

The Fulton, Montgomery & Schoharie Counties Workforce Development Board

Board Meeting

Wednesday, October 7, 2020
via Zoom

I. Opening and Attendance:

Welcome: Marty Callahan, Chairman of the Board, called the meeting to order at 4:32 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, Kerry Brunner, Marty Callahan, Erin Clemens, Pamela Goldswor, Melissa Johnston, Kathleen Kilmartin, Mark Mincher, Allene Monaghan, Donna Pesta, Amy Rogers, Andrea Scribner, Donald Snoop, and Jeannette Spaulding

Excused: Elijah Braemer, Roger Cusano, Andrea Fettinger, Arthur Graulich and Peter Stearns

Absent: Dave Fariello, Amy McCray, Karen Miller, Lani Pertell, Kenneth Rose and Jeff Stark

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

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

II. Action Items:

- **Resolution BY 2020-04:** Acceptance of the minutes from the September 2, 2020 Annual Board Meeting
 - Motion: Don Snoop Seconded by: Melissa Johnston
 - Discussion: There was no discussion.
 - Vote: All in favor
 - Motion Carried

- **Resolution BY 2020-05: Upon the Recommendation of the Accountability and Return on Investment Committee:** Acceptance of the Single Audit Report for Year Ending 6/30/20

- Motion: Jeannette Spaulding Seconded by: Don Snoop
Discussion: Andrea was unable to attend, therefore Kim shared that Phil Beckett began by reviewing the Management Letter with the Committee. Although everything was satisfactory, he did find “opportunities for strengthening internal controls and operating efficiency.” He offered suggestions to update our Property and Equipment Inventory; review our policies for Lease Accounting for Equipment and Space to comply with new regulations to become effective December 15, 2021; to include canceled check images along with bank statements for review by the Executive Director; and to review and update our Internal Accounting Manual as needed. He also reviewed the Single Audit Report with the committee. The Committee sent the Single Audit Report to the full Board for action at the October 7th meeting.
- Vote: All in favor.
- Motion Carried.

III. Information Sharing:

Accountability and Return on Investment Committee: Kim reported that in addition to the Single Audit review as stated above, that the committee discussed expenditures as of August 31, 2020 and that both the PIC & Workforce Development Board budgets should be at 16.67% expended. The Private Industry Council total program funding was slightly underspent at a blended program average of 13.30% and the WDB total expenditures were slightly underspent at 15.16%.

Gail shared that the TET-Dislocated Work Grant, was supposed to end on September 30, 2020. Most of the Workforce Boards in NYS are underspent because businesses were not hiring and potential employees were not looking for work. NYS Department of Labor requested and received an extension for the grant through September 30, 2021. This will allow us to put more TET-DW dollars into Private Industry Council’s contract, while reducing the amount of WIOA money used. We are actually saving WIOA funds while at the same time giving PIC more TET-Dislocated Worker funds to support Businesses and Dislocated Workers going forward for the final 9 months of the PY’20 contract.

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

Next Meeting: Tuesday, November 24th, 2020, at 3:30 p.m. by Zoom, unless otherwise determined.

Business Services and Employer Engagement Committee:

Pam shared that there were 59 FMS Business Contacts in August and 4 Recruitments in the Cobleskill Center for JJ Young (12 participants). Nancy Reccio explained that all

appointments were one-on-one. We did not have any new training contracts written or TET/DW Training sessions held in August.

She said that 2020 has been somewhat tough because there have not been a lot of traditional job fairs or recruitments. There was a community outdoor job fair in Gloversville a few weeks ago with ten to twelve businesses but was poorly attended by actual jobseekers.

She stated that Amazon is hiring. They opened on September 24th with shifts running Thursday – Sunday, 1 a.m. to 11 a.m.

Nancy Reccio has also been training Nancy Rogers to join the Business Services team. Nancy Rogers will be focusing on Health Care while Nancy Reccio will continue her focus on Manufacturing and Distribution.

Pam shared that Laurie Bargstedt of HFM BOCES suggested that since everyone is looking at different and innovative ways to do job recruitment, it might be a good idea to find ways to share ideas. This will save each of us time and give us access to other peoples' thoughts and practices. She encouraged committee members to send her ideas of what they are trying or would like to try. They are working on compiling a list so that they can share ideas and grow with each other. Marty shared that if anyone has ideas about recruitment, that the Business Services Committee is always open to input and suggestions.

