



LANE WORKFORCE EXECUTIVE BOARD MEETING
Thursday, February 19, 2026
11:30am – 1:00pm
MINUTES

In Attendance: Billy Dover, Jeff Graham, Solomon Harris, John Stapleton, Heather Buch, Kori Rodley
Absent: Shondra Holliday, Lyndsie Leech, Dana Merryday
Staff: Ashley Espinoza, Tiffany Cink, Anne Nestell, Stephanie Lovell, Ryan Kounovsky, Cindy Perry

APPROVALS

Recommendation	Motion	Seconded	Status
Approve Executive Board Meeting Minutes (January 15, 2026)	Heather Buch	John Stapleton	Approved Abstained: Kori Rodley
Executive Board recommends and seeks approval of the Local Chief Elected Official (CEO) and the Governor of Oregon to renew the approval to Sole Source the One-Stop Operator contract to Lane Workforce Development Board/Lane Workforce Partnership for a period of three additional years beginning July 1, 2026 – June 30, 2029.	Heather Buch	Billy Dover	Approved
Approve General Operating PY 25/26 Budget Modification #2	Billy Dover	Heather Buch	Approved Abstained: John Stapleton
Approve the Amendment of the 2024 – 2028 Workforce Development Board Local Plan	Jeff Graham	Billy Dover	Approved

I. CALL TO ORDER

Chair Solomon Harris called the meeting to order.

II. PUBLIC COMMENT

No public comments were received.

III. CONSENT CALENDAR

Heather Buch moved to approve the January 15, 2026, Executive Board meeting minutes. John Stapleton seconded, and the motion was approved. Kori Rodley abstained.

IV. BUDGET MODIFICATION #2 FOR PY 2025 – 2026

Tiffany Cink provided an overview.

- Reported a budget modification that included an additional \$258,686. Of this amount, \$112,000 came through a Higher Education Coordinating Commission grant for statewide apprenticeship creation in behavioral health. The grant is nearly three years in duration and will support LWP's first apprenticeship effort as a workforce board.
- Noted partner involvement on the apprenticeship work, including Lane County, PeaceHealth, Lane Community College, and Lane ESD.
- Received \$135,910 Team Oregon Build/CTE Career Pathways partnership grants from multiple foundations including Roundhouse Foundation, Reser Family Foundation, Oregon Community Foundation, and Hosea Youth Service.
- Shared that the Southwestern Oregon Workforce Board (SOWIB) engaged LWP staff to support launching their construction sector partnership and provided \$10,000 as a result.
- Stated that overall funds included minor internal shifts, with increased personnel expenses to extend the Team Oregon Build position.
- Reported that most costs were allocated to contracts, including work with Lane ESD and Pivot.
- Noted that slightly more than \$100,000 will be placed into reserves for future expenditures related to completing the Behavioral Health project.

Billy Dover moved to adopt the General Operating Budget Modification #2 as presented. Heather Buch seconded, and the motion was approved. John Stapleton abstained.

V. ONE-STOP OPERATOR RENEWAL REQUEST

Ryan Kounovsky provided an overview.

- Reminded the group that the 2025 procurement for the One-Stop Operator role did not result in a qualified respondent, leading LWP to assume the role. The One-Stop Operator is responsible for coordinating the workforce center and partner collaboration.
 - Core Focus: The One-Stop Operator works behind the scenes to ensure that WorkSource Lane operates as a unified, accessible system. The operator is tasked with coordinating services, eliminating barriers, and creating clear pathways for everyone we serve.
- Shared that LWP has been performing the One-Stop Operator role since July 1, 2025 and is requesting additional time beyond the initial one-year plan. Because One-Stop Operator procurements operate on four-year cycles, LWP is requesting approval to continue in the role for the full four-year period before transitioning the work to another organization.

