

LCWD Board of Directors Meeting Minutes**Thursday, June 25, 2025, at 8:00 AM****College of Lake County – Grayslake Campus****Room A013**

Present: John Castillo, Kevin Considine, Timothy Dempsey, Carrie Espinosa, Yvette Ewing, Christian Fernandez, Edward Gallagher, Jennifer Harris, Laticia Holbert (Zoom), Dr. Kristen Jones (Proxy), Marcus Jordan, Dennis Kessler, Kathy Nellis, Dr. Carlotta Roman, Jennifer Serino, Dr. Tasha Shell (Proxy), Quinton Snodgrass, Ken Swanson, Amy Van Strien, Kimberly Wimer

Absent: Laura Crivlare-Maglio, Josh Fischer, Lisa Johnson, Dr. Michael Karner, Noelle Kischer-Lepper, Troy McIntosh, Dr. Darryl Rader, Julie Savitt, Carla Shroeder, Adam Sutter, Dr. Andrew Warrington

I. Call to Order..... Chairwoman, Dr. Carlotta Roman

The meeting was called to order on Thursday, June 25, 2026, at 8:04 AM by Board of Directors Chairwoman Dr. Carlotta Roman.

II. Public Comment

No public comments were made.

III. Chair Report

*Chair Dr. Roman opened the meeting by recognizing the passing of **Dr. Mary Ross Cunningham**, Vice Chair of the Lake County Board and a longtime advocate for workforce development and the Job Center of Lake County. Dr. Cunningham was recognized for her leadership and advocacy of county-funded Summer Youth Programs, workforce services, grants, and initiatives supporting small businesses and workforce development. The Chair also noted Dr. Cunningham's past advocacy at the federal level related to incumbent worker training policies and her support for SkillBridge and other workforce initiatives.*

Chair Dr. Roman also welcomed Patrice Sutton, Lake County Administrator, who was attending the meeting.

IV. Consent Agenda

- a. April 2026 Board of Directors Meeting Minutes*
- b. Authorize the acceptance of WIOA Rapid Response Grant in the amount of \$440,000 for the grant period of April 1, 2026, through December 30, 2027.*
 - i. Motion to approve: Timothy Dempsey*
 - ii. Motion seconded: Dennis Kessler*
 - iii. Motion carried.*

V. Regular Business (ACTION ITEMS)

- a. Approve the Program Year 26 WIOA Formula Grant Budget and Participant Plan for Adult, Dislocated Worker, and Youth.***
 - i. Staff presented the proposed Program Year 2026 WIOA Formula Grant Budget and Participant Plan for Adult, Dislocated Worker, and Youth programs.*
 - ii. The PY26 formula fund allocation is approximately \$6.8 million, a reduction from the previous year but generally in line with the allocation from two years prior. Staff explained that formula funding is based on factors including population, community characteristics, unemployment rates, and declining industries. Lake County's lower unemployment rate compared with the state contributed to the reduction in the allocation.*
 - iii. The proposed budget maintains the current personnel inventory and accounts for Lake County employee benefits, indirect costs, facilities, Job Center resources, technology subscriptions, staff development, and program operations. Continued programming includes occupational training, work-based learning, employer-led training grants, chamber agreements, Job Center on the Move, community workers, and implementation of IWDS 2.0, the new case management and performance management system.*
 - iv. Staff reviewed WIOA funding requirements incorporated into the budget, including:*
 - 1. A maximum of 10% of the allocation for administration.*
 - 2. No more than 25% of youth funding allocated to in-school youth.*
 - 3. At least 75% of youth funding allocated to out-of-school youth.*
 - 4. At least 20% of youth funding dedicated to work-based learning.*
 - 5. At least 50% of Adult and Dislocated Worker funding budgeted toward training.*

6. *No more than 20% of Adult and Dislocated Worker funding allocated to incumbent worker training.*
 - v. *The budget includes approximately \$1.3 million for Individual Training Accounts, supportive services, work-based learning, work experience, on-the-job training, apprenticeships, incumbent worker training, and contracted youth programming.*
 - vi. *The Board discussed the distinction between Workforce Development-delivered work-based learning and contracted youth programming. Staff explained that contracted work-based learning is delivered through high schools, community-based organizations, and 160 Driving Academy.*
 - vii. *Staff also reviewed the overall projected Workforce Development budget of approximately \$14 million, which is approximately \$1 million less than the previous year. The projected budget includes WIOA formula funds, carryforward funding, Rapid Response grants, county funding, SkillBridge funding, apprenticeship funding, and other supplemental grants.*
 - viii. *The Board discussed the connection between the budget and the Board's strategic priorities. Staff explained that funding has been intentionally distributed across the Board's strategic areas, including operating a high-performing workforce system, building the future workforce, expanding employer-led training, strengthening talent pipelines, reducing barriers to success, increasing access to technology and digital literacy, connecting residents to opportunities, and connecting industry to talent.*
 1. *Motion to approve: Timothy Dempsey*
 2. *Motion seconded: Dennis Kessler*
 3. *Motion carried.*
- b. Authorize Workforce Development to approve renewals with 160 Driving Academy and Youth Conservation Corps based on performance, continued service need, and availability of WIOA Out-of-School Youth funds.**
- i. *The Board considered authorization for Workforce Development to approve renewals with 160 Driving Academy and Youth Conservation Corps based on performance, continued service need, and availability of WIOA out-of-school youth funding.*
 1. *Motion to approve: Kevin Considine*

2. *Motion seconded: Marcus Jordan*
3. *Motion carried.*
4. *Timothy Dempsey abstained.*

c. Approve the Nominating Committee's recommended Slate of Officers for PY'26.

i. The slate as recommended includes:

