

The Fulton, Montgomery & Schoharie Counties Workforce Development Board

Board Meeting

Wednesday, December 2, 2020
via Zoom

I. Opening and Attendance:

Welcome: Marty Callahan, Chairman of the Board, called the meeting to order at 4:33 p.m. Marty asked all attendees to place their name and Business or Organization into the Zoom chat box for attendance purposes. All Board Members and guests introduced themselves.

Members Present: Wendy Adams, Laurie Bargstedt, Donna Becker, Marty Callahan, Roger Cusano, Andrea Fettinger, Melissa Johnston, Karen Miller, Donna Pesta, Ken Rose, Andrea Scribner, Donald Snoop, Jeff Stark, and Peter Stearns

Excused: Kerry Brunner, Erin Clemens, Pamela Goldswor, Arthur Graulich, Kathleen Kilmartin, Allene Monaghan, Lani Pertell, Amy Rogers and Jeannette Spaulding

Absent: Elijah Braemer, Dave Fariello, Amy McCray and Mark Mincher

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:

- o **Resolution BY 2020-06:** Acceptance of the minutes from the October 7, 2020 Board Meeting
 - o Motion: Andrea Fettinger Seconded by: Don Snoop
 - o Discussion: There was no discussion.
 - o Vote: All in favor
 - o Motion Carried

III. Information Sharing:

Accountability and Return on Investment Committee: Andrea shared that the Accountability and Return on Investment Committee met on November 24th. Gail talked about the release of the WIOA Services RFP. The current Subcontractor (Private Industry Council) contract expires on June 30, 2021. It is the end of the fourth year of their agreement. A draft RFP is currently being reviewed by the Accountability and Return on Investment and the Workforce Oversight Committees. After acceptance by the committees, it will be released as a RFP for WIOA Services. The anticipated release date is January 11, 2021.

Gail reminded Board Members that they will not need to approve the RFP release. An Ad Hoc Committee, made up of members of both the Accountability and Oversight Committees, will review and score all applications, independently, and then come together to make a recommendation for a WIOA Services provider to the full board to accept the committee recommendation by resolution.

Kim talked about the financial report for October. As of October 31 both the PIC and the WIB budgets should be at 33.3% expended. The PIC budget is slightly underspent at a blended average of 24.44%, but all expenditures are as expected. September expenses paid in October were allocated to TANF, and TANF allocations contributed to the budget being currently underspent. An estimated \$50,000 is due to PIC for the Stimulus Employee Retention Credit, but they have not yet received this payment. When they do receive it, future expenditures will be reduced until the credit is used.

Total expenditures for the WIB are at 23.49%. A check from the IRS for \$15,000 for payment of the Stimulus Employee Retention Credit was received in October. This accounts for 3.41% of the WIB's current underspent budget of 9.84%. Previous months expenditures allocated to TANF also contributed to the WIB's budget being underspent. Notable October expenditures included; the annual accounting and audit fees and technology costs like Spectrum. All other expenses and desk rents were as expected.

The slated recapture amount by the Department of Labor of the TET-DW funding was calculated at \$72,522. We had previously revised the PIC budget to reflect the amount of money we calculated that we needed for the balance of the year. The recapture amount calculated by the Department of Labor would have reduced our funding and the PIC budget by \$14,700. Gail asked the Department of Labor if we could be allowed to keep this money thereby reducing the recapture down to \$57,000. Gail's request was accepted. This allowed us to keep what we had planned in the budget.

The next Accountability meeting will be January 26 at 3:30pm via zoom. Everyone who would like to join is always welcome. It's the committee that discusses the finances mostly and how it relates back to programs and policies.

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

Next Meeting: Tuesday, January 26th, 2021, at 3:30 p.m. by Zoom.

Business Services and Employer Engagement Committee: Marty stated that the Business Services and Employer Engagement committee met on November 19th. Bev gave her Program Report. The overall Center Traffic was 124: 59 in Amsterdam, 45 in Cobleskill, and 20 in Gloversville. There were 2 WIOA OJT's written during October; one with CDL Associates for a Personal & Commercial Lines Sales Agent and one with Electro-Metrics for a Shipping/Receiving Supervisor.

There were also two TET-DW OJT's written during October. Gail explained that the TET-DW was a special grant that we received out of the Trade Act for Dislocated Workers. It was originally a 1 ½ year grant backdated to make it a 2 year grant. With COVID, and not being able to write contracts because Employers were not hiring, the state requested a waiver from the federal government and got another year added on to the grant. The funding is for Dislocated Workers and is in addition to our usual Dislocated Worker money.

