

The Fulton, Montgomery & Schoharie Counties Workforce Development Board

Board Meeting

Wednesday, October 2, 2019
Amsterdam Workforce Career Center

I. **Opening and Attendance:**

Welcome: Marty Callahan, Chairman of the Board, called the meeting to order at 4:36 p.m. All Board Members introduced themselves. On behalf of the Board, Marty and Gail wished Art Graulich a Happy 90th Birthday!

Members Present: Wendy Adams, Laurie Bargstedt, Marty Callahan, Roger Cusano, Pamela Goldswor, Arthur Graulich, Melissa Johnston, Karen Miller, Judy Petroski, Jeannette Spaulding, Jeff Stark and Peter Stearns

Excused: Donna Becker, Kaleena Castiglione, Erin Clemons, Dave Fariello, Andrea Fettinger, Kathleen Kilmartin, Amy McCray, Dave Morrow, Donna Pesta, Amy Rogers, Kenneth Rose, Kerry Brunner and Don Snoop

Absent: Mark Mincher

Also present: *Crickett Thomas-O'Dell*, Regional Director, Workforce Development Institute (WDI) and *Mary Hill*, Program Director, FMS Private Industry Council, Inc.

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

II. **Presentation:**

Crickett Thomas–O'Dell, Regional Director, Workforce Development Institute shared that she has worked with the Workforce Development Institute (WDI) for 8 months. WDI is a 501(c)3 organization that operates independently of the state. This allows for more flexibility when writing grants. Their focus is on two things; growing and maintaining good jobs in New York State. WDI uses demand-driven programming. Using real-time data, they report to the state which helps identify workforce trends. WDI covers 9 counties.

Crickett reviewed some current workforce trends. She shared that the labor market is tight right now because of low unemployment as well as the large number of employers looking for employees. A large number of experienced and talented employees are heading into retirement so we are losing that expertise as well. They are also finding that there isn't a proper mix of technical skills and soft skills necessary for the jobs. Foundational skills such as time management, conflict resolution, leadership skills, problem solving and critical thinking are missing in much of today's workforce. The workforce demographics have also changed. You can have anyone from the Baby Boomers, the Gen-X, and the Millennials to the Gen-Z all in the same workplace, and sometimes it is difficult to figure out how they all can work together. Another trend is that automation is changing the way industries operate, including employees need more specialized skills. "Buying Local" is in just about every community and store and is becoming a larger trend. There was a time that Apprenticeships were thought to be a thing of the past, however, they are now growing again. It is helpful when an

employee can learn a new skill and get paid for it at the same time. One of the biggest barriers we are seeing is the lack of awareness that the good jobs are out there. For example, Crickett shared that she had no idea that Gehring Tricot or Townsend Leather were there before meeting with them.

In our three counties unemployment averages 4.6% (August 2019) and has decreased from five years ago. There will be over 46,000 individuals retiring soon and there are just under 24,000 millennials in the workforce.

The top five employers in our area are Wal-Mart, St. Mary's, Nathan Littauer, Target and Price Chopper. Data from over the last 2 1/2 years shows that most jobs are located in Amsterdam, Gloversville, Johnstown, Cobleskill and Jefferson. The top five industries are Health Care & Social Assistance, Retail, Finance & Insurance, Transportation and Warehousing and Manufacturing.

WDI is a grant funding program working with employers who are looking to retain or grow their workforce. They offer training on safety procedures and skill development, work with employers on productivity and compliance/certifications and equipment purchases. Gehring Tricot received a WDI grant for \$5,600 and was able to send four employees to training in North Carolina. Marty shared that the application was a little work, but not a chore and was well worth it. Jeff Stark shared that they used their \$12,000 grant from WDI to purchase glazer materials needed for their CNC. They had the equipment but needed the materials. Marty and Jeff shared that you pay for it up front and are then reimbursed. WDI typically covers 50% of a project.

Crickett explained that WDI will identify what the common training needs are at a specific company and what skills are missing from the region. They recently created a "Roll Grinding" training program for a papermill where the only two people that currently know how to use it are ready to retire. She stated that we need to look at developing a talent pipeline and to think about succession planning. The curriculum development is employer-driven with participant selection, trainers and site locations. WDI also works with some employers by providing them with connections to other companies that can develop or offer training programs that already exist.

They have assisted several companies with equipment purchases such as; Smart Boards for the Electrical Workers Union and CNC equipment for the Painters Union, and training and equipment purchases for Death Wish Coffee, ultimately eliminating the need for Death Wish to outsource. Crickett shared a list of several recently funded projects with the Board. Gail shared that the Adult Machine Tool training at Washington Warren County BOCES started under the Workforce Innovation Fund (WIF). She said that when the WIF grant ended there was a concern as to how that program would continue and WDI stepped in to save the program.

All Board Members were provided with a Workplace Intelligence Questionnaire. Once the Questionnaire is completed and returned to WDI, it is reviewed by a committee that meets twice a month. Once it has been determined that the project should be pursued, a Grant Application (a 6-page document) is sent to the business. Crickett shared that it is a simple application. Once she receives the application, she will look it over and may offer some alternate language that the application review committee likes to see. You will hear back within a week following your application submission.

