support ensuring their success in employment and/or postsecondary education and training.

Ms. Ajasin further stated that HempsteadWorks reviewed the received proposals, and internally, we invited selected organizations to present their programs. Following this process, Career and Employment Options, Inc. (CEO) was identified as best aligned with the program's objectives, and she invited CEO to present on their program.

Nicholas Villani, CEO's founder and current advisor, presented CEO's proposed program. He highlighted their use of the Vocational Engagement model, known for successfully placing youth in jobs, and their curriculum incorporating all 14 elements. Catherine DeGori added that CEO's recruitment strategy includes engaging school guidance counselors, families, community centers, utilizing in-person meetings, social media, and physical mailings. When asked by Ms. Duke about remote opportunities and language barriers, Mr. Villani assured that a virtual approach would be available, and noted CEO's practice of offering higher salaries to bilingual staff. Anthony Ferrera, CEO's new CEO, shared his personal engagement with non-English-speaking youths and families. Jeffrey Johnson asked which school districts CEO works with. Mr. Villani answered that they work with school districts from Montauk to Queens, but for the HempsteadWorks program, the focus will be on Town of Hempstead school districts.

Following CEO's presentation, they were asked to step out for the Board's deliberation. Veronica Rose-Craig asked which other proposals HempsteadWorks received. Ms. Ajasin responded that in addition to CEO, we received proposals from O-High Technologies and Apprenticeship Connections and Consulting, Corp. She noted their merits but emphasized the preference for organizations with stronger school district relationships and adeptness in addressing youth participants' barriers. She expressed openness to future collaborations with both entities. When asked about the RFP structure by May Whei-Lin, Ms. Ajasin clarified that it was designed to strongly incentivize achieving program goals, including bonuses for exceeding them.

A motion to approve CEO as the PY'24 In School Youth Program Services vendor was moved by Ms. Rose-Craig, seconded by Ms. Lin, and approved by the Board.

IV. Program Year 2024 Preliminary Budget Summary

Deputy Commissioner Kurt Rockensies explained that the Town of Hempstead Department of Occupational Resources (DOOR) drafted its budget for Program Year 2024. He presented the budget to the Board, noting an expected 12% decrease in funding. Ms. Duke asked how this decrease will impact services. Mr. Rockensies responded that services will not be affected due to a significant carryover of funds from PY'23 funds into the new year; however, there will be a reduction in spending for outreach efforts. He clarified that each local area has two years to spend 100% of their allocated funds, and assured the Board that we are on track to meet this requirement for the current year.

A motion to approve the PY'24 budget was moved by Veronica Rose-Craig, seconded by Ms. Duke, and approved by the Board.

V. NYSDOL Jobseeker and Business Survey Results

Commissioner Eric Mallette introduced Christopher White, Deputy Commissioner of the Office of Workforce Development at NYSDOL, who presented the results of jobseeker and business surveys aimed at aligning worker skills with business needs and meeting the demands of today's job market. The survey results can be accessed [here](#).

Martin Murphy noted that the survey identified teachers as the most in-demand occupation and inquired whether responses were representative of all school districts in New York State. Mr. White clarified that while not all districts participated, the need for teachers spans across educational levels and workplace training requirements. Mr. Johnson and Christina Massa added that the shortage of teachers can also be attributed to student discipline issues and declining interest in teaching careers. Ms. Duke asked whether the survey data was weighted by volume, to which Mr. White confirmed. Although not a statistical model, the data shows consistent trends statewide. Lorie Boyd queried whether the data reflected different age groups, to which Mr. White explained that jobseeker data skewed towards older workers. Ms. Duke then discussed the survey's finding that

networking and referrals are crucial for job acquisition, but highlighted the challenges posed by inadequate personal connections and declining communication skills as barriers to employment.

