Full Board Meeting
Thursday, September 17, 2026, at 10:00 AM MST

NALWDB Conference Room
525 Camino De Los Marquez
Suite 250
Santa Fe, NM 87505

Floyd Archuleta:	Present
Sarah Boisvert	Present
Dr. Rebecca Estrada:	Present
Maria Herrera:	Excused
Rudy Garcia	Present
Clarence Maestas	Present
Jennifer Martinez	Present/Zoom
Mario Lucero:	Present/Zoom
Pablo Lujan	Present
Sean Medrano:	Present
Jolene Nelson:	Present/Zoom
Mayor David Romero	Present
Chairman Jon Paul Romero	Present
Kevin Romero	Excused
Arthur Sparks	Excused

Present: 13, Excused: 3.
Also in attendance: NALWDB Staff: Lisa Ortiz - Executive Director, Barney Trujillo - Operations Manager, Ruthie Mares – Quality Assurance Specialist, Issy Lozano – Program Support Specialist, Brittany Valencia – Finance Specialist. **Guests:** Ericka Van Eckhoutte – Adult/DW Director, Nina Valdez – One Stop Operator, Veronica Alonzo NMDWS, Crystal Hollon – NMDWS, Chanin O'Rouke – DWS, Becky Vega – NMDWS, Leroy Garcia – NMDWS, Waldy Salazar – NMDWS, Maxine Palomino – NMDWS, April Pepper – NMDWS, Shellonda Rucker – Career TEAM, Julio Garcia – Legal Counsel, Tracee Loughran – Career TEAM, Rosina Espinoza – NMDWS, Charles Hall – WIOA North Program Manager.

1. Call Meeting to Order

The meeting was called to order at 10:00 AM by Chairman Jon Paul Romero.

2. Roll Call and Determination of a Quorum

Roll call was conducted by NALWDB Program Support Specialist Issy Lozano, who reported that a quorum was present.

4. Pledge of Allegiance

The Pledge of Allegiance was recited by all in attendance.

4. Approval of Agenda

Board Member Floyd Archuleta asked whether an executive session was needed. Chairman Jon Paul Romero stated that he did not believe one was necessary.

Motion to approve the agenda. This Motion was made by Board Member Sean Medrano, seconded by Board Member Marco Serna. Chairman Jon Paul Romero called for a voice vote, and the motion passed.

Program Support Specialist Issy Lozano stated that for the record, Board Members Clarence Maestas, and Mayor David Romero joined the meeting in person at 10:02am.

5. Approval of Board Meeting Minutes

Motion to approve the June 25, 2026, full board meeting minutes. This motion was made by Board Member Pablo Lujan, seconded by Board Member Floyd Archuleta. Chairman Jon Paul Romero called for a voice vote, and the motion passed.

6. Election of Vice Chair

Chairman Jon Paul Romero opened nominations for the vacant Vice Chair position. Board Member Floyd Archuleta nominated Finance Committee Chair Pablo Lujan, and Board Member Marco Serna seconded the nomination. Chairman Romero called for additional nominations. None were offered, and nominations were closed.

A roll-call vote was conducted, and Pablo Lujan was elected Vice Chair unanimously. Chairman Romero congratulated Vice Chair Lujan, who thanked the Board and staff and offered his continued assistance.

7. Action Items

7.1 Sunflower Bank Account Authorized Signer.

Executive Director Lisa Ortiz requested Board approval to remove former Chairman Joseph Weathers as a bank account signer and add Chairman Jon Paul Romero. Chairman Romero stated that he had completed the necessary paperwork earlier in the week. Mayor David Romero moved to approve the signer change, Vice Chair Pablo Lujan seconded, and the motion passed by roll-call vote.

Program Support Specialist Issy Lozano noted for the record that Board Member Jolene Nelson joined via Zoom at 10:05 a.m.

