

The Fulton, Montgomery & Schoharie Counties Workforce Development Board

Board Meeting

Wednesday, February 3, 2021
via Zoom

I. Opening and Attendance:

Welcome: Marty Callahan, Chairman of the Board, called the meeting to order at 4:31 p.m. Marty asked all attendees to place their name and Business or Organization into the Zoom chat box for attendance purposes and reconfirmed attendance by roll call.

Members Present: Laurie Bargstedt, Donna Becker, Elijah Braemer, Kerry Brunner, Marty Callahan, Andrea Fettinger, Pamela Goldswor, Melissa Johnston, Kathleen Kilmartin, Amy McCray, Karen Miller, Mark Mincher, Allene Monaghan, Lani Pertell, Donna Pesta, Amy Rogers, Donald Snoop, Jeannette Spaulding, Jeff Stark, and Peter Stearns

Excused: Wendy Adams, Erin Clemens, Roger Cusano, Arthur Graulich

Absent: David Fariello, Kenneth Rose, Andrea Scribner

Also present: **Mary Hill**, Program Director, FMS Private Industry Council, Inc.; **Crickett Thomas-O'Dell**, Regional Director, Workforce Development Institute and **Tracy Paradise**, Job Training Developer, Montgomery County Department of Social Services

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

II. Action Items:

- **Resolution BY 2020-07:** Acceptance of the minutes from the December 2, 2020 Board Meeting
 - Motion: *Andrea Fettinger* Seconded by: *Don Snoop*
 - Discussion: There was no discussion.
 - Vote: All in favor
 - Motion Carried

- **Resolution BY 2020-08:** Upon the recommendation of the Accountability and Return on Investment Committee and the Executive Committee: Acceptance of a one-time Merit Bonus for the WDB Executive Director and Staff
 - Motion: *Andrea Fettinger* Seconded by: *Jeannette Spaulding*
 - Discussion: Gail asked the Accountability Committee to consider a one-time bonus for the Workforce Development Board Staff in recognition of their outstanding commitment to additional responsibilities, above and beyond their usual job duties, to develop and carry-out new processes and procedures for the WDB and Workforce Career Centers to continue to

operate at the highest levels, working remotely, and when necessary in the office during the COVID pandemic. In addition, WDB staff have incurred personal costs with internet and phone lines. The Accountability Committee identified available funding within the budget, as we received an Employee Retention Credit of \$15,000. The Committee recommended a \$3,000 bonus for the Executive Director and a total of \$4,000 for the staff to be divided and distributed by Gail upon her discretion. The merit bonuses will be funded from the Employee Retention Credit revenue. This will still need to be approved by the NYS Department of Labor, but we need an accepted Resolution from the whole Board to submit to them.

- o Vote: All in favor
- o Motion Carried

III. Information Sharing:

Accountability and Return on Investment Committee:

Andrea shared that a discussion was held at the meeting regarding PIC Merit Bonuses. Gail said that she was recommending Merit Bonuses for PIC staff based on their 10 months of successfully working remotely. They have created tracking tools for services offered to job seekers and business customers. They also incurred personal expenses with using their own Internet and phone lines, which is an added cost to the employees. Andrea stated that they have worked above and beyond what was expected of them and that she feels they have done more work than if they were in the office. There was a discussion held regarding whether there was money in the budget to support the merit bonuses. Kim stated that PIC had received just over \$49,000 from the Employee Retention Credit. The committee decided to approve \$15,500 for the PIC staff. Although it is up to Mary Hill, in consultation with her Board, to allocate the funds, we are recommending a \$1,500 merit bonus for each of the 9 PIC Staff and a \$2,000 Merit Bonus for Mary Hill as the PIC Director and One-Stop Operator. Andrea stated that this information is just to inform the Board, as this action does not have to have Board approval. Gail will write a letter to Mary regarding the merit bonuses and Gail and Kim will work out how this will be reflected in the PIC budget. Since the PIC received the Employee Retention Credit, their budget did not change.