The employer is required to upfront the cost and is then reimbursed at the end of the project. Most projects last about 3 months. Employers are asked to send in a report on the outcome of the project about 6 months following the end of the project. Funds do not need to be returned if you do not meet your original goals. The outcome report helps WDI with their workforce trends reporting.

Crickett shared the 2018 WDI Impact Report with all Board Members.

III. Action Items:

- **Resolution BY 2019-03:** Acceptance of the minutes from the September 4, 2019 Board Meeting
 - Motion: Seconded by:
 - Discussion:
 - Vote: *No quorum present*

IV. Information Sharing:

Accountability and Return on Investment Committee:

Gail reported that we received a charitable contribution from Dollar General in the amount of \$5,000 to be used specifically for new computers in our resource rooms. We have been working with Dollar General since last January. Our centers have been very busy with them ultimately hiring 36 exempt and 56 non-exempt employees over the last few months. Since their building was not ready for them, they used almost all of the available space, without cost, in our Amsterdam Center during the last 2 months, and they have sent many of their applicants to our Resource Room to fill out on-line applications. Like so many other employers, Dollar General requires applications to be completed online and many people don't have computers. At a recent massive recruitment at the Amsterdam Mall, we opened our doors to accommodate 128 people with resume printing and on-line applications in our resource room. We realized that jobseekers and employers would both benefit from a replacement of our older Resource Room computers with new and faster models. Gail shared how grateful we are to Dollar General for their donation!

Kim's fiscal report showed that with two months into the new fiscal year, we are slightly underspent in the WDB and PIC budgets.

This is the time of the year that we start our Single Audit process. A lot of the work is done on desk review, and the auditor also came into the office for a day. The draft audit will be ready for the Accountability Committee to review at the November meeting. Based upon the recommendation from the Committee, it would then go to the full board at the December meeting for acceptance. Gail explained that we are a committee-driven Board where most of the action happens. However, anybody is welcome to come to any committee meetings.

Gail stated that we do not have a full year budget at this time. The House passed a budget that was based on WIOA rules and regulations and what money was supposed to be available for 2020. The Senate wanted a bill that did not include any new spending. The two houses haven't been able to reach an agreement. The government would have shut down October 1st except that they voted for a Continuing Resolution to keep the government operating through mid-November.

Basically, that means that, at least for now, we will be funding this year's program at last year's level. So, the budget that was voted on at the Annual Meeting in June may or may not be the budget we have going forward. That budget was developed based on the amount of funding that was shared with us by NYSDOL. Kim will be watching our expenditures very carefully to make sure that we stay more within last year's funding level than the coming year's levels. The Continuing Resolution is only good until November 21st. If an agreement can't be reached by then, we would be faced with another possibility of a federal shutdown. In the short term, it doesn't affect the operation of the Centers as we are currently operating on WIOA funds from the previous federal

year. However, it can affect people in other agencies and may affect part of DOL but not all. It may mean that for now at least, there is no adult funding for classroom or employer based training.

The full Committee report is available to Board Members on the website.

Next Meeting: Tuesday, October 22nd at 4:30 p.m. at the Amsterdam Center.

Business Services and Employer Engagement Committee:

Laurie shared that the meeting was well attended. Gail presented Beverly's monthly report for August, 2019, which showed that overall traffic was up. This increase is most likely from the increased Amsterdam Center use of Dollar General and applicants. There were 115 FMS Business Contacts in August. In addition to the Dollar General Saturday event, there were five Recruitments: three Recruitments in the Amsterdam Center for Dollar General with 190 participants, Marshall's with 120 participants, and NTI Global with two participants. There were two recruitments in the Gloversville Career Center for Broadway Healthcare (two participants), and Kasson Keller/Keymark Corporation (four participants). There was a discussion about the various HR opportunities that are available and the challenges that face HR Managers, as well as how to address those needs.

Gail shared that there will be an invitation going out that will invite the Business Services Committee members to Belmont Mills on October 17th at 9:00 a.m. A short meeting will be held, followed by a tour of the plant.

The full Committee report is available to Board Members on the website.

Next meeting is scheduled for Thursday, October 17th at 9:00 a.m. at Belmont Mills in St. Johnsville.

WIOA (MOU) Partners Committee:

Judy shared that Ashley Paciello and she attended the meeting from their Utica office via telephone conference. During the Partner Go-Around, many attendees gave examples of success stories with other agencies that they partner with. Not all had a specific success story in mind, but Partners will continue submitting success stories that will be shared with everyone before the next meeting on Friday, December 6th.

Ann Gallagher-Sagaas, NYS Commission of the Blind, gave an overview about the Universal Accessibility of the WDG to Individuals with Disabilities regulation, including those who are blind or visually impaired. There was a discussion on how it was being handled in the FMS Centers. Judy shared that they were happy to hear that there are staff that understand and can use the equipment. There are also individuals that are coming in and are using it effectively and are thrilled that it is available to them. Ann was very surprised that the staff here are able to operate the equipment. Most centers don't have the resources for someone who has that ability. Judy stated that they were scheduled to have a demonstration of our accessibility equipment but the Technology Coordinator was out ill. The demonstration will be rescheduled. Judy shared that when businesses are in the Centers, it is important to share the assistive equipment with them so they know what we have available to offer their employees.