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

Next Meeting: Thursday, October 15th, 2020, at 8 a.m. by Zoom, unless otherwise determined.

WIOA (MOU) Partners Committee:

Gail shared that the WIOA Partners Committee had intended to meet last month as part of their regularly scheduled quarterly meetings. We then received a notice from New York State Department of Labor that they were going to develop a new Memorandum of Understanding that all partners would be expected to sign onto. We canceled last month's meeting because we did not have a new MOU to share. We rescheduled for next Friday, October 16th, but the final MOU is still not out yet. Gail sent an email to Department of Labor on October 7th, asking when we were going to get a new Technical Advisory and MOU template. They have not answered yet. Therefore, we are debating whether to bring everybody together if we do not have a lot to share. The committee has about 14 to 16 partner agencies and 35 people on a Zoom call. Therefore, depending upon what we hear in the next couple of days, we will decide whether to have that meeting in October or to put it off until November.

The problem is that the MOU we have now with our partners expired on June 30, 2020. The MOU is an Agreement on how we share services and dollars that support the centers. An updated MOU was not pursued in the middle of the pandemic. This is not just us; it is around the country. USDOL is saying that when we finally get a Memorandum of

Understanding agreed upon, it will actually be back dated to July 1, 2020. As we know more, we will share with the Committee and the Board.

The next meeting is tentatively scheduled for Fri., October 16, 2020 9:00 a.m. via Zoom. This meeting will be rescheduled if a new Technical Advisory MOU template is not received by October 13th.

Workforce Systems Oversight Committee: Marty announced that the Committee has a new Co-chair, Donna Pesta. He thanked Donna for accepting the appointment.

Donna shared the Monthly Program Services Report and stated that the total traffic increased slightly from last month – up to 108 from 84 in July. However, many of those coming through the doors were repeat customers. The activity graph for August showed that the PIC staff logged 3,066 activities. Beverly stated that there were 448 Business and Employer contacts made through the distribution of the Business newsletter, entering and posting job orders and providing job openings to staff and partners.

There were no new Youth enrollments into the year-round youth program in August and no HSE or other Certifications issued. There were 12 new Metrix registrations issued and 72 courses passed. One customer completed 40 courses related to Computer Skills, Customer Service, Food Service and Soft Skills. Mary shared that they are excited to have provided over 5000 services specific to job seekers and business customers.

Gail reported that the Amsterdam and Cobleskill Centers continue to be open to customers by appointment only on Monday, Wednesday, and Friday. Staff continue to work remotely to provide services on Tuesday and Thursday. In addition, any customer who does not want to come into a Center can receive services remotely Monday through Friday. Additionally, the Gloversville Center went through some renovations to make them COVID-19 compliant with desks, table, and computers re-arranged for social distancing and personal protective shields in place. On Monday, September 28 the center was deep cleaned. The Gloversville Center will be open on Tuesdays and Thursdays, 8:30 to 12:30 and 1 p.m. to 4:30 p.m. for Adults and Dislocated Workers, and the same hours on Fridays for Youth. Gail will be sending out a news release and an email to Jon Stead at Fulton County Board of Supervisors once there is an official date.

Mary shared that the Gloversville Center opened on Tuesday, October 6th and that we already had 3 customers come in. The customers were from the Gloversville area and staff had been working remotely with them. They did not have transportation to the Amsterdam Center. They were very excited when they came in and saw that we were open again. Thursday will be the second day and she stated that we have 3 people scheduled in come in.

Mary also shared a story about a man that she met in the parking lot at Price Chopper. He asked if she knew where he could find a job because he had been out of work for quite a while. He does not have a car or a telephone. She shared that Century Linen was hiring. He did not have a way to apply for unemployment and did not know what to do. She had her travel bag with her and gave him the list of food pantries. He stated that Workforce Solutions is still closed. She told him that we were opening back up soon and

he was very excited to hear that news! He said the Library, and a few other places are closed, have limited hours and/or are not accepting walk-ins.

Mary stated that it costs \$14/one way for a bus to Amsterdam. Many unemployed people cannot afford that. She thinks that the numbers in Gloversville Center will grow very rapidly. Marty stated the bus would cost \$140 a week!