VI. Recruiter Scooter

Ms. Griffith welcomed Christian Massa, CEO and Founder of Recruiter Scooter, to discuss her application designed to streamline the job placement process for both jobseekers and employers. Ms. Massa explained that Recruiter Scooter (RS) facilitates "4-minute hires," allowing users to upload employment-related documents such as resumes, cover letters, licenses/certificates, and references. Jobseekers can also conduct a background check on themselves before applying to jobs directly through the platform. Ms. Griffith asked who owns the background check, and Alison Jean responded that the result of the background check is owned by the user and not the company. Myesha Arvon asked if the results of the background check is released to employers on the site. Ms. Massa responded that the results are shared only upon a conditional offer from the employer.

Ms. Rose-Craig asked if there is a database of jobs for viewers to see, and Ms. Massa answered that RS can pull job openings from other sources and databases. Ms. Duke questioned how RS saves employer time if candidates control their own background checks, and whether these checks comply with state regulations. Ms. Massa explained that RS prioritizes users by placing them on a "priority list," ensures compliance with state laws, and offers support to companies in case of errors. Ms. Griffin inquired about background checks for participants in programs offered by the Office for People with Developmental Disabilities (OPWDD). Ms. Massa mentioned that RS is developing policies to accommodate neurodiverse users. Ms. Rose-Craig asked what employers see when viewing applicants. Ms. Massa noted that jobseekers control what employers see on the employer screen of the app. Then, Ms. Duke asked if the app validates foreign diplomas and high school diplomas and their equivalences. Ms. Massa confirmed that RS plans to validate foreign diplomas and high school equivalences through open APIs, along with professional licenses, ensuring accurate information is available to employers.

VII. Youth Programs Update

Ms. Griffith invited Ms. Arvon, Youth Services Coordinator, to provide updates on HempsteadWorks' Out-of-School Youth (OSY) program, and the Youth Employment and Summer Youth Employment Programs (YEP and SYEP). Ms. Arvon explained that Out-of-School youth are aged 18-24 and face barriers. Currently, the Women's Opportunity Rehabilitation Center (WORC) serves as the OSY services provider, assisting 40 youth with personalized support. Some participants are engaged in employer presentations and training programs such as Medical Billing, CDL, CASAC, and Electrician training.

Afterwards, Ms. Ajasin updated the Board on MusicBreeds. She explained that at the last Board meeting, we expressed some of the challenges we were having with them, such as a low number of referrals, significant delays in communicating with youth referred by us, and

subpar monthly reports. The issues continued to persist despite extensive training and guidance from Ms. Arvon and her team and through quarterly monitoring. In response to these concerns, we sent MusicBreeds a detailed letter outlining our grievances with their performance and requested that they submit a comprehensive corrective action plan. Despite a 30-day period given for implementation, we observed little to no improvement, leading to the termination of their contract in April 2024. Ms. Duke asked if earlier detection of issues was possible. Mr. Rockensies explained that new vendors often face a learning curve in implementing WIOA programs but assured the Board that quarterly meetings and additional support were provided to them. Ms. Duke suggested requesting referrals from other organizations during future RFP evaluations to improve vendor selection accountability. Looking ahead to PY'24 and considering budget constraints, Ms. Ajasin added that we will deliberate on whether to seek a new vendor or to expand services with WORC, which has been demonstrating success with their program. Further discussions will ensure to determine the best course of action for ensuring continued success of the OSY program.

Afterwards, Ms. Arvon provided updates on YEP and SYEP. She reported that the YEP program will conclude on June 30, 2024, with participants moving on to SYEP, scheduled for July 8 to August 16, 2024. Mr. Rockensies thanked the entire youth team for their hard work with the youth program, and he commended Ms. Etta Banks for her dedication to facilitating youth orientation. Then, Commissioner Eric Mallette expressed gratitude to all Board members for their significant contributions to HempsteadWorks.

VIII. Old Business/New Business

No old or new business was discussed.

IX. Adjournment

A motion to adjourn was offered by Mr. Johnson, seconded by Mark Goldstein, and approved by the Board. The meeting was adjourned at 11:53 A.M.