

The Fulton, Montgomery & Schoharie Counties Workforce Development Board

Board Meeting

Wednesday, February 5, 2020
Amsterdam Workforce Career Center

I. **Opening and Attendance:**

Welcome: Marty Callahan, Chairman of the Board, called the meeting to order at 4:36 p.m. He introduced our newest Board Member, Andrea Scribner. Andrea is the Education and Career Planning Specialist for Fulton-Montgomery Community College. All Board Members introduced themselves.

Members Present: Laurie Bargstedt, Donna Becker, Kerry Brunner, Marty Callahan, Andrea Fettingier, Arthur Graulich, Melissa Johnston, Kathleen Kilmartin, Karen Miller, Mark Mincher, Donna Pesta, Judy Petroski, Amy Rogers, Andrea Scribner, Donald Snoop, Jeannette Spaulding, Jeff Stark and Peter Stearns

Excused: Wendy Adams, Elijah Braemer, Roger Cusano, Dave Fariello, Pamela Goldswor and Amy McCray

Absent: Erin Clemens and Ken Rose

Also present: *Mary Hill*, Program Director, FMS Private Industry Council, Inc., *Christy O'Callaghan-Leue and Annette Greco*, Adult Educators, HFM BOCES

Staff to Board present: Gail Breen, Beverly Ball, and Kim Skiff

II. **Presentation:**

Marty introduced HFM BOCES Adult educators Christy O'Callaghan-Leue and Annette Greco. HFM BOCES provides educational services in the Fulton and Montgomery County Correctional Facilities. In addition to academic skill development and high school equivalency, those involved with the criminal justice system participate in a variety of workforce readiness programs to support their transition upon release. Christy and Annette discussed the services provided in jail and at the Workforce Career Center that support employment goals.

Annette stated that as an Adult educator she usually starts with a meeting or class with an activity. She gave each Board Member a picture and asked them to look at it and think about what they see. She also gives a vocabulary word at the same time. She stated that tonight's word was "transform". She asked Board Members to think about the word and what it means to them.

Research states that one of the best predictors that someone is not going to return to their old life and commit another crime is that they are able to increase their level of educational acquisition in and out of prison. And, as incarcerated people return to our community, we need to think about how "we" will transform their lives.

One of first things that Annette does is to help them explore how they see themselves, how to

make personal internal decisions, and how to integrate into communities with the least restrictive environment. We want to integrate them, not segregate them.

If they have a high school diploma, she recommends workshops through the Workforce Career Center or classes through the local college. This could include resume development, online Metrix classes, and employment counseling. She also provides individual counseling at the Amsterdam Center on interviewing skills, how to attend a job fair, and other job seeking skills once they are released. Working with various partners helps "transform" the people who are incarcerated.

Christy stated that before students have the opportunity to meet with Annette or herself in the center, they meet in the jail. She holds classes on Monday, Wednesday and Friday. Most of the students are also attending high school equivalency classes at the same time.

The program is based primarily on CUNY Careers Kit. She does modify it because there is no internet available in the classrooms at the jail. The classes are usually 2- or 3-hour blocks and the sessions are enhanced with articles and downloaded YouTube videos to travel drives, so she can present up-to-date information.

There are 3 focus areas for employment; Manufacturing, Healthcare and Warehouse Transportation. They are currently in a Warehouse Transportation unit where they cover workplace vocabulary, job skills required and what education might be necessary for certain jobs. It might be a certificate or pre-employment skills for a certain job. They had a Manufacturing unit recently where Amy Rogers and Keith Gros came in from Keymark and talked about the importance of providing the experience and chance for people to create that new life for themselves.

Christy shared that she goes over the realities of someone leaving jail or prison with her students. Statistics show that 3 or 4 people incarcerated will be back in jail with 3 years. The number one way to help that not happen is education. The number 2 way is getting a job to help form stability. Most leaving prison or jail are really excited the first couple of days out, but then they begin to fall apart. She uses To-Do lists to get them going with items such as making sure they have housing, food, job search, and a budget. Students are provided with a composition notebook to practice writing. She has a strong focus on writing using a "prompt box". They finish with 3 things they are grateful for and share that with the class. The students work on "Fundamental Skills" and how to speak to and work with co-workers. She also provides a lending library of softcover books to help keep them occupied. Christy stated that the library gave her a \$1,000 for books this year, but she does accept donations as well. She reminded Board members that there should be no names, addresses or receipts with identifying information on them in the books. Laurie shared that hard-covered books can be donated to the Amsterdam Literacy Zone.

