

**The Fulton, Montgomery & Schoharie Counties**  
**Workforce Development Board**  
**Board Meeting**  
**Via Zoom**

Wednesday – May 4, 2022

**I. Opening and Attendance:**

Welcome: Pamela welcomed everyone and introduced Debra Vrooman, HR Manager at Roses Brands. Debra will be joining the Board, replacing Kerry Brunner that retired, after her official appointment from the FC Board of Supervisors. All members introduced themselves. Pamela thanked everyone for coming.

Members Present by Zoom: Laurie Bargstedt, Donna Becker, Martin Callahan, Christie Davis, Andrea Fettinger, Pamela Goldswor, Melissa Johnston, Angelia Kehl, Kathleen Kilmartin, Christopher Manus, Donna Pesta, Kenneth Rose, Jeannette Spaulding, and Peter Stearns

Excused: Wendy Adams-Rosa, Kerry Brunner, Roger Cusano, Arthur Graulich, Amy Rogers

Absent: Elijah Braemer, Jack Magliocco, Allene Monaghan, Lani Torres Pertell, Don Snoop, Jeffrey Stark

Also present: *Mary Hill*, Program Director, FMS Private Industry Council, Inc., *Debra Vrooman*, HR Manager, Roses Brands

Staff to Board present: Gina Papa, Beverly Ball and Kimberly Skiff

**II. Action Items:**

- **Resolution BY 2021 -13:** Acceptance of the minutes from the April 6, 2022 Board Meeting
  - Motion: Melissa Johnston Seconded by: Donna Becker
  - Discussion: There was no discussion.
  - Vote: All in favor
  - Motion Carried

**III. Information Sharing:**

**Accountability and Return on Investment Committee:**

Andrea shared that the committee did not meet during April. One of the reasons was because of lack of committee representation. She asked all members to consider joining the committee if they have some interest in a conversation about money and budgets. She stated that any members are able to join. Gina shared that all Board Members are asked to be involved in at least one committee, but are welcome to join several if they wish.

Gina shared that generally, if a meeting is not going to be held, she writes up minutes to go through all of the things that would have been discussed had a regular meeting been held and shares it with the committee members.

Our annual fiscal monitoring from the Department of Labor was just completed. Although we did have 3 findings, it is important to note that we didn't have any of our costs/spending questioned. The findings were minor in the sense that we didn't spend any money that we shouldn't have and we didn't do anything wrong with any of our money.

We continue to be underspent. In a call with the Department of Labor today, they shared that most of the areas in New York State are underspent, largely due to the pandemic and not a lot of customers coming through the doors or seeking trainings. Like we have done in the past two years, we are going to be able to apply for a waiver so that the unspent funds can be carried over into next year's programming. Under normal circumstances, that wouldn't happen and any money unspent would have to be returned to be redistributed to areas that spent all of their funds. Gina shared that our fiscal year runs from July 1<sup>st</sup> through June 30<sup>th</sup>, so we are nearing the end of the year.

Looking at our March expenditures, we are finding that our utility costs are higher than expected. Fortunately, even though we are going to be a little over on that line item this year, we have extra funds available. But it is something that we will have to plan for with next year's budget.

Our phone system that is used in all three centers is outdated and it is no longer being supported by its manufacturer, so we are in the process of getting bids for a whole new phone system.

Kim is currently working on our annual budget that will start July 1. It will be presented as a resolution at next month's meeting. It will be a 3 month budget because we may not have our final allocations for the coming year until around September or October. We do know that estimated allocations indicate we will be receiving about \$110,000 more this coming year than we did last year. A lot of that is based on formulas and how many people in our area were unemployed in the last year. Not only will we be able to carry in money, but we will also be getting additional funds.

All funds still have to go into a budget and we have to plan it all out so we are hoping to get some additional committee members for next month's meeting. Gina stated that we need more than just Andrea attending the committee meetings. Andrea shared that she has been on the committee since she joined the Board, but would like to have some more input because it is the committee that runs the funding for the Board and that runs the system. She stated even newer members should consider joining the committee. It teaches you about how the Workforce Investment System works, where the money comes from and how it gets dispersed. When we talk about shortfalls or excess funding, you really learn to understand it all and can articulate about it when representing your counties. Gina stated that she plans to put together a small half hour Zoom budget training before the May 24<sup>th</sup> committee meeting to talk about the basics of our budget and what we consider as we plan it. Attendees can get the big picture of how things work with a quick overview. She will be reaching out to Board Members asking them to be a part of this training and the committee.

