



WDB/LEO Joint Meeting
Michigan Works! West Central
 Ludington Service Center
 12:30 p.m. Wednesday, June 3, 2026
 MINUTES

LEO Board Members (5 Makes Quorum)

Present	Virtual	Absent
Mark Gregory Fred Guenther Allita Hren Les Johnson Joel McCormick Paul Mellema Jamie Russell		Jack Bulger Lori Tubbergen Clark

WDB Board Members (12 Makes Quorum)

Present	Virtual	Absent
Jason Finch Jami Klomp Cheray LaRoue Lindsey Lassanske Kelly Rider Rebecca Robeck Tracie Ruppert/Dani Craft Tracy Sanchez Deborah Smith-Olson Patrick Tiedt Mary Trucks		Mike Adams Daniel Eichinger/K Huisman Larry Emig Stephanie Frees Nancy Griffin Lindsay Hager Dave Hamelund Anna Hutchinson Renee Kline-Garstka Dan Kosheba Don Nolan Dawn Riley Jesica Scytco

Guests, Ryan Budzynski and Joseph Carpenter

Michigan Works! West Central Staff, Shelly Keene, Jonathan Eppley, Kevin Welch, Toni Davis, Max Meng, Chelsea Augustson, Kelly Miller, Don Palmer and Ann Walker

1. **Call to Order** at 12:30 p.m. by WDB Deborah Smith-Olson
2. **Public Comment** – No public Comments
3. **Consent Agenda-Handout-Action Items**

- a. Financial Report - Handout (*Goldenrod*)
 - b. Minutes from March 4, 2026, meeting (Emailed)
- Items were motioned for approval by Patrick Tiedt, WDB; supported by Allitta Hren, LEO; motion was approved by WDB and LEO.**

4. Mason County Success Story

- A. Shelly Keene introduced Don Palmer and Ann Walker, Talent Specialists from Mason County Michigan Works! West Central service center.
 - a. Palmer recognized Ryan Budzynski as a success story, highlighting his confidence going into his next chapter. Ryan came to Michigan Works! West Central's Ludington center expressing his desire to advance his position as a cook at the Lincoln Hills Golf Course by obtaining his commercial driver's license (CDL). He share his goal was to become an independent contractor and eventually work alongside his father on the railroad. After demonstrating determination and completing all required protocols for funding, Ryan was approved and successfully earned his CDL on Feb. 26, 2026.
 - b. Walker shared the success of Joseph Carpenter. She started working with Joseph in October 2025. He is a student at Oriole Academy, and as part of his work-based learning program, he is encouraged to attend workforce preparation activities at Michigan Works! West Central. Since October, Walker has presented 36 workshops and Joseph has attended at least 32 of those workshops! Joseph is in the Jobs for Michigan's Graduates program and is very involved in youth activities offered. He has attended talent tours, visited the Capitol for Legislative Day, attended the Dreams to Destinations Youth Conference and is almost finished earning his Career Readiness Certificate.
- B. Palmer, Walker and their guests left the meeting at approximately 12:48 p.m.

5. PY25 Final Budget - Action Item

- A. The final budget for Program Year 2025, which goes from July 1, 2025, to June 30, 2026, was presented. This budget was approved at the June 4, 2025, board meeting. In the first column are budget lines and the explanations are at the bottom. Column 2 has the Program Year 25 Preliminary budget that was calculated with the allocations we knew we were going to receive when the budget was prepared. Column 3 is the Program Year 25 final budget that we received, and column 4 is Program Year final expenditures, the May and June expenditures are estimated.

PY25 Final Budget was motioned for approval by Jason Finch, WDB; supported by Allitta Hren, LEO; motion was approved by WDB and LEO.

6. PY26 Preliminary Budget - Action Item

- A. The preliminary budget for Program Year 2026, which runs from July 1, 2026, to June 30, 2027, was presented to the board. In the first column are the budget lines and the explanations are at the bottom. Column 2 has the Program Year 26 final carry from June to July. Column 3 is estimated new allocations at the time the budget was prepared; some funding allocations were estimated based on previous allocations due to when the funds are released from the state. The last column is Program Year 26 preliminary budget for approval.

PY26 Preliminary was motioned for approval by Mark Gregory, LEO; supported by Les Johnson, LEO; motion was approved by WDB and LEO.

7. Approval of Auditor - Action Item

A. In the packet is a brief analysis of the three proposals received.

- Maner Costerian – our current auditors
- Gabridge & Company, PLC
- Roslund & Prestage & Company

Gabridge & Company has no Michigan Works! experience. Keene said with the complexity of our funds, it makes the most sense to utilize a firm that has experience with Michigan Works.

Roslund & Prestage & Company has experience with two Michigan Works! Agencies – Keene received mixed reviews from the references checked.

Keene reached out to Maner Costerian. If they are selected, the main auditor who had issues during the last audit would not be assigned to us. If they are awarded the contract, they have agreed to change auditors.

Keene asked the board approve to move forward with Maner Costerian as auditor for the next year, with the option of four one-year renewals if we are satisfied with the process.

