



Board and CEO Meeting Minutes

**The Workforce Connection Board,
Workforce Board for Boone, Winnebago, and Stephenson Counties**

Meeting: April 7, 2026

Time: 8:00am

Location: R1 Planning Council, 127 N. Wyman Street Rockford, IL

Attendee Name	Organization	Status	Arrived
Bernsten, Ben	Goodwill of Northern IL	X	
Bloomquist, Scott	Boone/Winn Regional Off of Ed	X	
Cassaro, Michelle	Chicago Rockford Airport	X	
Crandall, Kathy	Crandall Stats & Sensors	X	
Dunn, Michael	Region 1 Planning Council	X	
Fahrenwald, Jeff	SupplyCore	X	
Gaulrapp, George	ComEd	X	
Grayewski, Jeremy	Berner Food & Beverage	Absent	
Guirl, Robert	Community Member	X	
Harle, Greg	Plumbers & Pipefitters Local	X	
Hill, Sheila Dr	Hill & Hill Enterprises	X	
Hulsebus, Brant Dr	Hulsebus Rockford Chiropractic	X	
Leys, Sarah	City of Rockford	X	
Lopez-Fettes, Pamela	Growth Dimensions of Belvidere	X	
Montalbano, Matt	RBC Wealth Management	X	
Nelson, Marlana	IL DHS-DRS	X	
Nolley, Paul	Project First Rate	X	
Nord, Amy	Belvidere Chamber of Commerce	X	
Pirages, James	AGHL Law Office	X	
Primus, Troy	AAR Corp	Absent	
Rotello, Zack	Alpha Controls & Services LLC	Absent	
Salazar, Max	Collins Aerospace	Absent	
Schwebke, Casey	Swebco Manufacturing	Absent	
Spearman, Howard Dr	Rock Valley College	Absent	
Strandin, Glendia	RPS205 Adult Ed	X	
Wells, Todd	Bourn & Koch, LLC	X	
Zeal, Jeff	IL Dept of Employment Security	X	
Chiarelli, Joe	Board Chairman – Winn Co	X	
Helms, Scott	Board Chair – Stephenson Cty	X	Georgia Newcomer-Proxy
McNamara, Thomas Mayor	City of Rockford	X	Todd Cagnoni-Proxy
Johnson, Karl	Board Chairman – Boone Co	X	

Taira, Logan	IL Dept of Employment Security	X	
Duckett, Ted	IL Dept of Employment Security	Absent	
Geiger, Courtney	Goodwill of Northern IL	X	
McDonald, Karyn	Workforce Connection-Elevate Prog	Absent	
Saccucci, Erica Dr	The Workforce Connection	X	
Sims, Tabitha	Rock Valley College	X	
Caronna, Gina Dr	The Workforce Connection	X	
Busto, Anibal	The Workforce Connection	X	
Jaquez, Berenice	The Workforce Connection	X	
Huntress, Tina	The Workforce Connection	X	
Oysti, Chris	The Workforce Connection	X	
Rabe, Joan	The Workforce Connection	X	
Welsh, Emily	The Workforce Connection	X	
White, Dan	The Workforce Connection	X	
Guests			
Len Carter		X	
Elizabeth Carter		X	
Bryant Carter		X	
Khay Horton		X	
Julien Holt		X	
Arthur Hudson		X	

1. Call to Order

- TWC Board Michelle Cassaro, TWC Board Chair
Michelle Cassaro called the meeting to order at 8:02
- Chief Elected Officials Mayor Thomas McNamara, CEO Chair
Todd Cagnoni called the meeting to order at 8:02

2. Roll Call

- TWC Board
- Chief Elected Officials

3. Approval of Meeting Minutes

- a. TWC Board Meeting Minutes – 12/2/2025 Michelle Cassaro
Jeff Fahrenwald motion to accept Bob Guirl 2nd Passed
- b. CEO Meeting Minutes – 12/2/2025 Todd Cagnoni
Karl Johnson motion to accept Joe Chiarelli 2nd Passed

4. Board Member Recognition

Michelle Cassaro

Michelle Cassaro presented Len Carter with token of appreciation for his service on our Board. Len has retired from the TWC Board.

5. Approval of Award Office Space Lease Request for Proposal

Dr. Gina Caronna, President / CEO

Dr. Caronna spoke on the RFP for the new lease.

Pam Lopez-Fettes motion to accept Jim Pirages 2nd Passed
Karl Johnson motion to accept Georgia Newcomer 2nd Passed

6. Approval of Program Year 2025 Mid-Year Budget Modification
 Paul Nolley, Finance Committee Chair
 Bob Guirl motion to approve Pam Lopez-Fettes 2nd Passed
 Karl Johnson motion to approve Joe Chiarelli 2nd Passed
7. Approval of Regional and Local Plan Modification Dr. Gina Caronna
 Jeff Fahrenwald motion to approve Pam Lopez-Fettes 2nd Passed
 Karl Johnson motion to approve Joe Chiarelli 2nd Passed
8. Approval of Policy Changes Dr. Gina Caronna
 • Work-Based Learning Policy
 Greg Harle motion to approve Jim Pirages 2nd Passed
 Georgia Newcomer motion to approve Joe Chiarelli 2nd Passed
9. Approval of Training Provider/Program Approvals and Reapprovals
 Emily Welsh, Grant Compliance Manager
 Jim Pirages motion to accept Ben Bernsten 2nd Passed
 Karl Johnson motion to accept Joe Chiarelli 2nd Passed
10. Finance Paul Nolley, Final Committee Chair
 • Finance Report – February 2026
 • Financial Audit Program Year 2024 (July 1, 2024 – June 30, 2025)
 • Community Foundation 12/31/25 Update
11. Labor Force and Employment Update Logan Taira, Workforce Analysis & Dissemination
 Economic Information & Analysis Division – Illinois Department of Employment Security
 Logan presented a Labor Force and Employment Update for our region
12. Presentation by CEJA Contractor Incubator Khay Horton, Program Director
 Julien Holt presented on his newly formed business
 Arthur Hudson presented his newly formed business
13. Board Chair's Remarks Michelle Cassaro
 Thank you for the presentations and good work being done
14. President & CEO's Remarks Dr. Gina Caronna
 Attended NAWB with Shelly and Todd, so we will do the presentation at our next Board Meeting that we presented at NAWB.
15. Member Comments
 Greg Harle commented on the opportunities available through TWC and Goodwill.
16. Board Member Engagement Opportunities Berenice Jaquez
 Berenice spoke about the apprenticeship program and the many opportunities available
17. Public Comment
 None
18. Adjournment
 Jim Pirages motioned to adjourn the meeting Jeff Fahrenwald 2nd Passed
 Meeting adjourned at 9:07