



Dutchess County Workforce Development Board

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“Driving economic growth through Workforce Partnerships”

Board Meeting Minutes February 19, 2026

Members in Attendance: Sheila Appel, Laine Belmonte, Mary Jane Bertram, Nicole Fenichel-Hewitt, Theresa Giovanniello, Linda Hannigan, Johnnie Hansen, Rich Kleban, Jeanne Lipscomb, Michael McCormack, LaQuesha Matthews, Brandon Walker, Jodie Delucia, Peter Jordan, Chris Murley, Jim Devitt, Jaime Hyla.

Members Excused: Paul Mancarella, Adam Albertelli, Jessica Treybick, Garrett Dyal, Theresa Morley

Others in Attendance: Louise McLoughlin and the DCWIB Staff

1. Call to Order, establish quorum Sheila Appel

2. Welcome Sheila Appel

Sheila welcomed the Board members to the meeting and thanked the DCWIB and DCWORKS staff for all the work they do on behalf of the board. Ms. Appel introduced our new board member. Chris Murley serves as Vice President of Operations at Apparatus Manufacturing, where he leads operations for a precision sheet-metal fabrication company serving commercial and retail clients in the Hudson Valley. Jim Devitt is the Vice President of Business Development at Emergency One Urgent Care and Occupational Health, bringing more than 30 years of experience in healthcare leadership and business development. Jaime Hyla is the Executive Director of Community Family Development, a nonprofit organization dedicated to providing high-quality early childhood education and childcare services to families in Dutchess County. Ms. Appel welcomed them to the Board and everyone said hello. Ms. Appel said that we have a packed agenda and asked if everyone had the opportunity to review the December Board Meeting Minutes. Ms. Appel asked for a motion to accept the December meeting minutes. The motion carried. The results of the motion are in the chart:

Motion to accept December 11, 2025, Board meeting minutes

Motion:	Nicole Fenichel-Hewitt
2 nd :	Johnnieanne Hansen
YES:	14
NO:	0
Abstained from voting:	3
PASSED:	YES
CERTIFIED:	<i>Mary Jane Bertram</i> 2/19/2026

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Motion to accept Consent Agenda

Ms. Appel asked Dr. McLoughlin to run the consent agenda. Dr. McLoughlin explained that there are several policies that need to be approved to answer the fiscal audit. In addition, we are seeking approval of the procedures. These do not need to be approved by the Board, but as they are in the letter, we are asking for approval. Going forward we will follow DCWIB protocol of policies requiring a board vote and procedures set up by staff. The consent agenda has our current handbook which is written with Staffline and updated each year. Again, not something that we are required to seek approval for. We are also including our most current RFP’s/RFQ’s. Dr. McLoughlin offered to review the explanation that was provided in the board packet, and was granted permission to read it into the minutes, it is organized below with headings and subheadings for

improved readability.

POLICIES

Bonus Policy (Retro)- In December 2025, as part of NYSDOL fiscal monitoring the DCWIB was told that there was a 2011 Technical Advisory (TA) issued regarding awarding bonuses to staff. In July 2025, as part of payroll in June 2025 (PY24), bonuses were awarded to three staff people. The ED was not part of this bonus pool. The ED consulted with the Board Chair and Staffline, our employer of record, before issuing these bonuses. The awarding of these bonuses did not follow the 2011 TA which the ED missed. To resolve the resulting finding, the full Board needs to approve the retroactive bonus policy. The DCWIB also has to get approval from NYSDOL to offer these bonuses. The memorandum written to NYSDOL is included in your packet. It is important to note that the NYSDOL has approved this retroactive bonus and has stated that the finding will be resolved upon full Board approval. This letter is included in your packet.

Bonus Policy (Ongoing)- The DCWIB is recommending that the Board approve an ongoing Bonus Policy, to avoid this in the future. Once this policy is approved, the ED will send the memorandum, which is included in your packet, to NYSDOL for approval.

Closeout Policy- During the same fiscal monitoring process, it was determined that the DCWIB needed to update our closeout policy. After much back and forth with NYSDOL and many iterations, the following policy has been approved by NYSDOL. There is an accompanying procedure that I am going to introduce during my Executive Director's report. The ED cautions that if we combine Policy and Procedure and we need to change a step in the procedure, we require a full Board vote.

HANDBOOK

Employee Handbook- Historically, we have not sought approval for the Handbook, however in an abundance of caution, the ED is seeking board approval. This handbook is developed hand-in-hand with Ethan Allen/Staffline. Staffline provides legal compliance. It is important to note that since our iLobby system, which is utilized by DCWORKS to sign in and out, it has been recommended by NYSDOL that we use a different system. Our Center Operator has determined that a physical sign-in sheet is most reliable at this time. This change was required, by NYSDOL, to be changed in the handbook.

