



North Central Wisconsin Workforce Development Board
CHIEF ELECTED OFFICIALS Meeting
Teams Virtual Meeting
December 18, 2025 · 9:30 a.m.

Minutes (approved)

CEO Members Present: Rick Pease (Adams County), Steve Maier (Langlade County), Michael Tautges (Oneida County), Ann Konopacky, new appointee by Richard Logan, (Vilas County) and John Hokamp (Wood County).

CEO Members Absent: Terry Lukas, interim Board Chair (Forest County), Stacey Morache (Marathon County), Bill Bialecki (Lincoln County), and John Pavelski (Portage County).

Staff Present: Brian Kalish, Ginger Keymer, John Cokl, Libby Heidmann, and Peter Gelhar.

- 1) **Call to Order/Roll Call** – Pease called the meeting to order at 9:37 a.m., quorum was not reached until 9:43 a.m.
- 2) **Approve Chief Elected Officials' Minutes from October 16, 2025** – Hokamp moved to approve the minutes from October 16, 2025; seconded by Maier. Motion carried.
- 3) **Accept Treasurer's Report** – Maier moved to accept the Treasurer's Report; it was seconded by Hokamp. Motion carried.
- 4) **NCWWDB Updates**
 - a) **Grant application success for LifeWork\$** - Kalish reported the successful award of two grants totaling \$15,000 to be used towards staff time and initial startup costs of the LifeWork\$ program: \$5,000 from the North Central Community Foundation and \$10,000 from the Wausau Impact Grant. LifeWork\$ is a summer program that was in place prior to 2020. NCWWDB partnered with DVR, to provide high school aged students with disabilities with classroom and work experience. Goal is to get this program up and running by June 2026.
 - b) **Rebranding Updates** – Logo is now updated and new email addresses are set up. Greenleaf has provided drafts of new business cards, letterhead, and social media templates. Phase two will be to redesign the website.
 - c) **Awards of Excellence Refresh** - Staff drafted and last week the Board approved a resolution to rename our Awards of Excellence in honor of former Director Jane Spencer. The awards will now be called the Jane A. Spencer Awards of Excellence in recognition of her legacy.

- d) **Monitoring** – In mid-November, DWD came to the Marathon County Job Center, as part of their annual monitoring. For two days they comb through participant files, examine the financial side, ask a bunch of questions. The process went smoothly. The Exit Interview is complete. A couple of minor things to clean up and fix. Final report expected in mid-January.
- e) **One Stop Operator and Job Center Updates - Wisconsin Rapids Job Center** will be decertified and technically closing as a job center as of December 31st. Ongoing discussions with the McMillan Library in Wisconsin Rapids. They are very receptive to working out an arrangement where in-person services can continue there. Kalish is confident that some model will come out of this. Need to iron out the details, such as the location and amount of space available in the library. The building that houses the **Marathon County Job Center** has been sold. The new owners want the building vacated by March 1st. DWD facilities have been scrambling to find a new location and seem to have settled on the second floor of 11 Scott Street in Wausau, across from the Marathon County Public Library. Working out details on parking, the actual leases and which partners will be housed there. NWCCDB is part of a weekly check-in meeting with all the partners to try to get everybody on the same page and get us over there.

5) Discussion on Workforce Issues in Each County

- a) **Adams** – Pease reported that Chula Vista came before the county's Economic Board to announce an almost \$34 million project to expand banquet area by four-fold, create a 24-acre lake with beaches, add an additional 135 hotel rooms, or bungalows, suspended over the water, and expand their golf course and golf housing. Expecting to employ an additional 500 workers, 60-80 full-time, and about twenty of those management positions.
- b) **Forest** – No report
- c) **Langlade Report** – Maier thanked Kalish for his visit to the County. Langlade has invited Kalish to return annually to report on Board accomplishments. Of large focus, the significant grant Langlade received to install fiber optic cable to improve Broadband service in the county.
- d) **Lincoln** – No report.
- e) **Marathon** – No report
- f) **Oneida** – Tautges reported that Oneida is getting snow in measurable quantities. Better start to winter tourist season than the past few years. Business owners are already seeing a dramatic increase in traffic and pleased with the strong start.
- g) **Portage** – No report
- h) **Vilas** – Konopacky needed to take another call during this portion of the meeting.
- i) **Wood** – Open nursing positions in the two county assisted living facilities are slowly being filled. Down to only one contract agency nurse. Two assisted District Attorneys are in the process of being hired. The City of Wisconsin Rapids is considering a solar park on 27-acres in the Town of Grand Rapids, where two of the city's wells are located. Federal government has approved a grant for a Family Health Center in WI Rapids. Contributing almost \$5 million to a \$17 million project. Wood County has issued some operational money and opioid settlement money towards the project. The center would staff 30 employees and include a dental office for veterans, low-income, and seniors without dental insurance. Anticipate construction to begin spring of 2027.

6) Adjourn – Hokamp motioned, Maier seconded to adjourn. Meeting adjourned at 10:08 a.m.