

**NORTHEAST OHIO CONSORTIUM (“NOC”)  
COUNCIL OF GOVERNMENTS  
MEETING MINUTES**

Wednesday, February 28, 2024  
11:00 a.m.

Geauga County Offices, Meeting Room B167-B168,  
12611 Ravenwood Drive, Chardon, Ohio 44024

MEMBERS PRESENT:           Commissioner Sabrina Christian-Bennett  
  Commissioner Jim Dvorak  
  Commissioner Casey Kozlowski

MEMBERS ABSENT:

OTHERS IN ATTENDANCE: Hattie Grubke (OMJ-Ashtabula), Alissa Drees (ACJFS), Brian Guarniere (GCJFS), Margo Reda (OMJ-Geauga), Alyssa Steinhoff (GCJFS), Patrick Arcaro (Director, ACJFS), Mandy Minnick (OMJ-Portage), Vanessa Beard (PCJFS), Angel Brandner (PCJFS), Brian Boykin (PCJFS), Craig Sernik (Area 19 Director), Denise Gehring (Area 19).

Mr. Kozlowski called the meeting to order at 11:08 a.m.

Minutes

**Mr. Dvorak moved to approve the meeting Minutes from December 13, 2023. Mr. Kozlowski seconded the motion which was approved by all members present.**

Administrative Report

Mr. Sernik reported the Ohio Workforce Association parted ways with their lobbyist group Junto Group. Rapid Response for Deluxe in Portage and for Mohawk in Ashtabula were done. The audit of the NOC COG has begun.

Fiscal Report

Mr. Sernik reported halfway through the program year and project the area may return a modest amount of dislocated worker in either Ashtabula or Geauga and some administrative monies. We are going to request \$830,000.00 in additional funds from the state. Met with the providers in all three counties and all could use the additional youth funds. The State received a no cost one year extension on the Fresh Start grant that was to close end of March 2024 that will now close March

2025. The State picked up \$2 million additional RESEA dollars and will distribute by looking at areas who are high spenders.

### Reports of County OMJ-Centers

*OMJ Geauga County.* Ms. Reda reported the Open House with Kent State University-Geauga and Geauga Growth Partnership will be held next week to attract students and young job seekers to learn more about connecting with the different local businesses. On April 1<sup>st</sup> is the Getting Legal Series with an attorney presenting legal updates for 2023-2024 driven toward businesses. The Reverse Job Fair will be in March at Auburn Career Center. ODJFS has made changes and adjustment to the UI and are now training some of their employment professionals to do three different types of activities and they've added another 10 counties to have an in-person on-site OMJ to help adjudicate some of the issues individuals are having. Held a two hour Teams meeting training on the First Amendment Auditor.

*OMJ Ashtabula County.* Ms. Grubke reported will be holding an Ashtabula County Job Fair on Wednesday, May 8<sup>th</sup>. Held a Rapid Response event for Mohawk two weeks ago yesterday with 95 employees laid-off. The OMJ held resumes seminars. All employees except for 15 were all on SharedWork through unemployment. Ms. Grubke stated she joined their private Facebook page in order to post assistance from the OMJ Center.

*OMJ Portage County.* Ms. Minnick reported the OMJ Center is partnering with FCSC to develop a youth council something in the community to give voice to the young people. The manufacturing internship program will not begin due to not being able to get the 10 people needed. The WIOA team spent almost \$220,000 in ITAs only, Benefit Program goal with the State was by the end of the year to have 40 participants and are currently at 55 and preparing for the Re-entry Fair scheduled for April 18<sup>th</sup>. The Business Services team had almost 600 business services offered, planning another transportation job fair for March 27<sup>th</sup> at the OMJ-Portage from 1:00 p.m. to 4:00 p.m., and completing the Rapid Response with Deluxe. The work participation rate preliminary report for January shows 48 percent. The Youth team held its first annual holiday workshop for the youth at the end of the year.

