



Onondaga Workforce Development Board Meeting & Retreat  
April 10, 2026 - 9:00 AM  
960 James Street, Syracuse NY 13203

**Board Attendees:** Tony Baird, Aimee Durfee, Eric Ennis, Dekka Eysaman, Meghan Fountain, Jessica McCarthy, Anne Napper, Peter Naughton, Kate Oja, Eric Peckham, Ann Marie Taliercio, Matt Tarolli, Jim Thompson, Christopher Tuff, Nancy Williams, Randy Wolken

**CNY Works Staff Attendees:** Rosemary Avila-Ticio, Sheryl Bowman (remote), Susan Cooley, Christelle Marpaud, Darlene McCann, Mary Parry

**Guest Attendees:** Joanna Palladino and Renae Townsend, New York State Department of Labor Presenters.

**One-Stop Operator:** Mari Ukleya

The meeting was called to order at 9:10 AM

## BOARD MEETING

### ONE STOP OPERATOR REPORT

Mari is meeting with priority partners one-on-one. Mari and Rosemary met with Amanda Perrine, the Executive Director of the Onondaga County Public Libraries, and Northside learning center to learn how to better partner with our community.

We will do monthly newsletters. We hope partners will share information that Mari can disseminate. The Email came from Jackie Wiegand at OCM BOCES. If you didn't get it let Mari know.

We will start Lunch and Learn sessions with our Workforce and other community frontline staff.

We will have Frank Ridzi from Central New York Community Foundation come in June to find out how to streamline the referral process and see if providers like the Life Needs Assessment.

### ACTION ITEMS

- **Approve February Minutes**  
Kate Oja made a motion to approve. It was seconded by Tony Baird. All in favor, none opposed; motion carried.
- **Approve Kelly Burkett as a new stakeholder member of the Program Committee**  
Aimee Durfee made a motion to approve. It was seconded by Christopher Tuff. All in favor, none opposed; motion carried.
- **Approve Kate Oja as a new member of the Program Committee**  
Kate Oja recused herself from voting.

Eric Peckham made a motion to approve. It was seconded by Anne Napper. All in favor, none opposed; motion carried.

- ***Approve Anne Napper as a new member of the Governance Committee***

Anne Napper recused herself from voting.

Ann Marie Taliercio made a motion to approve. It was seconded by Tony Baird. All in favor, none opposed; motion carried.

- ***Approve Meghan Fountain as a new member of the Governance Committee***

Meghan Fountain recused herself from voting.

Ann Marie Taliercio made a motion to approve. It was seconded by Nancy Williams. All in favor, none opposed; motion carried.

- ***Approve Eric Peckham as the new Chair of the Audit Committee***

Eric Peckham recused himself from voting.

Jessica McCarthy made a motion to approve. It was seconded by Anne Napper. All in favor, none opposed; motion carried.

- ***Approve Christopher Tuff as a new member of the Audit Committee***

Christopher Tuff recused himself from voting.

Eric Peckham made a motion to approve. It was seconded by Tony Baird. All in favor, none opposed; motion carried.

## **CFO UPDATES**

- ***Accumulated Expenditure Report – through February 28, 2026***

PY24 - We spent all funds awarded except for OTDA 2024 Summer TANF was underspent by \$207,900.

PY25 – I've highlighted some items that will impact fiscal year end:

- OTDA Summer TANF program overspent by \$350k, we have reached out to OTDA to see if any other location underspent their funds during the same period, and if so, could we receive those funds to cover the direct cost of providing work experience to Syracuse youth.
- Empire State Development (ESD) grant denied \$204k. We are trying to see if we can mitigate that short fall
- NYSCION Calendar Year 2026 will begin being spent as of April 2026. SCION OMH funds were required to be spent in full before we could spend NYSCION to cover DRC Costs.

- ***Balance sheet – through February 28, 2026***

- The M&T operating balance shows a negative balance on the financial statements due to timing. The February 27<sup>th</sup> payroll costs were reimbursed to CNY Works in the beginning of March. The actual bank account did not go negative.
- We have \$2M in assets, \$1M in accrued liabilities. As of February 26, accruals for direct services were over \$1M. We are working with our training institutions to pay for these completed trainings. The accrual balances should be around \$400k/\$500k.