Executive Director Ortiz clarified that the signer change should also include Enterprise Bank. Fiscal Agent Rick Sandoval explained that the signed form was for Sunflower Bank and that Enterprise Bank already had Chairman Romero's profile, requiring only Board approval. Mayor David Romero proposed amending his motion to include Enterprise Bank. Chairman Romero acknowledged the amendment, and no objection was noted.

7.2 Approval of the Revised Policies

7.2A One Stop Policy #30, Rev. 4

7.2B Electronic File Policy #30a, Rev.1

7.2C Non-Discrimination Equal Opportunity and WIOA Title I Program Grievance and Complain Policy #24, Rev.3

7.2D Individual Training Account Policy #16, Rev.6

7.2E On the Job Training (OJT) Policy #23, Rev.4

7.2F Monitoring Policy Rev.1

7.2G Supportive Services & Needs Related Payments Policy #20, Rev.5

Chairman Jon Paul Romero proposed considering Agenda Items 7.2A through 7.2G together. Executive Director Lisa Ortiz reported that the Rules Committee had reviewed each policy at its Monday meeting. She stated that Quality Assurance Specialist Ruthie Mares had revised the firearms section of the One-Stop policy as recommended by the Committee and recommended approval of all seven policies.

Mayor David Romero thanked staff and noted that the policies had been distributed on September 2, allowing time for review and comment by the State. Mayor Romero moved to approve Agenda Items 7.2A through 7.2G. Board Secretary Sean Medrano seconded the motion, which passed unanimously by roll-call vote.

Chairman Jon Paul Romero thanked Mayor David Romero and the members of the Rules Committee for their work reviewing the policies before they came to the Full Board. He also thanked all committee members for the work they do to prepare items for Board consideration.

8. Discussion Item

8.1 US DOL Findings Update

Executive Director Lisa Ortiz updated the Board on the U.S. Department of Labor findings. She reported that NALWDB had submitted a final response and supporting documentation through the New Mexico Department of Workforce Solutions regarding

questioned On-the-Job Training and Transitional Job Training costs. Staff's analysis identified approximately $86,000 as allowable and $9,141.59 as potentially subject to repayment. USDOL will review the response, and NALWDB has requested a meeting to answer questions and provide additional documentation.

Lisa Ortiz stated that unrestricted funds could cover part of any required repayment, with the remaining amount to be requested from the CEOs, depending on USDOL's final determination. She also identified the interest-bearing account as another outstanding finding.

Executive Director Lisa Ortiz stated that USDOL's review covered program years 2022 through 2024, when CPLC in New Mexico was the service provider. She explained that the questioned costs involved participants served through organizations in the Gallup and Farmington areas, including police and fire departments. Lisa Ortiz maintained that the participants needed the services and that the costs were allowable.

Chairman Jon Paul Romero asked whether the CEOs had been asked to contribute toward a possible repayment. Lisa Ortiz stated that the CEOs received a detailed report at their August 25 meeting and were advised that assistance might be requested. In response to Vice Chair Pablo Lujan's question about available funds, Fiscal Agent Rick Sandoval reported approximately $7,000 in unrestricted funds at the end of June. He recommended retaining some for ongoing expenses that cannot be charged to WIOA and stated that most of any repayment would likely need to be requested from the CEOs. The restricted Kellogg grant could not be used for these costs.

Program Support Specialist Issy Lozano noted for the record that Board Member Rudy Garcia joined the meeting in person at 10:15 a.m.

8.2 Local Plan Modification

Executive Director Lisa Ortiz reported that the draft Local Plan Modification was posted on the NALWDB website for public comment. The modification updates the Board's four-year plan to reflect current economic conditions, performance targets, labor market information, funding, accomplishments, and challenges. She encouraged Board members and community partners to review the draft and provide feedback. Lisa Ortiz stated that the Board would need to meet in early October to consider the final modification before submitting it to the New Mexico Department of Workforce Solutions by October 5.

