

**STARK TUSCARAWAS WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT BOARD
WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT BOARD MEETING**

July 8, 2026 12:00 p.m.

Zoom

PRESENT	ABSENT	STWDB STAFF
Marla Akridge	Rick Baxter	JoAnn Breedlove
Stephen Carson	Andrew Fowler	Armon Cook
Damus Cole	Joseph Sekely	Rebecca Harris
Lauren Dalesandro		Claudia Lemley
Para Jones		Maddy Miller
Alison Kerns		Aleisha Stout
Mike Lauber		Scott Varian
Susan Lenigar		
Marc Manheim		
Joel McKenzie		
Rick Moss		JOB CENTER OPERATOR FISCAL AGENT DESIGNATED PROVIDER
Steve Rippeth		
Scott Robinson		Carrie Domer
Tracy Sabo		Freda Martin
Sarah Spies		Amy Miller
Patrice Yacko		Dan Sipe
		Renee Steurer
		Rena Wright
		Lori Yager

BUSINESS MINUTES

CALL TO ORDER

Scott Robinson, Chair called the meeting to order at 12:01 p.m.

Announcements..... *Scott Robinson, Chair*

Recognition of Departing Board Members

Robinson recognized three board members—Darren Van Winkle, Stephanie Maier, and Lisa Gould who recently concluded their service due to career changes that prevent them from continuing to represent the workforce area. He expressed the Board's appreciation for their service, insight, and commitment to strengthening the workforce system and extended best wishes to them in their future endeavors.

Meeting Minutes..... *Scott Robinson, Chair*

May 6, 2026, Meeting Minutes..... *Scott Robinson, Chair (Attachment A)*

MOTION: KERNS MOVED FOR THE APPROVAL OF THE MAY 6, 2026, MEETING MINUTES. MANHEIM SECONDED. MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY

Board Operations Updates..... *Scott Robinson, Chair*

- **Program Policy/Existing Initiative Updates**..... *Aleisha Stout, Asst. Director*

Policy Updates: Stout reported that during the last program year, a comprehensive review of the local WIOA policies was completed. Nearly all policies have now been reviewed, with only a few remaining that require additional foundational work related to procurement and fiscal matters. The current versions are available both in the internal system used by staff and on our website www.stwdb.org under the Governance tab in WIOA Policies section. These policies will continue to be reviewed regularly or as required by the state to ensure they remain current and accessible.

Workforce Trends Dashboard: Stout highlighted the Workforce Trends Dashboard as a foundational tool for the board's work. The dashboard reflects real-time data on Stark County, Tuscarawas County, and the combined workforce area, including information on workforce supply, employer demand, and areas of alignment or gaps. Stout noted that this tool is not tied to specific deliverables or usage targets but is intended to inform strategic decision-making across all initiatives. The data and visualizations will be refreshed in late summer or early fall, and she invited board members, as community leaders, to provide input on potential improvements or additional data elements that would better support their work.

BRN 2.0: Stout gave an update on BRN 2.0, the updated iteration of the long-standing Business Resource Network collaborative. She explained that staff completed a learning tour to assess whether the BRN still meets employer and partner needs and have since been developing BRN 2.0 as a more clearly defined, collaborative effort. A new BRN 2.0 landing page on the board's website is in draft form and will describe what the BRN is, who participates, how the collaborative process works, and what goals it is pursuing, along with contact information. The page is expected to go live within the next few weeks. She noted that Workforce Solutions Manager Scott Varian, has been leading this work over the past six months, engaging partners to strengthen knowledge of and information sharing of employer services within the board's footprint, and she encouraged board members to reach out to him with questions or ideas at svarian@stwdb.org