### Old Business

#### *Fresh Start Grant Redistribution of Funds.*

**Ms. Christian-Bennett moved to approve to distribute the \$80,000.00 of Fresh Start Third Allocation in the following ways:**

- 1. Distribute the \$8,000.00 of Administrative Funds to Area 19 NOC COG.**
- 2. Distribute \$20,220.00 to Ashtabula.**
- 3. Distribute \$51,780.00 to Portage.**
- 4. Transfer \$20,000.00 of Fresh Start Allocation 1 from Ashtabula to Portage.**
- 5. Transfer \$220.00 of Fresh Start Allocation 2 from Ashtabula to Portage.**

**Mr. Dvorak seconded the motion which was approved by all members present.**

*Distribution of WIOA Rapid Response Funds.*

**Ms. Christian-Bennett moved to approve to distribute \$53,659.00 of additional FY24 Dislocated Worker funds in the following manner:**

1. **Distribute \$5,366.00 to Area 19 Administrative Offices.**
2. **Distribute \$15,454.00 to ACJFS.**
3. **Distribute \$11,928.00 to GCJFS.**
4. **Distribute \$20,911.00 to PCJFS.**

**Mr. Dvorak seconded the motion which was approved by all members present.**

*Distribution of RESEA Funds.*

**Ms. Christian-Bennett moved to approve to distribute \$113,677.00 of Supplemental PY23 RESEA funds and \$42,033.48 of PY23 RESEA funds:**

1. **Distribute \$11,367.00 to Area 19 Administrative Offices.**
2. **Distribute \$51,000.00 to ACJFS**
3. **Distribute \$15,343.48 to GCJFS.**
4. **Distribute \$78,000.00 to PCJFS.**

**Mr. Dvorak seconded the motion which was approved by all members present.**

*Discussion of Incumbent Worker Training Policy Change.*

Mr. Sernik explained this was a simple change that was in error of how it was presented to the Workforce Development Board. The original draft had that once we reached \$10,000.00 in a year, we would not provide municipality anymore and not to apply for back to back years. During the WDB meeting a last second change was suggested to eliminate that to make it provide more money and to be more flexible with municipalities. The policy draft that was signed still had this remaining within it. This IWT policy change will be presented to the WDB for their approval.

**Ms. Christian-Bennett moved to amend the Incumbent Worker Training Policy, A-07 as presented. Mr. Dvorak seconded the motion which was approved by all members present.**

*Discussion of OJT Policy Changes.*

Mr. Sernik explained considering to allowing to go above the 50 percent threshold. The State has revised its OJT policy allowing to go above 50 percent for smaller businesses under certain criteria. Discussion will be held with the OMJ managers to decide how to set the criteria up when we would go above 50 percent. Area 19's policy currently has nothing based upon the size of the employer. It was suggested to maybe leave it as discretionary.

*Discussion of Supportive Service Policy Changes.*

Mr. Sernik stated we were going to combine the three supportive service policies but the State suggested not doing so. The reason not to do so is that the youth have a much greater and different need.

New Business

*Discussion of Draft Application for Additional CCMEP Funds and Motion to Approve the Same.*

Mr. Sernik reported he discussed with each CDJFS and the providers with all indicating the need for additional CCMEP funds.

**Ms. Christian-Bennett moved to approve an application for additional CCMEP funds in the amount of \$540,000.00 and for additional Dislocated Worker funds in the amount of \$290,000.00. Mr. Dvorak seconded the motion which was approved by all members present.**

*WDB Membership Resignation:*

**Ms. Christian-Bennett moved to accept the resignation of Judith Barris, Ashtabula County Community Action Agency, representing Community Organization for Ashtabula County, from the Area 19 Workforce Development Board. Mr. Dvorak seconded the motion which was approved by all members present.**

The Board decided to cancel the March 28<sup>th</sup> meeting and reschedule for April 3<sup>rd</sup> at 11:00 a.m. to be held at the OMJ-Portage Center.

Public Comment

None.

Adjourn the Meeting

**Ms. Christian-Bennett moved to adjourn the meeting. Mr. Dvorak seconded the motion which was approved by all members present.**

Meeting Adjourned at 2:15 p.m.

Minutes prepared by Denise Gehring.