



North Central Wisconsin Workforce Development Board  
**CHIEF ELECTED OFFICIALS Meeting**  
February 20, 2025 • 9:30 a.m.  
**Virtual via Microsoft Teams**

**Minutes** **Approved**

**CEO Members Present:** Rick Pease (Adams County), Ron Skallerud (Forest County), Bill Bialecki (Lincoln County), Stacey Morache (Marathon County), Michael Tautges (Oneida County), Richard Logan (Vilas County), and John Hokamp (Wood County).

**CEO Members Absent:** Ben Pierce (Langlade County) and John Pavelski (Portage County).

**Others Present:** Kurt Gibbs (Marathon County Board Chair) and Lance Pliml (Wood County Board Chair).

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

1. **Call the Meeting to Order** – Pease called the meeting to order at 9:34 a.m.
2. **Approve Agenda** – Bialecki moved to approve the agenda; seconded by Hokamp. Motion carried.
3. **Welcome new Chief Elected Official for Marathon County – Stacey Morache**  
Stacey Morache, District 6 Supervisor for Marathon County, was introduced and welcomed to the group.
4. **Approve Chief Elected Officials' Minutes from December 19, 2024** – Bialecki moved to approve the minutes from December 19, 2024; it was seconded by Hokamp. Motion carried.
5. **Accept Treasurer's Report** – John presented the Treasurer's report, highlighting a strong balance sheet with over \$500,000 in cash on hand, an increase in grant receivables, and the deployment of laptops to program participants. Skallerud moved to accept the treasurer's report as presented; it was seconded by Tautges. Motion carried.
6. **Mid-Year Monitoring of Contracted Provider** - Jane reported on the annual monitoring of Forward Service Corporation, noting their good performance and recommending the renewal of their contracts for the next program year, July 1, 2025, to June 30, 2026. Jane explained the Executive Committee's decision to waive the fiscal policy to align all program contracts on the same schedule, due to the dissolution of LETC and the transition with the Executive Director.
7. **Program Year 2025 Provider Contracts (Youth/Adult/Dislocated Worker)** - Motion to approve by Hokamp; seconded by Skallerud. Motion carried.
8. **Board membership Updates** - Motion to approve membership by Tautges; seconded by Morache. Motion carried.
  - Jeremy Higgins – Moved from the Boys & Girls Club of Portage County to UW Stevens Point. He expressed his interest in staying with the Board to represent Youth Services.
  - Jodi Gruhn – Transitioned from County Materials to Westphal Staffing, also wished to remain on the Board and continue her involvement. Gruhn was recently appointed to the Executive Committee.

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## 9. NCWWDB Updates

- **Executive Order** – Jane mentioned the rescission of a budget memo and the upcoming reauthorization of the Workforce Innovation Opportunity Act (WIOA), with no new updates.
- **Marshfield Job Center** - Jane announced the City Council's decision to fund the resource room Associate only until the end of March, with the lease not renewed. Staff are exploring alternatives with Mid-State Technical College.
- **New Grants** – Jane announced **forWRD**, a new opioid crisis grant which involves collaboration with the Northwest Wisconsin Workforce Board. NCWWDB will serve Wood and Adams, Northwest will serve northern counties. Remaining ARPA funds going to WDB's across the state in the form of **WAI 2.0**. Proposals are due March 1, focusing on areas such as tourism, construction, manufacturing, entry-level healthcare, and childcare.

## 10. Discussion on Workforce Issues in Each County

- **Adams** – Pease discussed the contentious transition to a county administrator, the reduction of staff in various offices, and the defunding of the local food pantry, which has led to increased demand at Second Harvest food distributions.
- **Forest** – Skallerud noted the increase in mental health service calls due to localized services and the positive impact of snow on tourism. He also mentioned the integration of their human services department and the need for CNAs.
- **Langlade** – No Report
- **Lincoln** – Bialecki reported on the static workforce, the formation of an ad hoc committee to address long-term facility needs, the ongoing sale of Pinecrest, and the positive impact of snow on tourism. He also mentioned the challenges in childcare and the progress in broadband expansion.
- **Marathon** – Morache reported on efforts by Economic Development Committee to amend codes and create an ordinance that encourage new homestead properties, workforce housing, and long-term rentals. Difficulty with CNA recruitment in the County. A joint City and County housing taskforce bringing recommendations to the County Board on emergency shelters. Cohort scholarship with Childcaring has nine participants, with goal of 30 within two years, opening 240 slots.
- **Oneida** – Tautges reported that snowmobile trails are open, businesses are happy and breathing a sigh of relief. Good progress in housing. DNR Hiring Fair, struggling to find Foresters, not enough volunteers to lead hunting and boating safety courses. Nicolet College recently added flight training course in 2023; they are also working with high schools on a youth apprenticeship program.
- **Portage** - No Report
- **Vilas** – Logan highlighted the positive impact of snow on tourism and the development of an early childhood center in Manitowish Waters to serve NW Vilas County and SE Iron County.
- **Wood** – Hokamp reported on the expansion of the Weinbrenner shoe factory and the redevelopment of their old factory into an 80-unit apartment complex. He also mentioned the potential redevelopment of the Northern Steel Casting foundry site and the ongoing need for nurses and CNAs in county facilities.
- **April Meeting** – The next meeting was scheduled for April 17th, 2025, and will be held in person at the Marathon County Job Center.

## 11. Adjourn – Meeting adjourned at 10:28 a.m.