1. *Dr. Carlotta Roman, Chair*
2. *Josh Fischer, Vice Chair*
 - a. *Led by Timothy Dempsey, the floor was opened for additional nominations. No additional nominations were made, and the nominations were closed.*
 - i. *Motion to approve: Quinton Snodgrass*
 - ii. *Motion seconded: Dennis Kessler*
 - iii. *Motion carried.*
 - b. *Chair Dr. Roman thanked the Board for its continued trust and support and recognized the shared leadership of the Board and its members*

VI. Strategic Focus

a. Committee Action Plans 2026 – 2028

i. Operations Committee

1. Digital Access and Literacy – Presentation by Digital Growth Initiative

- a. *The Operations Committee's strategic focus is Strengthening System Access and Coordination, with an emphasis on digital access and literacy and digital navigation*
- b. *Staff recognized the County's Digital Growth Initiative team and highlighted the Workforce Development Department's three-year partnership with the County broadband team. The partnership has supported digital literacy, digital curriculum, laptop distribution, and digital navigation throughout Lake County. Workforce Development also incorporated digital literacy services into its Rapid Response grant to serve an additional 125 residents.*
- c. *Betsy Brandon, Assistant to the County Administrator, provided an overview of the County's Digital Growth Initiative. The Lake County*

Board adopted the Broadband and Digital Equity Plan in December 2023. The initiative was funded through ARPA, with funding scheduled to end at the end of 2026. The initiative was developed in response to gaps in internet access, access to devices, and digital literacy programming.

d. The initiative includes:

- i. Digital literacy programming*
- ii. Digital navigators*
- iii. Device distribution*
- iv. Community partnerships*
- v. Public Wi-Fi initiatives*
- vi. County-level digital access policies*
- vii. A digital asset inventory and resource website*
- viii. The Northstar Digital Literacy curriculum*

e. Digital navigators provide one-on-one assistance, group learning, basic computer skills training, resume workshops, open computer lab support, and assistance understanding emerging technology. Navigators are located at the Job Center, health centers, libraries, and other community locations throughout the County.

f. Through April 2026, the initiative had served nearly 5,000 residents, provided nearly 4,500 learning sessions, and distributed more than 1,500 devices. The program distributed 119 laptops to Summer Youth Employment Program participants during the previous summer and planned to continue the model in 2026.

g. Board members discussed the importance of sustaining the Digital Growth Initiative after ARPA funding ends and asked how Board members, businesses, and community partners could assist. The County indicated that it is developing sustainability strategies and welcomed ideas and potential partnerships. Workforce Development is also working with the County on a sustainability plan and is leveraging WIOA and Rapid Response funding to continue portions of the work, including digital navigation and device distribution.

ii. Talent Pipeline Committee

1. Future Workforce – Young Professionals Panel

- a. *The Talent Pipeline Committee's strategic role is to build earlier and sustainable career pathways. The Committee's focus areas include:
 - i. Youth voice and program design
 - ii. K-12 aligned work-based learning opportunities
 - iii. Increased registered apprenticeship pathways
 - iv. Emerging skills*
- b. *Jennifer Serino discussed the recent Young Professionals Panel, which brought young Workforce Development employees into the Talent Pipeline Committee meeting to share their experiences entering the workforce and their perspectives on career pathways and workforce services.*
- c. *The Board heard from young professionals Ricky and Yadira, who discussed their experiences working with high school students through the Summer Youth Employment Program.*
- d. *Ricky emphasized the importance of exposing young people to opportunities beyond the traditional college pathway. He shared that work-based learning gives students the opportunity to explore careers, gain experience, save money, and determine whether a career path is a good fit before investing significant time and money into education.*
- e. *Yadira discussed how conversations with Summer Youth participants frequently expanded beyond their immediate summer employment into longer-term career planning. Students expressed interest in careers including elevator technology and nursing, and Workforce Development was able to connect them with resources and opportunities beyond the Summer Youth Program. Parents also expressed interest in Workforce Development services for themselves.*
- f. *The Board was informed that the Executive Committee had approved the creation of a Youth Advisory Group, chaired by Ed Gallagher of*

Pace. The group will initially include young professionals within Workforce Development and will eventually determine which additional youth and community members should participate. The purpose of the group is to incorporate youth voice into the design and delivery of future youth programs and grant-funded services.

iii. Employer Connections Committee

1. Apprenticeship Program – Presentation on Apprenticeship Programs

- a. The Employer Connections Committee's strategic focus for the next two years is Industry Sector Partnerships, including employer-led training and talent development, apprenticeship expansion, and communication and messaging*
- b. Board member Marcus Jordan presented on apprenticeships. He began by recognizing the Workforce Development team's ability to adapt and respond to changing circumstances, noting that this flexibility is also essential to successful apprenticeship and pre-apprenticeship programs. He emphasized that workforce and career pathways do not always follow a simple, predetermined sequence and that successful apprenticeship programs require adaptability.*

VII. Other Business / Updates

a. State and Federal Updates

- i. Tabled to July Executive Committee Meeting*

VIII. Member Time

- a. Dr. Carlotta Roman – Legacy Reentry Foundation Relentless Hope Award*
 - i. Presentation by Regina from Legacy Reentry Foundation*
- b. Ali O'Brien – Fischer Paper Products Honored on 6/5*

IX. Adjournment

The meeting was adjourned at 9:50 AM.

- Motion to approve: Jennifer Harris*
- Motion seconded: Timothy Dempsey*
- Motion carried.*

Upcoming Meetings:

LCWDB Talent Pipeline Committee Meeting

- *Tuesday, August 11, 2026, at 9:00 AM*

LCWDB Employer Connections Committee Meeting

- *Tuesday, August 18, 2026, at 9:00 AM*

LCWD Board of Directors Meeting

- *Thursday, September 24, 2026, at 8:00 AM*