



Workforce Development Board, Wednesday, March 4, 2026 @ 8:30 am

Wed Mar 4, 2026 8:30 AM - 10:30 AM PST

DRAFT Meeting Minutes

Board Members in Attendance

Ayyad, Alia

Bartels, Elyse - Vice Chair

Brown, Kristen

Corpuz, Frances

De La Garza, MariaElena

Delk, Marshall

Detlefs, Peter

Diaz, Alma

Hererra-Mansir, Carmen

Holmquist-Gomez, Laura

Morse, Rob - Chair

Rodriguez, Annabelle

Rodriguez, Francisco

Rodriguez, Isidro

Roth, Shaz

Siegel, Carol

Shields, Bryan

Sumano, Raymond

Vereker, Dustin

Board Members Absent

Dodge, Daniel

Hernandez, Felipe

Liebetrau, LeNae

Pedersen, Alexander

Setzler, Katie

Van Den Heuvel, Casey

Staff in Attendance

Diaz-Rivas, Brenda - WDB Associate Human Services Analyst

Gutierrez, Elizabeth - WDB Administrative Aide

Paz-Nethercutt, Sara - WDB Sr. Human Services Analyst

Stone, Andy - WDB Director

Vaiz, Mary Lou - WDB Clerical Support

1. Call to Order / Welcome

The Chair called the meeting to order at 8:32 AM, and a quorum was established. All participants attended in-person.

2. Non-Agenda Public Comment

MariaElena De La Garza announced that the tiny home community Hope Village has opened with 12-15 occupants, including seven residents over the age of 70 years who previously were housed in a hotel. Private tours of the site are available.

3. Chairperson's Report

Chair Rob Morse expressed appreciation to the WDB staff for covering business services during the vacancy of the Business Services Manager position. He also shared that Elyse Bartels, Dustin Vereker, Andy Stone, and himself will attend a NAWB conference March 23, 2026. Additionally, the Executive Director of the State Workforce board toured businesses in our tri-county region.

4. Presentation: Workforce Achievement Awards

Two Achievement Awards were presented to WIOA program participants for overcoming adversity and achieving career goals. Videos highlighting the recipients were shared with the Board.

5. Presentation: Boardable Introduction

A brief introduction of Boardable was presented. Members will receive two calendar meeting invites for the remainder of the year. Instructions were reviewed for accessing meetings and accepting invitations. Boardable sends meeting reminders, provides access to board packets

with a printing capability, saves staff time, tracks attendance, maintains historical meeting records, and allows note taking. Members were asked to notify Mary Lou Vaiz one day in advance if printed packets are needed.

6. Consent Items (vote required):

- a. Approval of Minutes: December 3, 2025
- b. WIOA Program Year 25/26 Contractor Local Program Monitoring
- c. WIOA Local Program Services: Revised Policy

Action: Motion was made to approve the consent items as drafted by WDB staff:

Status:

Motion to Approve: Marshall Delk

Seconded: Carol Siegel

Objections: None

Abstained: Francisco Rodriguez, Shaz Roth, Alia Ayyad

Committee Action: Motion Carried

7. Action Items (vote required):

a. WDB Officer Nominating Committee Program Year 26/27

It was stated that Past Chair Carol Siegel has agreed to chair the Nominating Committee.

The following information was shared:

- Current officers: Chair - Rob Morse; Vice Chair - Elyse Bartels; At Large - Alia Ayyad and Dustin Vereker; Non-Workforce Development Board Representative - Tracey Adolfo; Past Chair - Carol Siegel
- Interest is being sought from members willing to serve and from incumbents interested in continuing in their roles
- Criteria for serving on the Executive Committee were reviewed
- Board members were asked to notify Siegel within one week if interested in serving on the Nominating Committee
- Executive Committee positions are one-year terms with five additional meetings

Action: Motion was made to form a WDB Officer Nominating Committee and recommend a proposed slate of candidates for election at the WDB meeting on May 20, 2026.

Status:

Motion to Approve: Marshall Delk

Seconded: MariaElena De La Garza

Objections: None

Abstained: None

Committee Action: Motion carried unanimously

8. Report Items (no vote required):

a. Operational Plan and Continuous Improvement Plan Updates WDB Program Year 25/26

Priority 1: Job Quality and Economic Mobility

Sara Paz-Nethercutt provided updates:

- Living Wage Target Visibility: The MIT living wage for the Santa Cruz County is \$42.98 and is updated annually (typically February-March). It is displayed on the WDB website and included in the bi-weekly Job Blast.
- Promotion: A flyer has been created that is posted in the Resource Room, at AJCC sites, promoted by WIOA contractors and during community engagement events.
- Building Career Ladders That Result in Living Wage Jobs: Efforts continue to develop career pathways that lead to living wage employment, with current focus areas including Dental Assistant to Dental Hygienist and Medical Assistant to Registered Nurse.

