

Northwest Workforce Council Meeting Minutes
September 24, 2025

Action Taken:

- **Approval of the Consent Agenda:**
 - **Approval of the June 25, 2025 Full Council Meeting Minutes**
 - **Approval to Update NWC's Bank of America Check Signers, removing Malinda Bjaaland, former NWC Director of Workforce Programming; adding Liz Vaughn, NWC Executive Administrator, and Scott Iddings, NWC Director of Program Strategy and Business Development**
 - **Approval to Update NWC's Columbia Bank Authorized Signatories, removing Malinda Bjaaland, former NWC Director of Workforce Programming; adding Cindy Silva, NWC Workforce Programs Manager**

Note: All approved Council and Committee minutes can be found on the Council's website: www.nwboard.org.

I. Call to Order

Chair Mark Vorobik called the meeting to order at 1:35 p.m.

II. Consent Agenda

A. Minutes of June 25, 2025, Full Council Meeting

B. Executive Committee Action on behalf of the Full Council

● **NWC Authorized Check Signers – Bank of America**

Board Chair Mark Vorobik noted that Malinda Bjaaland is no longer with the organization, leaving one authorized check signer in place. To strengthen internal processes and controls, a requirement was established for two signatures on payments over \$5,000 to safeguard against fraud and ensure detailed payment reviews.

To comply with internal controls and support cash flow management, the Executive Committee approved the removal of Malinda as an authorized signer on the agency's Bank of America account and recommended adding Scott Iddings, Director of Program Strategy and Business Development, and Liz Vaughn, Executive Administrator, as agency signers.

● **NWC Authorized Check Signers – Columbia Bank**

Mark stated that as part of the Community Reinvestment Program, NWC established Matched Investment Savings Accounts to help participants build financial assets while meeting program milestones. It was considered sound practice to have a programs manager on the account to monitor activity and provide coverage if fiscal staff are unavailable.

Due to staffing transitions, the Executive Committee approved the removal of Malinda Bjaaland from the account and recommended adding Cynthia Silva, Workforce Programs Manager overseeing the CRP program, to assume these responsibilities.

Peter Browning motioned ratify the June 25, 2025, Full Council Meeting Minutes, the updating of NWC's Bank of America Check Signers, and the updating of NWC's Columbia Bank Authorized Signatories. Lynette Brower seconded, and the motion passed unanimously.

III. NWC Committee Reports

Quality Assurance Committee Meeting Report (08/27)

Ensures quality program operations and the Continuous Quality Improvement (CQI) system of the WDC. The committee evaluates program goals, performance measures, the extent to which the Centers and programs meet quality standards, and the implementation of new program components.

- **Renewal of Lease Agreements for Center Locations**

Mark explained that leases for the Island, Whatcom, and Skagit offices will expire in 2026, with negotiations scheduled to begin in the fall. He emphasized that the Whatcom and Skagit Centers represent significant expense, and with flat funding for both ESD and NWC, alternative options may need to be considered in future years.

- **MOU/IFA due for renewal July 1, 2026**

Mark noted that the MOU/IFA is due for renewal next year. Patrick, the One-Stop Operator (OSSO), has informed partners and will facilitate discussions regarding the IFA. Partners such as NWIC, which no longer receives workforce funding, may no longer participate.

Workforce Solutions Committee Meeting Report (08/27)

Mark explained that although the Workforce Solutions Committee was unable to meet, that Scott Iddings had information to share from the most recent Business Engagement Strategies Taskforce (BEST) meeting. Mark invited Scott to speak to the most recent meeting.

- **Business Engagement Strategies Taskforce**

Scott reported that the Business Engagement Strategies Taskforce met on August 5th to discuss two primary topics. First, an overview of Rapid Response activities was presented, highlighting the Council's role in assisting workers and employers during layoffs, closures, or other job dislocations. The taskforce emphasized the importance of engaging employers in layoff aversion strategies, including Incumbent Worker Training and Shared Work Programs. Stepped-up outreach to businesses and the use of Virtual Rapid Response presentations via Zoom were recommended to support affected employees and provide hiring employers with a candidate pool. The Council's Business Services Team is planning a pilot for the virtual sessions.

Second, the task force discussed creating career pathways primarily targeted to young adults. Visual tools such as charts and brochures would provide information about key sector occupations. Partnerships with organizations like Northwest Career and Technical Academy and Associated General Contractors were suggested to integrate essential skills training,

mentoring, certifications or credentials, and employment opportunities into a cohesive strategy for participants of all ages.

- **Upcoming Business Focus Group Convening**

Scott reported that the Partner Management Team looked forward to hosting a Business Focus Group on October 15 at the Port of Bellingham. The panel will gather feedback from the region's employers and workforce organizations to assess the business community's knowledge, attitudes, and perceptions of WorkSource, identify service concerns (if any) and opportunities, and determine workforce and education needs and expectations.

IV. Board Business

A. PY 2024 Q4 Community Success Stories

- **Customer Success - Presentation by Jane Fox, NWC Coordinator**

Mark introduced Jane Fox, NWC Workforce Coordinator, and invited her to share a presentation on her recent success story from San Juan County. Jane Fox shared a participant success story highlighting the impact of the adult-funded On-the-Job Training (OJT) program. Alex Harper, who faced challenges completing formal education and navigating early career options, was referred to NWC through STAR Surveying. Participation in the OJT program allowed Alex to develop technical skills in surveying while easing pressure for immediate perfection, providing both the participant and employer with a supportive learning environment.