- Outlined three primary areas of work:
 - **ABC's/Trail to Summit:** Framework provides a clear, intuitive way to understand where job seekers are on their career journey and what support they need to reach their goals. This approach replaces complex workforce terminology with a pathway anyone can understand.
 - **1) Meet People Where They Are:** Assess current skills, barriers, and immediate needs without judgment;
 - **2) Offer the Right Level of Support:** Match services to individual readiness and circumstances
 - **3) Support Both Immediate Jobs and Long-Term Careers:** Create pathways that address urgent employment needs while building toward sustainable careers.
 - **Creating Stronger Business Services:** Efforts to better organize available workforce services for employers, understand employer needs, and connect businesses with appropriate resources across the system. Service categories discussed include talent recruitment, retention, workforce training and upskilling, business retention and expansion, and labor market information and strategic connections.
 - **“Partner of Workforce Oregon” model:** Formalizes relationships with community-based organizations, creating predictable, sustainable pathways for collaboration. How the program works:
 - Builds on proven partnerships like Bridge Lane and the Workforce Benefits Navigator Consortium that already demonstrate effective collaboration.
 - Creates predictable connection points so partners know exactly how to refer clients and access services;
 - Strengthens coordination through shared protocols, regular communication, and joint problem-solving;
 - Expands system capacity by leveraging the expertise and reach of community organizations.
- Noted that these efforts require additional time for implementation, community engagement, and alignment of partner capacity with community needs. Noted that the work remains conceptual and will continue to evolve as implementation progresses.

Heather Buch moved that the Executive Board recommend and seek approval of the Local Chief Elected Official (CEO) and the Governor of Oregon to renew the approval to Sole Source the One-Stop Operator contract to Lane Workforce Development Board/Lane Workforce Partnership for a period of three additional years beginning on July 1, 2026 – June 30, 2029. Billy Dover seconded, and the motion was approved.

VI. 2024 – 2028 LOCAL PLAN AMENDMENT

Ryan Kounovsky provided an overview.

- Shared that the state requested a midpoint review of the four-year local plan, which began in July 2024. The amendment is being brought forward for board ratification. A review of the full plan was conducted to confirm alignment with statewide goals, the Workforce Talent and Development Board mission, and WIOA requirements. The review found the plan remained aligned with state priorities and objectives. The amendment primarily includes administrative updates resulting from the 2025 procurements. Updates include:
 - Adult service provider change from Lane County Health and Human Services to Grant Associates
 - Youth service provider change from Connected Lane County to Looking Glass

- Clarified Lane Workforce Partnership’s role as the One-Stop Operator
- Minor wording updates related to Collaborative EDO
- The amendment is required to be posted for a 30-day public comment period, which is currently underway following posting to the LWP website. No public comments have been received to date.

VII. MID-YEAR CONTRACT REVIEW

Ryan Kounovsky provided an overview.

- Explained that many programs are measured on annual goals rather than six-month benchmarks, and the mid-year report is intended as a snapshot of enrollment goals, participation, and spending. The report includes four providers:
 - Grant Associates (Adult Service Provider): Participation data reflects whether enrollment is on pace at the 50% midpoint of annual goals. Ryan noted that enrollments increased between the first and second quarters and are on pace. The provider serves approximately 150 participants annually with a team of three case managers.
 - Reviewed additional adult funding streams included within the overall enrollment totals. Shared that funding expenditures may appear slower early in the year because some payment, particularly for on-the-job training, occur after participants complete training programs.
 - QUEST grant supporting individuals impacted by COVID-19 with healthcare training
 - WorkSource Oregon (WorkEx) funding supporting on-the-job training programs
 - Bushnell WorkReady partnership supporting BSN nursing students with support services and career guidance
 - CDL training funding continues due to strong interest and outcomes.
 - Looking Glass (Youth Service Provider): Reported an enrollment goal of 135 participants, with current enrollment above the midpoint target. Noted that Looking Glass absorbed caseload transitions from Connected Lane County and is on track with spending.
 - Connected Lane County: Continued partnership with Connected Lane County through the Oregon Youth Employment Program. Connected Lane County is meeting enrollment and participation expectations for youth employment and work experience activities.
 - Collaborative Economic Development Oregon: Noted two funding areas, with both on track for the year:
 - Business and industry engagement work
 - Benefits navigator activities supporting community connections to services. Referenced Bridge Lane activity as part of this work.
- A year-end report with final metrics will be provided after the close of the program year.

