



CENTRAL MINNESOTA Workforce Development Board

Community & Government Relations Committee

Mission: To develop and foster community and government relations while promoting the Workforce Development Board's interests and policies.

AGENDA

September 11, 2026

9:40 am–10:50 am

Please go to the board meeting page for all meeting materials:

<https://www.cmjts.org/cmjts-joint-powers-board-workforce-development-board-and-committee-meetings>

MEMBERS:

- | | |
|--|--|
| ☐ Lisa Zwart, Chair | ☐ Commissioner Dan Whitcomb, Vice-Chair |
| ☐ Commissioner Duane Anderson | ☐ Denise Stewart |
| ☐ Dr. Brent Thompson | ☐ Deb Meyer |
| ☐ Gary Foster | ☐ Bob Dockendorf |

STAFF:

- | | |
|---|--|
| ☐ Michelle Johnson (CMJTS) | ☐ Dina Wuornos (CMJTS - rotation) |
| ☐ Lori Kampa (CMJTS) | |

1. Call to order

2. Approval of the Consent Agenda

(A single motion and vote are taken on all items listed under the consent agenda.

Items may be added or deleted at the request of committee chairs, staff, or partners.)

- a. Meeting Agenda*
- b. Previous Committee Meeting Minutes*

3. Old Business

- a. Board recruitment
 - i. Renville County – manufacturing representation
 - ii. Mille Lacs County – Wuornos

4. New Business

- a. Cate Duin – MAWB platform
- b. Continue 2026 Goals, create game plan
- c. Spokesperson training worksheet* – Zwart/Wuornos

5. Future Agenda Items

- a.

6. January Agenda Items

- a. WIOA Title I funding

7. Adjournment

*Attachments

Upon request, this material can be made available in alternate formats.

Auxiliary aids and services are available upon request to individuals with disabilities by contacting 763.271.3700 or info@cmjts.org

Previous meeting minutes
Roll Call Record Sheet
Spokesperson worksheet

NEXT MEETING SCHEDULE

October 9, 2026

8:00 am – 8:50 pm	CMJTS Operations Committee
9:00 am – 9:50 am	Community & Government Relations Committee
9:00 am – 9:50 am	Workforce Development Committee
10:00 am – 10:50 pm	Workforce Development Board
11:00 am – 11:45 am	LMI
11:45 am – 12:30 pm	Guest Speaker
12:40 am – 1:30 pm	Joint Powers Board

All Meeting information and attachment information can be found at:

CMJTS Joint Powers Board, Workforce Development Board, and
Committee Meetings Page:

<https://www.cmjts.org/cmjts-joint-powers-board-workforce-development-board-and-committee-meetings/>

**COMMUNITY & GOVERNMENT RELATIONS (CGR) COMMITTEE
MINUTES**

June 12, 2026
Hybrid Meeting

MEMBERS PRESENT: Lisa Zwart (chair), Commissioner Duane Anderson, Commissioner Dan Whitcomb (vice-chair), Deb Meyer, Brent Thompson, Denise Stewart.

MEMBERS ABSENT:

GUESTS PRESENT: Bob Dockendorf, Gary Foster

STAFF PRESENT: Dina Wuornos, Michelle Johnson, Kristin Yeager

The meeting was called to order at 9:00 am.

WELCOME/INTRODUCTION

CONSENT AGENDA

Motion: Thompson moved to approve the consent agenda. Seconded by: Whitcomb. Motion carried.

OLD BUSINESS

Board Recruitment. Handout provided by Wuornos

- Several applications being approved at WDB meeting
- We have a young board, need to do mentoring and training. Help understand what we do.
- Southern Region, Kandiyohi, Meeker, McLeod, Renville:
 - Need a replacement for Rebeca Nelson
 - ♦ Preferably coming from Renville County,
 - ♦ Need business representation
 - ♦ Gary Foster has resources in Renville County and will reach out
- Rebeca Weirschke – business owner Clean Chickens and Co. LLC.
- Mark Netzing retiring
- Application out for Tony Buttacavoli – director for Family Pathways in North Branch. Social Enterprise and Business Representative with 200 employees. Nonprofit. Chisago County
- Have not heard back from Grand Casino

NEW BUSINESS

CGR Officer Elections

- Chair position does need to represent Private Business.

Motion: Thompson motion to maintain current officers Seconded by Anderson. Roll Call Vote Taken, motion carried

Revisited the goals from the minutes

- Cate Duin coming in September
- Dina to provide training to the board - WIOA 101 training
- Dina provided information about WIOA reauthorization. Summary of what's been happening at legislative level. Focus is to maintain control at the local level and continues to keep funding level.

- Was scheduled to be reauthorized in 2020 and it has not. As long as congress approves the WIOA appropriation funding will continue. Congress can choose not to appropriate. Do not believe that will happen.
- DOL in the process of auditing DEED.
- Bill HR 8210 – both chambers in house passed (ASWAA) A Stronger Workforce for America Act. The Senate has not created their own version. The Senate is where CGR should focus advocacy and make recommendations on what should be tweaked, kept, and removed. Communicating with the senate is an important step.
- Congress returns from recess 6/23/26 – WIOA reauthorization is competing with many things that will take priority.
- Workforce Labor and Economic Development Finance and Policy committee at the Minnesota house level. Dave Baker is co-chair of the committee and resides in 16B - Willmar area. Pinto is the co-chair of the committee and is supportive of our efforts.
- Isaac Schultz represents Isanti, Kanabec and Mille Lacs counties.
- Need to communicate with Dave Baker and Isaac Schultz – once we have an idea of what agenda looks like.
- Federal level – Tom Emmer, Michelle Fischbach, Pete Stauber. CMJTS staff did meet with Pete Stauber and his aid – very engaged. Follow up with Stauber. We have attempted to contact Fischbach. Stacy Morse does receive invitations
- What should CGR members be doing:
 - July and August best time frames to reach out for legislative advocacy.
 - Dina send out communications –Cate Duin important to moving forward – provide resources on exactly how to advocate
 - Build stronger partnerships with community organizations and employers
 - Chamber Memberships and activities
 - What does Dina want board members to get out of that.
 - 1) Are there potential nonprofits or entities that need more information.
 - 2) If we have employers or businesses – connect them to our business service coordinate team. Della with DEED
 - Encourage you to have professional name tags stating you are with the board – if you are at a networking event you can throw the name tag on.