During the meeting Gail shared that in October we began partnering with the Greater Capital Region Career Centers to offer virtual workshops for job seekers. These are co-led by staff from the 10 Career Centers of the Greater Capital Region – Albany-Schenectady-Rensselaer, Saratoga-Warren-Washington, Columbia-Greene, and Fulton-Montgomery-Schoharie. Offering these virtual

workshops regionally allows for a greater audience of participants and increased exchange between participants, while reducing duplication of services and investment of staff time. December workshops include Resume and Cover Letter Development, Interview Preparation, Completing Job Applications, and Transferrable Skills. Marty shared that Gail hopes that these workshops will help prepare job applicants to become successful employees for all of our businesses.

The local businesses services team update from Nancy Reccio said there were no recruitment or job fairs at the three centers. She had written four non- ITA contracts, however. Non-ITA contracts are specific to employer-based training, such as On-the-Job Training for new hires and Customized Training to upgrade current employees. Nancy wrote one contract for a customized upgrade training at one company and three contracts with another company for On-the-Job Training for Dislocated Workers. In all three of the cases, the new hires had been laid off jobs that they had had for 7 to 17 years. This company is considered an essential business and is a manufacturer of communication devices including audio frequency antennas.

Nancy facilitated a zoom meeting with the Business Services Consortium comprised of agencies that provide Workforce Services as part of their mission. They meet bi-monthly to share information on their specific services, as well as job leads for job seekers.

In addition, Nancy's been working on a Mohawk Valley Regional Healthcare Grant with Gail to identify local businesses that might benefit from training funds from this grant and would be willing to write a letter of support. So far, we received support from 12 local health care providers.

Melissa Johnson from the New York State Department of Labor said they continue to focus almost entirely on providing Unemployment Insurance assistance through data input. Staff are all working a mandatory five hours of overtime each week, which has been extended until the second week of December. They still don't have a return date for providing their usual services, although they have returned to the local centers. Staff are each in the Centers one day a week, and working remotely 4 days a week. Supervisors and managers are in the office 5 days a week. Melissa says that she really misses everyone and that it's great to be back and see others again.

Marty shared that they had a discussion about recruitment in reference to what the owners of Helmont and their other facilities are doing. The owner is getting out onto the floor during all shifts to introduce himself and talk briefly with the workforce. He is very excited about talking one-on-one with the employees. Marty thinks it has a very strong, positive effect on the culture of the organization and that it is a great recruitment effort to help strengthen the overall culture within the organization.

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

Next Meeting: Thursday, January 21st, 2021, at 8 a.m. by Zoom, unless otherwise determined.

WIOA (MOU) Partners Committee: Mary Hill shared that the Committee hadn't met since June. They started off with a Partner Go-Round. Gail reminded everyone to please not assume that we all know what each other's programs involve, especially with all the changes and COVID.

The group then moved into a discussion about PY' 20 and the MOU Partnership. Gail discussed this with all of the members. She had hoped to have more information to share about the actual Memorandum of Understanding. Unfortunately, the final Technical Advisory had not been released. A draft was shared with the Local Workforce Development Boards in late September. New York State DOL asked them not to share that with partners because it had not been officially approved by all state agencies involved. Gail stated that we expected to see a final document momentarily.

It is safe to assume some things though. One is that the Career Center Services Chart that each partner fills out will be included again this year. We also know that the process for referral system will be included. A common identifier for branding and a confidentially document will also be required this year. Additionally, there will only be a single MOU, which includes both WIOA Services and Infrastructure Costs in the document this year.

What we don't know is when the technical advisory will be released, what the actual template will look like, or when it will be have to be completed and returned to New York State Department of Labor, or any additional information they might ask of us.

Gail shared an update from NYSDOL, saying that they were told at a Zoom meeting last week that the Technical Advisory would be posted by the end of November. It was actually posted sometime after 7:00 p.m. on December 1st and the Guidance and MOU Template were posted on the 2nd. Gail shared that they are looking forward to scheduling a meeting, for probably January 8th, to once again bring all the MOU Partners together.

The meeting then moved to the Equal Opportunity Compliance Questionnaire that many of the partners had received from Silica Grant, the Equal Opportunity Office for New York State Department of Labor. This letter was in regard to the Annual EO Compliance reviews. The partners received this letter because they were identified as WIOA recipients, sub-recipients or partners in the system. The letter explained the nine elements that we are all assessed on, as well as how to locate the link to complete the survey. The surveys needed to be returned by Monday, November 17. DOL did state that they understood that there were restrictions with COVID, and many of the people hadn't been in the local centers and were not familiar with whether all required notifications and publications were posted.