- Board members noted that the condensed report for mid-year works well with the expansive report provided at year-end. It was requested that totals be added at the bottom of the tables in the report.

VIII. EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR'S REPORT

- Shared that LWP hosted a Grounded in Leadership training with partners from Tacoma, Washington who work for workforce boards and also provide consulting focused on human-centered approaches. The training was offered to service providers/frontline staff. Training topics included navigating collaboration across partner organizations, managing conflict and alignment, and maintaining personal balance and reflection. Also included discussion on AI focused on helping staff access information while protecting confidential client data. Survey feedback from participants was very positive, with staff indicating strong satisfaction with the training. The visit included a social networking event and partner engagement activities, including a visit to Connected Lane County.
- Provided an update on her participation on the Continuous Improvement Committee (through the Workforce Talent and Development Board) established through Senate Bill 623. The committee is responsible for hiring a third-party evaluator to assess Oregon's public workforce system. The RFP was released today and evaluator selection will follow. Process: review the evaluator's report; gather input from agencies, providers, and partners; develop final recommendations for the State Workforce Board; final recommendations submitted to the Governor by December 15 of even-numbered years.
- Shared the recent success of the Bridge Lane event at the Lane Events Center, noting strong participation from partners, employers, and community members. The event focused on connecting priority populations with employment opportunities and supportive services. Ashley emphasized the collaborative environment and positive partner feedback, while noting sustainability challenges once funding ends on June 30, 2026.
- Provided a legislative update on Senate Bill 1512, supported by Oregon Workforce Partnership and the nine workforce boards. The bill recently passed the Senate and is moving to the House. The proposal seeks to position workforce boards as administrators of Prosperity 10,000 funding to support coordination and community impact. Ashley noted that the bill currently has no funding attached, with hope for future funding in the 2027 legislative session.

IX. EXECUTIVE BOARD MEMBER UPDATES

- John Stapleton
 - Reported ongoing collaboration with the City of Eugene to develop a regulatory pathway and housing model designed to serve individuals earning 0-30% of Area Median Income (AMI). The model addresses a key system gap where individuals exiting transitional housing face barriers to permanent housing, including extended waitlists for programs such as Section 8.
 - Everyone Village, the partner organization involved in the project, demonstrates a strong track record of stabilization outcomes which is essential to long-term housing success and preventing individuals from cycling back into transitional housing.
 - Federal funding has supported development of a permanent housing component that will also function as a regional training site. Planned workforce and education

partnerships include career technical education pathways, behavioral health training, healthcare collaboration with PeaceHealth, and construction programming, with additional partnership support from the University of Oregon.

