

**MEETING MINUTES**  
**LAKE COUNTY WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT BOARD**  
**November 15<sup>th</sup>, 2023 @ 10:00 AM**

**Board Roll Call**

Eric Barbe  
Suzanne Casar  
Hugh Scott Seaholm (P)  
Patrick Mohorcic  
Brian Bontempo  
Rich Mears

Mark Goffinet  
Carrie Dotson (P)  
Tim Flenner  
Terry Lazar  
Jerry Benko  
Dan Findley

Sara Spence  
Gretchen Skok-DiSanto  
Shayna Jackson  
Carolyn O’Conner  
Shirley Galipo

**Others in Attendance**

Cory Vojack, Ex Director, LCWDB     Leslie Ryan, LCDJFS     Shawn Douglas, LCDJFS  
Mike Hatton, Lake County Veterans Service Commission

**Call to Order:**

Vice Chairman Flenner called the meeting to order at 10:03 AM.

**Minutes:**

Terry Lazar moved for the approval of the minutes of the June 8th, 2023, meeting. Patrick Mohorcic seconded the motion. All were in Favor; Motion Carried without abstentions.

**Introductions:**

Cory Vojack introduced two new members to the board, Jerry Benko, Senior Vice President, Senior Commercial Market Executive, Middlefield Banking Company, and Mark Goffinet, Program Delivery Manger, Office of Workforce Development. Both replacing outgoing members Robert J. Dawson and William Moore respectively.

Cory Vojack then introduced Mike Hatton, Lake County Veteran Service Officer, Lake County Veterans Service Commission, for the Spotlight Presentation.

**Spotlight Presentation:**

Mr. Mike Hatton, the County Veteran Service Officer, commenced the presentation by outlining the role and responsibilities of the Veterans Service Commission. He emphasized its status as a separate entity from the Department of Veterans Affairs, dedicated to serving veterans, dependents, and survivors.

Mr. Hatton highlighted the legal obligations of the Veterans Service Commission, which include assisting veterans in obtaining federal, state, and local benefits, providing temporary emergency financial assistance, and offering transportation to and from VA medical appointments. Notably, Lake County surpasses these minimum requirements, ensuring respectful services for indigent veterans. Discussion ensued regarding employment services, with a focus on collaboration with Ohio Means Jobs and the Disabled Veteran Outreach Program (DVOP) Specialist, Michele Stowe-Caya.

Mr. Hatton mentioned the avoidance of duplicating services offered by experts nearby. The presentation

detailed the services provided by the Veterans Benefit Administration (VBA) and the Veterans Health Administration (VHA), covering compensation, pension, life insurance, medical care, and more. Mr. Hatton then discussed the National Cemetery Administration's offerings, including in-ground burial and columbarium options. The expansion of national cemetery sites was highlighted. An overview of the locations, eligibility criteria, and services offered by Ohio Veterans Homes in Sandusky and Georgetown was presented.

Mr. Hatton shared recent updates, including the implementation of new software for the Veterans Management System, the hiring of two accredited veterans, and ongoing exploration of new programs under Financial Assistance. Increased outreach events to veterans' organizations and community agencies were also highlighted. Mr. Hatton concluded the presentation with a review of fiscal numbers for 2022 revealed over 13,300 veterans in Lake County, with significant federal expenditures. Specifics included \$80,294,000 in tax-free compensation and pension, \$4,318,000 for education benefits, \$573,000 for insurance and indemnities to survivors, and \$81,632,000 in medical care for over 5,300 veteran patients.

### **Workforce Director's Report:**

Cory Vojack, Executive Director of the Lake County Workforce Development Board, presented the Return on Investment (ROI) Annual Report for Program Year 2022, highlighting significant accomplishments and contributions to the community. The total training cost for the year was \$82,325.00, with 99 participants successfully placed in direct employment, achieving an average wage at placement of \$46,913.55. The total annualized income from placed participants amounted to \$4,644,441.60, and the net taxpayer ROI, calculated at an average of 8.7 months, was \$229,756.77. These results underscore the board's commitment to effective workforce development and its positive impact on both participants and taxpayers.