Chairman Jon Paul Romero stated that he expected to be traveling but could attend the meeting virtually. He emphasized the need to secure a quorum so the Board could meet the submission deadline.

8.3 Gallup AJC – Discussion of relocating

Executive Director Lisa Ortiz reported that the Gallup American Job Center's current space does not adequately accommodate its staff. One-Stop Operator Nina Valdez has discussed an adjacent space with the landlord that would provide room for additional partners, although it is larger and more costly than the center currently needs. Lisa Ortiz stated that the New Mexico Department of Workforce Solutions was interested in the option, but the additional cost to partner agencies remained a concern.

Nina Valdez explained that the current center has limited space, a small resource room, and no conference room, leaving little room for staff or program expansion. The adjacent space would provide a conference area, a larger resource area, and rooms for testing. She stated that the landlord has requested a decision so the additional space can be leased to the center or offered to another tenant.

Board Member Rudy Garcia asked about the proposed Gallup American Job Center space, its cost, and how many additional staff it could accommodate. Executive Director Lisa Ortiz estimated that the center would increase from approximately 3,000 to slightly more than 4,000 square feet. One-Stop Operator Nina Valdez clarified that the proposed space would have approximately 12 offices total, three or four more than the current location, along with a conference room, resource area, and break room.

Staff estimated that annual rent would rise from approximately $69,000 to around $90,000, excluding moving costs. Lisa Ortiz explained that rent would be shared among the partners occupying the center and allocated according to their use of the space. Nina Valdez said the proposed location was largely ready for occupancy, although internet and technology needs still required review.

Rudy Garcia requested a review of the site and the Board's specific share of the added cost. Lisa Ortiz stated that Nina Valdez oversees the region's job centers and would report findings to her and Operations Manager Barney Trujillo. Fiscal Agent Rick Sandoval said the Board's share would be a portion of the increase and appeared likely to fit within the budget, but the amount could not be determined until the lease terms and partner allocations were finalized.

Nina Valdez stated that the landlord would like a decision by December for a possible January transition. Lisa Ortiz said staff would continue discussions with the New Mexico Department of Workforce Solutions and provide an update at the next meeting. Chairman Jon Paul Romero stated that the cost breakdown and site review would be presented before the Board was asked to consider approval.

9. Informational Reports

9.1 Board Chair – Jon Paul Romero

Chairman Jon Paul Romero thanked the Board for its confidence in selecting him as Chair. He noted his service on the Board since 2009 and thanked staff and Board members for their work, particularly during recent audits and reporting challenges.

In response to Board Member Rudy Garcia's question about possible changes, Chairman Romero said he did not anticipate immediate staff changes but planned to review committee membership and vacancies. Board Member Rebecca Estrada noted that the Sector Strategies Committee had been largely inactive since the New Mexico Department of Workforce Solutions assumed a greater role in that work. Members discussed reviewing whether some committees should be changed or discontinued.

Chairman Romero also proposed a Board retreat to help members understand their roles and improve communication. Executive Director Lisa Ortiz recalled that the last retreat was in 2022. Board Member Floyd Archuleta supported holding another retreat. Chairman Romero said staff would explore dates in late 2026 or early 2027. He also expressed a goal of filling three Board vacancies by year's end. Rebecca Estrada raised the need to review union representation, and Lisa Ortiz identified business representation in Mora, San Miguel, and San Juan counties as areas needing attention.

9.2 Executive Director – Lisa Ortiz

Executive Director Lisa Ortiz presented the final PY25 performance results to the Full Board, reporting that NALWDB met 10 of 15 measures. She stated that the Adult program met both employment measures and exceeded its Measurable Skill Gains target but did not meet its Median Earnings or Credential Attainment targets. The Dislocated Worker program met or exceeded its employment, Median Earnings, and Measurable Skill Gains targets, but did not meet Credential Attainment. The Youth program met its employment measures but did not meet Credential Attainment or Measurable Skill Gains. Lisa Ortiz stated that staff and service providers would continue working to improve performance and that PY26 began with strong enrollments.

