

**Northwest Workforce Council Meeting Minutes
April 3, 2024**

Action Taken:

- Approval of the December 13, 2023 Full Council Meeting Minutes
- Approval of a regional minimum wage paid to WIOA participants enrolled in Work Experience activities, with the caveat the Executive Committee review and approve the new regional wage rate at the beginning of each calendar year
- Approval to continue to provide WIOA IB Youth, Adult, Dislocated Worker Services through the program year which the State Workforce Board finalizes guidance on Policy 1015-1; as well as retroactively authorize the Council to provide Youth services for PY 2023 (July 1, 2023 to June 30, 2024).
- Approval to recommend Consortium Committee action to move to a WIOA compliant, 19-member board.

Note: All approved Council and Committee minutes can be found on the Council's website: www.nwboard.org. Also, NWC's written outline that describes using a [Consent Agenda](#) for a Board can be found on the Council's [Meeting Minutes and Agendas](#) webpage for reference.

I. Call to Order

The meeting was brought to order at 1:34 p.m. by Chair, Mark Vorobik.

II. Welcome and Introductions

Mark asked everyone to introduce themselves and their workforce affiliation as there were new attendees and a guest speaker.

III. Guest Presentations

**A. Northwest Workforce Council's 2024-2028 Draft Strategic Plan – Update
Guest Speaker, Jennifer Noveck, Ph.D (via Zoom)**

Mark Vorobik welcomed Jennifer Noveck who shared a presentation on recent and ongoing activities regarding the Council's 2024-2028 draft Strategic Plan. Activities which sought stakeholder input included the Plan's virtual Community Forum event, Team Whatcom feedback session, and NWC's Strategic Planning sub-committee meetings. The workforce system stakeholder survey also remains live on the Council's website in both English and Spanish, and members were encouraged to continue to share widely. The draft Plan is on schedule to be submitted to the state workforce board on April 10.

B. WIOA IB Youth Successes

Catherine Kennedy, NWC Workforce Coordinator, Skagit County

Mark welcomed Catherine Kennedy, NWC Workforce Coordinator, and invited her to share a few program success stories with the board. Catherine presented two Youth Program participant journeys, and conveyed the appreciation of those enrolled in the Council's programs, and how the successful outcomes of program enrollment affects our communities both in the short and long

term. Members appreciated the insights and requested to continue to hear about program successes.

IV. Consent Agenda

A. Minutes of December 13, 2023 Full Council Meeting Minutes

Terry Corrigan moved approval of the December 13, 2023 Full Council Meeting Minutes. Alerd Johnson seconded and the motion passed unanimously. Approved meeting minutes are posted to the board website www.nwboard.org

B. Procedural Requirement: Annual receipt of [NWC Policy # 01-37](#) Code of Ethics, Conflict of Interest & Protected Disclosure Policies.

Mark referred members to their meeting packets which contained the conflict of interest and code of ethics policy and acknowledged the board's adherence to its contents. He also reminded the board that if anyone has any questions, they can reach out to him or Marissa.

V. System Oversight

A. Minimum Wage paid to WIOA Work Experience participants.

**NWC Executive Committee Approved during March 12, 2024 meeting, and recommend Full Council approval.*

Mark shared the City of Bellingham raised its minimum wage and intends to gradually do so over the next couple of years until they reach a static wage rate that is always \$2.00 above the state's minimum wage. He stated the Executive Committee recommended approval to set a regional minimum wage to the highest amount set by any regulatory body within NW's 4-county region. Increasing the minimum wage will not have any significant impact on the NWC youth budget and will aid the Council in meeting compliance with the work-based ratio rule. Members discussed that staff will need to have intentional conversations with participants regarding realistic wage expectations with future entry level jobs should that be the young person's career pathway.

Following discussion, Del McAlpine moved approval of a regional minimum wage paid to WIOA participants enrolled in Work Experience activities, with the caveat the Executive Committee review and approve the new regional wage rate at the beginning of each calendar year. Lori Province seconded, and the motion passed unanimously.