Mr. Vojack then gave an update for Quarter one of the Return-on-Investment Report for Program Year 2023. The Q1 2023 report indicated continued success, with 24 individuals placed into gainful employment opportunities. Average wage at placement was \$21.65, resulting in total annualized earnings of \$1,080,539.20. The net taxpayer ROI for the quarter was 6.9 months, demonstrating a swift return to work and operational efficiency in workforce development efforts.

Mr. Vojack then reviewed the Balanced Scorecard for Program Year 2023's first quarter. Local Workforce Area #5 achieved and exceeded performance measures in Q1, PY 23. Outreach and customer service initiatives positively impacted job seekers, and internal operations improved through strengthened partnerships and engagement efforts. While maintaining a strong accountability level, there is acknowledgment of areas for improvement.

Mr. Vojack then announced that the LCWDB, Auburn Career Center, and OhioMeansJobs Geauga County have collaborated to create a new position, a Placement & Career Navigator. Nicole Moore was introduced as the new Career Navigator at Auburn Career Center. Her extensive experience and understanding of program requirements position her well for this pivotal role. Nicole will focus on bridging the gap between job seekers and employers, fostering partnerships, and contributing to workforce development and career advancement within the community. The Career Navigator will actively participate in hiring events and job fairs, identify business needs, assist in job seeker and employer development, provide real-time data on qualified candidates, and promote incumbent worker training programs. The role aims to enhance connections between job seekers, employers, and OhioMeansJobs (OMJ) Lake and Geauga Counties.

Cory Vojack then described recent Incumbent Worker Training Initiatives. The LCWDB has entered agreements to supplement EMT training costs for the Concord Township Fire Department and Perry Joint Fire District using Incumbent Worker Training Funds. This initiative supports upskilling current employees with tenure of at least six months, contributing to a skilled workforce. Participants from these fire departments are receiving training through Auburn Career Center's Emergency Medical Technician program.

Mr. Vojack concluded his report with mentioning his recent joining the Educational Service Center of the Western Reserve's Business Advisory Council. Within the council's current initiatives, Cory shared the Educational Service Center of the Western Reserve's Corporate Challenge, fostering collaboration between

businesses and educational institutions, was highlighted. The program offers students opportunities to address real-world workforce challenges through various projects, promoting a dynamic connection between education and industry.

### **Marketing Committee:**

Gretchen Skok-DiSanto reported that The Marketing Committee convened on November 8th, 2023, to discuss recent initiatives and events aimed at promoting workforce development in Lake County. The following topics were a summary of the key discussions:

#### 1. Rebranding Initiative:

The Ohio Department of Job & Family Services is currently undergoing a statewide rebranding effort, which includes the OhioMeansJobs centers. Two examples of the new branding were presented during the meeting.

#### 2. Podcast: "North Coast Careers":

Gretchen Skok-DiSanto reported on the success of the podcast, "North Coast Careers," which was launched last year. To date, 20 episodes have been released. The upcoming 21st episode will feature Zachery Ludi, Veterans Program Manager, aligning with the focus on promoting Veteran Resources for Military Spouses and Families month.

#### 3. Radio Advertising:

The Marketing Committee has been actively promoting workforce services on Mix 97.1 FM and WKKY 104.7 FM through a combination of commercials and live spots, reaching a broad audience to increase awareness of available resources.

#### 4. Billboard Campaign:

A billboard campaign was implemented on routes 2 & 20 from June 1st to August 31st, emphasizing WIOA training services. Three different ads highlighted various career development opportunities, contributing to a visible presence in the community.

#### 5. Notable Events:

The committee reported that the OhioMeansJobs|Lake County team actively participated in various events, including career fairs, job and resource fairs, plant tours, and workshops. Noteworthy involvement was observed in community events such as the Lake County Fair, Mentor City Fest, and Back to School Bash, providing valuable opportunities for engagement with the local community.

The Marketing Committee commended the team's comprehensive approach to rebranding, podcast production, radio advertising, billboard campaigns, and active participation in community events reflects a dynamic strategy to effectively promote workforce development initiatives. The board reflected on the initiatives presented in this report demonstrated a commitment to reaching diverse audiences and fostering community engagement.

### **Adjournment:**

There being no further business, Suzanne Casar moved for adjournment at 10:50 AM. The motion was seconded by Brian Bontempo, and all were in favor.