Pathways 2 Progress (Grant): Stout provided an update on the Pathways 2 Progress grant (Pathway Home 6 and branded as Pathways 2 Progress), for which the board is a sub-recipient through Midwest Urban Strategies. She noted that although the grant has been in place for about a year, participant enrollment began in February. A draft Pathways 2 Progress webpage is under development and is expected to be published in approximately two weeks. The site will outline the grant's purpose, partners, participant process, goals, and key community connections. Stout shared positive feedback received from Midwest Urban Strategies, indicating that Armon Cook and the Greater Stark County Urban League service delivery team are performing at a very high level with particularly strong early outcomes. She concluded by inviting questions during the meeting or between meetings as board members review and engage with these initiatives

- **New Board Initiative Updates**..... *JoAnn Breedlove, Exec. Director*

Breedlove began with an administrative update/reminder of board staff email addresses. In mid-May, the workforce board staff transitioned to a new email extension, **stwdb.org**. An automatic reply on the former email addresses has been notifying senders to update their contact lists, but effective July 1, emails to the old addresses now generate a message indicating that delivery was unsuccessful and directing senders to use the new addresses. Breedlove reiterated this change as a reminder to board members and partner organizations.

WorkOhio: Breedlove revisited the WorkOhio initiative, previously introduced at the March 2026 meeting. She explained that WorkOhio, launched by Lieutenant Governor Tressel in January, is designed to connect Ohioans with more personalized job seeker support through seven regional hubs aligned with JobsOhio regions. MAGNET (Manufacturing Advocacy and Growth Network) serves as the regional hub for Northeast Ohio. Breedlove displayed the WorkOhio website and outlined the process for individuals seeking assistance: a prospective job seeker can select “Contact a job expert,” complete a short form with basic information (name, ZIP code, county, preferred contact method, and areas of interest such as job search, training, résumé/cover letter help, or interview preparation), and submit it. For individuals who live in or wish to work in Stark or Tuscarawas counties, referrals are routed to the local system and connected through the OhioMeansJobs Center. She noted that referrals have been limited so far because the state has not heavily promoted the site beyond the initial January launch. The initiative is funded for 18 months, from January 2026 through June 2027, and the board remains prepared to support it as awareness grows.

DOL RESTART Grant Overview (Attachment B): Breedlove highlighted the U.S. Department of Labor RESTART (Reentry Employment in Skilled Trades, Advance Manufacturing, Registered Apprenticeships and Training) grant, pursued in partnership with Midwest Urban Strategies (MUS). She reminded the board that an overview (Attachment B) had previously been shared in April. The grant focuses on serving justice-impacted young adults ages 18–24, with a primary goal of connecting them to pre-apprenticeship and apprenticeship opportunities, particularly within the skilled trades. Midwest Urban Strategies recently informed the board that their multi-board consortium application was successful; five workforce boards across Ohio and Indiana are participating. The award is a forty-two-month grant beginning July 1 and running through December 31, 2029, with an anticipated six-month ramp-up period. As a result, direct service delivery is expected to begin on or after January 1 of next year. Breedlove reported that the local goal is to serve 160 individuals and noted that early conversations have already occurred with apprenticeship partners such as Damus Cole and Rick Moss regarding how best to design exposure, exploration, and program components. She added that a kickoff meeting with MUS and all sub-recipients is scheduled for the end of the month, and she committed to keeping the board informed as the project develops.

Career Connect (Attachment C): Breedlove introduced Claudia Lemley, who joined the team in mid-May as the new Career Connect Manager. She described this as a “unicorn” role, noting that Lemley will oversee a collaborative network of roughly a dozen nonprofit and publicly funded partner organizations delivering workforce services through an employment navigator framework. The position includes championing the initiative, supporting partners, setting goals and expectations, and managing shared data. Breedlove referenced a one-page Career Connect overview (Attachment C) in the packet and emphasized that this role is central to coordinating navigation services and tracking outcomes across the network.