The committee also reviewed the WDB and PIC financial reports for December. The PIC Adult and Youth funding is underspent. Dislocated Worker is on budget at 53.73% spent. All expenditures were as expected. The Workforce Development Board total expenditures are at 38.76%. Andrea said that it is hard to do face-to face-services right now where you would normally incur other expenses. She feels that the expenses will change in the future as we return to the offices.

Andrea shared that the RFP for WIOA Services was released on January 19th and that a Bidders meeting was held on February 2nd. Questions and Answers will be posted on the FMS website for transparency purposes. The return date for proposals is February 26th, with a Tentative Selection Date of April 7th. The RFPs will be scored by an Ad Hoc Committee, made up of members of the Accountability and Executive Committees. They will separately score each of the applications that are received and the committee will then meet by Zoom to compare and choose one operator to present to the full Board to approve for the WIOA Services.

Andrea reminded Board Members that the Committee is open to anyone on the Board. We talk about fiscal matters including where the expenditures are supposed to be at every quarter and every month. She stated that if you want to learn more about the budgets and fiscal operations of the PIC and WDB, this is the committee to join and that all are welcome.

Next Meeting: Tuesday, February 23, at 3:30 p.m. by Zoom.

Business Services and Employer Engagement Committee:

Laurie shared that there were 868 Businesses and Employer Contacts made during the month of December. Of those, 762 were for job openings posting.

From the Business Services team, there were no recruitments or job fairs held. Nancy wrote one adult -funded Customized Training at Lamont Engineers. The one person who has passed the course will be receiving a \$2 an hour wage increase. Nancy also shared that she has been working with Theresa DaBiere-Craig, talking to local businesses about starting apprenticeships and has been busy developing more job orders for local employers and getting them posted.

Chris Larrabee said that while they are still working on UI claims and fielding a lot of questions about how people can get their 1099 forms, he shared that folks are able to go onto the website and print them off themselves. Chris said that he is hoping to get back doing business services soon and is looking forward to that.

In our committee go-round, Nancy Rogers shared that many of the people that she's working with who are engaged in searching for new jobs seem to be those individuals who are not eligible to collect unemployment. Nancy said that she's hearing that many employers are having challenges filling their job openings, and we certainly hear that echoed from a lot of our partners.

Mark Kilmer said that they held their "Cheers to Business" Annual Awards event. He highlighted that The Entrepreneurial award went to Upstate Coffee, The Wilkinson Industry of the Year award went to Hill and Markes, Inc., and the Small Business Award went to State Farm Insurance. The Capano Family who own the Gloversville True Value and New York Lunch received the Chamber Family Award. The Agriculture Business of the Year award went to Wemple & Edicks. The FMS Workforce Partner of the Year Awards went to Dunn and Dunn, LLC and Electro-Metrics.

Next Meeting: Thursday, February 18th, 2021, at 8 a.m. by Zoom, unless otherwise determined.

WIOA (MOU) Partners Committee:

Mary stated that the committee had a busy month with two meetings held in January. At the first meeting we held a discussion on the development of the PY'20 Memorandum of Understanding which is required under the Workforce Innovations and Opportunity Act. The MOU must be revisited and entered into not less than once every three years. Our last MOU was completed during the program year PY'16-17, so this was our year to update it.

Gail focused on the Technical Advisory that was recently released as well as the Guidance and Template used to develop the PY'20 MOU. We reviewed the Intent of the MOU, the Parties to the MOU, System Services and Design. Mary also gave an overview of the Referral System, which is part of the MOU. She reminded all partners that they should still be sending in their referral information, as she is still tracking the numbers. She encouraged those new to the group to reach out to her, and she would be happy to set up a Zoom meeting to walk them through the process.