- ***Income statement – through February 28, 2026***

- These figures are actual figures through February 2026, then projecting out the next four months to calculate the projected cumulative fiscal year expenditures.
  - The projected revenues are projected to be significantly under budget since we are underspending the QUEST grant.
  - There are positive variances (cost savings) due to staff vacancies. This issue helps with the bottom line but creates a strain on the remaining staff trying to continue to provide adequate services to our clients. Sheryl is working on filling those vacancies.
  - The PY25 Budget was created based on last year's trends. Due to the ESD Grant under payment, and the OTDA /TANF Summer Youth program overspending a \$500k/\$550k projected loss is being discussed, but we may be able to mitigate some of it.
- **Budget plan -high level**
    - Program Directors will get the PY26 budget package by the end of day today. They will have until April 27th to get back to Finance so we can combine all programs from all departments and present that to the Executive and Finance Committee at the May 5<sup>th</sup> meeting and the Board at the June 12<sup>th</sup> meeting so that PY26 is in place on July 1, 2026, and can be ready to use.
    - The salaries, taxes and benefit workbook is created by Finance and reviewed and confirmed by HR so the figures for direct staffing costs will be very accurate.
    - Occupancy costs are based on rent, utility, phone, and maintenance; direct costs and are not under the oversight of the Program Directors.
    - Directors will have input on Program supplies, trainings, etc. They will also have input on any new programmatic initiatives.

Aimee asked if there is a plan to fill the vacant treasurer position on the board. Rosemary said yes, we will be discussing that at the Governance Committee meeting on May 20<sup>th</sup>.

## **EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR UPDATES**

- **QUEST Bootcamp Update**  
We had 9 individuals graduate from the second cohort on April 6<sup>th</sup>. To date, we have had a 95% completion rate. Please pass the word if you know anyone who is eligible. Professionals from construction and the trades come in to discuss what it's like to work in their field. Looking ahead we want to have five additional cohorts. We would like to include healthcare and partner with Loretto, also. The participants are paid a stipend of \$16/hour, \$320/week, and they receive a bonus of \$320 for perfect attendance.
- **TANF Applications**  
TANF applications went live on April 1<sup>st</sup>. If your business would like to be a worksite, let Bruce or Rosemary know.
- **Development Days**  
We have implemented development days on the last Friday of each month. In March we had a Professor from OCC facilitate a 3-hour training course on communication styles. It was very interactive and leadership and staff really enjoyed it.
- **NYATEP Youth Practitioners Conference**  
Rosemary and most of the Youth Team attended the NYATEP Youth Conference in Saratoga Springs March 9<sup>th</sup> - 11<sup>th</sup> and found it to be very informative.

- **211 Advocacy Day**

Rosemary sits on the 2-1-1 New York State Board and attended the 211 Advocacy Day in Albany on February 10<sup>th</sup>. One of the items Rosemary advocated for was the benefit cliff, which means when a small rise in income leads to a sudden loss of benefits, leaving a person or family worse financially. The goal is for public benefits to last over 6 months after they are working.

- **Construction Careers Information Session**

On March 31<sup>st</sup> CNY Works hosted an information session focused on Construction Career Pathways. We had 45 people sign up, and 36 attended, with a few walk-ins. This was in partnership with CenterState CEO and other community partners. NYSDOL's Deputy Commissioner for Workforce Development gave some remarks, and we also had Empire State Development attend the information session. We also had Gilbane who is contracted by Micron to build the fabs. They heard directly from Gilbane and from Jeff, who is the Director of the NY Site Construction for Micron and one of our Board members. Sara Newton-Klitz, previous Board member from Micro was in attendance as well. They received information about all the workforce constructions programs, processes, and entries in the community, what it entails, etc.

- **Meeting with Mayor Owens**

Rosemary, Sue and Randy had a meeting with Mayor Owens and Eric Ennis on March 30<sup>th</sup>. The Mayor pledged \$50k for admin and unrestricted funds. We will meet with the County Executive soon to make the same request.

## **COO UPDATES**

- **Quarterly Annual Turnover Report**

Sheryl is providing this to point out how SYEP affects the turnover rate. So far, there has been no turnover for the first quarter of 2026.

## **BOARD RETREAT**

### **NYSDOL PRESENTATION**

Joanna Palladino and Renae Townsend from NYSDOL presented an overview of Board responsibilities and duties under WIOA.

If you have questions, you can send an email to [lwdb@labor.ny.org](mailto:lwdb@labor.ny.org)

Aimee Durfee asked how the State does their evaluations. There are monitoring guide tools on the website: one for consolidated annual fiscal review, and one for program monitoring. Within those there is a list of what we look at. We Look at rules and regs and performance. We get performance from one stop operating system. Reports are made available to the local area. However, sometimes reports are flawed due to us having an old system that collects the data. We are creating a new data reporting system in Cognos.

NYSDOL program monitors do quarterly desk reviews from OSOS. Let us know if there are reporting issues. Sometimes staff just struggle to put the info in correctly, sometimes training refreshers are needed, and sometimes staff turnover can affect this as well.

