

The Fulton, Montgomery & Schoharie Counties Workforce Development Board

Board Meeting

Wednesday, September 2, 2020
via Zoom

I. Opening and Attendance:

Welcome: Marty Callahan, Chairman of the Board, called the meeting to order at 4:36 p.m. He presented Executive Director, Gail Breen with a Certificate of Appreciation from the Board. Gail celebrated 20 years as the Executive Director for the FMS Workforce Development Board on August 1st. All Board Members congratulated her on her achievement. Marty conducted attendance of those members that had not entered their name and Business/Organization they represent into the Zoom chat box. Gail shared that if anyone has a question throughout the meeting, they can type the question into the chat box, and it will get addressed during the meeting.

Members Present: Wendy Adams, Laurie Bargstedt, Donna Becker, Kerry Brunner, Marty Callahan, Roger Cusano, Dave Fariello, Andrea Fettinger, Melissa Johnston, Kathleen Kilmartin, Karen Miller, Allene Monaghan, Donna Pesta, Amy Rogers, Kenneth Rose, Donald Snoop, and Peter Stearns

Excused: Pamela Goldswor, Arthur Graulich, Mark Mincher and Andrea Scribner

Absent: Elijah Braemer, Erin Clemens, Amy McCray, Lani Pertell, Jeannette Spaulding and Jeffrey Stark

Also present: **William Federice**, Chairman, Schoharie County Board of Supervisors; **Mary Hill**, Program Director, FMS Private Industry Council, Inc.; **Stephen Munford**, Deputy Commissioner, Schoharie County Department of Social Services and **Cricket Thomas-O'Dell**, Regional Director, Workforce Development Institute

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

II. Action Items:

- **Resolution BY 2020-01:** Acceptance of the minutes from the June 3, 2020 Annual Board Meeting
 - Motion: Andrea Fettinger Seconded by: Don Snoop
 - Discussion: There was no discussion.
 - Vote: All in favor
 - Motion Carried

- **Resolution BY 2020-02: Upon the Recommendation of the Accountability and Return on Investment Committee:** Acceptance of the Request to Transfer Funds Between Dislocated Worker and Adult PY20 Funds on a Case-by-Case Basis
 - Motion: Andrea Fettinger Seconded by: Don Snoop
 - Discussion: Gail shared that Department of Labor allows us to transfer funds between Adult and Dislocated Worker funding if needed, but never between Youth funding. Years ago, when we needed to move money, a Resolution would be presented to the Board for approval and the request would then would be submitted to DOL for approval. Now we pass a "blanket" allowance at the beginning of each year to transfer money between Adult and Dislocated Workers on a case-by-case basis as needed. Kim and Gail present the request to transfer to the Accountability Committee for their approval. - By having this Resolution at the beginning of the year, if we need to transfer money to meet either adult or dislocated worker demands, we don't have to wait one, or two, or at worst three months until the next Board Meeting. If we transferred the money before it was approved, we would get a disallowed cost by NYS DOL during their fiscal monitoring.
 - Vote: All in favor.
 - Motion Carried.

- **Resolution BY 2020-03:** Upon the recommendation of the Accountability and Return on Investment Committee: Acceptance of the Fulton, Montgomery and Schoharie Counties Workforce Development Board, Inc. BY 20-21 Annual Budget Beginning July 1, 2020 and Ending June 30, 2021
 - Motion: Don Snoop Seconded by: Andrea Fettinger
Discussion: Andrea reminded Board Members that they had previously approved a 3-month spending plan in July and that now we are able to present the full year budget for approval. She shared that the funding seems to be a lot stronger and healthier at this time. Kim shared that we are required to carry-in no more than 20% of our annual total allocation of WIOA funds. This carry-in helps us to pay our bills for the months of July-September until the final allocations come in for the new year. In PY'19 we had an excess of funds in our carry-in that typically wouldn't be allowed. We, like many other workforce areas across NYS, were underspent quite a bit because of the COVID-19 Pandemic and the lack of demand/availability of classroom training and employer-based training. Because of the impact of COVID, NYS DOL allowed local areas to request a waiver to carry in more than 20% of the previous year's funding. We requested, and received that, waiver. Normally you can't carry over anything past the 20%, and some years we didn't even have the 20% to carry over. However, the closer we can get to maintaining the 20% carry-in, the easier it is to pay our bills for those 3 months prior to the full funding allocation becoming available on October 1st. Kim

shared that with the excess funding we were able to carry-in close to \$142,000. Our allocations for PY'20 are less than PY'19, so this waiver helped to enhance available funding. Gail stated that we were not the only ones to request this waiver, most if not all of the Workforce Boards had spent less than the 80% they were required to spend. In addition, before we determine what our reserve is, Kim automatically takes out the 20% carry-in that we need to save for the next year. When Kim took out the 20% carry-in, we still had \$142,000 in our reserve. Most years we are lucky if we have \$12,000 - \$20,000 in reserve.

