Northeast Indiana Works Board
January 9, 2026
9:00-10:30 AM

Board Members Present: Kim Barnett-Johnson, Angie Dane, Jordi Disler, Leroy Jackson, Kent Prosser, Rebecca Schroeder, Shelly Sterns, Michael Venturini, Jim Walmsley. Phil Brown, Patrick Buesching

Staff Present: Edmond O'Neal, Erica Lillie, Victoria Durnell, Kim Tempel, Lori Rice, Michael Scher Cindy Neal.

Call to order

Board Chair Rebecca Schroeder called the meeting to order at 9:00 a.m. A quorum was present.

Consent Agenda: Board Minutes, Financial Report

The minutes of the October 3, 2025, board meeting and financial report were provided in the packet of advance materials. Leroy Jackson moved to approve the minutes and financial report. Michael Venturini seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

Audit Report

Lori Rice explained the key items from the audit report. It was a clean and unmodified audit report. Northeast Indiana Works is a low-risk auditee. The audit report was reviewed and approved by the Executive Committee and the full audit will be reviewed and approved by the committee before being submitted to the IRS. Jordi Disler moved to approve the full audit report. Leroy Jackson seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

Presentations

The board heard from Melissa Campbell (former customer, now partner) and James Brown (COO, Bulldog Battery) about the Wabash County Jail Chemical Addiction Program (JCAP). Melissa shared her journey with a history of substance abuse, service through WorkOne and now partnership to help others overcome substance abuse challenges. James shared his

perspective as an employer with the program and also someone with a history of substance abuse. Both highlighted their own feeling of needing a second chance and how this program provides that to Wabash County residents.

Victoria Durnell (staff) spoke to the board about her work in the youth mentoring space, specifically with regional community-based organizations like Junior Achievement, Fort Wayne Community Schools, TeenWorks, and Blue Jacket.

Chief Elected Official Remarks

None

President/CEO Report

Edmond O'Neal talked provided updates on the ongoing state-level effort to realign workforce regions and blend economic development and workforce development activities at the regional level. He reviewed HB1101 with the board, which outlines a new structure for regional economic development entities, and Executive Order 25-77 which formally established the State Workforce Development Board (SWDB). O'Neal announced that DWD has notified the region of successfully surpassing WIOA performance goals for PY2024-25. Unemployment rates for counties within the region were reviewed, an update was provided on current office leases and potential office relocations, and changes to the Allen County office were announced related to amenities for staff and customers. NEINW will be co-hosting an event with IEDC at Sweetwater Sound on 2/3 to highlight Sweetwater's internal employee training programming and to educate the employer community on the IEDC Power Up Grant. O'Neal requested approval to extend the existing WIOA Adult/DW Service Providers Contract (Eckerd) for one additional year, having already received approval from the Indiana Department of Workforce Development. Kent Prosser moved to approve the extension request. Kim Barnett-Johnson seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

Board Chair's Remarks

Schroeder thanked the board and staff for their service and hard work.

Adjourn

The meeting adjourned at 10:28 a.m.

(The next meeting of the board will be from 9 a.m. to 10:30 a.m. April 10, 2026. There will be a virtual option, but all are encouraged to attend in person.)