Bev emailed a copy of the WIOA Complaint Grievance Procedure to all of the partners to assist them in completing elements one and eight of the questionnaire. We also instructed partners that any additional questions could be emailed to Gail.

The next meeting which had been scheduled for December 4th has been cancelled as we were not in receipt of the TA and accompanying documents in time to review them. As Gail mentioned, we will now be scheduling the meeting for January.

Next Meeting: January 8, 2021 at 9:00 a.m. by Zoom.

Workforce Systems Oversight Committee: Donna stated that since much of her report was already covered, her report would be short. She shared that overall there were 59 Resource Room visitors: 29 WIOA; 17 Youth; 15 CCFI (math doesn't add to 59) and 5 other visits. The Gloversville Center reopened on October 6th. At this time ACCES/VR is not back in the Amsterdam Center, but HFM BOCES Adult Literacy is. All the staff continue to work remotely on the days that they're not assigned to a Center.

During October, there were 5,291 activities logged by the PIC staff. There were 1,989 correspondence contacts, mainly due to 2 newsletters being emailed out. More businesses are opening back up, and the need for more employees and seasonal workers are coming through. So that's great news. There were 255 contacts made regarding classroom training. That is typical around this time of the year when more students are looking for assistance and inquiries about programs.

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

Next Meeting: Wednesday, January 27th, 2021, at 8 a.m. by Zoom, unless otherwise determined.

V. Environmental Scanning:

Gail reminded Board Members that they had her Executive Directors report for October and November, but she wanted to highlight just a couple of things. One that is more fun and one that has a more regional focus than a local focus.

She has truly enjoyed working with the P-TECH Program, which is four years of high school and two years of a Community College program rolled into one. In our area, HFM BOCES is the sponsor. Gail shared that she has been a P-TECH mentor since they started about six years and that she likes working with the young people there. They are very motivated and fun to be around. She shared that they are now zooming instead of meeting in person and that adds another component to it. Last month the mentors talked about Resume Development. Next week they will be discussing Professional Presence and Dress. You do a presentation with a group of eight to 10 students. Some of them are in person that day and some of them are virtual like we are right now.

For example, they will be talking about things like the tattoo you just had to have. Now you are going on a job interview, and you have to think about how important it is to have that tattoo right out there for everybody to see. It's those kinds of things that young people and young adults sometimes go ahead and do and then think about later.

Gail also discussed the Regional Grant applications. We have applied for 2 Federal Grants on a regional basis. One is on Advanced Manufacturing and Apprenticeship and that's out of the Capital Region led by an organization called SEAT. They're very similar to CEG (The Center for Economic Growth) in the Capital Region. The second one is a Regional Application that is for Healthcare. Herkimer-Madison-Oneida LWDB is the lead applicant. Each of these applications covers six to seven different Workforce Boards all working together. We got a great response from our Healthcare providers. Locally we received 12 letters of support saying we will work with this program, we will bring people in and help support training them. We think these are both going to be very good, not just for our three counties, but for the whole region. Gail reminded Board Members that they are national grants and very, very competitive. If we get one out of two she will be thrilled. Crickett Thomas-O'Dell asked what SEAT was. Gail stated that the grant was for Advanced Manufacturing and Apprenticeships and that SEAT was the lead organization for this USDOL grant. She shared that they have Community Colleges, WIB's and some businesses involved as well.

Marty shared that he wanted to make sure that everyone had the opportunity to see and read Nancy Reccio's newsletter. He stated that he likes the information shared and that if you are recruiting, they have candidates listed in the newsletter as well. Gail shared that the December Newsletter also includes a testimonial from a jobseeker. It is nice to show businesses what the jobseekers are saying about them. They always seem to hear when someone has something bad to say, but it is important to hear good things too.

VI. Board Member Go Round:

Marty stated that the topic of transportation came up during the Business Services Committee meeting. He asked Board Members to share how vital transportation is to their business, either directly or indirectly, and how it impacts their business. He also invited Board Members to share updates on what is going on in their business/organization as well.

