

# COUNTY OF ULSTER

## Workforce Development Board

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Sharon Williams, Director

### Ulster County Workforce Development Board Meeting September 17, 2025 Minutes

MEMBERS PRESENT – Jim Ferraro, Michael Berg, Domenica Murray, John Lindgren, John Eickman, Leah Gherardi, Frank Falatyn, Mike Iapoce, Jeanne Lipscomb, Jen Mullan, Chris Marx, Sean Brix, Dan Whalen, Tina Buono, Tiziana Rinaldo, Angela Patella (remote from North Country, NY)

MEMBERS ABSENT –Keith Blair, Ashima Butler, Jess Davis, Tamika Dunkley, Peter Harris, Nejla Liias, Joe McDole

ALSO PRESENT - Sharon Williams, OET Director/WDB Director, Faith Golden, OET Deputy Director, Amanda LaValle, Deputy County Executive, Suzette Haas, Assistant County Attorney, Renee Pugliese, OET

The meeting was called to order at 8:00 a.m. by Jim Ferraro, WDB Chair. There was a quorum.

#### 1. **OPENING – JIM FERRARO, BOARD CHAIR:**

Jim started the meeting. Introductions were made around the room.

#### 2. **APPROVAL OF MINUTES – JIM, CHAIR**

Jim asked for a motion to approve Minutes from January 2025. Motion made by Michael Berg, seconded by John Eickman. All in favor, none opposed. Minutes approved.

Motion made to approve Minutes from March 2025. First motion made by Michael Berg, seconded by John Eickman. All in favor, none opposed. Minutes approved.

Motion made to approve Minutes from May 2025. First motion made by Michael Berg, seconded by Domenica Murray. All in favor, none opposed. Minutes approved.

Motion made to approve Minutes from July 2025. First motion made by Domenica Murray, seconded by Dan Whalen. All in favor, none opposed. Minutes approved.

#### 3. **NEW MEMBER UPDATE – SHARON WILLIAMS, DIRECTOR**

We congratulate and welcome several new members that were formally appointed to the Board by the County Attorney effective September 3, 2025: Leah Gherardi - RCAL, Jen Mullan - Central Hudson, Jon Lindgren - Communications Workers of America, and Nejla Liias - Global Health Visions.

The rest of the members should have received their re-appointment letters from the County Attorney's Office.

We also lost some members: Alex Cordova – Ulster Savings Bank and Jana Kantor – local business owner. There will be a nomination for a new person from the Ulster Savings Bank to be reviewed. Currently we are at full DOL requirements of 51% being business owners. We will be reaching out for recruiting new members.

#### **4. FUNDING UPDATE – SHARON WILLIAMS, DIRECTOR**

At our last meeting, we were still waiting for NOAs (Notice of Obligation Authority). Since then, we have received NOAs from the State for Adult, Dislocated Worker, Youth and YEP funding. So we are on track to continue our operations through the end of the year. This is the first allotment, we will receive the second allotment toward the end of this calendar year. We still have the cushion to transfer funds between Adult and DW. We are one of the few County Departments that is fully federally funded, no County share at all.

#### **5. WDB BYLAW UPDATE - SHARON**

Suzette Haas of the County Attorney's Office was introduced. She is assigned to the WDB and helped us in the review and re-crafting of the Bylaws. The final version was sent to everyone. The question was asked if there is a limit to the number of members of the Board. There is not, however, we have to stay within the federal guidelines of percentage requirements from certain industries and sectors. Currently we are meeting the requirements.

Directors and Officers are all covered under the County policy for indemnification.

Jim asked for a Motion to approve the updated Bylaws. Motion made by John Eickman, seconded by Chris Marx. All in favor, none opposed. Newly updated Bylaws approved.

#### **6. NEW CHAIR NOMINATIONS – SHARON**

It is up to the members of this Board to nominate the new chair and the chair must be from the Board itself. Members received a packet with the names of the people that are eligible to be nominees. Only members that are business leaders in the community can be nominated (and currently the person must be an Ulster County resident). Board members are to take a look at the list and vote electronically. Sharon will put the deadline on there. The candidate will be voted in at our next meeting in November (we need quorum for this).

The new chair will choose their new Executive Committee. The current Executive Committee is Jim, Ashima, Frank, Chris, John E., Tamika, Faith and Sharon.

#### **7. LOCAL PLAN UPDATE – SHARON WILLIAMS**

The draft Local Plan was sent out to everyone and asked for feedback. The next draft will be sent out also. Every year we are tasked to update/modify the plan.

**DEMAND OCCUPATIONS LIST** – It is our job to look at the positions that we feel are in demand here in Ulster County. There is no direct one to one correlation between the list and the training available for these particular positions here in Ulster County. We can pay for training in other locations for Ulster County residents if there is no training available in Ulster County.

It was suggested to align this Demand Occupations List with apprenticeship programs available. These positions are mostly entry level as opposed to management.

Suggestion was made to add cannabis industry to the list, but our office would not be able to support training because federally it is still considered illegal.

We have not typically been able to support agricultural training because it tends to be seasonal and we're required to assist individuals toward permanent positions. However, agricultural is one of the main industries here in Ulster County and we can add it to the list.

Some other suggestions to add were: EMT, Direct Care/residential support, Grant writing/Administrative, Caseworker, Case Manager, Social Welfare Examiner, Early Childhood

Intervention Specialist, Job Coach. Reminder that titles must be an industry recognized credential by the State in order for us to be able to fund training.

#### **8. FINANCES – FAITH GOLDEN, DEPUTY DIRECTOR**

Faith went over the charts. We've got quite a bit over the course of the year that we can spend on Adult and DW funding. We've got about \$ 68,000 for Youth for ITAs; a lot of the youth money is set aside for work experience funds.

**2025 Budget** - Overall we received about a 20% increase in our allocations for Adult, DW and Youth. The increase came in primarily Adult and Youth. It works out to be about a \$52,000 dollar increase in training funds from last year available for Adult funding, a decrease of about \$25,000 for DW training funding, and the contract right now for youth work experience was increased about \$25,000 over last year's contract, which can be amended if needed.

Sharon asked for a motion to approve the budget. Motion made by Domenica Murray, seconded by John Eickman. All in favor, none opposed. Budget approved.

We have a vacancy in the Office of Employment and Training for the Disability Resource Coordinator position – Michael Thomason resigned. We are in the process of revamping the job description and we will be putting out that posting shortly.

We are required to provide a work experience for youth, not full employment. We were finding some of our young people were staying on longer than they should have been. To ensure that we can serve all the young people possible, we had to put tighter limits on the time that a young person can stay in a work experience. That work experience is a maximum of 16 weeks. The goal is then that, at the end of their 16 weeks, they are ready for the next step (not within the program). We have to give other youth opportunities to be a part of the program as well. We also have to be mindful of how much money we are spending since the money we receive federally is finite.

#### **9. UPDATES – SHARON**

Reminder that 9/18/25 at 5:00 pm is the Welcoming Workforce Week Event at the Restorative Justice Center focusing on looking at hidden talent pools and barriers to employment.

Due to time constraints, the other updates (for **SYEP and YEP**) will be sent out in written form.

#### **10. MOTION TO ADJOURN – JIM FERRARO**

Jim asked for a motion to adjourn. Motion made by Frank Falatyn, seconded by John Eickman. All in favor, none opposed. Meeting adjourned at 9:12 a.m.

**ULSTER COUNTY WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT BOARD  
NEXT MEETING:**

**Wednesday, November 19, 2025  
8:00 AM**