Mary distributed the 2018 and 2019 Referral Reports. This is a data-driven system that shows and tracks referrals from agency to agency. The 2018 Report was a reflection of 12 full months while the 2019 report reflected just 7 months (through July) and showed about half as many referrals were given out. There were more follow throughs on this year's report. This is an indication that

staff are doing a better job of making the connections, that appropriate referrals are being made, and that people are using community resources appropriately.

The full committee report is available to Board Members on the website.

Next meeting is scheduled for Friday, December 6th 9:00 a.m. in the Amsterdam Career Center.

Workforce Systems Oversight Committee:

Jeannette shared Beverly's monthly Program Report for August, 2019. The August Program Report shows us that the total traffic across the three Centers was up from last month, due in large part to the Dollar General interviews. At a Dollar General event, staff assisted 128 individuals in the Resource Room with completing applications and printing resumes. During August we served 191 individuals and had 620 active customers. Jeannette shared that the charts prepared by Beverly are a nice visual of the traffic patterns.

The Disruptive Customer – Best Practices and Procedures was recently updated. The Centers have staff from various agencies, and these agencies may have individual agency compliance and expectations. However, working in the Center we have "Functional Alignment" practices that everyone has to follow within the work environment; especially when it comes to safety. The intent of the Best Practices and Procedures is to prevent or minimize the hazard of Workplace Violence to both customers and center staff. These updated Best Practices and Procedures will be distributed to all Center staff and to the Workforce Systems Oversight Committee. Training on Difficult and Disruptive Customer Behaviors will be presented at Center staff meetings in November. Jeannette shared it is important to be prepared and not caught off guard by dangerous or potential dangerous situations that can be avoided.

The full Committee report is available to Board members on the website.

Next Meeting: Wednesday, October 23rd at 8:00 a.m. at the Cobleskill Center.

V. Environmental Scanning:

Gail reiterated how appreciative we are of the \$5,000 donation from Dollar General. Even more so now that we know we may not have as much funding as we previously planned on. We certainly would have to look at where we take money away from. Technology would be one of those places we would look to save money.

We have recently recruited a new Board Member, Elijah Braemer, Senior HR Manager, Dollar General. We hope to have him as a member for our December meeting. Elijah was living in Amsterdam and our opening was for a Fulton County businessperson. Fulton County has a residency requirement for their appointments. Luckily for us, Elijah closed on a new home in Broadalbin yesterday and has indicated an interest in joining the Board. Gail shared we are fortunate to get such wonderful Board Members, in part due to recommendations from Nancy Reccio of our Business Services Team. It usually takes about 6 weeks to complete the process with the counties.

VI. Board Member Go Round:

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

- Things are going well.
- Looking to hire engineers and drafting employees.
- These positions are specialized and difficult to fill.

Laurie Bargstedt (HFM BOCES):

- IC3 Digital Literacy program is now off the ground. 11 ESL adults started yesterday.
- Correction Education program is going well. Already more than halfway to yearly goal.
- 2 students received Outstanding Adult Learner of the Year and one received Honorable Mention.

Marty Callahan (Gehring Tricot Corporation):

- Sales Team is at the Orlando Show to learn about trends in Textile Industry.
- Helmont held training - Medicare and the Aging Process.
- Business is very steady.

Roger Cusano (Universal Plastics Corporation):

- Status Quo.
- Business is slow, but repeat orders are strong.
- Finishing up shop improvements.
- Have a hiring freeze but hoping for new contracts that will start hiring again.

Pamela Goldswor (Townsend Leather):

- Busy. Have added about 20 new employees.
- Good leather-making weather. Humidity and leather making don't do well together.
- Doing a lot of training with employees.
- Attending many "Home Town Events" to increase community involvement.

Arthur Graulich (Argus Acres):

- Stable workforce, no turnovers.
- Has 7-8 employees and 4-5 drivers that are Part-time.

Melissa Johnston (NYS DOL):

- UI numbers continue to be down.
- Hired a new Labor Services Representative for the Amsterdam Center. Hourly position.
- Have requested to backfill a permanent position in the Cobleskill Center.

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

- Busy summer and fall looks to be as well.

Judy Petroski (ACCES/VR):

- Thrilled to be nominated by Legacy Observed Dispatcher as "Top 3 Best of the Best".

Jeannette Spaulding (Schoharie Co. Community Action Program, Inc.):

- Fully staffed.
- Operating under Continuing Resolution and are monitoring budgets closely.

Jeffrey Stark (IUPAT District Council #9):

- Things going well. Plenty of work for winter.
- They service 9 local counties.

Peter Stearns (Laborers Local #157):

- A lot of work currently going on.
- Will slow down over winter months.

VII. Board Member Feedback?

VIII. Adjournment:

Meeting Adjourned at 5:46 p.m.

***No Board Meeting in November.
The next Board Meeting will be held on December 4, 2019 at 4:30 p.m.***