



**NEW ORLEANS  
WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT BOARD**

NOWDB Full Board  
JOB1 Business and Career Solutions Center  
1307 Oretha Castle Haley – New Orleans, LA  
April 17, 2024 | 11:00AM  
Meeting Summary

**Attendance**

**Members Present**

Gregory Curtis  
Claire Jecklin  
Floyd James  
Mikal Anderson  
Charlene Brock  
Dottie Belletto  
Allyson Wilson  
Rachel Mackey  
Peter Pappas  
Andrew O’Brien, Sr.  
Jeffrey Schwartz  
Connie Carlson

**Members Absent**

Melissa Sparks  
Allen Square  
Thelma French  
Jerry Repka  
Jeffery Martin  
Suri Duitch  
Katherine Felton  
Rodney Wallis  
Runiaja Vicksbrown  
Kellie Payne Spencer  
Danielle Garrett

**Staff and Guest**

Sunae Villavaso  
Neia Limar  
Tammie Washington  
Sabrina Johnson  
Ada Kwanbunbumpen  
Lori Boissiere  
Chantell Patin  
Leonard Zanders  
Tyra Brown  
Karmen McKinley  
Jason DeGruy  
Joel Morgan

I. **Call to Order**

Board Chair Gregory Curtis called the meeting to order at 11:12AM

II. **Roll Call**

Board Chair Curtis forewent roll call.

Board Members who attended the meeting virtually: Arlanda Williams.

III. **Board Chair Updates**

Please note for the record that NOWDB members or members of the public who are participating via TEAMS can submit comments or questions on the chat box and the Board Chair will recognize all public comments at the appointed time of the meeting. Mr. Curtis reminded board members of the importance to attend board meetings regularly as well as their assigned subcommittee meetings. Mr. Curtis advised the group that there are positions available on the board and requested referrals for

qualified candidates. He also shared that the House of Representatives passed the reauthorization but is not yet sure if it has passed the Senate as of yet. How the funds will be disseminated between the State of Louisiana and the cities is under review.

Director Villavaso added to the conversation by sharing the overall response from other directors toward Louisiana's Secretary of Labor's action regarding the 25% Governor's Reserve which was previously 15%. This change, in addition to the decreased funding for Workforce Development, would indicate further budget cuts. She also reported on the 50% allocation assigned to training and how it impacts supportive services for participants. Lastly, she shared the position that Secretary of Labor Susana Showen takes on the Subsequent Designation which would make the local offices of workforce development regional to decrease the number of local areas from 15 to approximately 8.

Board Member Belletto asked for clarification on the relationship between Orleans Parish and that of Jefferson and St. Tammany. Mrs. Villavaso responded that these parishes are considered Region 1 and that Orleans is working collectively and in collaboration with Jefferson Parish and St. Tammany Parish.

Board Member Pappas shared his thoughts that budget cuts are occurring at the State level because of a lack of awareness in the value of the work being done at the local level and suggested that the Workforce Development of Orleans Parish be more "outfront" about the work that is being using platforms like social media. A discussion was had by the group around the topic.

Chair Curtis introduced Tyra Johnson Brown, Director of Housing Policy and Office of Community Development, to the group. Director Brown shared her support of a meeting between the parishes to discuss how changes in the State's budget will impact the region.

### **Board Staff Updates/Program Oversight Report**

Director Villavaso advised the group of security concerns that have occurred at the Job1 office building related to concealed weapons. As a result, security cameras, a metal detector and signage will be installed. She also reported the progress of the ARPA proposals. She shared that Leonard Merriman Pilot Program and the New Orleans Chapter of the Tuskegee Airman were awarded the \$500,000 to train high school seniors to become air pilots. Training starts May 29, 2024. Participants will have earned their 1<sup>st</sup> level of pilot licensing by graduation time and will be co-enrolled in the Mayor's Summer Youth Employment Program (MSYEP) allowing them to earn wages while learning. Additionally, the Office of Workforce Development (OWD) hopes to partner with United Airlines or Delta Airlines to culminate their training with an apprenticeship program. Enrollment in the program is estimated to be 10 participants for Summer 2024 and another 10 participants for Summer 2025.