Next Meeting: May 24, 3:30pm *via Zoom*

*Full minutes are posted online*

### **Business Services and Employer Engagement Committee:**

Laurie gave a summary of the meeting: Nancy Reccio reported that there was going to be a job fair at FMCC on April 27<sup>th</sup> and then another one on June 8<sup>th</sup> at the Great Sacandaga Brewing Company. The latter came out of a discussion within this committee about finding some new and different avenues to reach out to for job fairs. Sign up information will be available soon and businesses will need to bring their own table, chair, and pop ups.

Nancy Rogers reminded people that if you're planning to do any type of training as a business to please reach out to her because there may be funding available to support those training costs for your employees.

Chris Larrabee reminded us about the availability of the New York State Job Bank to post job orders free of charge. He wants people to understand that it is available and that they will help you get your job postings up there. They're continuing to do monthly virtual job fairs including one held today. These virtual job fairs allow employers and job seekers to participate from a computer station, whether it's in their home or a local center where they don't have to incur travel expenses.

The committee recently changed its format to include a topic of the month. This month it was Job Fairs. Members shared what they look for in a job fair, what they hope to see from job seekers, and how they hope to get attention from job seekers. It was suggested that employers get up from the table and talk with candidates rather than sitting down, keep a list of current employees that would be willing to carpool, have giveaways that will draw people's attention to come and talk to you, having part time and flexible work hours available, and having paper applications for those who are not so computer savvy. Amy Rogers got a prize for the most notable job experience at a job fair. She had a job seeker in a ninja outfit complete with a plastic sword on his back. Laurie shared that the committee is always open to suggestions for "Topic of the Month" and to reach out if you have any suggestions.

Gina shared that there's also some suggestions for the organizers of job fairs in the full minutes. There was a discussion held about how the Career Centers can better prepare people to go to a job fair.

*Next Meeting: Thursday, May 19, 8:30 am via Zoom.*

*Full minutes are posted online*

**WIOA (MOU) Partners Committee:** Mary stated that the committee met on April 1<sup>st</sup>. There were 14 members present. She was excited to share that, for the first time in 2 years, we finally saw an increase in referrals made between these agencies. In January, we had 7 referrals and in the month of February, we had 31. That is a good indication that offices are opening again and that customers are starting to come in for assistance. Agencies are referring to each other because, as we know, we cannot do it all and we need the help of all of our partners to coexist.

The Summer Youth Employment Program (SYEP) will begin on July 18<sup>th</sup>. It is a little later again this year because they have found that youth enjoy it more if they have a couple of weeks off between school ending and the SYEP starting. They are also looking at bringing all three counties together for a one day orientation. They are planning where to hold it and in which county. The orientation would include topics such as; Labor Laws, Financial Literacy, workplace attitude and appearance, and how to get along with co-workers and supervisors. These are wonderful soft skills that many of our youth don't have yet and employers are telling us that these are critical skills. They are in the process of developing worksites for the summer programs.

During our Partner Go Round, agencies gave updates on what programs they have going on, what's going on in their agency and anything new that's happening or anything that we can help with.

This committee meets quarterly from 9-10:30.

*Next Meeting: June 10, 2022 at 9am by Zoom*

*Full minutes are posted online*

**Workforce Systems Oversight Committee:** Donna stated the committee met on April 27<sup>th</sup>. Bev gave a March report and a graph showing activities for the month. The Amsterdam and Cobleskill Career Centers are now open five days a week, and Gloversville is open Wednesday and Thursday. As soon as their numbers increase, they will be open more days.

Mary Hill gave an update on services and let us know what is going on with the Private Industry Council and the One Stop Operator. Melissa Johnson gave us an update on the New York State Department of Labor, Pam Levy let us know what was going on in the Catskills Center for Independence and Jeanette Spaulding gave an update on the Schoharie County Community Action Program.

Wendy Adams from Lamont Engineers thanked everyone for explaining things really well. Wendy's comment served as a reminder to all of us that we tend to use a lot of acronyms and abbreviations, making it difficult for members outside our agencies to understand. Donna suggested that, in our reports, it would be nice to write out the acronyms so that people understand what we are talking about.