Item was motioned for approval by Mary Trucks, WDB; supported by Deborah Smith-Olson, WDB; motion was approved by WDB and LEO

8. Plans/Modifications- Handout (Blue)- Action Items

a. WIOA

1. WIOA MOU (Memorandum of Understanding) (Draft PI 26-08) – *Action – Signature Required.*
2. WIOA Local and Regional Plan (Draft PI 24-13) – *Action – Signature Required.*
3. Infrastructure Funding Agreements (IFA) – *Action – Signature Required.*
4. WIOA Adult, Dislocated Worker, and Youth Program Allocations for Appropriation Year 2026 (Draft PI 26-xx) – *Action-Signature Required.*
5. WIOA Statewide Activities Funding for Career Exploration and Experience Events (Draft PI 26-xx) - *Action-Signature Required.*
6. Capacity Building and Professional Development (Draft PI 26-xx) - *Action-Signature Required.*
7. Statewide Activities Funding Allocations for Customer Relationship Management for Program Year 2026 (Draft PI 26-xx)) – *Action – Signature Required.*
8. WIOA Statewide Activities Funding for Young Professionals Plus 2026 Initiative (PI 26-04) – *Action – Signature Required.*

b. Employment Service

9. Employment Service Allocation for AY 2026 (Draft PI-26-xx) – *Action – Signature Required.*
10. RESEA (PI 25-16)) – *Action – Signature Required.*

c. Other

11. DTE Energy Foundation Grant/United Way of the Lakeshore – *No Actions Required*
12. Workforce and Employer Expansion: Sector Strategies and Related activities for the Period of January 1, 2026 through December 31, 2026. (PI 26-06)) – *Action – Signature Required.*
13. FY 2026 for Advancing Social Work Careers through Education and Navigation Direction (MI ASCEND) (Draft PI-26-xx) – *Action – Signature Required.*

Items were motioned for approval by Patrick Tiedt, WDB; supported by Paul Mellema, LEO; motion was approved by WDB and LEO.

9. Demand Occupations Policy) – Action Item

This is typically updated every two years. The last time was December 2023. We relied on the state for the labor market information in the past and when we reached out to get the data for our new list; they were unable to produce it. We recently subscribed to Lightcast, which is a much more accurate, up-to-date data system. So that is the platform that was used to create the new revised demand occupation list. Included in the board packet are the top 40 in-demand occupations for our 6-county region. This list is what is used to promote training programs in our region. If a job seeker is interested in training and it is not on this list, they are required to find 3 local job postings within the last 30 days to prove the occupation is in demand prior to paying for it.

Items were motioned for approval by Allitta Hren, LEO; supported by Rebecca Robeck, WDB; motion was approved by WDB and LEO.

10. MiCareerQuest West Central (Video)

A. Jonathan Eppley thanked board members for making this year's MiCareerQuest another successful event. Each year, the event gets stronger, and that success is a direct reflection of the dedication, energy and support of our volunteers, businesses and partner organizations. This year, 12 board member businesses and organizations participated, including Nestlé-Gerber, Bucher Hydraulics, Hardman Construction, Gray & Company, Grand Oaks, RCG, Lake-Osceola State Bank, Consumers Energy, Ferris State University, SMART Local 7, UA Local 174 and the Michigan Department of Corrections. While that number was slightly lower than last year's 15 board member participants, the continued engagement and commitment from our board partners remains an important part of MiCareerQuest's success.

We also appreciate the board and partner volunteers who gave their time to support the event. Three volunteers attended, with a couple of others stopping by throughout the day, including Allitta Hren, Jesica Scyto and Kelly Rider.

In total, this year's MiCareerQuest brought together 73 businesses, 1,212 students, 17 schools and eight counties. MiCareerQuest remains a valuable opportunity for students to explore career pathways, connect directly with employers and learn more about the industries and opportunities available throughout our region.

Our video production intern, Gavin, put together a video from this year's event, which provides a great look at the hands-on experiences, student engagement and employer participation that made the event such a success. (Video was played for board)

11. Michigan Works! West Central Organizational Updates

A. CEO, Shelly Keene

There will be a small delegation of Michigan Works! directors and leaders who will be going to Washington DC in July to do some visits on Capitol Hill. We are hoping to make an impact on apprenticeship funding and still working on the potential for WIOA reauthorization. When I was in DC in February, there was a lot of interest in our Pre-Licensure Registered Nurse apprenticeship program. One of Sen. Gary Peters' staffers is a former RN and she really was interested in learning more about that. With his retirement, we are hoping Sen. Elyssa Slotkin will step in and be the

workforce champion for Michigan. We will also meet with Rep. John Moolenaar to get his support on workforce development funding.

I will be reaching out in July to get the personnel committee meeting scheduled for August so that we can have the recommendation ready for the September meeting.