Initial and Continued Eligibility for Training Providers Policy- There was language in this policy regarding the DCWIB reserving the right to review training providers on the ETPL at any time and approving or removing them from the list based on reviewing performance and customer feedback. This language was moved from the policy section to procedures knowing that procedures can be added, modified or deleted.

Cost Policy- NYSDOL asked for a few word changes in our policy. These were made and approved by NYSDOL. The changes do nothing to our current practices.

PROCEDURES

Procurement and Policy Committee Procedures

These procedures establish guidelines under which the Procurement and Policy Committee will operate. The procedures may be revised as needed to reflect operational adjustments identified by the Committee during the course of its work.

Note: These procedures do not require formal approval by the Board of Directors. They are included within this Consent Agenda item to inform the Board, as this is a newly established DCWIB Committee and Board awareness of its operating guidelines is appropriate.

Property and Inventory Management- During this monitoring process, the DCWIB learned that the handling of our computers (laptops) could be better organized. The devices we use for the customers are well documented. Everything is labelled and accounted for. We had to spend some time locating, tagging and logging computers at both DCWIB and DCWORKS. The DCWIB's computers were all labelled but not all were on the inventory sheet. The DCWORKS computers took more time to log in. With the help of the Center Manager and the Business Engagement Manager, the invoices, from the G/L report and the computers that were at DCWORKS matched. Computers without labels were labelled and everything was accounted for. We all need to do a better job with tagging/logging new equipment and disposable (to PCA) of our old equipment, which has been replaced.

Grant Closeout Procedure: It was determined that we did not have a clear understanding of expenses and accruals for long-term grants in the closeout period, so the closeout procedures were updated. They are

attached for your attention.

ETPL Procedure: This procedure provides the steps to review providers on the ETPL list.

RFP's and RFQ's

Quick Books: Professional services to review, correct, and stabilize its existing QuickBooks (online version) accounting system Quick Books Clean Up- The DCWIB is looking for a qualified contractor to provide a cleaned and reconciled QuickBooks accounting system, accurate financial statements for agreed-upon periods, written assessment and cleanup summary, adjustment and reconciliation support, final project closeout documentation and possible other services/deliverables unknown by the DCWIB at the issuance of the RFP that may come up during the process.

Website Redesign and Development: This RFP replaces the contract that we signed with a company in June of last year. We discovered that some of the deliverables were the same as the deliverables for our contract with Ashworth Design. The overlap was significant enough to lead us to go out to RFP and procure a new provider. The services being sought include website redesign and development, content management, staff training, accessibility and compliance and hosting and transition services. Plus, any services that may be needed as we work through the project.

Supportive Services: In order to provide supportive services, the DCWIB needs to contract with an agency that can directly purchase the service needed. Currently the WIB is not set up to do this. We have a contract with Community Action that we have let expire due to intense scrutiny by our FOTA monitor. We are trying to be more exact for our next contract.

Ms. Appel asked if there were any questions. She asked for a motion to approve the Consent Agenda. The motion carried.

Motion:	Theresa Giovannello
2 nd :	Peter Jordan
YES:	17
NO:	0
Abstained from voting:	0
PASSED:	YES
CERTIFIED:	Mary Jane Bertram 2/19/2026

Dr. McLoughlin asked Ms. Appel if the Board could go into Executive Session. Ms. Appel asked for a Motion to GO INTO EXECUTIVE SESSION to discuss specific employee human resource information.

Motion:	Brandon Walker
2 nd :	Mary Jane Bertram
YES:	17
NO:	0
Abstained from voting:	0
PASSED:	YES
CERTIFIED:	Mary Jane Bertram 2/19/2026

Ms. Appel asked for a Motion to RETURN FROM EXECUTIVE SESSION

Motion:	Sheila Appel
2 nd :	Peter Jordan
YES:	17
NO:	0
Abstained from voting:	0
PASSED:	YES
CERTIFIED:	Mary Jane Bertram 2/19/2026

Ms. Appel asked for a Motion to accept Retroactively Accept Bonuses from July11, 2025 payroll and a 5% Cost of Living Raise for staff of DCWIB and DCWORKS.