She then expanded on the transition of Career Connect to the board. Effective July 1, the initiative moved from the Stark Economic Development Board’s Strengthening Stark effort to the Stark Tuscarawas Workforce Development Board. Career Connect is a collaborative of about twelve nonprofit and governmental organizations that use an employment navigator model to help the populations they serve secure livable-wage jobs. Many partners are already connected to the public workforce system through the OhioMeansJobs Center or contractual relationships with the board. Outcomes are tracked in a shared data system and aggregated to demonstrate collective community impact. Breedlove highlighted 2024 metrics from the overview, noting that partners collectively assisted 244 previously unemployed individuals in obtaining employment, generating an estimated \$8.3 million in new earned income for the community. She emphasized the strong alignment between Career Connect and the board’s broader initiatives, indicated that the board intends to seek additional support to sustain the initiative beyond mid-2028, and reiterated Lemley’s central role in coordinating partners and maintaining momentum.

- **Strategic Framework for Measuring Workforce System Impact**..... JoAnn Breedlove, Exec. Director

Breedlove presented an overview of the board’s multi-year effort to develop a strategic framework for measuring workforce system impact. She explained that the goal is to move from simply funding services to more clearly defining expectations for each investment and consistently assessing value and impact across all board-funded programs and initiatives. During Program Year (PY) 25 (July 1, 2025–June 30, 2026), staff worked with the designated service provider and job center operator, Workforce Initiative Association, to establish foundational “scopes of services” for each funded activity. This first year emphasized achieving a shared understanding of service expectations and qualitative goals rather than focusing on quantitative performance measures.

For the current year, PY26, Breedlove noted that the board will build on this foundation by adding agreed-upon volume goals, where appropriate, to the previously defined scopes of service. This will help the board better understand the scale and level of activity across the system. Looking ahead to PY27 (beginning July 1, 2027), the intent is to implement a more consistent approach to performance measurement across all board-funded initiatives, using a common set of clearly defined metrics so that the board can more easily interpret trends, understand what is working, and make more informed decisions. Breedlove described this as a three-year progression: defining the work (PY25), measuring the work (PY26), and then measuring impact (PY27).

Breedlove emphasized that this framework will not replace federally required WIOA performance measures or grant-specific metrics. Federal performance standards will continue to be reported as required. Instead, the new framework is intended to complement those requirements by offering a broader, system-level view of impact. She noted that the board currently tracks a significant amount of data through state and local systems, and this effort is focused on organizing that information in a more coherent and useful way for board and stakeholder decision-making. Breedlove advised members that the monthly reports they receive will evolve over the next year as staff align reporting with the new framework and asked for patience during this transition. She concluded noting that the framework is designed to help the board better understand system performance and community impact.

- **Legislative Updates** JoAnn Breedlove, Exec. Director

Proposed Rule Changes to Federal Grants Regulation Attachment D

Breedlove focused on a proposed rule change to Office of Management and Budget (OMB) guidance at 2 CFR Part 200. She referenced Attachment D, which offers a one-page synopsis of the proposed revisions and their potential implications for organizations receiving federal funds, including the workforce board, municipalities, and nonprofits. The rule change was issued in late May, with a public comment period running through July 13 and a proposed effective date of October 1 of this year. Breedlove noted that the proposal has generated significant national attention, with approximately 93,000 public comments submitted to date, and that numerous national associations representing counties, municipalities, and other stakeholders have expressed concern about both the content of the changes and the compressed implementation timeline. She encouraged board members connected to federally funded entities to review the summary and consider how the changes might affect their organizations. In response to a comment in the chat, she also offered to connect individually (Marla Akridge) and share additional detail with interested members.

- **Other Updates**

Ohio Workforce Association Workforce Development Board Chair Luncheon–June 16, 2026

Breedlove provided an overview of the Ohio Workforce Association Workforce Development Board Chair Luncheon held on June 16 in Westerville, which she attended along with Scott Robinson and Patrice Yacko. The program included presentations from representatives of both gubernatorial campaigns, who outlined their respective workforce priorities and potential policy directions for the next administration. Participants also received federal workforce legislative updates from Chris Andresen, as well as information on current state workforce legislation and ApprenticeshipOhio initiatives. Robinson remarked that the event offered

valuable insight into likely workforce priorities beginning January 1, and Breedlove characterized it as well attended and highly informative for board leadership.