Lisa Ortiz reported that staff had met with service providers to review proposed performance targets for the next two years. The proposals would be submitted to the New Mexico Department of Workforce Solutions for negotiation. Board members thanked staff for their work and noted the Board's progress over the past several years. Chairman Jon Paul Romero agreed that the organization had improved while acknowledging that work remained.

Lisa Ortiz also reported that the annual financial audit was underway with Hinkle and Landers. She and Fiscal Agent Rick Sandoval were providing the requested documentation, and she expected the audit report by December.

9.3 Financial Report – Rick Sandoval

Fiscal Agent Rick Sandoval reported that the June 30 financial statements were preliminary but expected only minor adjustments before submission to the auditors. He explained that negative amounts shown under One-Stop costs represented partner reimbursements for shared rent and operating expenses. Net One-Stop facility costs were approximately $340,000, about $100,000 higher than the previous year, primarily because the Board continued paying for the Santa Fe facility occupied by service providers while also leasing the downtown administrative office.

The Board budgeted approximately $5.4 million for the fiscal year and expended approximately $3.8 million, resulting in an under expenditure of about $1.5 million. Sandoval noted that funding has declined approximately 10% annually in recent years, making carryover funds important for maintaining operations. Administrative and Adult funds expiring in June 2026 were fully expended. Approximately $1.3 million must be expended by June 2027, with an estimated $750,000 carrying forward. Youth and Dislocated Worker programs did not meet certain required obligation and expenditure benchmarks.

Rick Sandoval reported that approximately $7,000 in unrestricted funds may be available toward the questioned costs associated with the U.S. Department of Labor findings. The remaining reimbursement may require assistance from the Chief Elected Officials (CEOs). Executive Director Lisa Ortiz and Board Member Rebecca Estrada clarified that the CEOs must determine whether reimbursement should be requested from the counties where the affected participants were served or shared among all ten counties. Ortiz confirmed that the CEOs had received detailed reports during their two most recent meetings.

Operations Manager Barney Trujillo emphasized that the participants were eligible, successfully completed services, and remained employed with organizations including law enforcement and fire departments. Quality Assurance Specialist Ruthie Mares clarified that the questioned costs resulted primarily from missing wage and timesheet documentation from the previous service provider. Staff intend to concede approximately $9,000 that cannot be supported while defending the remaining costs because the participants were eligible, received appropriate services, remained employed, and experienced wage increases. Rebecca Estrada agreed that the programs achieved successful outcomes and that the concern involved the previous provider’s documentation process.

Lisa Ortiz stated that the funding consisted entirely of federal WIOA funds and that no fraud or misuse had been identified. The findings involved missing documentation and noncompliance with certain On-the-Job Training and Transitional Jobs Training requirements. Staff are awaiting a final determination from the U.S. Department of Labor. Training will be provided to current service providers regarding documentation

requirements, and the New Mexico Department of Workforce Solutions has agreed to provide additional Transitional Jobs Training guidance.

Rick Sandoval noted that service providers have historically reimbursed unallowable costs resulting from their actions. However, recovery from the previous provider may be difficult because that contractual relationship has ended. Regarding fund transfers, Rick Sandoval stated that no Dislocated Worker-to-Adult transfer was necessary for the prior year because Adult expenditures were below budget. Approximately $60,000 has been included as a possible transfer for the upcoming year, subject to actual program needs.

Board Member Floyd Archuleta recommended improving outreach to service providers, CEOs, and state legislators so they remain informed about the Board's activities and may identify potential opportunities for support or financial assistance.

Chairman Jon Paul Romero agreed that the Board should maintain communication with state legislators and seek additional support or funding when needed. He commended the Executive Director and staff for their work. Chairman Romero explained that CEO Committee meetings are scheduled as needed to update the ten Chief Elected Officials on important matters. He noted that eight of the ten CEOs attended the most recent meeting, representing an 80% attendance rate.