When they exit the jail or prison, some go into treatment for a while. 75% of the incarcerated population has an addiction issue and requires some type of support for it upon release.

Annette followed up on the picture she gave Board members. She shared that this was an incarcerated individual that been just released and was floundering. She asked Board members to think about ways that we as community members can share what we have to offer to them.

Gail asked if they could work with Department of Labor and their Bonding Program. Annette said she has worked with the DOL Employment Counselor because many formerly incarcerated people have a stigma and have difficulty getting a job. Melissa stated that the Bonding Program is like an insurance program. If you hire someone with a criminal background, the DOL Employment Counselor will issue that Federal Bonding information to the business. The Program reduces the risk to the business if the employee has committed a crime on the job. It is something extra that individuals can take to an interview to encourage employers to hire the individual.

Annette shared that the Partner staff at the Career Center are amazing at what they do. She also handed out a flyer regarding the services HFM BOCES offers.

III. Action Items:

- **Resolution BY 2019-09:** Acceptance of the minutes from the December 4, 2019 Board Meeting
 - Motion: Jeff Stark Seconded by: Peter Stearns
 - Discussion: There was no discussion.
 - Vote: All in favor
 - Motion Carried

IV. Information Sharing:

Accountability and Return on Investment Committee:

Andrea shared that the Accountability and Return in Investment Committee is responsible for providing oversight of the fiscal operations of the Workforce Development System and the Workforce Development Board, including the annual budgets for the Workforce Development Board and our WIOA subcontractor, the FMS Private Industry Council.

Kim had reported that December marked the halfway point of the budget year where both the subcontractor and the WDB were slightly underspent. This will change as the year goes on.

Kim explained that we are usually underspent in the first half of the year. We do not get the majority of our funding until October, so dollars that are set aside for training frequently are frozen until November.

The committee also discussed the definition of Marketing as opposed to Outreach. Gail said that she had recently attended a US Department of Labor Employment and Training Governance. One of the topics discussed was appropriate and legal expenditures under WIOA guidelines. While "marketing" is not an allowable cost under WIOA, "outreach" is allowable. According to USDOL's Regional Administrator "outreach" is about "a call to action" for our services. As a result, we are reviewing our language and expenditures to make sure that expenses in this area relate back to "outreach." Andrea stated the language they use at The Office For Aging is "Public Education or Community Education."

Andrea shared that they are always looking for new members to join the committee. It is a great opportunity to learn everything fiscal about the organization. Gail added that it is also a great way to participate in developing Policies that are related to fiscal, such as determining funding levels for On-the-Job Training and Classroom Training. Policies are developed by Board staff in conjunction with the Committee, which then refers the policies to the full Board for approval.

Andrea shared that the meeting time has changed to 3:30 p.m. instead of 4:30 p.m. and that committee members can also call in.

The full committee report is available to Board Members on the website.

No Meeting in February.

Next Meeting: Tuesday, March 24th at 3:30 p.m. in the Amsterdam Center.

Business Services and Employer Engagement Committee:

Laurie shared that Andrea Scribner of FMCC announced the date of the annual Spring job fair. It is co-sponsored by FMCC, FMS Workforce Solutions System, and the Fulton-Montgomery Regional Chamber of Commerce. The Job Fair will be held on Thursday, April 23, from 12:30-3:00 p.m. in the gym. Andrea shared that it is open to students, community members, and employers. Anyone who is a Chamber Member will get an invitation.

Laurie stated that in January, the committee met at "The Stitch" in Johnstown. The Stitch is part of Townsend Leather. For many years the building was an abandoned factory space, but now Townsend Leather has taken it over and reworked it into a fabulous workspace. Marketing, human resources, accounting, sales, and customer service are all housed on the second floor of the building. They are hoping to use the first floor as incubator space for other businesses. The third floor has a yoga studio, and they are considering doing art exhibits there as well. Committee members got to see samples of their product, including; leather products used in airline seats, furniture, wallcoverings and floor coverings.

Laurie encouraged Board Members to offer to host a Business Services Committee meeting at their site. She stated it is a great opportunity to help them better understand what we each do, who we serve and how it is done. And, it creates an awareness that makes us more informed about one another.

Gail thanked the Business Services Committee on behalf of Pam Goldsweyer who was unable to attend the Board meeting due to a medical issue.

The full Committee report is available to Board Members on the website.

Next meeting is scheduled for Thursday, February 20th at 8:00 a.m. in the Amsterdam Center.