Board Action Items..... *Scott Robinson, Chair*

Treasurer / Financial Report *Dan Sipe, Fiscal Agent Representative* **Attachment E**

Sipe presented the treasurer’s report and referred members to Attachment E. He reported that for Program Year (PY) 2025 formula funds, approximately 55–60% of allocations have been expended across all categories. Because these funds remain available through the next program year, the board is well positioned to fully utilize PY 25 resources and currently anticipates a carryover of about 30%.

Under other funds, Sipe reviewed the status of the RESEA grants, noting that the board recently received an additional \$100,000 PY25 allocation, which will appear in the next month’s report. The current RESEA balance is expected to be fully expended by early August. He further reported that the navigator grants and other special grants listed in this section have now been fully expended. Sipe also highlighted the Pathway Home grant and the workforce grant administered in partnership with the Stark Economic Development Board, both of which remain in early stages of implementation.

Sipe summarized the FY 2025 TANF allocation for CCMEP, explaining that most expenditures occur during the summer months due to youth work experience programming. The TANF/CCMEP grant period concludes on September 30, and the board expects to fully expend the available funding. He reported that the One-Stop MOU budget is currently 77% expended; this MOU represents the first year of a two-year agreement. Finally, Sipe noted that the GRIT grant is also in early implementation and was approximately 6% expended as of May.

MOTION: CARSON MOVED TO ACCEPT THE MAY 31, 2026, TREASURER’S REPORT AS PRESENTED. LAUBER SECONDED. MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY

Featured Updates

- **Service Provider (Designated).....** *Lori Yager, Program Mgr., Workforce Initiative Association*
Yager provided an update highlighting outcomes from recent Licensed Practical Nurse (LPN) training investments. She reported that a Canton City Schools LPN cohort of fifteen students had a 100% completion rate, which is unusual given the rigor of the program. The board invested approximately \$137,661 in this cohort and, in Program Year 2025 overall, nearly \$300,000 to support 29 LPN participants (including this group).

Yager noted that close collaboration with Canton City Schools’ financial aid staff has been critical in moving interested students into training with OhioMeansJobs funding. She shared a statement from Canton City emphasizing that these funds provide second-chance opportunities and help adults rebuild their lives. Yager closed with a brief success story about a graduate who had previously been served at a domestic violence shelter, emphasizing the long-term personal impact of these training investments.

- **Job Center Operator (Procured)....** *Renee Steurer, Employment Services Mgr., Workforce Initiative Association*
Renee Steuer shared an employer success story from the Tuscarawas County OhioMeansJobs Center. Small business owner Leandra Johnson, who had just been awarded a cleaning contract for the local BMV office, came into the center overwhelmed and unable to post her job order or produce hiring materials. Staff member Anita Rutledge provided individualized, concierge-style assistance by completing the job order with her, printing flyers, and helping her think through a recruitment strategy for a highly specific, low-hour evening janitorial position.

Drawing on her knowledge of local job seekers, Rutledge then connected Leandra with Phyllis, whose schedule and needs matched the role. Phyllis was hired within five days, significantly faster than typical timelines for such niche positions. The placement resolved an urgent staffing need for the employer, supported reliable services for a co-located partner (the BMV), and ultimately led to Leandra's company successfully bidding on and receiving the contract to clean the OhioMeansJobs-Tuscarawas County center itself, keeping those dollars within the local community.

Member Updates

No additional board member updates or announcements were offered.

Robinson noted that board staff has experienced some issues with calendar meeting notices related to the transition to the stwdb.org email domain. To ensure accurate notices, Rebecca Harris will review and as needed, reissue or update calendar invitations for upcoming board meetings.

Meeting Adjournment

MOTION: MOSS MOVED TO ADJOURN THE MEETING. CARSON SECONDED. MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY

Adjourned: 12:55 p.m.

NEXT MEETING: September 9, 2026 -Tractor Supply Company-Navarre Distribution Facility