Next Meeting: *Wednesday, May 25th at 8:30 am by Zoom*

*Full minutes are posted online*

## **V. Environmental Scanning:**

Gina shared that her Executive Directors report was sent out previously and it included all the things she's been involved with for the past month.

New York State's Open Meeting Law is the law that we operate under as far as our meetings having to be open to the public. There's been a lot of discussion about it lately because through the pandemic, we have all gotten accustomed to Zoom meetings. The legality for conducting business is under discussion and Gina has been doing a lot of research on it. Pam and Gina got together to talk a little bit about how things are going to look going forward and what our requirements are to hold the meetings; do we have to go back to in person or can we do a hybrid system. It's all a little fluid right now, but there'll be more to come as we get things figured out. It is an issue going on throughout New York State and probably the whole country as far as public entities and doing business in the public realm. We will keep you posted as we learn more.

Gina was invited to be a part of interviews for a new Career Center Manager for the Department of Labor. We are sad that we lost Melissa Johnston to a bigger and better job in Albany, but that means we are without a Manager. Being invited to be part of the interviews shows a fantastic effort for partnership. As the Executive Director for the Board, she works very closely with the DOL Manager and was appreciative to be invited to be a part of the interviews. The interview process is still ongoing.

The Annual Meeting on June 1<sup>st</sup> and the RSVP/Meal Choice form has gone out. One of the things we're going to be doing this year is distributing our Business Partner of the Year Awards at the meeting. In years past, we gave the awards at each county's Chamber of Commerce Annual Meetings but we are going to try something new. It will be a nice, personal way for Board Members to see some of the entities that are taking advantage of our services and training and employing people in our counties. The Board Meeting will be from 4:30 – 5:30. Business Partner awards at 5:30 followed by dinner.

## **VI. Board Member Go Round:**

### **Laurie Bargstedt, HFM BOCES:**

- Applying for money to provide basic programming for adults.
- 2 new local Health Care Providers as training partners; Lexington and Home Helpers. HFM will help English language learners transition into entry level of care.
- Also working with the North Atlantic States Regional Council of Carpenters. HFM will be helping English language learners develop the language and math skills that they need in order to go into the Carpenter's Apprenticeship program as bilingual learners. It provides them an advantage of having bilingual staff that they can then advance up through the ranks to serve bilingual customers and work with other bilingual workers on the program.

### **Donna Becker, Schoharie County Department of Social Services:**

- Homeless numbers have skyrocketed. If they fill out a temporary assistance application, they are now required to look for work unless they have a mental health or physical health doctor's note. A lot of the homelessness has been due to code violations, code enforcement shutting down the building they were living in or because the evictions have started up again. Between January and April 2022, they had the same number of homelessness as the entire year of 2019.
- Have about six vacancies and having issues with getting enough applicants to even consider.

### **Martin Callahan, Gehring Tricot:**

- Making about 40,000 lbs. of fabric weekly.

- Running three shifts.
- Planning a management cookout for employees in June.

**Christie Davis**, Fulton-Montgomery Community College:

- Graduation in 2 weeks.
- In person Job Fair held last week, co-sponsored by FMS Career Centers and the FM Chamber of Commerce. 100+ job seekers attended (around 70 students and 30-40 community members).
- Looking forward to the Job Fair on June 8<sup>th</sup> at the Great Sacandaga Brewery. Registrations have gone out to employers. If you need one, contact Christie for the link. It is also available on the FMCC website.
- The first back-in-person HR Consortium meeting to be held on May 5<sup>th</sup> at 8:30. Pamela Goldswor will be presenting about Workplace Culture. Breakfast served by Vintage Café.

**Andrea Fettingner**, Fulton County Office for Aging:

- Happy Older Americans Month. The theme is "Age My Way".
- Fulmont Community Action Agency is their transportation provider and they are looking for a PT - CDLB with passenger endorsement. Contact Fulmont for more information.
- They contract with three home care agencies, and are very short in Personal Care Aides if you know anybody that is looking for a job in human services. She would love to have full staffing there so they can get all of their waiting list served.