B. WorkSource Information Notice (WIN) 0139, Change 1: Required Local Workforce Development Board Policies; Two polices adopted:

- i. NWC Policy [WIOA 01-43, Rev 1](#): Personally Identifiable Information
- ii. NWC Policy [WIOA 01-44](#): Monitoring Policy

Mark referred members to both policies in their packet and explained that Local areas are required to have designated local policies in place to assure compliance with state and federal rules/guidance. Recently, WA state issued WIN 0139, Rev 1 which provides definitive instruction regarding the mandatory policies and required board involvement in the development or amendment of local policy. The WIN includes guidance on exactly how boards are to be involved in policy development and/or amendment. Given the available executable options listed within the policy, the Executive Committee decided the best course of action would be to approve/adopt any new or revised local policy during regularly scheduled Executive Committee meetings. For any newly developed policies and/or substantive changes made to local policy, these would be drafted by staff and brought before the executive

committee as a standing agenda item for review, where members could review and approve or request further action by staff in the draft policies prior to implementation.

As such, the Executive Committee reviewed and approved the implementation of two local policies (listed above).

C. PY24 WIOA Program Delivery – Update on State’s draft policy 1015-1

Marissa Cahill informed members the state’s draft policy 1015-1 remains in deliberations at the state workforce board, scheduled to be reviewed during their March 21, 2024 meeting. The policy has been in draft form since March 2023, with no further guidance provided to local areas. CEO Cahill shared several letters from the Washington Workforce Association, WDA Directors, Local Workforce Development Chairs (including NWC), and Local Elected Officials, were received by the state workforce board sharing concerns over the draft policy’s apparent disregard for the provisions afforded local boards by federal regs (WIOA) to provide Youth services directly, without the additional administrative burden and overhead that procurements would incur.

Members discussed the state’s continued delay in providing local area guidance on service provider procurements. Following broad discussion on the topic, **Peter Browning moved to approve retroactive authority of the Council to provide Youth services for PY 2023 (July 1, 2023 to June 30, 2024), as well as the Council’s ability to continue providing Youth, Adult, & Dislocated Worker services through the program year which the State Workforce Board finalizes guidance on Policy 1015-1.** Terri Corrigan seconded and the motion passed unanimously.

VI. Chief Executive Officer Report

CEO Cahill reported on the following items:

- A. 2024 National Association of Workforce Boards (NAWB) Annual Forum March.** Marissa Cahill, Mark Vorobik, Peter Browning, and Jane Fuller will be attending the NAWB forum this year. She shared their collective excitement to be re-engaging with the conference (NWC had not attended since 2019). They are hopeful to bring some fresh ideas back for the upcoming Full Council planning meeting on April 3rd.

- B. Exploring Careers & Healthcare Opportunities (ECHO) Tour March 18-20, 2024 @ Everett Community College.** Marissa shared she was pleased to learn that a Healthcare Tour – Mirroring our local WAVE Tour – is being organized in Snohomish by CCWA and ESD189 on March 18-20 at Everett Community College. Tonja Myers would be joining Marissa in attending the VIP Tour on the 18th. Please ask Marissa if any additional members are interested in attending. Marissa hopes to coordinate with CCWA, ESD189, and local healthcare providers to host similar events in the NW Region.

- C. The Workforce Board’s 2024 workforce system poster is now available.** A handy overview of Washington’s largest, publicly funded workforce development programs, including participant employment rates and earnings, federal and state funding totals, and a list of administering agencies and providers is included; Link: [Matrix 2024 Final.pdf \(wa.gov\)](#)

- D. WIOA Re-Authorization “A Stronger Workforce for America” (ASWA).** Marissa shared two enclosures with members pertaining to the proposed re-authorization of WIOA, called, A Stronger

Workforce for America (ASWA). The first, a quick one-page pros/cons on the draft legislation as it pertains to local service delivery, and the second a more detailed look at the proposed regs section by section. WIOA was last up for re-authorization in 2022 and did not pass congress. She will keep members informed as legislation moves forward and what implications (if any) they will have on the NW area.