Director Villavaso reported that the Office of Workforce Development is currently working on writing a local plan based on the State plan during this 30-day revision period and will work with Jennifer Barnett to write a regional plan. Chair Curtis added that there is opportunity and requirement for New Orleans Workforce Development Board members to provide input on the local plan. A discussion around the topic was had by the group.

Director Villavaso concluded her report by stating that OWD will begin to go before the Council with ARPA projects lasting over 1-year.

Chair Curtis notified the group of the position taken by the National Association of Workforce Boards (NAWB) regarding WIOA House Bill 6655 – A Stronger Workforce for America Act. He advised the group that an email would be shared after the meeting containing a link to read both H.R.6655 and NAWBs review/evaluation.

### **Business Engagement Committee Update**

Chair Williams advised the group that the committee recommends conducting a survey to poll small businesses in the local area regarding their needs for employment, and training. She is requesting permission from the NOWDB to proceed in sending out a survey to gather data to work with invested partners in developing essential training.

Board Member Pappas clarified the purpose of the survey would be to help small businesses understand the resources available from the OWD and, equally, the survey would assist OWD in knowing the opportunities available from small business. The survey would also aid in the creation of a database where workforce candidates can find job opportunities and small business can find the talent they are seeking; essentially creating a Talent Marketplace. He concluded with the recommendation of revisiting the content and image shared on social media related to the OWD.

### **Operator Report**

Director Zanders covered programmatic highlights and insights through March 2024 including Career Services metric, the Earn & Learn Program, the National Dislocated Worker Grants (the CAREER Grant), On the Job Training Program and the implementation the “reverse job fair” concept. Mr. Zanders presented a review of the PY23 Monthly Dashboard report progress through March 2024, shared success stories from the Earn and Learn initiative, lead a discussion surrounding LA Works HiRE platform serving as the universal shared database for employer and job seeker information and search/referral processes. He shared information regarding the launch of the HIRE NOLA outreach campaign, serving employers and job seekers in Summer 2024. He presented a breakdown of the progress and challenges of the CAREER NDWG in the areas concerning OJT process and potential revision to OJT goals, timeline, training progress and enrollment challenge/setback, the Reverse Job Fair initiative that was launched in February 2024 and will reoccur on Friday, April 29, 2024. Mr. Zanders then discussed coordination of the Business Engagement Committee

objectives that will be scheduled between Business Engagement Committee and Operator.

**Approval of the NOWDB Full Board Draft Meeting Minutes November 8, 2023**

**Motion by: Dottie Belletto**

**Second by: Peter Pappas**

**No Opposition**

**The motion was approved by unanimous decision.**

**Approval of the NOWDB Full Board Draft Meeting Minutes December 13, 2023**

**Motion by: Peter Pappas**

**Second by: Claire Jecklin**

**No Opposition**

**The motion was approved by unanimous decision.**

**Approval of the NOWDB Full Board Draft Meeting Minutes March 13, 2024**

**Motion by: Claire Jecklin**

**Second by: Allyson Wilson**

**No Opposition**

**The motion was approved by unanimous decision.**

**Approval to add survey proposed by the Business Engagement Committee as an Action Item to the April 17, 2024 meeting agenda**

**No Opposition**

**The motion was approved by unanimous decision.**

**Approval of Business Engagement Survey contingent upon information on cost**

**Motion by: Peter Pappas**

**Second by: Jeffrey Schwartz**

**No Opposition**

**The motion was approved by unanimous decision.**

**IV. Open Discussion**

There was no open discussion.

**V. Public Comments**

There were no comments from the public.

**VI. Adjourn**

**Motion by: Andrew O'Brien, Sr.**

**Second by: Dottie Belletto**

**No Opposition**

**The motion was approved by unanimous decision.**

The meeting adjourned at 12:22pm.