After discussions with the Accountability Committee, we decided to recommend re-instating the Gloversville Center. Fulton County has one of the higher unemployment rates in our 3 counties and public transportation is very poor. We had never dropped the lease in the Gloversville Center and were renting on a month-by-month basis. It is a small site and the cost to operate is well within our ability now that we had additional carry-in that has increased our reserve funding. Additionally, we are located right next to Laurie's Literacy Center and share many of the same customers. For that reason, we decided to put the Gloversville center back into the budget. The budget now reflects direct services, through physical Career Centers, in each of the 3 counties. Andrea shared that by not restoring the Gloversville Center, the reduction of services to Fulton County residents would be hard to handle. She stated that having services there again, for at least 3 days a week to start, is going to be great.

- o Vote: All in favor.
- o Motion Carried.

III. Information Sharing:

Accountability and Return on Investment Committee: Andrea stated that the budget for BY'20 is \$1,929,908 and while it is a reduction over 2019, it is still a healthy budget. She stated that we are in good shape going into BY'20-21, and she is really happy about that.

Andrea reported that the PIC budget is slightly overspent for the first month of PY'20 at a blended average of 11.82%. This is due to the total dollar amount of TET-DW training obligations at the end of July. The total expenditures for the WDB are at 6.65%. This is slightly underspent but will change when Membership dues and the Single Audit fees coming in.

Gail shared that the Amsterdam and Cobleskill Centers are open on Monday, Wednesday, and Friday by appointments only and staff continue to work remotely on Tuesday and Thursday. There are no walk-ins. The doors are locked and customers have to have an appointment. No UI questions or services are available but staff will give customers the

Department of Labor phone number. As we open Gloversville, it will also be for Monday, Wednesday and Friday.

Gail stated that earlier payments for cash requests were being delayed due to a misunderstanding at the NYS Division of the Budget regarding the origin of the funding and that it was simply a pass through from US Department of Labor and cannot be used to balance other parts of New York State's budget. Reimbursement is still slower than a year ago, but Kim is able to look forward to our obligations when requesting cash, so that we remain fiscally sound.

Andrea stated that this report is just the highlights from the meeting. The full Committee report is available to Board Members on the website. She stated that the meetings are open to all Board Members, and anyone is welcome to join.

Next Meeting: Tuesday, September 22nd at 3:30 p.m. via Zoom.

Business Services and Employer Engagement Committee:

Marty shared that Nancy Reccio reported that there continues to be no mini job fairs or recruitments. However, Nancy has been working with Dollar General to develop virtual or remote interviewing. So far, no jobseekers have signed up for a virtual interview, but Nancy has a schedule in place if and when they do. This would be the second step, after the on-line application, if they are reluctant to go to Dollar General for an in-person interview.

Nancy and Gail also talked briefly about the new Amazon "Last Mile" Distribution Facility on Route 5S south of Amsterdam. The Last Mile Hub is similar to the UPS hub in Fulton County. This is the last stop for goods and packages before they go out for delivery. Nancy and Gail participated in a Chime virtual call with two recruiters from Amazon. They are currently looking for management staff, but will be moving on to general warehouse workers soon.

Melissa reminded everyone that while she and her staff are actually part of the Division of Employment and Workforce Solutions, they continue to focus almost completely on providing Unemployment Insurance assistance; helping people file claims and following up on incomplete claims. Many staff have been moved from traditional UI to PUA (Pandemic Unemployment Assistance). They are all working a mandatory 7.5 hours of overtime each week. Although they are looking forward to getting back to serving job seeking customers, they have no idea when they will be able to return to that capacity.

Marty shared that the full Committee report is available to Board Members on the website. He encouraged Board Members to read the full report to see what our Business Partners are currently doing in regard to the Pandemic.

The next meeting is scheduled for Thursday, September 17th at 8:00 a.m. by Zoom.

WIOA (MOU) Partners Committee:

Gail shared that the WIOA Partners; the WIOA Partners Committee is responsible for oversight of services provided by WIOA Partners to populations as outlined in the MOU Services Memorandum of Understanding. This includes services to targeted populations under the Workforce Investment and Opportunity Act. The Committee also includes organizations that do not receive WIOA funding but still have employment as part of their mission. Additionally, like the Business Services and Employer Engagement Committee, this Committee is open to organizations that are not Board Members. For example - Fulmont Community Action Agency doesn't get WIOA funding, but they are an interested partner that provides services to help people re-enter or enter the workforce. Other members include Office for the Aging, Commission for the Blind, Department of Labor, Department of Social Services and others. There are nearly 50 members of the group, some including multiple representatives from an organization. We meet quarterly. During the meetings we share information about what the partners do. We usually have two larger presentations by Partner members and we also do a committee member go-round so all members can share what their organization is doing. Anyone is welcome to join the committee but we would especially like to see some Businesses join so that you can see what the MOU Partners talk about and you can hear what other resources are available besides the Workforce Development Board.