Motion:	Brendan Walker
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2 nd :	Jaime Hyla
YES:	17
NO:	0
Abstained from voting:	0
PASSED:	YES
CERTIFIED:	DocuSigned by: <i>Mary Jane Bertram</i> 2B6F76E1CCC841E... 2/19/2026

3. Ms. Appel asked for Dr. McLoughlin’s report.

Dr. McLoughlin asked the Deputy Director to give her report on the operating budget. The Deputy Director stated that as of January 2026, the total PY25 operating budget is \$1,295,640.15, with \$476,149.26 expended year-to-date, representing approximately 36.7% of the annual budget. Overall spending is aligned with the fiscal year timeline and reflects stable financial management. Personnel costs continue to represent the largest portion of the budget. Combined staffing expenses across both locations total \$389,120.04 year-to-date. Expenditures are tracking proportionally and remain within projected levels. Salary and fringe expenses are consistent with staffing plans, and wage and fringe offsets at the Neptune location are helping to reduce the net personnel burden. At this stage in the fiscal year, personnel spending appears appropriately paced. Non-personnel expenses total \$87,029.22 year-to-date against an annual budget of \$342,267.64, reflecting conservative spending (approximately 25% of the annual allocation). Core operational costs such as rent, IT, equipment, and training are progressing as anticipated. Several discretionary or seasonal expense lines show minimal or no spending to date, leaving sufficient flexibility for planned activities later in the fiscal year. In summary, the organization is operating within its approved budget framework. Spending levels are consistent with expectations for this point in the year, personnel costs remain controlled, and non-personnel expenditures are conservative. The overall financial position is stable, with adequate capacity to support remaining programmatic and operational priorities for PY25.

As of February 14, 2026, the following funding remains available in the NYSDOL PeopleSoft system across multiple program years and funding streams. For Program Year (PY) 2025 Administration (Program 140), there is \$88,553.59 available to be obligated through June 30, 2026. Under the Adult – Formula (Program 110) funding stream, PY24 funds total \$217,748.92 and must be spent by June 30, 2026, while PY25 funds total \$468,723.67 and must be obligated by June 30, 2026. For Dislocated Worker – Formula (Program 120), PY24 funds of \$290,411.10 are available to spend by June 30, 2026, and PY25 funds of \$541,065.65 must be obligated by June 30, 2026. Within the Youth – Formula (Program 130) category, PY24 funds total \$300,015.43 and must be spent by June 30, 2026, while PY25 funds of \$571,878.23 must be obligated by June 30, 2026. For NY SCION (OMH) (Program 346), the available balances include:

- PY23: \$3,923.02 (SPEND by June 30, 2026)
- PY24: \$71,200.00 (SPEND by June 30, 2026)
- PY25: \$30,000.00 (SPEND by June 30, 2026)

Additionally, RR – NY SCION (Program 345, PY24) has \$100,000.00 available to spend through June 30, 2027, providing an extended expenditure period beyond most other funding streams.

Other available funding includes:

- RETI (Program 201, PY24): \$74,483.01 (SPEND by June 30, 2026)
- RR Fiscal Incentive (Program 125, PY24): \$50,483.20 (SPEND by June 30, 2026)
- RR Program Incentive (Program 126, PY24): \$871.64 (SPEND by June 30, 2026)

Overall, the majority of PY24 funds must be fully expended by June 30, 2026, while PY25 formula funds require timely obligation by the same date. Strategic planning and timely contracting will be critical to ensure full utilization of available resources. Dr. McLoughlin stated that we do have a lot of funding that needs to be expended by June 30 and this is concerning. The good news is that we were awarded additional incentive, RETI and SCION funding- the challenge is a plan to use the money

to benefit people and businesses. We are actively working on this.

We are working on the findings from our recent fiscal audit and will meet the 45-day deadline. It has been a challenge with the timing and the ED asked for Board guidance on how to communicate this with NYSDOL.

We have USDOL coming in to audit us the week of March 16, 2026

We are establishing a new Procurement & Policy Committee to strengthen our oversight of contracts and ensure alignment with DCWIB Fiscal Policies and Procedures. This committee will review contracts prior to execution to confirm they are complete, clearly written, properly executed, and aligned with approved rates and terms. No services will begin and no payments will be authorized without a fully executed contract. The committee will meet as needed, either in person or virtually, to ensure timely review and action. If you are interested in serving on this committee and supporting strong governance and accountability, please let me know. Your participation is greatly appreciated. Three Board members volunteered to be on the committee (Jaime Hyla, Theresa Giovanniello and Jodi DeLucia).

Our SYEP allocation for 2025 was fully spent and we are working on the RFP for 2026.

Our Youth Employment Funding from Dutchess County Government supports programming from October 1, 2025 through June 30, 2026. This investment allows us to partner with community-based organizations to provide meaningful employment opportunities, work readiness training, and skill development for young people across the county. For this program year, we have received funding requests totaling \$557,507.30, which will support 181 youth through a variety of community partners.