WIOA (MOU) Partners Committee:

Judy said that the Committee did not meet, however the next meeting is scheduled for Friday, March 13th at 9:00 a.m. in the Amsterdam Career Center. The committee already has one speaker and is hoping to get another scheduled prior to the meeting. The goal of the committee is to learn more about our Partners and the services they offer the special populations we serve.

Next meeting is currently scheduled for Friday, March 13, 2020 9:00 a.m. in the Amsterdam Career Center.

Workforce Systems Oversight Committee:

Donna stated that the December program report shows us that the total traffic across the three centers was down slightly from last month. The Gloversville Center saw a 37% decrease in resource room traffic from November. This could be due to the Centers being closed for one snow day and two holidays in the middle of the week, less UI customers and Workers Comp. customers coming through the door and not receiving the Fulton County DSS Orientation Referral List for two weeks during December. As of January 16, the traffic numbers for the Gloversville Center had already

exceeded the total number for the month of December so the numbers seem to already be going back up. The Cobleskill and Amsterdam Centers remained pretty steady. During December we served 188 customers and had 947 total active customers.

There were 108 FMS Business Contacts in December. A Mini-Job Fair was held at the Amsterdam Center with 8 Businesses and 52 participants in attendance. There was 1 Recruitment in the Gloversville Center for Keymark Corporation (2 participants); and 1 Recruitment in the Amsterdam Center for the US Census, however, there were no attendees. There were 10 new Metrix registrations issued and 19 courses were passed. On January 6th we went "live" with the Virtual Registration and customers can now access, register and take Metrix Courses virtually. We will now be tracking the Virtual Registrations.

Mary shared that she currently has a staff opening in Cobleskill for a combination Workforce Advisor/Youth Coordinator. She has received a number of promising applications but applicants quickly lose interest when they learn the position is in Cobleskill. It is a long way for someone to travel from Montgomery or Fulton Counties to Cobleskill, especially in the winter.

Melissa reported that they are now in their peak season with weekly downloads and they saw a rise from 40 people per week to 175 people per week. The good news is that many of these people are exempt from coming in to a Center because they may be in a union, experiencing a temporary layoff, or may already have a return date.

Pam said that she has a new NYConnects staff person in the Cobleskill Center twice a week. They are also working closely with the local Department of Social Services as a number of people will be losing their SNAP (food stamp) benefits because of a change in the law. They expect to see a large jump in the use of food pantries. Catskill staff are assisting the local DSS to identify Work Experience sites with businesses and agencies as many recipients will now need to work in exchange for benefits.

Gail reported that the push is now on for 100% participation in the US Census in New York State. The Governor has announced the "Complete Count Census" including using the Resource Rooms in the Career Centers across NYS for people to complete their 2020 Census questionnaires. Government aid and representation in Congress both depend on census numbers.

The full Committee report is available to Board Members on the website.

No Meeting in February.

Next Meeting: Wednesday, March 25th at 8:00 a.m. at the Cobleskill Center.

V. Environmental Scanning:

Gail shared that our visit to The Stitch was the second in a series of business visits we are planning. We are now including staff members that see customers as well as Board Members. Every other month the Business Services Committee will be visiting a different business. She stated they will be looking for Businesses that would like to host the committee. They currently have 3 businesses that have volunteered to host: Dollar General Distribution Center, Gehring-Tricot in Dolgeville, and CG Roxane. She asked any Board Member that would like to highlight their business to contact her. Every other month the meeting will still be held in the Center so that all members can highlight their business and partner agencies can update the businesses on the services they offer.

The FM Regional Chamber of Commerce recently held their annual awards celebration. The FMS Workforce Development Board Business Partners of the Year recipients were CG Roxane and Dollar General Distribution Center.

VI. Board Member Go Round:

Laurie Bargstedt (*HFM BOCES*):

- New round of IC3 Digital Literacy starting.
- High school Equivalency is going well. 3 additional sessions of the test have been added.

Donna Becker (*Schoharie County DSS*):

- Currently have 8-9 openings. Most jobs are only posted for 10 business days, making it difficult to attend job fairs as they don't always match the timing of the postings.
- These are Civil Service positions that are canvassed. Most on the list aren't interested once they find out it is for a Department of Social Services position. Donna stated they are trying to find out why.
- They have concerns about their union contract and the uncertainty for staff.

Kerry Brunner (*Richardson Brands Company*):

- Busy waiting for efforts to pay off from their recent Re-Branding, Marketing, Research and Development efforts.
- Continually hiring.