NEXT AGENDA ITEMS

ITEMS FOR FUTURE MEETING AGENDAS:

SEPTEMBER AGENDA ITEMS

- Cate Duin will attend to assist with platform for CGR

ITEMS FOR JANUARY MEETING AGENDA:

- WIOA Title I funding

ADJOURN

Motion: Thompson adjourned the meeting at 9:54 am.

Community Ambassador Cheat Sheet

Quick-reference talking points for board members promoting the WDB in the community



PITCHING TO BUSINESSES: THE TALENT & GROWTH ANGLE

CORE MESSAGE:

We are your no-cost, federally funded workforce support system, helping employers recruit, train, and retain talent. Through our Business Service Division, we build and support pipelines of capable workers - so you can save money, scale your operations, and stay competitive in an ever-changing economic climate.

Services to Highlight

- **No-Cost Recruiting Events:** On-the-spot interviews, monthly hiring events, regional job fairs, plus free advertising for your own hiring events.
- **Free Job Posting & Candidate Pipeline:** Direct access to jobseekers via CareerForce.mn.gov and local coordinators, including veterans, New Americans, dislocated workers, and candidates with disabilities.
- **Financial Training Subsidies:** OJT reimburses ~50% of a new hire's wage during training; Incumbent Worker Training funds upskilling current staff, and Registered Apprenticeships.
- **Employer Networking Groups:** HR, manufacturing, SHRM, and professional networking groups for peer best practices and talent pipelines.
- **Labor Market Intelligence:** Regional data on competitive wages, hiring trends, and skill shortages to guide business planning.
- **Planning & Advertising Tools:** Free wage-comparison data and a guided job description builder.



30-Second Elevator Pitch - Businesses

"We are your complimentary, federally funded talent partner. Finding and keeping qualified workers is your biggest headache, we solve that by sourcing candidates through job fairs and hiring events, connecting you to job-ready workers, and covering roughly 50% of a new hire's training costs through On-the-Job Training grants. We even help you upskill your current team. We take the risk out of hiring so your business can grow."



PITCHING TO COMMUNITY MEMBERS & NONPROFITS: THE OPPORTUNITY ANGLE

CORE MESSAGE:

We help people find their way to financial independence not by treating them like paperwork, but like the individuals they are. That means tackling the systemic barriers standing between them and a stable, well-paying career.

Services to Highlight

- **Tuition Assistance & Credentials:** Funding for adult learners, dislocated workers, and youth to earn industry-recognized, stackable certifications at local colleges and other training institutions.
- **Career Navigation:** One-on-one career counseling, resume writing labs, and mock interview prep at local CareerForce Centers (CFC).

- **Supportive Wrap-Around Services:** Childcare stipends, transportation supports, and other support services tailored to your individual needs and circumstances so that challenges don't derail employment goals.
- **Specialized Placement Programs:** Focused initiatives for veterans, youth, individuals with disabilities, and justice-involved citizens.

30-Second Elevator Pitch — Community Members

"Whether you are looking to change careers, re-enter the workforce, or gain a new certification, our board funds the resources to get you there. Through our local CareerForce Centers, we provide free career coaching, resume building, and financial aid for technical training. We even help cover costs like childcare resources or transit while you learn, ensuring you have what you need to build a stable, prosperous career."

THE MACRO STORY: BENEFITING THE LOCAL ECONOMY

For elected officials, chambers of commerce, and rotary clubs - position the WDB as an economic engine.

► Reduces Public Assistance Dependency

Moving residents from unemployment or underemployment into living-wage careers expands the local tax base and reduces reliance on social safety nets.

► Prevents "Brain Drain"

By aligning local education and training programs directly with regional employer needs, we keep our brightest talent right here in the community.

► Attracts New Industry

Businesses do not relocate to areas lacking talent. By maintaining a robust, highly skilled workforce pipeline, we make our region a magnet for corporate investment and economic expansion.

TIP: Match the pitch to the room; lead with talent & savings for businesses, opportunity & support for jobseekers, and economic impact for civic leaders.

QUICK VOCABULARY GUIDE: SIMPLIFY THE JARGON

Board members often rely too heavily on federal acronyms. Use this quick translation guide to keep conversations engaging and easy to understand:

<i>Instead of saying...</i>	<i>Say this instead...</i>
"WIOA Title I Funding"	"Federally backed grants dedicated to local workforce training."
"Incumbent Worker Training"	"Funding to upgrade the skills of your current employees."
"CareerForce Center / CFC"	"Our local career lab is open to all community members."
"Labor Market Information (LMI)"	"Local hiring data, competitive wage trends, and skill gap analysis."
"Eligible Training Provider List"	"Our vetted network of approved local colleges and trade schools."