



North Central Wisconsin Workforce Development Board
CHIEF ELECTED OFFICIALS Meeting
February 20, 2024 • 9:30 a.m.
Virtual via Microsoft Teams

Minutes (approved)

CEO Members Present: Rick Pease (Adams County), Ron Skallerud (Forest County), Michael Tautges (Oneida County), John Pavelski (Portage County), Richard Logan (Vilas County), and John Hokamp (Wood County).

CEO Members Absent: Ben Pierce (Langlade County) Bill Bialecki (Lincoln County), and Kurt Gibbs (Marathon County).

Others Present: None

Staff Present: John Cokl, Brian Kalish, Ginger Keymer, and Jane Spencer.

1. **Call the Meeting to Order** – Skallerud called the meeting to order at a.m.
2. **Approve Agenda** – Hokamp moved to approve the agenda; it was seconded by Logan. Motion carried.
3. **Welcome new Chief Elected Official for Marathon County – Stacey Morache**
4. **Approve Chief Elected Officials’ Minutes from December 19, 2024** - moved to approve the minutes from December 19, 2024; it was seconded by . Motion carried.
5. **Accept Treasurer’s Report** –moved to accept the treasurer’s report as presented; it was seconded by. Motion carried.
6. **Mid-Year Monitoring of Contracted Provider**
7. **NCWWDB Updates**
 - **WIOA Reauthorization** – WIOA has not been reauthorized. A partial shutdown may be coming.
 - **Job Center Updates & Certification** – Job Centers need to be certified every three years and meet guidelines based on whether it is an affiliate or comprehensive site. WDA 6 Job Centers are certified through June 30, 2025. In January, Spencer and Kalish will begin the recertifying process. Some changes are likely in the months ahead.
 - **Staff & Board Member Updates** – CJ Tangedal, Office Manager for NCWWDB has taken another position in the area. Ginger Keymer, who helped cover in the past, has been filling in since early December. Keymer accepted the position and will officially start after the first of the year. Board Member, Matt Murphy is planning for retirement;

he will resign from the Board in March 2025. He has some suggestions for a replacement. Ideas from other CEOs are welcome as well. Spencer officially announced her retirement for April 2025. She is working with the Executive Committee on next steps for a search.

- ***Opioid Crisis Grant Update*** - The Support to Communities opioid crisis grant ended in August. The State Department of Workforce Development has another opioid crisis grant and wanted to get it out to all eleven Boards. However, the Department of Labor cut the grant from \$13 million to \$4 million. To distribute the grant as well as possible, NCWWDB partnered with the Northwest Board to submit a proposal where Northwest would be the grant recipient and then they would contract with NCWWDB to provide the services. The grant has been awarded; the Northwest Board will serve the northern counties, such as Vilas, Oneida, and Forest County. NCWWDB will take the southern part of the region, which includes Wood County.

8. Discussion on Workforce Issues in Each County

- **Adams** – Pease reported a developer has recently built two homes in the City of Adams and may possibly build more. Legal counsel has successfully been hired. The County is no longer supporting their local food pantry. With 70% poverty in their school district, Pease is concerned local children will suffer with this change.
- **Forest** – Skallerud reported that County was able to pass their budget with few cuts to services. The County is working with the Sokaogon Chippewa tribal community on some broadband projects. Expanding broadband access has been a huge issue in Forest County. The Sokaogon Chippewa Tribe is waiting for a grant announcement. If successful, tribal members in a three-county area will have fiber internet to homes on and off the reservation. Forest County could then piggyback off those pathways. If all funding sources come through, the regional community would be using those grants to build the best network possible, with the most coverage, making sure to alleviate redundancies. The ARDC and Human Services Center is now finalized with all state approvals. The four or five dislocated workers have been absorbed by the County. Forest will be contracting with Oneida County for some human services but providing mental health crisis services on their own. Like Vilas, there is not enough snow to open trails, and the County is eager to begin their winter tourism season. Summer tourism went well in Forest County, but now the County sales tax is trending behind. If the region continues having winters with less snow for snowmobiling, etc., that will affect tourism dollars going forward. The County is continuing to look for other ways to generate revenue.
- **Langlade** – No Report
- **Lincoln** – No Report
- **Marathon County** – No Report
- **Oneida** – Tautges reported that employers are in high spirits with the onset of the cold and snow. They are comfortable with staffing situations for tourism-focused businesses. He has heard many repeated comments of customers having pent up demand and dollars; they're

actively looking to find a reason to spend for winter activities.

- **Portage** – Pavelski reported that on Tuesday night, the County Board decided to put together an ad hoc committee to look at the sale of the County Healthcare Center. Several buyers are interested, as there are only so many licenses available for skilled nursing facilities. Portage County currently has 48 licensed beds. The City of Stevens Point will have a new low-income housing complex, scheduled to begin construction in 2025 and reach completion in 2026.
- **Vilas** – Logan reported the County Zoning department and committee have been working on changes to their zoning ordinance to facilitate the building of some affordable housing. County would like more snow for the tourism industry. A childcare center closed in the western part of the County that served a lot of residents. Work is being done to find another location and reopen. A local church is serving as an interim center. Childcare is one of the biggest hurdles that County faces, along with affordable housing. The Gogebic Iron and Vilas County Network just received a federal HRSA planning grant to look at gaps in health care access throughout the region. Vilas County, Gogebic and Iron all struggle with having healthcare and hospitals within reasonable driving distance. They're starting the planning process to identify the needs and figure out where they can fill some of the gaps. The region has an older population as well. Logan stated that employment levels are good in Vilas County. Unemployment is low.
- **Wood** – Hokamp reported the local Post Office needs workers to deliver local mail. The Wood County HR Department filled 165 positions in 2024 with 1659 applicants. The County is attracting employees interested in working for Wood County. Quite a few employees were lost in 2022. Salaries were raised in early 2023 to match other counties in the area. Wood County Crisis Center no longer funded by County but will be contracted out. About 15 employees have been displaced but may be hired by an independent contractor. Recently held a ribbon cutting for their new jail. The Sheriff's Dept is scheduled to move into the new jail in January with inmates projected to arrive in February. Jail is on schedule but slightly over budget.

9. **Adjourn** – Meeting adjourned at 10:13 a.m.