As a result, Alex secured stable full-time employment, gained independent housing, and is applying his skills effectively in the field. Jane emphasized that OJT not only supports participants in building confidence and long-term employment prospects but also eases employer stress in a competitive labor market, demonstrating the program's dual benefit to individuals and businesses.

B. One-Stop System Operator (OSSO) PY 2024 Annual Report

- **Presentation by NWC OSSO, Patrick Baldoz**

Patrick Baldoz provided an overview of the One-Stop Operator reporting expectations and the integrated service model at the WorkSource Centers. He emphasized that the One-Stop system is designed to bring workforce and education providers together to create customer-focused service rather than program-specific silos. Staff conduct preliminary assessments to identify participant needs and coordinate services across multiple partners, ensuring functional and programmatic integration. Patrick highlighted performance monitoring, customer satisfaction, and accessibility as key priorities, noting that quarterly reports guide service delivery adjustments and ensure compliance with state standards.

He also discussed partnership management and employer engagement activities, providing examples of collaborative problem-solving for community and participant needs. Patrick highlighted ongoing efforts to ensure fiscal and programmatic accessibility, including improvements to resource software for individuals with disabilities. Overall, he underscored the importance of system-wide coordination to serve both participants and employers effectively.

V. Chair's/Executive Committee Report

A. Updated local NWC Policies

**Policies required under [State WIN 0139, Change 1](#) in need of revision. Per the board's decision, the Executive Committee is responsible for executing this function of the board.*

B. One-Stop System Operator (OSSO)

- Upcoming OSSO Procurement 2026

Mark stated that the One-Stop System Operator contract is scheduled for re-procurement in 2026. He provided background on the current contract and shared that the initial cost has had a modest increase over the three years, reflecting the part-time scope of the work. He shared that the Executive Committee received the current OSSO Statement of Work, and discussion on continuity or changes to the contract will resume during the Quality Assurance Committee and Executive Committee meetings in November.

C. New Lightcast Opportunities

Mark asked Polly Carpenter, NWC Data and Accounting Specialist, to share a demonstration of Lightcast. Polly provided an overview of the newly acquired Lightcast subscription, which will be used in cooperation with other workforce development boards across the state. The platform allows rapid access to regional labor market data, including labor force demographics, migration trends, industry and business characteristics, in-demand skills, and occupational reports filtered by region, wage, education level, and projected job growth. She highlighted the tool's ability to provide timely, accurate, and actionable data compared to traditional sources, supporting more effective planning and decision-making. Polly also noted potential uses for the tool, including developing career pathway information for the website, identifying skills gaps, supporting employer engagement, and informing on-the-job training opportunities.

Members expressed interest in learning more about the data platform and excitement for the information that will be made readily available to the community on a more consistent basis.

VI. System Oversight – Informational Items/Attachments

Mark reminded board members that as we are seeking to utilize our time together to engage in discussion and the sharing of ideas, rather than reviewing reports unless necessary. He directed members to their packets and explained that there are several "Additional Informational Items" enclosed for reviewing on their own time. He reminded everyone that if they have any questions regarding the additional informational items, they can reach out to him or Marissa. The following reports were provided:

A. WIOA Northwest Workforce Performance Reports ([available online](#))

1. WIOA IB Programs (Operated by NWC)
 - WIOA Grant Summary YTD
 - Non-WIOA Grant Summary YTD

B. Annual WIOA IB PY24 State Monitoring April 7 – April 30, 2025

Marissa Cahill reported that the annual review conducted by the Employment Security Department has been completed. The final report, which is sent to the Chief Local Elected Official and the Board Chair, was included in the meeting packets for reference.

The oral Exit Interview was attended by the Board Chair and NWC administrative team. The review found no questioned costs and identified no critical issues, indicating a comprehensive and satisfactory review of the organization’s compliance and performance.

C. WIOA IB Internal PY24 Q4 Program Monitoring 09/29/2025 – 10/3/2025

Marissa Cahill noted that the internal program monitor will be onsite the week of September 29th to engage with staff. Results from this review are expected to be available during the fourth-quarter Quality Assurance Committee meeting.

D. Annual PY 24 Equal Opportunity Monitoring scheduled for 10/14 – 16/2025

Marissa Cahill reported that the annual Equal Opportunity monitoring by the state’s Employment Security Department will take place the week of October 13th. Results from this review are expected within approximately six months. The Council is still pending receipt of last year’s August 2024 final report.

E. Annual Audit

Marissa Cahill noted that Alegria has been engaged for the annual audit, and information is currently being submitted. Audit findings will be presented to the Executive Committee as soon as they are able to finalize their report.

Old Business – None

New Business – None

Public Comment – None

Adjournment The meeting was adjourned by Chair, Mark Vorobik at 2:48 PM.

Attendance:

Board Members:

Mark Vorobik, *Business Sector, Skagit County*
Hart Hodges, *Business Sector, Whatcom County*
Lynette Brower, *Higher Education, Skagit County*
Kevin Corrigan, *Business Sector, Island County*
Jessica Barr, *Public Employment, Regional*

Local Elected Officials:

Kari McVeigh, *San Juan County Official*
Peter Browning, *Skagit County Official*

NWC Staff:

Marissa Cahill, *Executive Director*
Scott Iddings, *Workforce Programs Manager*
Polly Carpenter, *Data & Accounting Specialist*
Liz Vaughn, *Executive Administrator*
Jane Fox, *Workforce Coordinator*

Guests:

Patrick Baldoz, *One-Stop System Operator*
Michael Reese, *Higher Education, Skagit County*
Kristina Hines, *Economic Development, Island County*
Kyle Jones, *DSHS Division of Vocational Rehabilitation*