On Friday, we will be holding our fourth annual Always a Better Way internal staff conference for professional development. Staff will be presenting nine different workshops throughout the day, and we will kickoff with a keynote speaker who we heard at the Michigan Works! annual conference. So, we are looking forward to the entire team getting together for a day of learning together. I will also be presenting service awards to a few of our staff: Jon (Eppley) and myself will be getting our 10-year awards; and Andrew Middleton, Jesica Galcia, and George LeVasseur will be getting their five-year awards. Andrew and Jesica are both Talent Specialist and George is our Director of IT.

B. Communications Report, Jonathan Eppley

This year's "20 Under 30" magazine was published this past Saturday in the Big Rapids Pioneer, and will be published in this week's Oceana County Herald Review and Lake County Star. We have copies for all of you in your packets. These are some of the best and brightest young professionals our region has to offer. Be sure to share this publication, which also is available on our website at MWWC.org/20Under30.

To celebrate this year's winners, we are going to have an awards luncheon at noon on Friday, Aug. 7, at our Ludington service center. You are all invited; we hope you can make it. There is an invite on the last page of your packet. Please email me if you plan to come so we can get an accurate count for the caterer.

C. Business Engagement Report, Kevin Welch

- a. **Lake County Employability Skills Program:** We successfully launched and completed our initial cohort, addressing key workforce gaps identified by local employers, particularly around communication, teamwork and reliability. This program was developed in collaboration with employer partners and is designed as a scalable, hands-on training model that connects participants directly to employment opportunities.
- b. **June Hiring Parties:** Throughout June, we will host multiple hiring events across our region, creating direct connections between job seekers and employers. These events will generate strong engagement and help build immediate hiring opportunities while also expanding employer partnerships.
- c. **July Employer Lunch & Learn:** We are launching an Employer Lunch & Learn series focused on gathering employer insight and to help us develop long-term, sustainable talent pipelines. These sessions will provide an opportunity to collaborate directly with businesses, better understand their workforce needs and align our programs to support sustainable hiring outcomes. More details to come.

D. OS Reentry Services, Chelsea Augustson

New Contracts

Since the last board meeting, 2 of the 3 open contract positions have been successfully filled.

- The Family Reunification Specialist position has been awarded to Jackie Hallberg with Mediation and Restorative Services.
- The Specialized Resource Navigator position has been filled by Tia Olsen, a Grand Valley State University intern.

Michigan Justice Fund Grant

We were awarded funding through the Michigan Justice Fund to support the Max out/Juvenile Lifer population these are individuals released from incarceration without MDOC supervision, who often require more individualized support. These individuals are not eligible for traditional OS-funded services.

One example of this grant demonstrating an impact is Mr. Sparks, who was incarcerated for 25 years and is now successfully reintegrating into the community with support from our Resource Navigator Beth. His progress prompted the Allegan County Deputy Chief Public Defender to share: *“As a trial attorney and public defender, I have never had—and likely will never again have—an opportunity to witness this level of coordinated effort to support someone’s release and successful reentry. I deeply appreciate the hard work and dedication of the MDOC staff and continue to promote the outstanding work being done.”*

This reflects the strength of our collaborative approach and our commitment to serving both general and specialized populations.

Reentry United Conference

The 5th Annual Reentry United Conference will be held on Aug. 14, 2026, at Grand Valley State University’s Allendale campus. Registration will be opening soon. Board members interested in attending are encouraged to reach out for registration details.

E. Workforce Development Services, Toni Davis

June 10, in Big Rapids Road to Restoration from 10 a.m. - 3 p.m. Road to Restoration is a free clinic to assist Michigan residents in understanding how to get their driving privileges restored. Residents who attend will meet one-on-one with Michigan Secretary of State staff and talk with volunteer attorneys to determine the steps necessary to reinstate their driver’s license.

We hosted a vision board workshop in Lake County with our PATH participants. One individual put her graduation on there and she is graduating with high school completion from Lake County Adult Education. Another participant had put a graduation on her vision board and has started an MA program. Another participated in our Employability Skills and successfully completed it. Proving the importance of goal setting and visualization.

12. Handouts

a. News Clippings

1. Fremont – Credit Union to buy Rite Aid Building
2. Fremont – Tommy's Express car wash coming
3. Ludington – Berkshire Hathaway acquisition of OxyChem transfers ownership of Ludington plant
4. Big Rapids – Little Village holds ribbon cutting in Stanwood
5. Big Rapids – Proposal for development on Hanchett
6. Ludington – Hart Business owner to open Vietnamese restaurant
7. Ludington – An old boat finds a new purpose
8. Big Rapids – MiCareerQuest West Central draws 1,215 students
9. Big Rapids – New Barber opens in downtown Big Rapids
10. Ludington – Inaugural Lake County Employability Skills program graduates 9
11. Ludington – Chase Creek Smokehouse owners retire

b. Unemployment

The state level is at 5.1 percent and the national level 4.3 percent.

13. Next Meeting:

Sept. 2, 2026 – Michigan Works! West Central Big Rapids Service Center, 14330 Northland Drive

14. Other Business

15. Adjournment

Meeting was adjourned at 1:21 p.m.