Mary stated that the Gloversville Center has been sanitized and cleaned, Plexiglas shields are in place, and the room rearranged so that we would be ready to re-open. She stated that the landlord has been very good also. The landlord is very conscious of COVID and has cleaned and sanitized the restrooms. He now has one restroom designated for staff and another one for customers and the general public.

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

Next Meeting: Wednesday, November 25th, 2020, at 8 a.m. by Zoom, unless otherwise determined.

V. Environmental Scanning:

Gail shared that the Greater Capital Region (Saratoga, Warren, Washington, Albany, Schenectady, Rensselaer, Columbia and Greene Counties) contacted us to see if we wanted to participate in designing and providing Virtual Workshops for our Jobseeker customers. Nancy Rogers is working with staff from Saratoga County to present a Virtual Workshop on "Overcoming Your Barriers to Employment". Many Centers are still closed, so this will help jobseekers throughout the 11 counties of the greater capital region. It is a great opportunity to offer these workshops when there is no physical space available. We plan to post a flyer on Facebook with links to register for the workshops. This is one more innovative way we are trying to work with our jobseekers.

A Rural Health Care grant has been released by USDOL. A number of Local Workforce Boards are looking very seriously at it. We have very rural areas where there is a shortage in healthcare workers and healthcare in general. This grant would train some of our Dislocated Workers and some of our Adults who are low income in healthcare careers. We plan to join a partnership of local workforce boards to apply for the grant. This is a national funding opportunity from USDOL, and they usually only award 8-10 grants. Gail stated that it would probably be the beginning of the year before we know the outcome of the grant application.

Gail shared how pleased she is now that the Gloversville Center is now open. Although the HFM BOCES staff have returned to the Amsterdam Center and the DSS staff and Catskill Center for Independence staff are in the Cobleskill Center, DOL staff have not returned as they are focusing on Unemployment Insurance efforts remotely. Melissa shared that they are assigned 100% to UI and that they hope they are making an impact. She stated that they look forward to transitioning back into reemployment services.

VI. Board Member Go Round:

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

- Still have staff working remotely and a handful in the office.
- Things going well.

Laurie Bargstedt (HFM BOCES):

- All Adult Literacy by distance learning: English as a Second Language, Skill Development and HSE preparation. Students come in once a week for support. If they cannot come in or are not comfortable coming in, they use Google Meet.
- Integrated English Literacy Program now offered in person in the evenings.
 - Marty asked if this was because they are working during the day or if it is because they have family to take care of during the day. Laurie shared that it could be for both reasons. He asked how many participants they have overall. Laurie said they currently have around 100. Normally they would have a little bit more, but some people just are not able to participate in schooling right now. Laurie shared that persistence with Adult Learners is a tricky thing. Sometimes they might be inactive for three or four weeks and then they come back. They might have challenges at home with their own family or difficulty managing their workload. She said that their customers' enrollment is cyclical but the program tries to be flexible.

Donna Becker (Schoharie County DSS):

- Appointment only basis, but not turning anyone away.
- A few homeless people without appointments still are being helped.
- HEAP season starting soon. Working with Office of Emergency Services about how to meet the need if 15-20 people come to front desk to fill out an application.
- Still have many waivers.
- Doing many Fraud Investigations. SNAP Benefit recipients that failed to report that they are working or getting Unemployment Insurance benefits. She has signed several criminal complaints for SNAP fraud. Marty asked if people are knowingly doing this. Donna stated DSS must allege that they are willful. To defraud is welfare fraud.

Kerry Brunner (Richardson Brands Company):

- Brought back a few more employees from layoff. Still down a little.
- Switched to Roses Brand back in March.
- Different owners. Group out of Texas. Really forward thinking.

Marty Callahan (Gehring Tricot Corporation):

- Getting away from some of the PPE development; getting back into the more diversified product lines from pre-COVID.
- Developments with Adidas and Nike right now. Making athletic wear like football pads, NFL fabric that goes around the actual foam padding.
- At about 40% production right now.

- Has a couple of openings.

Pamela Goldswor (Townsend Leather):

- Striking up a deal with L.L.Bean, like they did with Wolverine and New Balance.
- Not quite ready for hiring.
- Focusing on machinery and expanding.
- Pushing a lot of footwear and apparel.

Melissa Johnston (NYS DOL):

- Still focused on the Unemployment Insurance.
- Received the Veterans Program Office Incentive Award for last program year. It comes with some recognition trinkets for DOL staff and partners and a plaque for posting at the office.

