



MICHIGAN WORKS! WEST CENTRAL
Local-Elected Officials Special Meeting
Mecosta County Service Center
September 2, 2026

MINUTES

Members Present

Bulger, Jack
Gregory, Mark
Guenther, Fred
Hren, Allitta
Johnson, Les
McCormick, Joel
Mellema, Paul
Russell, Jamie
Tubbergen Clark

Members Absent

Michigan Works! Staff

Keene, Shelly

Roll Call

LEO Special Meeting brought to order at 11:55 a.m. by Chair, Fred Guenther, at the Michigan Works! West Central Mecosta County Service Center located at 14330 Northland Drive in Big Rapids. Roll call indicates a quorum is present.

Minutes of March 4, 2026, LEO Special Meeting

Mark Gregory moved to accept the minutes of March 4, 2026, LEO Special Meeting Minutes as printed; supported by Paul Mellema; motion approved.

Approval of Newaygo County Private Sector Employer, Susan Coxen, Bucher Hydraulics

Lori Tubbergen Clark motioned to approve the Newaygo County Private Sector Employer, Susan Cox, Regional Human Resource Manager at Bucher Hydraulics; supported by Les Johnson; motion approved.

Other Business

Adjournment

Meeting adjourned at 12:05 a.m.



WDB/LEO Joint Meeting
Michigan Works! West Central

Big Rapids Service Center

12:30 pm - Wednesday, September 2, 2026

MINUTES

LEO Board Members *(5 Makes Quorum)*

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

WDB Board Members *(12 Makes Quorum)*

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

Guests, Director Susan Corbin (LEO), Krista Johnson (LEO), Ann Marie Stafford (LEO), Heather Kevnick (LEO), Hollie Sly and Crystal Fountain

Michigan Works! West Central Staff, Shelly Keene, Jonathan Eppley, Kevin Welch, Toni Davis, Max Meng, Chelsea Augustson, Kelly Miller, Jon Barton and Breann Rushing

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 June 3, 2026, meeting (Emailed)

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

4. Mason County Success Story

- A. Shelly Keene introduced Jon Barton and Breann Rushing, both Talent Specialists from Mecosta County Michigan Works! West Central service center.

- a. Barton recognized Hollie Sly as a success story at the board meeting,

Hollie Sly

Hollie Sly balanced raising four children, working as a Nursing Technician and attending Central Michigan University full time while pursuing her goal of a healthcare career. With support from the WIOA and PATH programs, she completed EMT training at AGAPE Health Care School despite coursework, clinical, family and technology challenges. She passed her final exams, earned her Michigan EMT license and accepted a full-time EMT position with Montcalm County Emergency Services. Hollie continues her studies and plans to become a paramedic, demonstrating how determination, resilience and workforce program support can help turn opportunity into achievement.

- b. Rushing recognized Crystal Fountain as a success story at the board meeting,

Crystal Fountain

Crystal Fountain returned to the PATH program while facing significant challenges and working to create stability for herself and her three children. Through Michigan Works! West Central's PATH and WIOA programs, she received support, encouragement and guidance that helped her address barriers, set goals and move forward. She secured housing, earned her Career Readiness Certificate, began CNA training, volunteered with Angels of Action and became more involved in her church and community. Along the way, Crystal gained confidence, developed a stronger sense of purpose and demonstrated resilience and determination in building a better future for her family.

Barton, Rushing, Sly and Fountain left the meeting at approximately 12:47 p.m.

5. LEO – WD Presentation – Director Corbin

- Keene introduced LEO Director Susan Corbin
- Corbin gave a presentation providing an update on the state's workforce plan

6. Plans/Modifications- Handout (Blue) - Action Item

- a. Going PRO Talent Fund

1. Going PRO Talent Fund Program Administration Fiscal Year (FY) 2026 Cycle 2, the period of July 14, 2026, through June 30, 2027 (Official PI 26-26) **Action – Signature Required**

- b. Other –

2. MWA Apprenticeship Success Coordinators (ASCs) and MWA Registered apprenticeship Program (RAP) Intermediary Functions – (Official PI 26-24) **Action – Signature Required**

3. National Farmworker Jobs Program (NFJP) – (PI 26-21) **Action – Signature Required**
4. The Michigan Industry – Driven Skills Training Program (MIDSTP) – (PI 26-11) **Action - Signature Required**
5. Opioid Settlement Workforce Initiative (Draft PI 26-25) **Action – Signature Required**

Action items were motioned for approval by Patrick Tiedt, WDB; and supported by Mike Adams, WDB; motion was approved by WDB and LEO.

7. Approval of Personnel Committee Recommendations - Action Item

Action Item was motioned for approval by Fred Guenther, LEO; *and supported by Jesica Scytka, WDB; motion was approved by WDB and LEO.*

8. WIOA Performance

- a. Local and state-wide WIOA performance reviewed

9. Fraud Policy

- a. WDB/LEO completed and submitted Fraud Policy

10. Conflict of Interest Policy

- a. WDB/LEO completed and submitted Conflict of Interest Policy

11. Action Planning

- a. We will be hosting our Action Planning Session on Friday, Sept. 25, at the Big Rapids office from 9-11:30 a.m.

Staff will send out a survey by the end of the week that we will be asking for WDB/LEO feedback. Board members are asked to complete the survey by Friday, Sept. 18, which will give us enough time to prepare for the meeting on the Sept. 25. Board feedback in advance helps plan for the session on the 25.

The board members who are able to attend the planning session will help determine the top three priorities for the agency for the next two calendar years. The recommendation will be brought before the full board at our December meeting.