VII. Board Business

A. Federal and State Economic Security for All (EcSA) Program – Update

Malinda shared three of the five tribes are participating in the Community Reinvestment Funds summer projects. Upper Skagit, and Samish declined participation. Lummi, Nooksack, and Sammamish all have intensive projects that increase skill, career awareness and aim to develop their youth for entrance into the workforce. Malinda is meeting this week with the Mount Vernon Chamber to develop plans to serve Latino Businesses and Latino Youth.

B. NWC Board Designation under WIOA

Marissa referred members to their meeting materials where several items had been generated for their review and discussion. Items included a briefing note, detailing the potential benefits and process of updating NWC’s board designation from its current “alternative entity” status to that of a WIOA compliant board; a WIOA board template, illustrating the number and designation of required membership; NWC’s current seated board and vacancies under its grandfathered status; and lastly a draft mock-up of current seated members reflected in the WIOA board template.

Members discussed the difficulties in operating under alternative entity status, including how difficult it has proven to be to fill seats, as well as the difficulty in maintaining a strategic focus with such a large board. Understanding that WIOA also requires community subject matter experts be invited to engage with the board during meetings and strategic sessions, members favored the decision to move to a WIOA compliant board.

John Sternlicht motions to Recommend the Consortium Committee move to a WIOA 19-member seated board, Tonja Meyers seconds. Motion passes unanimously.

VIII. System Oversight (Informational Materials provided)

Mark referred members to additional materials included in their meeting packets that have been included for transparency, previously reviewed by both the Quality Assurance and Executive Committees. Additional information could be found in the Executive Committee meeting minutes.

A. WIOA Northwest Workforce Performance Reports / Quality Assurance Committee Reports

As the operator for WIOA IB Programs: Youth, Adult, Dislocated Worker, the NWC provides quarterly data on performance as part of system oversight.

1. WIOA IB Programs (Operated by NWC)
 - Supplemental Program Performance Report: PY 23 Program Year: Qtr. 2 – July 1, 2023 – December 31, 2023
 - New: WIOA Grant Summary YTD
 - New: Non-WIOA Grant Summary YTD

B. Employment Security Department’s *Recognizing Your Teams Successes* Letter

C. Monitoring Activities underway

1. Annual WorkSource Equal Opportunity Monitoring by the State October 17-19, 2023
2. WIOA IB Internal PY23 Q1 & Q2 Program monitoring conducted February 9–21, 2024
3. Annual WIOA IB PY23 Monitoring April 8-12, 2024

D. One-Stop System Operator PY23 Q1 & Q2 Reports

Old Business – None

New Business – None

Public Comment – None

The meeting was adjourned by Chair, Mark Vorobik at 4:26 PM.

Attendance

Board Members:

Mark Vorobik, Board Chair, *Business Sector, Skagit County*

Alerd Johnson, *K12, Island County*

Dave Paul, *Higher Education, Skagit County*

Del McAlpine, *Business Sector, Whatcom County*

Adele Skinner (alternate to Brian Ivie), *Business Sector, Skagit County*

Kevin Corrigan, *Business Sector, Island County*

Lori Province, *Labor, Whatcom County*

Megan Grundbrecher, *Vocational Rehabilitation, Regional*

Robin Plume, *Business Sector, Whatcom County*

Tammie O’Dell, *Labor, Skagit County*

Tonja Myers, *Business Sector, Whatcom County*

John Sternlicht, *Business Sector, Skagit County*

Kathi Hiyane-Brown, *Higher Education, Whatcom County*

Elected Officials:

Peter Browning, *Skagit County Commissioner*

Jane Fuller, *San Juan County Councilwoman*

Satpal Sidhu, *Whatcom County Executive*

NWC Staff:

Marissa Cahill, *Executive Director*

Malinda Bjaaland, *Director of Programming & Workforce Initiatives*

Liz Vaughn, *Executive Administrative Manager*

Guests:

Jennifer Noveck, PH.D

Toni Melilo, *Washington State Central Labor Council*