Chairman Jon Paul Romero then moved Agenda Item 9.5 ahead of Item 9.4 to accommodate One-Stop Operator Nina Valdez, who needed to leave for another meeting.

9.4 Title I Report – YDI & Career TEAM

Concha Cordova, Vice President of YDI's Education, Employment and Training Division, presented the Title I Youth Service Provider Report. For PY25, YDI served 110 participants across all ten counties and met three of five federal performance measures. Services included 43 Work Experience placements, eight Individual Training Accounts, 25 incentives, and 34 supportive services. Assistance included training, work attire, technology, transportation, and incentives for educational and employment achievements.

Through August 2026, YDI reported a combined caseload of 194 participants, including 32 Summer Youth Academy participants. PY26 activity included 18 new enrollments, 12 Work Experience placements, and four Individual Training Accounts. YDI established first-quarter goals of 40 enrollments and 25 placements. Program priorities included completing Summer Youth Academy activities, transitioning participants into education or employment, implementing the internal Corrective Action Plan, improving quality assurance and data entry, and strengthening staff oversight.

Concha Cordova reported that the program was fully staffed. New staff serving San Miguel, Colfax, and Mora counties began on August 10, 2026. YDI conducted annual staff training and submitted its monitoring response and Corrective Action Plan in August. Current partnerships included Work Experience opportunities with the Town of

Taos and Los Alamos County, internships through UNM–Los Alamos and Northern New Mexico College, and the Prep to Profession Culinary Training program with Career TEAM.

Final PY25 performance showed that Youth Median Earnings exceeded the negotiated goal, while employment outcomes were near their targets. Credential Attainment and Measurable Skill Gains remained below goal and continued to require attention. Cordova also shared the success of Karissa, a 20-year-old participant pursuing medical assistant certification at Carrington College. With tutoring and supportive services provided through WIOA, Karissa earned multiple certifications and academic awards, prepared for an externship with Gallup Community Health, and remained on track to graduate in October 2026.

Ericka Van Eckhoutte, Executive Director of Career TEAM Northern New Mexico, presented the PY26 Quarter 1 Adult and Dislocated Worker Report. Career TEAM reported serving 103 Adult participants and 30 Dislocated Worker participants. Adult services reached approximately 48% of the projected annual goal, while Dislocated Worker services reached approximately 10%. Lower enrollment remained a concern in Cibola, Taos, Los Alamos, Rio Arriba, and Mora counties. Strategies included group orientations, outreach, special projects, rapid-response participation, registration tracking, and an eligibility tool for partner referrals.

Career TEAM reported approximately $350,000 in total obligations from an approved budget of $1,343,499. Adult obligations totaled $256,776.13, while Dislocated Worker obligations totaled $94,456.48. Sixty-six participants received Individual Training Accounts totaling $294,255, and more than $40,000 was provided in supportive services. The Department of Corrections HVAC cohort served ten participants and obligated approximately $66,000. Areas requiring improvement included Dislocated Worker obligations, training and supportive-service activity in Mora County, and business services.

Career TEAM conducted 23 outreach events involving 239 individuals. Of those, 144 registered for intake, 91 submitted applications, and 42 businesses received orientations. Planned projects included additional Department of Corrections cohorts in Santa Fe and Cibola, Prep to Profession culinary cohorts in Santa Fe, and Road to Opportunity events throughout the region. These projects could serve approximately 135 participants and generate approximately $997,000 in Individual Training Account activity.

Performance projections showed Adult fourth-quarter employment and Credential Attainment meeting expectations, while Dislocated Worker Credential Attainment exceeded the goal. Adult second-quarter employment and Measurable Skill Gains for both programs remained areas for improvement. Career TEAM planned to use predictive reports, Work Number, online verification tools, monthly participant contacts, and the invoicing process to obtain missing performance documentation.