The second meeting was January 22. The discussion focused on the Infrastructure sharing component of the MOU, including, how an annual Infrastructure Budget is derived and how costs for co-located partners are determined. FMS uses the desk cost formula for most of their partners, but they use a lease agreement for NYS Department of Labor.

After we receive all outstanding information from the Partners, including the Career Services Chart and the Applicable Career Services Operating Budget, a draft of the MOU will be sent to all Partners for their review. Mary stated that she believes that it had been sent out and Gail confirmed that it had been sent as of February 3rd. Partners will now review and make comments on the draft they received. All changes and comments are due back to the WDB by February 12th. Gail thanked all of the Partners for their hard work on the MOU process. She stated that on or before February 26th we will send a Draft to Department of Labor for their review. They may ask us to make changes or they may accept it as submitted. We will then gather all of the signatures for the final submission to Department of Labor.

Next Meeting: February 19th, 9 a.m. by Zoom.

Workforce Systems Oversight Committee: Overall Center Traffic was 52 people, 17 in Amsterdam and 18 in Cobleskill and 17 in Gloversville. There were 26 Resource Room, 11 WIOA, and 9 Youth visits.

Due to the increased number of COVID positive cases in the counties the Leadership Team recommended return to remoted services, closing all 3 centers to staff and to in-person customer visits, on December 23rd. Staff will continue to work remotely through February 16th, when a re-opening date will be re-evaluated. Staff have been very successful in providing services remotely. Providing services remotely during COVID has not only proven very successful, but it has also helped keep staff and customers safe and well. Mary has seen an increase in Skype, Face Time and Live Chat calls. Numbers for December and January both show an increase.

There were 2 new businesses added to OSOS and 1 WIOA OJT Customized training written for 3 employees at Lamont Engineering. We had 2 new Virtual Metrix Registrations with 18 courses completed by 4 customers. Since July 1st we have had a total of 191 courses completed by 24 customers. During the period of December 1 - December 31st there were 2,991 activities logged by the PIC staff, so they continue to be very busy.

Gail reported that we had partnered with the Herkimer-Madison-Oneida Workforce Development Board and others on two national grants. HMO WDB submitted the proposals as the lead organization. Both proposals were successful. The proposals are structured to include a staff person and participant training dollars in each WDB that will be funded out of the HMO grants. Gail said that she will work with Mary on the staff selection, but that both positions will be supervised by Mary Hill. The two grants are EXCITE (EXpanding Cyber and Information Technology Employment) and REACH (Health Care Training Project). EXCITE will focus on the unemployed who may be potential IT workers. REACH focuses on building a skilled healthcare workforce to address shortages in Rural Health Care.

DOL staff continue to focus primarily on UI services, including the new partial UI claims program recently released by the Governor's Office. The number of mandatory hours of overtime for DOL staff has been reduced and the NYS Department of Labor is in the process of hiring a number of new employees for their UI Division. Melissa and Derek continue to be in the center 4 days a week, and other DOL staff rotate in for one day a week. Melissa said it will still be a while before her staff will be able to help with workforce development activities again.

Donna shared that we are going to continue to stay remote until things calm down in the COVID world. Gail shared that we would be sending all Board Members a list of Workforce Acronyms, as our conversations sometimes sound like alphabet soup.

Next Meeting: Wednesday, Wednesday, February 24, at 8 a.m. by Zoom.

V. Environmental Scanning:

Gail expanded on the Regional Partnership with Herkimer-Madison-Oneida Workforce Development Board. These grants will give us one staff person dedicated to work on each grant. The staff will sit in the Amsterdam Center when we open again; we are hoping by March 1st. Mary will be recruiting these two staff people, and they will be paid for out of the Herkimer-Madison-Oneida budget. We will also receive training dollars to reach out to people for trainings such as LPN's or Radiologic Technology and will not use our own WIOA training dollars, allowing us to continue to serve other WIOA-eligible customers. This allows us to provide more training to more people. Gail stated that as more unemployment benefits end, more people will be coming back looking for work. Mary and Melissa's staff will be very busy, so this is an opportunity to get more people trained and back into the workforce.