Donna Becker (Schoharie County DSS):

- Schoharie County Transportation is the go-to transportation for Social Services
 - They provide transportation for parents for visits, transportation for children (even unaccompanied children by putting them in a car with one driver and making sure no one else is in the vehicle), and Medicaid Transportation.
 - Very accommodating. 5 days a week.
 - Barrier: No late hours after 6 p.m. Makes it difficult for on-call and homeless people when businesses may need those hours.
 - Important for elderly that need to shop. \$1.20 each way.
 - Standard Routes: Sharon Springs to Cobleskill to Middleburg and all around the county, but also go into Albany County.
 - Offer route deviations – for an additional charge of \$1.00.
 - Larger buses from Cobleskill to Capital District (may not be running as often now due to COVID restrictions).
 - Take SUNY students to Crossgates and other locations.
 - Donna shared they are seeing more UBER drivers, but cautioned concerns with Mental Health issues and drug use

Marty Callahan (Gehring Tricot Corporation):

- Doordash seems to be coming more and more into the area. More out of area people buying property in rural areas increases the need for drivers and taxis, Uber and Doordash
- A key question for them when interviewing is “Do you have reliable transportation?” Really listen. Relying on others for transportation can quickly change when they are required to work the 3rd shift.

Roger Cusano (Universal Plastics):

- Always ask about reliable transportation during interviews.
- Have found they need to have more flexible schedules for some employees during COVID due to daycare issues.

Melissa Johnston (NYS DOL):

- They continue to work on unemployment.
- Extended overtime until the middle of December. She suspects it will continue to get extended.
- Mandatory requirement is five hours per week, but a lot of staff are working at least 20 extra hours per week.

Donna Pesta (SUNY Cobleskill):

- SUNY students are offered a \$50 a semester bus pass that is unlimited. Many students have cars, but a lot of students from the city do not and they find the pass helpful.

Ken Rose (MC Department of Economic Development & Planning):

- Montgomery Area Express has 2 routes. One is a western run from St. Johnsville to Fonda and the other is an Eastern run from St. Mary's to Fonda. To be helpful, routes have to match up with the needs of employers, which is not always the case.
- Brown Transportation handles the mass transportation route from Amsterdam to Albany as well as the Montgomery County Area Express.
- The 5S corridor has had transportation issues.
 - Ken's office reached out to businesses on 5S to see what their needs were. One of the issues was that the shifts are different in each one of the businesses. For example: Dollar General has a different shift than Target does.

- They have shared that information with Brown Transportation to see if there is any type of service that they could provide.
 - Looking into the possibility of some state reimbursement or buy in from companies so that they can add a transportation route.
 - For Dollar General it doesn't seem to be an issue since many employees were local, but for other businesses it is a problem.
 - City of Gloversville did a whole transportation plan with a consultant and it came down to the fact that it would be a huge cost.
 - In the past year and a half to two years, the County Executive presented a proposal to CDTA. They would get a portion of the mortgage recording taxes in the county. The gap was in the millions. Without major funding from the state or federal level, the county's budget can't absorb millions of dollars to run transportation.
 - The City of Amsterdam had to shut down their transportation due to huge deficits.
 - Keymark once ran a bus to Utica to the refugee center. They now carpool.
 - Ken wonders if transportation issues will change as minimum wages increase in upstate New York. He stated that we will have to wait and see.
- Andrea Fettinger shared that there might be a report from the rural transportation group that Ken spoke about. Brent Warren is the municipality or the mobility manager for Fulton County Gloversville Transit. She stated she might have a copy of it, or that she could reach out to him and have it sent to Gail. The result of the report was that there was no action taken. Marty asked how old the report was and Andrea shared that it was maybe 4 or 5 years old.

Andrea Scribner (Fulton-Montgomery Community College):

- FMCC does have a bus route. It runs early enough for classes starting at 8 a.m.
 - Barriers:
 - Science labs run from two to five in the afternoon, and by four o'clock the buses are done.
 - Does not accommodate those attending evening classes.
 - Difficult for students who live on campus, but want to work off campus. A cab can cost as much as \$20/one way to Amsterdam. It ends up not being worth it for them to work.
- Andrea shared that the number one reason she has seen students withdraw from classes during the semester is because their car broke down and they couldn't get to class.
- There is Gloversville Transit and also transportation that goes to Amsterdam.

Jeff Stark (IUPAT District Council #9):

- Knights of Columbus has their annual Santa Claus this week with social distancing.
 - They have limited supply of gifts for families that may need help. He asked Board Member to private message him if they know of anyone who could benefit from some extra help this year.

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

- Suggested a further study of transportation issues going into 2021.
- Marty agreed and stated it will be on the agenda for the first of the year.

VII. Board Member Feedback?

Marty shared that if anyone has a topic that they would like to share with the group or discuss to let Gail or Beverly know and we will review it. He wished everyone a Happy and Safe Holiday Season.

VIII. Adjournment:

Motion to close the meeting:

Motion: Peter Stearns Seconded: Melissa Johnston
Meeting Adjourned at 5:28 p.m.

*No Board Meeting during January.
The next Board Meeting will be held on February 3, 2021 at 4:30 p.m. via Zoom.*