12. Shining Star Award

- a. Ann Walker – Keene shared with the board that Ludington Talent Specialist Ann Walker was selected by staff at the 2026 Shining Star for the organization. She will receive her award at the 2026 Michigan Works! Association Annual Conference in mid-September.

13. Michigan Works! West Central Organizational Updates

- a. CEO, Shelly Keene

Moolenaar Visit

- On Aug. 21, we hosted Congressman John Moolenaar in our Big Rapids office.
- We gave him a tour of the office and then four participants, one apprentice and one employer, attended the visit.
- We showcased the WIOA Adult and Youth programs.

- It was a great experience. Our guests all spoke from the heart and we very complimentary of the services they received and our goal is when he is voting, he remembers some of the stories he heard and how our programming impacts his constituents.

Shelby Office

- We are looking forward to moving into the new Hart Community Center building that is owned by West Shore Community College
- It is anticipated that the building will be ready for occupancy in early to mid-October.
- We will be planning our move accordingly.
- Michigan Works! West Central will be the leader of the building.

Executive Assistant Position

- Today will be Kelly Miller's last board meeting as she has accepted a different position within the agency. She will be our new OS Economic Stability Specialist.
- The position is currently posted with interviews planned for Sept. 17. We have received over 125 applications with 12 selected for potential interviews.
- Keene thanked Miller for her work of the past 2-plus years and look forward to seeing her grow in her new position.

b. Communications Report, Jonathan Eppley

20 Under 30 Luncheon

On Aug. 7, we held our annual 20 Under 30 awards luncheon in Ludington. Twelve of our 20 winners were able to attend. They received legislative tributes from our local legislators, Rep. Moolenaar and certificates from Michigan Works! West Central.

Several board members were in attendance. This is one of our most fun days of the year, where we get to celebrate young professionals in our region and look to inspire some of our youth participants to achieve more.

One of this year's winners, Brandon Childress from Baldwin Community Schools was our keynote speaker. He did a great job celebrating and inspiring the young professionals in the room. Our video production intern did a really good job creating a video highlighting the event. A link was sent out after the meeting.

Full Staff

In early-July, Ross Fiske joined us as our new Video Production Intern from Ferris State University. During his first week, he did a video shoot for the OS truck driving program. The OS team was so impressed with his work that they have since requested two more videos that we'll be finishing up this fall. He's doing some of the best work our interns have done for us. We're happy to have him with us through mid-December.

Also, in mid-August our new full-time Digital Media and Communication Specialist David Biscorner joined our team. He's joining us after a few years in the TV news industry and has a background in producing esports video content. Currently, he's diligently working to improve our social media presence – which has seen a welcome boost in engagement – and he's making some good updates to our website. He'll take over some of those video responsibilities after Ross' internship is done.

c. Business Engagement Report, Kevin Welch

Keene and Welch recently completed employer SWOT analysis sessions in Big Rapids and Ludington. Feedback from employers consistently reinforced the importance of recruiting and retaining reliable employees who possess strong soft skills, a solid work ethic and dedication.

On the challenging side, the organization was awarded only two Going PRO Talent Fund (GPTF) grants during the 2026 Cycle 2 funding round. Welch also shared that apprenticeship programs continue to perform well and Incumbent Worker Training (IWT) funding has helped employers address workforce training needs and partially offset reductions in GPTF funding opportunities.

d. OS Reentry Services, Chelsea Augustson

Reentry United

We hosted our 5th annual Reentry United Conference in early-August at Grand Valley State University's Allendale Campus. This year's theme was Breaking Barriers focusing on the continued commitment to remove obstacles hindering successful reentry.

MDOC Director Heidi Washington opened up the conference for us and Dr. Kendall Taylor as the Keynote speaker. Kendall is the cofounder and CEO of Salute 1st a program that focuses on impacting men from all walks of life by challenging their perspectives to help build men of good character.

A total of 28 breakout sessions were held this year and the conference has now had at least corrections workers and officials from 15 different states attend.

Truck Driving Program

We have reached 160 participants who have graduated from our truck driving program with FCG Truck Driving School in Byron Center.

OS by the Numbers – (9 Months into 2026)

Parole Services are down a little bit from last year by about 1,400 services

Probation Services have seen an increase of around 1,200 Services from last year.

e. Workforce Development Services, Toni Davis

We currently have two participants enrolled in Mott Community College's virtual Social Work Technician program. The participants are employees at Our Brother's Keeper (OBK) and is using this training opportunity to continue growing in the social services field.

Our team reached out to local social service agencies because we had funding available to help support training. OBK followed up with two interested individuals.

This is a year-round program, and the participant is expected to complete the training by December 2027. This opportunity is a good example of how training funds can support both employee growth and the workforce needs of local community-based organizations.

14. Handouts

a. News Clippings

1. Gene's opens new grocery outlet in Grant
 2. AndyS plans Aug. 16 opening, hiring nearly 100 employees
 3. Chinese battery giant in settlement talks with township it sued for millions
 4. Reed City's historic H&D Chuckwagon to close; building up for sale
 5. New Big Rapids Burlington eyeing end of September opening
 6. Data center proposed for Morley dam; meeting postponed due to large number of attendees
 7. New Evert outdoors store to offer a little bit of everything
- b. Unemployment
The state level is at 5.1 percent and the national level 4.4 percent.
- c. Updated Organizational Chart
- d. Updated WDB Chart

13. Next Meeting:

Wednesday, Dec. 2, 2026 – Michigan Works! West Central, 710 S. State St. Hart, MI 49420

14. Other Business

15. Adjournment Meeting was adjourned at 1:56 p.m.