Ericka Van Eckhoutte also highlighted Career TEAM's participation in regional workforce and economic-development events. She concluded with the success story of Phillip Trujillo of Mora County, who completed Class A CDL training through RV Transportation and planned to pursue a Heavy Equipment Operations credential to expand his employment opportunities.

9.5 One Stop Operator Report – Nina Valdez

One-Stop Operator Nina Valdez introduced herself and reported that she had served in the position for approximately two months. During that time, she visited the American Job Centers throughout the Northern Region, met with site and area managers, and began building relationships with workforce partners. She described her role as strengthening communication and coordination among the centers, partners, and Board.

Nina Valdez also developed and distributed her first newsletter featuring success stories, employment opportunities, and other workforce information. She plans to issue the newsletter regularly. Although she did not have performance data to present, she stated that future reports would include additional information as she becomes more familiar with the position.

Board Member Rebecca Estrada thanked Nina Valdez for partnering with Los Alamos National Laboratory, which anticipates hiring a significant number of employees during the next calendar year. Nina Valdez has coordinated with laboratory human resources staff to provide presentations at American Job Centers regarding available positions, career opportunities, applications, and cover-letter requirements. Estrada noted that discussions were also underway regarding a larger, coordinated recruitment event.

She reported that she was developing additional partnerships in the Española area and had been offered use of a facility at no cost for trainings and resource events. She expressed her commitment to introducing new ideas, expanding outreach, and identifying opportunities beyond existing practices. Nina Valdez concluded her report and was excused to attend another meeting.

10. Public Comments

There were no public comments reported.

11. Next Meeting Date: October 02, 2026

12. Adjournment

Motion to adjourn at 11:39am. This Motion was made by Board Member Rebecca Estrada seconded by Board Member Sean Medrano and passed unanimously.

An Executive Session may be called at any time during the meeting. Pursuant to New Mexico Open Meetings Act Section 10-15-1 (H) Subsections; (1) Meetings pertaining g to issuance, suspension, renewal or revocation of a license, except that a hearing at which evidence is offered or rebutted shall be open. All final actions on the issuance, suspension, renewal or revocation of a license shall be taken at an open meeting; (2) Limited personnel matters; provided that for purposes of the Open Meetings Act, "limited personnel matters" means the discussion of hiring, promotion , demotion, dismissal, assignment or resignation of or the investigation or consideration of complaints or charges against any individual public employee; provided further that this paragraph is not to be construed as to exempt final actions on personnel from being taken at open public meetings, nor does it preclude an aggrieved public employee from demanding a public hearing. Judicial candidates interviewed by any commission shall have the right to demand an open interview; (3) Deliberations by a public body in connection with an administrative adjudicatory proceedings For purposes of this paragraph, "administrative adjudicatory proceeding" means a proceeding brought by or against a person before a public body in which individual legal rights, duties or privileges are required by law to be determined by the public body after an opportunity for a trial-type hearing. Except as otherwise provided in this section, the actual administrative adjudicatory proceeding at which evidence is offered or rebutted and any final action taken as a result of the proceeding shall occur in an open meeting; (4) The discussion of personally identifiable information about any individual student, unless the student or the student's parent or guardian requests otherwise; (5) Meetings for the discussion of bargaining strategy preliminary to collective bargaining negotiations between the policymaking body and a bargaining unit representing the employees of that policymaking body and collective bargaining sessions at which the policymaking body and the representatives of the collective bargaining unit are present; (6) that portion of meetings at which a decision concerning purchases in an amount exceeding two thousand five hundred dollars ($2,500) that can be made only from one source is discussed and that portion of meetings at which the contents of competitive sealed proposals solicited pursuant to the Procurement Code are discussed during the contract negotiation process. (7) Meetings subject to the attorney-client privilege pertaining to threatened or pending litigation in which the public body is or may become participant; (8) Meetings for the discussion of the purchase, acquisition or disposal of real property or water rights by the public body.