**Pamela Goldswor**, Townsend Leather:

- Still hiring.
- Just had a birthday with a big outdoor event for that.
- Have started designing some employee clubs. They thought they might be a fun thing for employees that are interested. Have welcomed a Craft Beverage Club and Water Club, so far.

**Melissa Johnston**, NYS Department of Labor:

- Continue to provide all services virtually.
- Virtual Job Fairs would be great for those that mentioned hiring projects coming up. You get to reach many, many customers who can just log in from their computer.
- Still seeing really low numbers of new unemployment claims filed. Gives longer time to work with the individuals that are coming through on unemployment and doing reemployment appointments.
- New addition to the reemployment services is mandating additional appointments beyond the first three required appointments or until they are back to work. Amsterdam and Cobleskill are part of a study with the Federal Government. The additional appointments are mandatory and if they don't show up, if they're still collecting, they will have their benefits suspended.
- As of next week, the Career Center staff will be telecommuting one day per week.

**Angelia Kehl**, St. Mary's Healthcare:

- Newest team member, Laurie Kimball, attended the Community Health Fair last week and will be at other events going forward.
- Recently re-opened off-site clinics for Phlebotomy. If you know of anyone interested in Phlebotomy, they are looking for employees.
- Hiring for multiple different units.

**Kathleen Kilmartin**, Community Health Center:

- Hired a PT Nurse.
- Attended Job Fair and connected with a nursing student. Andrea Scribner is giving her information to the graduating nursing students.
- Has been "ghosted" 3 times this week. Two didn't show for appointments, and a screening call didn't answer the telephone.

**Christopher Manus, International Union of Operating Engineers:**

- In the beginning of their hard season. May is a very big time in the northeast for the Operating Engineers to go out and work.
- Flyer is available for initial application days (May-September) for young apprentices and others that are looking to make a career change. They have state approved apprentice programs and their Training Center is open.
- Taking applications for anyone that has heavy equipment operating experience that may have relocated or been displaced during COVID.
- Lots of construction between Syracuse and Albany in the next couple of years so that anybody that wants to work is going to be able to work.

**Donna Pesta, SUNY Cobleskill:**

- Next week is finals.
- Commencement is next Saturday. First time they've had a commencement in two years.

**Kenneth Rose, Mont Co. Economic Development & Planning Dept.:**

- The Governors Consolidated Funding application just opened.
- Currently have quite a few Community Development Grants and a couple of Private Sector Grants that they are working on.
- Can anticipate over the next three to four months to hear a couple of major employer announcements on the 5S Corridor.
- When the time comes, and construction is completed, they always rely on the Workforce Development Board for the interview process.

**Jeannette Spaulding, Schoharie Co. Community Action Program, Inc.:**

- See people most of the time by appointment.
- WIC still has in person waiver status through later this year. Families don't have to come in for their WIC appointments, staff works with them through cell phones and zoom.
- A lot of money is being funneled for the Weatherization Services to help people with energy efficiency in their home.
- No employment vacancies.

**Peter Stearns, Laborer's International Union of North America:**

- A lot of people working. Looks to be good throughout the year.

**Gina Papa, Executive Director, FMS WDB:**

- Thanked Kim for offering to do a fiscal training and stated that Kim is an excellent teacher. She is a numbers geek, but also a good teacher – a rare combination.
- She will be reaching out to Board Members to see if we can get some new committee members involved.

**Kimberly Skiff, Fiscal Manager, FMS WDB:**

- Looking for people to join the Accountability Committee.
- Willing to meet with people as a group, or one-on-one to give them the insight that they might need to begin to understand what we do here fiscally.

- Initial stages of composing a new budget, both the annual and the three month.

**Beverly Ball**, Executive Asst. & Prog. Management Asst., FMS WDB:

- The Annual Board Meeting is June 1<sup>st</sup>. RSVP/Meal Choice Form was emailed. Please respond by May 13<sup>th</sup>.

**Guest:**

**Debra Vrooman, Roses Brands:**

- Been at Roses Brands for 4 months.
- Restructuring the HR Department.
- Had 10 people scheduled for an Orientation and only 2 showed.

**VII. Adjournment:**

Meeting Adjourned at 5:28 p.m.

*The Annual Board Meeting will be held on June 1, 2022 at 4:30 pm  
at the Raindancer Restaurant, Amsterdam*