

Lorain County Workforce Development Board Meeting
Thursday, May 29, 2025
9:00 am
Meeting Minutes

Members Present

Chris Brown	Mark Goffinet	Susan Meek
Chris Cabot	Tracy Green	Ben Norton
Hannah DiVencenzo	Lisa Hutson	Donald Ortner
Rob Duncan	Nick Jarmoszuk	Erin Schneider (v)
Tony Gallo	Carl Johnson	
Charlotte Gardiner (v)	Tim King (v)	

Members Absent

Shauna Mitelski, Ryan Flanigan, Andy Kasubienski, Kevin Stitak, David Zunis
Sha-Niqua Matthews, Dave Larson

Staff/Guests Present

Chris Durkin Commissioner Jeff Ridell

Call to Order: Ben called the meeting to order at 9:00 a.m.

Roll Call: Ben asked Lesley to conduct the roll call, and Lesley confirmed that there was a quorum.

Approval of Minutes

Ben called for a motion to approve the minutes from the previous meeting. The motion was approved.

WDB Chairperson Report

Workforce Development in Lorain County

- Ben highlighted Lorain County's unique advantage with a mega-site of over 1,000 acres ready for development, making it the envy of the region in the state of Ohio.
- Lt. Governor Tressel visited Lorain County Community College, and JVS emphasized workforce readiness and the success of the Innovative Waiver program, which removes obstacles for students in the College Credit Plus program.

- Lorain County Community College offers 53 courses and five credentials through the statewide Innovative Waiver program, focusing on industry-recognized certifications tied to high-demand careers.
- Commissioner Ridell stressed the importance of workforce development, citing the need for workers in the next five to six years due to an aging population and retiring workforce.
- Collaboration between JVS, Lorain County Community College, and area employers is critical to identifying and addressing current and future workforce needs.
- The board aims to stabilize the workforce today and build a sustainable model for the future, leveraging internships, retraining programs, and scholarships.

Strategic Planning and Metrics for Workforce Development

- Lt. Governor Tressel emphasized the need for a community scoreboard to track workforce development metrics, including the number of certificates, degrees, and job placements achieved.
- Commissioner Ridell highlighted the importance of incorporating data and metrics into government processes to measure success and secure additional funding.
- Lorain County Community College's strategic plan and the board's efforts to align workforce development initiatives with measurable outcomes were discussed as key priorities.
- The board plans to integrate metrics into its workforce development activities to ensure accountability and demonstrate tangible results.

Collaboration with JVS and Other Institutions

- Commissioner Ridell expressed concerns about JVS's lack of collaboration and focus on organizational outcomes rather than broader workforce development goals.
- Efforts are underway to improve relationships with JVS and integrate their programs into the county's workforce development strategy.
- Dave announced plans to have youth program staff provide career counseling at JVS and local high schools to better connect with in-school youth and prepare them for future opportunities.
- Partnerships with institutions like Lorain County Community College and Black River Career Prep are being strengthened to enhance training and career readiness.

Addressing Out-of-School Youth and Juvenile Workforce Challenges

- Dave highlighted the difficulty in contacting out-of-school youth aged 18-24, a critical segment for workforce development.

- Efforts are being made to mandate communication between school superintendents and Ohio Means Jobs offices for students who drop out, ensuring better tracking and engagement.
- Partnerships with juvenile detention centers aim to provide training and counseling to at-risk youth before they turn 18, helping them transition into the workforce.
- The board is exploring ways to support formerly incarcerated individuals with transportation and job placement services.

Transition to Electronic Files and Process Improvements

- Dave announced the transition to electronic files for workforce development, starting in June, to improve efficiency and security.
- The state audit revealed inefficiencies in the current paper-based system, prompting the move to electronic records by 2026.
- The transition will streamline processes, reduce paper usage, and enhance data management for workforce programs.

Budget Challenges and Resource Allocation

- The adult program budget has been fully spent, requiring careful management of funds and prioritization of training programs.
- A 9% budget cut starting in July will further strain resources, prompting efforts to optimize spending and seek additional funding opportunities.
- Dave plans to hire part-time youth specialists to address staffing needs while managing costs effectively.
- Efforts to increase revenue include renting out unused office space and reducing travel expenses.

Next Meeting – Thursday, August 28, 2025