Gail shared that Mary's staff has been very involved with the Greater Capital Region Career Centers. They have been developing workshops for job-seekers across our 11 county, 4 WDB region. What we are finding is that we might offer a workshop at FMS and get one participant. Saratoga-Warren-Washington Counties might offer a similar workshop and get one participant. So by offering these same workshops through ZOOM and open to jobseekers in the whole region, we're getting a better response. Mary Hill shared that Nancy Rogers has been offering a workshop with another staff person from Saratoga on "Barriers to Employment." They developed a slide show presentation and have been presenting it. It has been one of the best attended workshops. They received a lovely note from one of the attendees last week that said – "I just want to tell the two ladies who just did the Barriers workshop what a great job they did and how much I got out of it". Mary shared that she likes staff being involved in these activities because they get a chance to see other Career Centers and learn about what services they offer and how they are set up. She shared that she has heard from a couple of people that we are the best protected center with our Plexiglas and other COVID protocols we have in place.

VI. Board Member Go Round: Andrea Fettinger gave a historical background on the 2019 Fulton County Regional Transportation Report. Approximately 20 years ago, Fulton County would have a monthly meeting with all the rural transportation providers. It included taxis, buses, ambulances, whatever transportation services were available. They would map out where those vehicles would travel so you would see where the duplication was. The group has changed over time, they became consolidated, and now have a regional meeting that doesn't meet as frequently. There was a study and survey conducted by a company called RSL Associates. Its main goal was to evaluate and build upon the region's current transportations services. One of the most popular results of the survey was that they wanted to have CDTA come into Montgomery or even Fulton County at FMCC to pick up workers and students or anyone who needed transportation. That never came into fruition. When Dusty Swanger was President, he took over transportation for students and the college, as opposed to using the global transit buses. They utilized their own buses because it was just an overlap upon overlap at that time. The final goal is that Gloversville Transit, who is considered the Mobility Manager for Fulton County, or a coalition of county representatives, gets together and develops a new transportation plan. We talked last month about how many of the larger businesses like Walmart Distribution or Amazon, for example, need to have some kind of transportation for their employees or potential employees that don't have transportation right now. Andrea stated she thinks that Brent Warren, the Fulton County Mobility

Manger, might be a good speaker at a future Board Meeting. Andrea said that if we are going to attract new employees, there needs to be a way for them to get to work and back. She stated that she is trying to find the Regional Report because it offers a broader picture of the transportation. She shared that the 5311 and 5310 grants will soon be out and that she thinks the WDB could have some input in those grants.

Laurie Bargstedt (HFM BOCES):

- IC3E Digital Learning Program still ongoing.
- Still offering English as a Second Language and High School Equivalency preparation at a distance.
- Hoping to be giving the TASC Exam (High School Equivalency) within the next 4 weeks. This will be offered to their own students and for PIC students.

Donna Becker (Schoharie County DSS):

- Still have waivers for not requiring job searching. Will be busy once that goes away.
- Only had 4 people take the most recent Civil Service test for caseworkers.

Kerry Brunner (Roses Brand Corporation):

- Busy is steady. Status Quo.
- They are maintaining employment and have been "Right-Sizing".

Marty Callahan (Gehring Tricot Corporation):

- Still struggling to find employees.
- Continuing to invest in new equipment; purchased new Warper and Back Winding machine.
- Supply chain has increased 20-25 cents per pound across the board on purchases.

Andrea Fettingner (Fulton County Office for Aging):

- Working with older adults to register for COVID vaccines.
- Most Offices for the Aging will be involved with assisting older adults at pharmacy locations. They also assisted older adults at FMCC last week.
- Still accepting HEAP applications.
- Half-staff on alternating weeks.

Melissa Johnston (NYS DOL):

- Continuing to work hard to get people their UI benefits.

