

Board Meeting Minutes
March 19, 2026, at 8:00 am
Jules Center, JCC

Welcome/Call to Order: Chairman Cooper welcomed Board Members at 8:00 am. He noted that a quorum was present, with one member expected to leave early, and proceeded to the approval of minutes and resolutions.

Privilege of the Floor: There was none.

Approval of Minutes:

- December 18, 2025 Board Meeting minutes – Motion by 1st Vice Chair Pettit, seconded by Mr. Dupee; approved unanimously.
- March 6, 2026 Executive Board Meeting minutes – Motion by 1st Vice Chair Pettit, seconded by Mr. Dupee; approved unanimously.

New Business: Chairman Cooper noted a correction to the resolution numbering and confirmed the Board would follow the printed resolution document.

- Resolution: 25-06 – Approval of Membership Renewal to Advocate Drum
Motion by 1st Vice Chair Pettit, seconded by Ms. LaVallee; approved unanimously.
- Resolution: 25-07 – Approval of Membership Renewal to Naturally Lewis
Motion by Mr. Dupee, seconded by 1st Vice Chair Pettit; approved unanimously.
- Resolution: 25-08 – Authorizing Use of Perkins Grant Funds FY26
Motion by 1st Vice Chair Pettit, seconded by Ms. Dwyer; approved unanimously.

Correspondence: There was none.

Guest Speaker: Ms. Dawn Cole, President and CEO of United Way of Northern New York, provided an update on efforts to support ALICE households, emphasizing the connection between financial instability and workforce challenges. She highlighted new initiatives, including the *Getting Ahead in the Workplace* program, a 16-week cohort designed to help working individuals build stability, confidence, and long-term goals. Early outcomes show increased participant engagement, community involvement, and personal growth. Ms. Cole also discussed ongoing efforts such as the *Staying Ahead* program and the development of employer stability partnerships to better connect employees with resources. During the discussion, Mr. Dupee offered to host future programming and explore opportunities to support participants through educational pathways. Ms. Cole encouraged continued collaboration among local organizations and employers to strengthen workforce stability across the region.

One-Stop Operator Report: Ms. Garno presented the One-Stop Operator Report for October–December 2025. She reported challenges accessing Cognos Management Reports, resulting in

incomplete data for the quarter. A revised report will be distributed once access is restored. Available data indicates that job orders and employer services are consistent with the same period last year. Customer satisfaction surveys were overwhelmingly positive, with strong feedback regarding staff support and services. Quarterly program reviews identified minimal errors, with minor updates being made to improve documentation clarity. The March partner meeting was successfully held, focusing on communication and collaboration among partner agencies.

Executive Director's Report/Financial Report: Director Mayforth provided a fiscal update, noting that anticipated federal funding cuts were avoided. Funding is expected to remain largely level, with slight decreases in some areas. Delays in federal guidance were attributed to staffing shortages. State-funded programs, including summer youth employment, remain stable. Program expenditures are on track, however, some state funding must be used within strict timelines, resulting in minor unspent balances.

Labor market data shows unemployment rates remain within normal seasonal ranges. However, concerns were raised regarding manufacturing job losses and long-term workforce shortages due to population decline and retirements.

Director Mayforth also warned of a recent job posting scam and emphasized the importance of confirming job opportunities with employers.

Upcoming Events and Programs:

- Workplace Forum - March 26 at BOCES
- Spring Job Fair - April 26 at Hilton Garden Inn
- Career Jam - May 21 at Watertown Municipal Arena
- Summer Youth Program - Applications opening soon

Roundtable Discussion: Board members shared workforce updates.

- Mr. Dupee reported difficulty filling specialized faculty positions and expressed interest in expanding program tracks aligned with employer needs.
- Employers reported both hiring challenges and workforce reductions depending on industry conditions.

Next Meeting: June 18, 2026, at 8:30 am (breakfast at 8:00 am), Lewis County DSS

Adjournment: Motion to adjourn by Ms. Marks; seconded by 1st Vice Chair Pettit. The meeting was adjourned at 9:25 am.

WDB Attendance:

Anderson, George
Castillo, Rod
Cooper, Matthew
Dupee, Dan
Dwyer, Amy
Keruski, John
LaVallee, Marybeth
Marks, Shellie
Mayforth, Cheryl
Pettit, Jody
Yarina, Tracey

Others in Attendance:

Cole, Dawn
Garno, Anne
Gratch, Nick
Hennessey, Sean
Smith, Nana