The next meeting is scheduled for Friday, September 25, 2020 9:00 a.m. via Zoom.

Workforce Systems Oversight Committee: Donna stated that Gail reviewed the 2018 and 2019 traffic. In Program Year 2019, which ended on June 30, 2020, traffic (the number of times the door turns, not a count of unique customers) was down 25%, but that wasn't a big surprise because the Centers had been closed for 12 weeks. Before COVID hit and the world shut down, the job market was doing well and the Unemployment numbers were down.

Bev reported that overall Center Traffic reached 84, an increase from 23 during June. Overall, the appointments included 49 Resource Room, 7 WIOA, 14 Youth, 13 CCFI and 1 Other.

Bev's Activity graph shows the various activities that staff have been completing. During the period of July 1 – July 31st there were 3,387 activities logged, 310 Business and Employer Contacts; 1,122 Correspondences were made to partner staff and customers; 84 Customer Service Contacts; 1,103 Partner Sharing Contacts; and 275 Youth Contacts were made.

Mary shared that staff enter their activities into a shared database and every month she calculates the totals. She checks on them periodically during the 4 weeks to see how things are going and what numbers are higher or lower and why that is happening. New activities can be added as needed, such as the SYEP activities.

The full minutes from the committee meeting are available on the website for review.

The next meeting is scheduled for Wednesday, September 23rd at 8:00 a.m. by Zoom.

V. Environmental Scanning:

Gail and Mary met with Ron Peters, Director of the Fulton County Center for Regional Growth, to discuss how we can work more closely with Fulton County Economic Development initiatives. We will be working together to develop a mailing list of the Businesses in Fulton County. We would then bring them together for a Workforce Summit by Zoom in late October or early November. At first Ron thought they could have the Summit at his building, but the building is under renovation. It is only handicapped accessible on the first floor. The meeting space is on the second floor. Once the Business list is developed, a survey will be sent out asking employers what their greatest needs are. The next step would be to offer two Workforce Summits. The first one would be a general one to introduce businesses in the area to the kinds of services that are available. A perfect example would be Cricket from the Workforce Development Institute. Cricket and other agencies that have Workforce dollars for either equipment or training will be invited to talk to employers about what resources are available for businesses. A second Summit would be held about a month later that would be broken down by Industries in Demand, such as Manufacturing, Healthcare or Tourism. That is where we get to drill down into what each of these particular industries' needs are. Gail stated that she will be following up with an email to Ken Rose from Montgomery County Economic Development to see if there is anything similar that we can partner with in Montgomery County.

The Amazon Last Mile Hub is planning to have their building on Route 5S (next to Alpin Haus) open in October with their Management staff and some warehouse workers as well. Gail and Nancy have had a couple of Chime calls with them. Besides hiring their management level staff and warehouse workers, they are anxious to get involved in the community. They have asked that we drop them a line anytime there is something they can help sponsor. They want to get their name out in the community and be seen as a business interested in serving their community beyond just providing jobs.

VI. Board Member Go Round:

Wendy Adams (Lamont Engineers, P.C.):

- Everyone well. Half working remotely and half working in office.
- Protocols are being followed and workloads are good.

Laurie Bargstedt (HFM BOCES):

- Will be offering their services through distance education in the forms of packets.
- Can see some people once a week in person and will serve some people through something similar to Zoom called Google Education.
- Will be changing the IC3E Digital Literacy training.
 - o The daytime program will be 5 days a week so that students can complete it sooner.
 - o Will also be offering an evening program two nights a week.
 - o The focus of the program is Digital Literacy skills for adults with an emphasis on English as a Second Language. However, they will be taking students from any category now.

Donna Becker (Schoharie County DSS):

- Hoping to get Homeless grant money from Catholic Charities.
- Stephen Munford, Deputy Commissioner, will be concentrating on the Income Maintenance Unit with oversight of Food Stamps and Employment programs.

Kerry Brunner (Richardson Brands Company):

- Things are going well and starting to pick up.