Andy Stone provided updates:

Priority 2: Employer and Small Business Engagement

- The Santa Cruz Chamber hosted a Hospitality Roundtable on February 24, 2026. Board member Kristen Brown offered to assist in organizing monthly roundtables for the remainder of the year.
- Launchpad has been implemented within Salesforce to track and strengthen business engagement efforts.
- The WDB website now clearly outlines available business services

A discussion followed regarding ways to engage businesses across South County, including Spanish-Speaking business owners and the Pajaro community. It was suggested that a separate meeting be held to further discuss solutions. Members expressing interest included: Alma Diaz, Carmen Herrera-Mansir, Dustin Vereker, Francis Corpuz, MariaElena De La Garza, Peter Detlefs, and Shaz Roth.

Priority 3: Skills Gaps and Training Alignment

- Eliminating Barriers to Training Success by Expanding Support Services and Creating Bridge Programs: An EDD Pathways Grant application has been submitted to expand support services for individuals affected by CalFresh and Medi-Cal requirements. A funding decision is expected soon.

- Draft/Publish Annual Labor Market Snapshot Featuring Board's Top 10 Occupations: The Board's Top 10 Occupations were included in the State of the Workforce report. Additional materials with detailed information are also being developed.
- Proactively Identify and Add Training Programs for Top 10 Local Occupations: Outreach will be conducted to training providers not currently on the Eligible Training Provider List (ETPL) for the Top 10 local occupations.

b. Staff Updates

Director's Updates - Andy Stone reported:

- Business Services Manager Vacancy: The position is being reassessed and may be retitled Workforce Development Manager, with broader responsibilities including business services oversight and coordination with clients. Some business services duties will also be distributed among contractor staff.
- California Workforce Development Board's Visit to the Central Coast: The delegation visited an organic grower/food processing plant, Joby Aviation in Marina, a pipefitters apprenticeship program, the Watsonville Airport to view Joby's hangar and the PVUSD aircraft maintenance program, and a water treatment facility in Hollister.

• New Grant Updates:

• The James Irvine Foundation - Additional Funding Request: WDB was invited to apply for an additional \$800,000 - \$1,000,000 grant. A formal application for \$1,000,000 will be submitted. Two major initiatives to grow community have been proposed:

1. Supporting Leaders and Elected Officials: Providing education and tools for working with businesses in ways that benefit lower-income communities. Examples include community benefit agreements tied to development projects, commitments to local hiring, and potential contributions to affordable housing. The Initiative would focus on the Pajaro and Salinas Valleys and include community engagement, education and marketing components.
2. Expanding Human-Centered Design Approaches: Addressing Challenges in Pajaro Valley related to CalFresh and Medi-Cal work requirements. Many residents are at risk of losing food and medical benefits due to federal policy changes. The initiative aims to convene business leaders, government agencies, and community organizations to help residents retain benefits while transitioning to living wage employment. Partners are being sought.

• Community Engagement / Eligible Training Provider List (ETPL) - Brenda Diaz- Rivas reported:

The James Irvine Foundation - Public Workforce Capacity Grant

a. Human Centered Design Learning Lab (Civic Makers):

The Learning Lab concluded with a showcase where teams presented solutions to real workforce challenges. Andy Stone and Brenda Diaz-Rivas are meeting with each team to identify the ideas with the greatest impact for implementation. Human-Centered Design methodologies are being integrated into day-to-day operations to better serve customer

needs. Grant funding will support implementation of viable recommendations. Civic Makers provided an Executive Summary with recommendations.

b. Racial Equity:

A second in-person workshop was held with strong participation. Three focus themes were identified for upcoming sessions:

1. Community trust, engagement, and visibility
2. Equitable pathways for priority populations
3. Racial equity data accountability

Andy Stone and Brenda Diaz-Rivas are receiving coaching to facilitate future racial equity discussions and workshops.

2. Eligible Training and Provider's List (ETPL):

The State recently updated ETPL policy. One key change establishes a goal that all training programs statewide be approved and in good standing by July 1, 2026. Additionally, new training programs will no longer be required to provide two years of performance data prior to approval.

9. Board Member Breakout Session: Advancing WDB Strategic Priorities

Board members divided into groups to discuss the Strategic Plan and identify ways to become more engaged and supportive through their roles or businesses.

10. Adjournment

The meeting adjourned at 10:08 AM.

a. Next Executive Committee Meeting: April 29, 2026 @ 8:30 am

Location: 500 Westridge Dr. - Career Center Classroom, Watsonville

b. Next Workforce Development Board Meeting: May 20, 2026 @ 8:30 am

Location: 500 Westridge Dr. - Community Room, Watsonville