Marty Callahan (*Gehring Tricot Corporation*):

- 3rd Shift entry level openings.
- Working with Empire State Development, Advanced Institute for Manufacturing and Mohawk Valley Community College on an Apprenticeship Program geared toward Textiles focusing on Warp Knitting.

Andrea Fettinger (*Fulton County Office for Aging*):

- Small Department, facing 2 vacancies. Tests have not been posted yet. Hiring will be provisional based on successful completion of the tests.
 - * Aging Services Specialist - Requires A.S. degree but test has not been written.
 - * Account Clerk - No degree required but Excel and math skills preferred.
- Continuing to process HEAP applications for those over 60.
- Aging Network - In the midst of learning about Value Based Payments and private pay options.

Arthur Graulich (*Argus Acres*):

- 2 major milk companies have gone bankrupt but farmers continue to find a market for their milk – so far.

Mary Hill (*Private Industry Council*):

- Has 2 openings.
 - * One in Cobleskill for Workforce Advisor/ Youth Coordinator.

- * One in Amsterdam for a Resource Room Coordinator.
- Laurie shared that applicants that are lacking skills necessary can take the IC3 Digital Literacy certification for computer technical skills. If they are Spanish, they could be bi-lingual and go through Workforce Readiness and ready to be part of the team.

Melissa Johnston (*NYS DOL*):

- Fully staffed.
- UI numbers way up. Most return to work before being seen for 3rd appointment.

Kathleen Kilmartin (*Community Health Center*):

- Everything going well.
- Hired 5 new RN's, 2 PT's and a Rehabilitation Services Director in January.
- Learning about Value Based Payments

Karen Miller (*Jack Miller's Tractor & Truck Inc.*):

- Work has been steady this winter and they are gearing up for the spring.

Mark Mincher (*Operating Engineers, Local 158*):

- Quite a few on the "Out-of-Work" list.
- Issues with Permitting may hold up the Windfarms and Power Cable coming down from Canada. Slow 2020 could make 2021 a Banner Year.
- There is a 1 million square foot Distribution Center going in across from Beechnut. (Winstanley from New Haven Connecticut purchased the property). Hoping to get local laborers to do the job.

Donna Pesta (*SUNY Cobleskill*):

- Finding that incoming freshmen are GenZ students. The College needs to learn to adjust and find ways to support them.

Judy Petroski (*ACCES/VR*):

- Staffing is the same.
- Status quo.

Amy Rogers (*Keymark Corporation*):

- Still hiring.
- Had over 30 applicants at the last couple of Job Fairs.
- Still running shuttle for Amsterdam, Gloversville and Johnstown.

Andrea Scribner (*FMCC*):

- Spring semester is in full swing.
- Job fair on April 23rd.
- Offer to list any job openings for Board Members.

Donald Snoop (*Mid-Tel Cable TV*):

- Things are going well at Mid-Tel.

Jeannette Spaulding (*Schoharie Co. Community Action Program*):

- VITA tax processing and 1st round of HEAP benefits continues. 2nd rounds go to DSS.
- 2 job openings:
 - * FT in the Employment Training Center
 - * PT Receptionist
- Increase in Housing Assistance - Not typical for this time of year.
- All contracts have been renewed and are stable.
- As part of the Creative Connection for Youth program - A Babysitting Class will be offered by staff.

Jeffrey Stark (*IUPAT District Council #9*):

- Amazon is taking over a vacant old factory in Amsterdam for warehouse distribution.
- Currently have 3 "Out-of-Work" Painters.
- Last year they took in about 35 employees and retained about 75%. They need 30 to 40 more by April or May.
- Can't put any apprentices on the job so going to be a tough year.

Peter Stearns (*Laborers Local #157*):

- Everything going well even though it is winter.

VII. Board Member Feedback?

* Mark Mincher stated that they will be holding a Construction Career Day at the Operating Engineers Training Center on April 9th at 27 Haney Lane in Glenmont. Laurie asked if they publicize this information on Facebook. Mark shared that they have a webpage available at iue158training.org. He shared that you can find videos and apprenticeship requirements on the page.

* Mark also asked when the NPR interview with Jim Zarroli was released. Gail stated she would provide him a name and the link to the broadcast.

Following the meeting Gail provided the following link to the Jim Zarroli interview:

<https://www.npr.org/2019/12/05/784451583/despite-job-boom-more-men-are-giving-up-on-work>

You can read the article or click on the link to listen to the interview itself.

VIII. Adjournment:

Meeting Adjourned at 5:46 p.m.

***No Board Meeting in March.
The next Board Meeting will be held on April 1, 2020 at 4:30 p.m.***