Roger Cusano (Universal Plastics Corporation):

- Sutton plant in Massachusetts will be dissolved in 7-8 weeks. Will mean more work for Holyoke and Albany plant.
- No cases of COVID.
- Albany plant is basically in the Bio-Medical realm where the other two plants are for Aerospace. Aerospace Industry has been hit very hard.
- Has launched a small project with a large diagnostic firm.
- Doing PPE out of Holyoke plant. Donated over 500 face shields to Cobleskill Regional Hospital. Also working on a different style face shield for educational support. Has better classroom protection with a cloth surround around the bottom. In production in Holyoke.
- Down to about 50 people. Lost about 25%, but hopes that will come back in the future as orders come back.

David Fariello (St. Mary's Healthcare):

- St. Mary's separating from Ascension.
 - o Will be a stand-alone hospital sponsored by the Albany Diocese.
 - o Plan to be fully divested by next July.
 - o 7 HR staff recently have been hired. There have been no job losses, but some have been repurposed into other areas.
 - o In regard to COVID;
 - o Some procedures are now being done and some visitations are now happening.
 - o Some staff continue to work from home.
 - o No COVID admission since August 21st.
 - o No deaths in the past 3 months in the hospital. The feeling is that physicians have learned how to treat it early with a variety of medications. Looking like a possibility of a vaccine at the end of this year or beginning of next year.

William Federice (Schoharie County Board of Supervisors):

- First time attending FMS Workforce Development Meeting.
- Realized that there are a lot more moving parts than he was aware of.
- Has a new appreciation for the tasks completed and our mission.

Melissa Johnston (NYS DOL):

- Continuing to assist individuals with Unemployment Insurance and will continue to do so until directed otherwise.
- Staff miss everyone, but it is where they need to be right now. It is a good feeling to be helping fellow NYS citizens and getting them the money that is helping them get by right now.

Kathleen Kilmartin (Community Health Center):

- 3 new staff members started on Monday, including one RN and one LPN.
- Full steam ahead on going back to regular Orientations.

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

- Busy. Thankful that things are kind of normal.

Allene Monaghan (ACCES VR):

- Currently offices are closed to the public and they are working remotely.
- 3 counselors in Johnstown. Counselor Assistant retired and there is no support staff.
- Hiring freeze.
- Using Microsoft Team or Zoom to meet with clients.
- Applications can be mailed or can be submitted through the website.

Donna Pesta (SUNY Cobleskill):

- SUNY Cobleskill suspended 12 students (out of the 1,200 - 1,400 enrolled) for not following rules for COVID. Most students are doing well and following the rules.
- 75% of academics are being offered remotely and the remaining 25% are all lab work.
- Trying to get the hands-on learning done while still in session.
- Just finished 3rd week of classes, further than they thought they would get.

Amy Rogers (Keymark Corporation):

- Had small bout of COVID cases. Back up and running and everyone is doing well.
- Not able to attend any Job Fairs right now due to COVID situation.
- Did attend an open-air job fair in Gloversville. Unfortunately, it was not well attended by jobseekers.
- Still running their employee shuttle but with COVID restrictions they can only have 3 passengers on the shuttle at a time.
- Looking to partner with someone on transportation discussions and solutions.

Kenneth Rose (Montgomery Co. Economic Development & Planning Dept.):

- Have engaged a company out of Saratoga to undertake a Childcare Survey for Montgomery County residents and Businesses.
 - o The first steps are to engage various employees throughout the county and see what the results are. From there they will reach out to some of the businesses to discuss the results.
 - o It was initiated through the County Executive's Business Round Table.
 - o Working closely with Hill and Markes because they have a tremendous need in regard to childcare services for their employees.
 - o The IDA owns property across the street from Dollar General and Hill and Markes. Potentially looking to partner up down the road with someone to provide childcare services. The IDA may look at developing and building the actual building.

- Survey results should be wrapped up by end of September or early October.
- Looking for something more tailored to the business corridor on 5S. There are currently over 2,000 employees in that area.

Don Snoop (Mittel Cable TV):

- Mittel continued to be busy.

Peter Stearns (Laborers Local #157):

- Everything going well. Busy.

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

- Still on PAUSE for accepting applications for any grants.
- Still working with companies collecting Workforce Intelligence and gathering data.
- Has had conversations with businesses in Fulton and Montgomery Counties regarding challenges with Childcare and Transportation.
 - Looking to work on a program with a gentleman that has his own transportation shuttle service.
 - He was recently in the Business Review as he has secured an exclusive contract with Amazon. He will be doing the Last Mile deliveries for upstate New York of packages weighing 150 pounds or more.
 - Prior to getting that contract he had his shuttle service for employees. It is something they are looking to enhance in the Fulton and Montgomery County areas due to the rural areas. She is looking to have a business roundtable discussion regarding transportation needs.

VII. Board Member Feedback?

VIII. Adjournment:

Meeting Adjourned at 5:35 p.m.

The next Board Meeting will be held on October 7, 2020 at 4:30 p.m.