



**NEW ORLEANS**  
**WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT BOARD**

NOWDB Full Board  
JOB1 Business and Career Solutions Center  
1307 Oretha Castle Haley – New Orleans, LA  
June 12, 2025 | 11:00AM  
Meeting Summary

**Attendance**

**Members Present**

Gregory Curtis  
Thelma French  
Angelle Hava  
Floyd James  
Claire Jecklin  
Rachel Mackey  
Andrew O’Brien, Sr.  
Peter Pappas  
Allen Square  
Rodney Wallis  
Allyson Wilson

**Members Absent**

Melissa Hopson  
Mikal Anderson  
Chris Bardell  
Dottie Belletto  
Charlene Bonck  
Desiree Stelly Bordenave  
Danielle Garrett  
Jeffrey Martin  
Jerry Repka  
Jeffrey Schwartz  
Stacey Shepperson  
Runiaja Vicksbrown  
Arlanda Williams

**Staff and Guest**

Tyra Johnson Brown  
Tammie Washington  
Neia Limar  
Sabrina Johnson  
Karmen McKinley  
Lori Boissiere  
Torrie Jakes  
Leonard Zanders

Board Members who attended the meeting virtually: Mikal Anderson, Jeffery Schwartz

**I. Chairman Welcome**

11:16am Chairman Curtis acknowledged that a quorum had not been met and began the meeting by requesting the delivery of updates and reports that do not require voting action by the Board.

**II. Finance Committee Report**

Finance Chair, Floyd James, reported that the Finance Committee met on June 11<sup>th</sup> and presented the board with a Finance Report Packet which consisted of the Finance Committee Meeting Summary, the review and adoption of updated fiscal policies, Administrative Cost Limitation Policy, Improper Payment Policy, Allowable Cost Policy, Cash Management Policy, Conflict of Interest Policy, Fraud Policy, Internal Control Policy, Monitoring Policy, Records Retention Policy, Relocation of Employee Costs Policy, Cost Classification & Allocations, and a draft copy of the Operations Manual/Financial Management. He continued to report that about 72% of the overall expenditure

for the Adult, Dislocated Worker, and Youth programs is expended through April 30th, 2025. About 3% of the grant life remained on the carryover and 53% of the grant life remained on the current PY24 allocation. He added that the training log shows an upward trend and is projected to be on target by the close of the program year on June 30, 2025. Pathway HOME grant continued to enroll clients through April 2025 however, due to the incident at Orleans Parish Justice Center on May 16<sup>th</sup>, the facility was put on lockdown and all programming was discontinued. Mr. James acknowledged the action item on the agenda set to approve the Fiscal policies stemming from state monitors submitting a preliminary report that showed 3 findings, two of which pertained to outdated policies. The members reviewed all updated fiscal policies for approval. This action item will be moved to the next scheduled board meeting due to the lack of a quorum.

Board member, Thelma French, raised a question related to the Relocation of Employee Costs Policy. A brief discussion was had to provide clarity.

### **III. Operator Report**

Director Leonard Zanders and the Job1 Leadership Team (Angelique White-Miller - Career Services Supervisor, Lavette Holmes - Talent Development Specialist, Zantirce Journee – Youth Talent Development Specialist, Priscilla Cheatham – Business Solutions Manager, and Neron North-Green – RESTORE Re-entry Program Manager) presented program highlights.

### **IV. Youth Committee Report**

Youth Committee Chair Claire Jecklin reported on the committee meeting held on May 30<sup>th</sup>. She reported on the progress of youth-focused programs including the Mayor's Summer Youth Employment Program (MSYEP) and the Job1 Youth Works Department. The MSYEP employed over a thousand youth for the summer and Youth Works issued a great number of work permits to young people just starting their career journeys. She highlighted employers New Orleans Recreational Department, the New Orleans Housing Authority and many local retailers for creating summer job opportunities for youth participants. She also mentioned highlights from the close of the program year such as students receiving their HighSET diplomas and completing trainings to receive certifications in high demand industries. MSYEP Director Karmen McKinley provided updates on the success of worksite placements, the anticipated 1<sup>st</sup> payroll and the on-site Career Coach visits. Board member Floyd James commented on his observation of the MSYEP in action at STEM NOLA. He complimented the program and its "phenomenal" execution. He encouraged NOWDB members to make time to visit the MSYEP youth participants working at STEM NOLA. He additionally complimented MSYEP Career Coach, Demitri Haynes, on his excellent customer service skills.

### **V. Staff Updates**

Director Tyra Johnson Brown opened her report with an introduction of and welcome to the new Sr. Compliance Officer/Equal Opportunity Coordinator, Torrie Jakes. She then addressed the recent change of leadership in the Office of Workforce Development to provide context to matters published in the media. She confirmed that the employment termination of Sunae Villavaso was not due to retaliation from allegations of payroll fraud as reported in the media. She confirmed the documented cause of employment termination and dismissal of Sunae Villavaso was due to

insubordination, abuse of power/threatening employees with her relationship with the Mayor, and submitting fraudulent travel documents. Supporting evidence has been provided to investigators. She advised the board that they may be contacted during the ongoing investigation. Upon the completion of thorough investigations, a report will be submitted to both the City Council and the City of New Orleans (CNO). CNO Administration reserves the right to release the findings of the report to the media. She concluded her report by reminding members of the NOWDB of their signed Conflict of Interest Statements as well as the officially appointed spokesperson for the NOWDB is the Chairman, Gregory Curtis. She added that, as a board member, it is inappropriate to have conversations and/or meetings with vendors on behalf of the Board. Chairman Curtis added a forceful reminder that there is currently a Request for Purpose (RFP) out and that it would be improper for any member of the Board to speak to anyone who may be submitting a proposal to the RFP. The CNO's Procurement Department is the public's point of contact for questions or concerns related to RFPs.

Board member, Thelma French, raised a question related to statutory required board members and their ability to have an alternate to serve for quorum. Deputy Director, Tammie Washington, confirmed that the State Board can have alternates however the State's policy indicates that local boards cannot have proxies. Board member, Allen Square, suggested reducing the number of board members to help in the ability to achieve a quorum. Board Manager, Neia Limar, later confirmed that the mandated minimum number of NOWDB members is 23 members, which is one less than the current board membership of 24.

Director Brown concluded her report with an update on the RFP which was released on May 27<sup>th</sup> with a pre-submittal conference held on June 5<sup>th</sup>. The deadline for question was June 9<sup>th</sup>. A One-Stop Operator has to be selected by July 1<sup>st</sup>. The evaluation selection committee should commence around June 25<sup>th</sup> or 26<sup>th</sup>. A discussion was had regarding the date of an emergency NOWDB meeting to ratify the committee. Additionally, the Louisiana Workforce Commission's (LWC) monitoring is ongoing. A draft report was received on June 9<sup>th</sup> where four potential findings were identified (one related to administrative, one related to procurement and two related to fiscal). All documentation is being compiled and the Office of Workforce Development has fifteen days to present information to clear the findings. Most of the findings stem from documentation that was not requested when monitors were onsite. LWC visited Job1 last Friday to take a tour. As a result of this visit, it was suggested to provide updated policies & procedures. This project was already underway and should be completed soon.

#### **VI. Public Comments**

There were no comments from the public.

#### **VII. Open Discussion**

Meeting ended at 12:05pm.