Donna Pesta (SUNY Cobleskill):

- 1st day of classes was Monday, February 1st.
- All staff, faculty, full and part time students and commuters must be tested for COVID before stepping onto campus. SUNY Cobleskill must complete 2 COVID tests before they can start on-site classes. They have had low positive numbers.
- Classes will go through May 14th with no Spring Break.
- ¾ of the classes will be remote, only hands-on labs will be on-site.

Amy McCray (CG Roxane, LLC):

- Continuing to grow.
- Hired additional employees in January and have 3 slated to start in February.

Mark Mincher (Operating Engineers Local 158):

- Struggling through the winter. 20% on unemployment out-of-work list.

- Employees at Johnstown Industrial Park, Beechnut and the Benjamin Moore Manufacturing Plant.
- Beechnut demolition is building right now, so expect activity out there in near future.
- Canajoharie Solar Farm should be about 300 constructions jobs. Mark has been told it is a local contractor.

Allene Monaghan (ACCES/VR):

- Still not seeing public. No date on when that may change.
- Still at 50% staffing. 3 days in office one week and 2 the next week.
- Starting to receive more referrals.
- Hired a Business Office Manager to handle local bills and vendors.

Lani Pertell (Don Brown Bus Sales):

- Doing well. Busier than normal for this time of year due to COVID and places being closed. As things started opening their budget contracts were renewed.
- Has one opening for a Mechanical Technician.

Donna Pesta (SUNY Cobleskill):

- First day of classes was Monday, February 1st. All classes are remote until 2 COVID test results are completed.
- Very robust testing protocol. Anyone who steps foot on campus, facility staff, part time students, full time students, commuters, all get tested every week. Positive test results have been very low.
- $\frac{3}{4}$ of the classes will be remote, only those with hands-on labs will be in person.
- Classes will go through May 14th with no Spring Break. They don't want them going home and bringing something back with them.

Amy Rogers (Keymark Corporation):

- Actively hiring.
- Still having transportation issues. Still running their free shuttle for Amsterdam, Gloversville and Johnstown areas.

Donald Snoop (Middel Cable TV):

- All is good.

Jeannette Spaulding (Schoharie County Community Action Program):

- Offer a few in person services by appointment only, with COVID screening.
- Weatherization - continuing to go to client's homes with added protocols.
- Healthy Families (WIC) still has a waiver so that they don't have to come into the office.
- Childcare Resource and Referral received additional CARES funding to assist daycare providers and essential workers. They have distributed \$135,000.
- Due to utilities and rent extensions, not seeing a rise in homeless prevention numbers.
- Still accepting HEAP applications.
- VITA (Volunteer Income Tax Assistance) has started, but can't be filed until the 12th.
- Employment Training Center is slow.
- Using Zoom for Family Support and Parent Child meetings. Supervised Visitation is held in person with scheduled appointments.

Peter Stearns (Laborers Local 157):

- A group of people still out of work.
- Things are good though.

Cricket Thomas-O'Dell (Workforce Development Institute):

- Meeting virtually with elected officials.

- Transportation and Child Care are huge concerns. Women who leave the workforce to take care of children usually don't return to the position they left or come back to same salaries.
- Have funding resources until end of April for Manufacturing.
- Upcoming Apprenticeship roundtables for Sewing and Textiles.
- Governor Cuomo pushing forward on Adult Use Cannabis.

Tracy Paradise (Montgomery County DSS):

- Still can't require people look for work.
- Employers need and want employees.
- At 50% staff, alternate days.

VII. Board Member Feedback? Mary thanked the Board for the bonuses for the PIC staff and reiterated how hard they have worked over the past year.

VIII. Adjournment:

Motion to close the meeting:

Motion: *Don Snoop* Seconded: *Melissa Johnston*

Meeting Adjourned at 5:41 p.m.

*No Board Meeting during March.
The next Board Meeting will be held on April 7, 2021 at 4:30 p.m. via Zoom.*