Mark Mincher (Operating Engineers Local 158):

- Were deemed essential for heavy highway and bridgework, but many projects have had funding pulled back.
- Global Foundries ramping up and needs 400 fitters. They are worried about the quarantine and being able to bring in out of state fitters and electricians.
- Been challenging year for the engineers in the trades.

Allene Monaghan (ACCES VR):

- Still telecommuting. Mandated at half-staff M-F in Johnstown but having no individual appointments.
- Applications extended until January 1st.
- Using Microsoft Teams and WebEx for meetings.
- Numbers of referrals are down, but expected as many come from schools which have been closed since March and are just beginning to re-open.
- Little low on staff in the Gloversville office. Have 3 counselors and the supervisor. No counselor assistant or support staff. One Utica staff member goes every other week to provide some clerical support.
- Marty shared that Nancy Reccio sends out a monthly newsletter that shows jobseekers that may fit what ACCES/VR is looking for. Allene responded they are on a hiring freeze at this time.
- Mary shared that the newsletter goes out to all Board Members and Businesses in the Chamber directories for both FM and Schoharie Counties and to all Partner staff. The Newsletter shares a brief description of the job seeker and what they are looking for and what kind of job they have had in the past. For more information, you can contact Nancy Reccio. It also shows the current unemployment rates and compares to last year. Gail shared that our partners in the Capital District asked for a copy because they are interested in having their Business Services teams do something similar. Currently they all provide a quarterly report, but it is not specific to Business Services.

Donna Pesta (SUNY Cobleskill):

- Eighth week of classes, still on campus; students doing fantastic.
- Doing a lot of COVID testing. Tested over 1,100 people in last two weeks and only 1 positive.
- Working on a Virtual Career Fair. Doing it all virtually and in smaller clusters.

- Get many employers, especially for Plant Science students that travel from out of state. It will be interesting to see in the future if they want to keep doing it virtually because it will save a lot of time and travel for them.

Amy Rogers (Keymark Corporation):

- Actively recruiting. Did a couple of outdoor job fairs, but had limited participation. Transportation continues to be an issue.
- Shuttle bus is still running, but at a lower capacity because of COVID and required social distancing limiting the number of riders at any one time.

Andrea Scribner (Fulton-Montgomery Community College):

- Not a lot of students on campus. Majority of classes are remote, except labs.
- Office are fully open, with some staff working remotely certain days and in person others.
- Virtual meetings with students using Microsoft Teams, Zooms and telephone calls.
- Virtual Open House on November 21st. More details forthcoming.
- Would like to touch base with Donna Pesta regarding the Virtual Job Fairs that SUNY Cobleskill is offering.

Don Snoop (Mittel Cable TV):

- Nothing new. MidTel remains extremely busy. They have a lot of underground work to do and are trying to get it all in before the frost hits.

Jeannette Spaulding (Schoharie County Community Action Program):

- Had a rotational schedule for staff, but now pretty much everyone back.
- Services are by appointment throughout whole agency. If someone shows up and staff are able to see him or her at that time, they do.
- Has a community greeter and a greeting room where everyone is checked; but not recorded. Brief screening questionnaire before they can access direct services.
- Uptick in need for Food Pantries and Emergency services. Even though there is a moratorium on evictions, there is still a need for families, especially with UI Benefits decreased and ended for many people.
- Staff are preparing and studying for the upcoming tax return season.
- HEAP season starting soon; applications will be processed online and sent to DSS for their review and approval.
- Employment training classes are taking place; pre-registration and limited sizes.
- Weatherization is out taking care of homes. Scheduled appointments and covered from head to toe in PPE.
- The Child Care Resource Referral Center was considered an essential service. The CARES funding assisted childcare providers and essential workers. Therefore, they currently work in pairs.
- Family Support Center seeing families by appointment or Zoom if possible.
- Healthy Families WIC Program. Waiver for in-person services. Benefits are processed remotely, and parents do not have to come in. This is for all WIC programs.

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

- Some money that was being held up by the Department of Budget has now been released. While they are still not fully funded, they can start reimbursing all the contracts that they had already committed to for the year.

VII. Board Member Feedback?

VIII. Adjournment:

Meeting Adjourned at 5:44 p.m.

***No Board Meeting during November.
The next Board Meeting will be held on December 2, 2020 at 4:30 p.m. via Zoom.***