## **STRATEGIC PLANNING**

This document provides a synthesized overview of the major themes, priorities, and strategic signals shared by the Board of Directors during the meeting. It integrates discussion across **career pathways and no-wrong-door systems, partnerships and funding diversification, and operations, governance, and staff development** into a cohesive narrative intended to guide leadership and strategic planning.

### **1. Defining Success: Outcomes Over Activities**

Across all discussions, the Board emphasized that success must be defined by long-term, high-quality outcomes, not short-term outputs.

- Job placement alone is insufficient; success includes retention, wage progression, and sustained attachment to the workforce.
- Measurements should extend beyond initial placement to include 2nd- and 4th-quarter employment and stability indicators.
- Board members are signaling a shift from activity-based compliance toward impact-driven performance management.

**Strategic Signal:** The organization should consistently frame decisions, funding, and reporting around long-term workforce outcomes rather than program volume.

### **2. Career Pathways and the No Wrong Door System**

The Board's discussion reflected strong support for a **no wrong door philosophy**, paired with concern about implementation consistency.

- **Key Themes**
- A no wrong door approach requires **coordination, shared expectations, and accurate referrals** across partners.
- Without system-wide visibility, staff risk sending customers to the wrong service or creating unnecessary handoffs.
- Pathways must be **clear, navigable, and milestone-based**, allowing jobseekers to see progress from entry to employment stability.
- **Role of CNY Works**
- Board members questioned whether CNY Works can or should be the single front door.
- The emerging consensus supports a **hub-and-spoke model**:
- CNY Works as the **regional coordinator, standards-setter, and connector**
- Multiple access points (affiliate sites, co-locations, mobile access)

**Strategic Signal:** Leadership is expected to strengthen alignment and standards across entry points while preserving flexibility for customers.

### **3. Partnerships as System Infrastructure**

Partnerships are viewed not as optional collaborations but as **core infrastructure** for service delivery, funding resilience, and participant success.

- **Community-based organizations** are essential for outreach, trust, and wraparound supports.
- Employer and labor partnerships are critical for ensuring pathways align with **real labor market demand**.
- Cross-sector collaboration reduces duplication, increases scale, and strengthens regional impact.

**Strategic Signal:** Partnerships should be managed as long-term system relationships, not transactional or grant-specific arrangements.

#### 4. **Funding Diversification and Resilience**

The Board expressed concern about overreliance on limited funding streams and emphasized diversification as a priority.

- Reliance on a single funder creates risk and limits adaptability.
- A balanced mix of **restricted and unrestricted funding** is necessary to support:
  - Innovation
  - Pilots
  - Rapid response to emerging needs
- Engagement with public-sector leaders and advocacy is seen as a pathway to new funding opportunities.

**Strategic Signal:** Funding strategy should support organizational flexibility and long-term sustainability rather than short-term stability alone.

#### 5. **Addressing Basic Needs as a Workforce Strategy**

The Board reinforced that employment success depends on **addressing basic needs first or in parallel**.

- Priority areas include:
  - Childcare
  - Housing stability
  - Transportation
  - Food security

These needs must be addressed through intentional partnerships and braided funding, not treated as peripheral issues.

**Strategic Signal:** Workforce outcomes and social supports must be integrated rather than siloed.

#### 6. **Operations, Data, and Technology**

Operational systems were identified as both a constraint and an opportunity.

- Existing data systems limit visibility into customer progress, partner coordination, and outcomes.

- The Board supports investing in **internal tools, dashboards, and performance management systems** that go beyond minimum compliance.
- Clarity is needed between governance responsibilities and operational execution.

**Strategic Signal:** Data should be used as a tool for learning, accountability, and improvement—not solely reporting.

## 7. Governance, Alignment, and Accountability

Board members emphasized the importance of alignment across governance, leadership, and frontline practice.

- Clear roles and boundaries between the Board and operations are essential.
- Staff at all levels should understand how their work connects to strategic goals.
- Performance data should inform decision-making, resource allocation, and support.

**Strategic Signal:** The Board expects stronger top-to-bottom alignment and intentional use of performance information.

## 8. Staff Development, Culture, and Retention

People were consistently identified as the organization’s most critical asset.

- Structured onboarding, ongoing training, and internal career pathways are needed.
- Emphasis on **soft skills, cultural competency, and customer experience** is central to effectiveness.
- Turnover and wellness are recognized as organizational risks that require proactive attention.

**Strategic Signal:** Investment in staff development and culture is viewed as foundational to long-term system performance.

## Overall Board Message

Taken together, the Board is signaling a desire to move the organization toward:

- **Systems thinking over program silos**
- **Outcomes over activities**
- **Coordination over fragmentation**
- **People-centered operations over compliance-only approaches**

The expectation is not simply to add programs, but to **lead alignment, clarify pathways, strengthen partnerships, and build a resilient, outcome-driven workforce system for the region.**