

**Board of Directors Quarterly Meeting**  
**October 1, 2025**  
**Merrills on the Waterfront, New Bedford, MA**  
**Meeting Minutes**

**Attendance :** Jean Breault, David Cabral, Eva dosSantos, John Fernandes, Margarita Graham, Angela Johnson, Pam Kuechler, Lisa Lemieux, Bonnie Mello, Stephen Merrill, Christopher Mittell, Mike O’Sullivan, Maciel Pais, Aaron Polansky, Michael Watson, Steven White, Michael Williams, Ron Melbourne

**CC Staff:** Rodney Solomon, Fran Grey, Elizete Perry,

**Workforce Board Staff:** Lynn Connor, Rocha, Angie Furey, Debbie Hartman, Christina Baptiste, Anni Jerome, Michael Santos, Wil Edmond

**Welcome and Meeting called to order**– Michael Santos opened the meeting at 9:00 AM followed by a roll call by Lynn Connor, motion to approve minutes made by Michael Santos, all in favor.

**Workforce Board updates: Mike Santos**

Mike went on to explain his 4-year plan which has been signed off by the mayor and moved forward by the Executive Committee. He welcomed everyone into the office who would like to get to know more of the organization and what is done by the Workforce Board and Career Center and to see what each individual team does. The organization keeps moving forward and cleaning up what has been broken and continuing what needs to be approached and fixed. Organizational changes have been made, putting key people in key places, assuring they are receiving the tools necessary to be successful. He mentioned government shutdown and how it has affected the Workforce Board and that they are adjusting offset losses. He went on to go over some programs; there are currently 150 CNAs trained through the health care program. Manufacturing training has been sent to 24 students through CNC, MACWIC and Advanced Manufacturing and they are currently in the process of placing them in their respected industries. They have applied for another manufacturing grant for July 1, 2025, through June 30, 2026, with potentially 60 students at \$356,166 .00 which was submitted on May 16<sup>th</sup>. The Veteran and Spouse Transitional Assistance Grant have been fully implemented with a strong initial enrollment. Youth Program has 277 students out on the waterfront and throughout the City of New Bedford of which 247 are ready to go and will start on July 7<sup>th</sup>. They are currently looking to get more training vendors approved for the WIOA Youth Programing. He then showed a clip of the youth expo which happened the prior month which the youth team pulled together. Currently a 2-year 2-million-dollar Opioid grant has been submitted as of May 30<sup>th</sup> aimed at serving 40 people. The EDA Good Jobs grant is moving forward at a slow rate with all adjustments being made in the current administration with plans to begin in the summer/fall. The youth team is starting a financial literacy program, working with area establishments to start the program. They will be starting with youth, and the long-term goal is to open it up to the adult population. He mentioned the October upcoming job fair and how it affects the Veteran population. All teams are working to exceed all expectations that the Board has and working closely with the Executive Committee.

### **Career Center: Rodney Soloman**

Went over the numbers for WIOA as of September 16th, October 1<sup>st</sup> is when their numbers get finalized. Very strong pipeline with the Adults and Dislocated workers being served. Adult is exactly where they were last year and the Dislocated workers are at 11% higher than last year. Training course enrollments are slightly behind where they were last year, but they have a strong pipeline so even though they are behind they are still on track. There has been a very strong start to the year on credentials going from FY 2025 into FY 2026. They are at 12% over last year for adults and 33% over where they were last year for Dislocated Workers. The state pulls quarterly wage matching and gets pulled up into that reporting. They are working on a new enrollment process with the WIOA folks, more cohort based right now people are coming in and it creates an administrative kind of burden and makes it difficult to convey to customers where they are in the process. A cohort will be implemented to smooth the process. They are the first to try it and will see where it goes, they are starting to bring people in groups and go through their assessments, eligibility and training packets.

### **Youth Updates: Christina Baptista**

The youth program is looking to start that week through June 30<sup>th</sup> the goal at the end of the program is to get all the youth employed. Some of the Summer youth have come back for the year-round program. Exploratory programs are coming to help youth explore in areas they might be interested in like a CNA Program, or technical roles but are not familiar with the roles so they want to research them. Based on Cycle one of the summer programs, they have found that some youths have had some difficulties with email and phone etiquette when they reach out to them and they are trying to help them along with these skills. They have new workshops that will be starting maybe in November. She then introduced Jonathon Bartolomy, one of their youths that did the summer program and Valerie Alves which was his site supervisor. Mike introduced a video to be played of Jonathon “in action” . Lindsey Sousa went on to explain more of the summer youth program in detail and how youth built their confidence through their employment. Jonathon answered any questions that the Board had for him. Lindsey mentioned a case manager that is looking into expansion into the Haitian and Creole population for this upcoming year. She told anyone who has any questions on the programs to please reach out. Mike mentioned the advertising that has been implemented to push information out into the community, and social media to find a way to network with organizations. Mike mentioned that if anyone wanted any further information that the youth would have more information for them at their table.

Mike asked for any thoughts, questions or concerns, thanking everyone for joining and asked for a motion to adjourn so moved by Margarita Graham and seconded by Yvonne Tobey with all in favor. Meeting closes at 9:58 AM

### **Upcoming Meeting**

- **FY26 Board of Directors Meeting**
  - **March 11, 2026,**
  - Time and Location TBD**