- Noted that federal investment filled a funding gap previously unaddressed by other entities, prompting private sector partners to step forward and help close remaining financing needs for a fully development village model. A press release is expected soon.
 - Multiple communities across the county have expressed interest in replicating the model. Teams are currently analyzing economic and development factors to establish a scalable and replicable framework, with clearer guidance anticipated within the next year.
 - Turning to construction industry conditions, John described an uncertain outlook. Early indicators show reduced project intake across architecture and engineering firms, largely driven by economic uncertainty, high borrowing costs, and hesitation around commercial office development demand. While project pipelines remain sufficient to maintain current employment levels, many capital projects are paused pending improved market confidence. John noted a broad holding pattern across all sectors.
 - Workforce considerations remain a priority, with ongoing replacement needs due to retirements within the aging architecture, engineering, and construction workforce. Youth workforce engagement continues to be a focus although maybe not on the scale we hoped it would be.
 - Highlighted affordability, not construction capacity, as a primary barrier to housing development and homeownership. Efforts are underway to explore grant funding with Capital One to support homeownership pathways connected to career technical education and workforce development strategies.
- Jeff Graham
 - Ice cream production continues, though recent mechanical issues have made production a bit slower than we would like. Inventory levels remain stable, with approximately eight weeks of stock available across product SKUs. Demand has plateaued compared to the prior year, and the company is not anticipating significant production growth. Production volume is projected to remain consistent with last year at approximately three million tons.
 - Positive momentum following a logo rebrand last year and broader company marketing efforts, including a Super Bowl commercial.
 - Jeff will be traveling to Colorado next week for training followed by preparing for a Walmart social compliance audit. An external auditor will come in and review our hiring practices, workforce demographics, turnover metrics, etc. Just like we audit our suppliers in various aspects, this is a more broad approach to what they want to see and how we are supporting them as a customer of ours.

- Kori Rodley
 - Shared that the [Glenwood Riverfront Redevelopment Community Meeting](#) will be taking place this afternoon starting at 4:00pm at Roaring Rapids Pizza. Learn about the proposed master plan, ask questions, and speak with the agencies involved in the redevelopment.

- Billy Dover
 - There is nationwide instability within the transportation and trucking industry. Key concerns identified in a recent national survey include economic conditions, rising insurance costs, and increased litigation exposure. These factors are influencing company decisions related to equipment purchases, hiring, and business sustainability, with consolidation occurring across the industry.
 - Noted continued local interest in CDL careers across Lane and Douglas counties. He receives daily inquiries from individuals seeking guidance on obtaining a CDL and has been directing them to WorkSource.
 - Billy is holding a recruiting seminar in Lane County focused on CDL pathways and trucking careers. Approximately 25 – 30 individuals have RSVP'd.
 - Highlighted ongoing challenges related to entry-level drive employment. Many employers are unable to hire new drivers due to insurance restrictions, creating a mismatch between available workers and hiring capacity. He emphasized the need for employer education on strategies to address insurance barriers and strengthen training programs.
 - Upcoming regulatory changes effective April 1 from the Commercial Vehicle Safety Alliance will expand allowable freight activities for intrastate CDL drivers within Oregon. This change may create additional opportunities, including for drivers under 21 years old.
 - A regional truck driving school with multiple campuses is actively seeking a Eugene location to establish a new CDL training site.
 - Encouraged people to attend the LWP Full Board meeting on May 28th when a National Guard Employment Administrator will be presenting, noting the Guard's capacity to provide cross-sector talent and foundational training support.

- Commissioner Buch
 - County received positive news regarding Secure Rural Schools (SRS) funding. The three-year federal allocation includes two years of backlogged funding and one year of prospective funding, providing greater financial stability than anticipated. Because SRS funding timing is uncertain, it is typically not included in baseline budgeting. Historically, funds have been split between Sheriff's Patrol operations and Roads and Bridges. This year, the projected allocation is approximately 40% for patrol and 60% for infrastructure.
 - The County Administrator is expected to present recommendations during the upcoming budget cycle regarding how SRS funding will be applied, including potential support for patrol services and addressing projected deficits. Budget Committee meetings are anticipated to begin next month.

- Transient Lodging Tax (ILT) investments:
 - More than \$500,000 in tourism funding has been distributed to rural communities.
 - A five-year funding allocation has been established for the McKenzie River area to support long-term planning, recognizing its unincorporated status.
 - Funding has also been invested in preservation and stabilization of Lane County's historic covered bridges, supporting tourism, rural economic development, and community heritage.

- Solomon Harris
 - Hired a new employee with onboarding complete. There is optimism that things are starting to turn the corner.

X. OTHER BUSINESS

No additional matters were recorded.

XI. ADJOURNMENT

Chair Solomon Harris adjourned the meeting.