The proposed allocations are as follows:

- **NECC** – \$15,505 to serve 5 youth
- **The Art Effect** – \$213,925 to serve 94 youth
- **CM2** – \$149,076 to serve 36 youth
- **Beacon Recreation** – \$16,648.07 to serve 5 youth
- **Eden Share** – \$10,972 to serve 3 youth
- **Love Quest Foundation** – \$45,725 to serve 10 youth
- **Charlia Frank** – \$30,231.48 to serve 8 youth
- **Poughkeepsie Farm** – \$23,144.75 to serve 5 youth
- **Youthful Savings** – \$52,280 to serve 15 youth

These partnerships reflect a diverse mix of enrichment, workforce exposure, financial literacy, arts, recreation, and community-based employment experiences. Collectively, they ensure that youth throughout Dutchess County have access to structured, supervised, and skill-building work opportunities. This funding continues to demonstrate the County's commitment to investing in young people and strengthening our future workforce pipeline.

We are currently working with Ashworth Design on our new logo, newsletter and marketing pieces.

The DCWIB and DCWORKS attended the January Contact Breakfast. It was a great opportunity to network. I was able to keynote and address

CHILDCARE

Childcare Coalition DCWIB continues to spearhead in the Dutchess County Childcare Coalition, a

cross-sector partnership focused on addressing childcare access, affordability, and workforce capacity throughout the county. The coalition brings together county government, childcare providers, workforce and economic development partners, and community organizations to identify solutions that support working families and strengthen labor force participation. Given the direct connection between childcare availability and employment, this collaboration remains an important component of our broader workforce strategy.

DCWIB was awarded a grant from Early Learning Nation to support and expand the work of our Early Childhood Coalition. This funding will strengthen coalition coordination through monthly meetings and support two major convenings in 2026 — a Spring Roundtable and a larger Summit focused on early learning and workforce participation. The Summit will include data-driven discussions, including a workshop on women’s participation in the workforce at the national, state, and local levels. The grant covers event logistics, stakeholder engagement, facilitation, and reporting. This award reinforces DCWIB’s leadership in aligning childcare and early learning with workforce development, recognizing childcare as a critical driver of labor force participation and economic growth in Dutchess County.

Québec Consulate Event – International Women’s Day

I will be a presenter on the roundtable at the Quebec Consulate Event in March. This is a celebration of United Nations International Women’s Day in March, and to recognize the strong and ongoing collaboration between Dutchess County, New York State, New York City, and Québec, the Québec Consulate General is organizing a Leadership Roundtable focused on child care and early learning. The Québec Consulate General represents the Government of the Province of Québec in the United States. The Dutchess County Early Learning Coalition, through the Dutchess County Workforce Development Board (DCWDB), will participate in this Leadership Roundtable. The discussion will reflect on our April 2025 delegation visit to Québec and highlight how we have applied those learnings toward developing a universal childcare model in Dutchess County.

We anticipate receiving a limited number of invitations for this event. Additional details will be shared as they are confirmed by the Québec Consulate.

Co-hosted by:

- Dutchess County Workforce Development Board
- Dutchess County Early Learning Coalition
- Dutchess County, New York
- Office of Children and Family Services
- State University of New York (SUNY)
- New York Public Welfare Association (NYPWA)
- New York Association of Training and Employment Professionals (NYATEP)

I have been asked to attend the Quebec delegation In May and would like to go. This is in partnership with the Québec Consulate General in New York City, we have been invited to participate in a two-state delegation study visit to Québec from May 3–8, 2026, alongside leaders from New York and Maryland. The visit will explore Québec’s globally admired Universal Child Care and Early Learning Model in Québec City, Montréal, and Trois-Rivières. The system is recognized for providing high-quality, affordable childcare that supports families, increases women’s workforce participation, and improves long-term outcomes for children. Delegates will meet with public policy officials, researchers, economic development leaders, and visit local Centres de la petite enfance (CPEs) to better understand how the model operates in practice. As universal childcare discussions continue nationally, this visit offers an important opportunity to learn from a proven system close to home. The ED asked for permission to attend the conference, which was granted.

January Chamber Breakfast: I recently served as the keynote speaker for the Dutchess County Regional Chamber of Commerce, where I presented on the current workforce landscape in Dutchess County. The presentation addressed labor market challenges impacting employers, including recruitment difficulties and skill gaps, and referenced local unemployment data and findings from the 2024 NYSDOL Business and Job Seeker Survey. I also discussed untapped workforce opportunities, barriers to employment, and the importance of upskilling and employer-driven solutions such as flexibility and benefits. The keynote reinforced DCWIB’s role as a strategic partner to the business community and highlighted our commitment to strengthening the local workforce system.

Attached to the agenda are the Way to Work Program and Think Jobs Program Updates.

This was the end of the report.

Sheila Appel thanked the DCWIB staff for their work and summarized the meeting. She asked for a motion to adjourn.

Motion:	Sheila Appel
2 nd :	Peter Jordan
YES:	17
NO:	0
Abstained from voting:	0
PASSED:	YES
CERTIFIED:	<i>Mary Jane Bertram</i> 2/19/2026

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