

**ST. LAWRENCE COUNTY WORKFORCE INVESTMENT BOARD
MINUTES OF MARCH 11, 2009**

CALL TO ORDER: Acting Chairman Donald Hooper called to order the regular meeting of the St. Lawrence County Workforce Investment Board at 6:34 PM at the Lobster House, Norwood.

Members Present: Jack Backus, Sue Caswell, Rich Daddario, Kathy Daniels, Don Hooper, Tracey Long, Lisa McCarty, Ron McDougall, Richard Orton, Daphne Pickert, Dale Rice, Ryan Schermerhorn, Jeff Tyo, Mark Webster.

Others Present: Ray Fountain, Kim Gilbert, Jean Hantz, Natalie Sweatland, Jim Connor, Dee Burlingame, Linda Manchester, Gregory Hart (Workforce Development Institute),

CHAIRMAN'S COMMENTS:

- Recognition of new member, Jeff Tyo; Roundtable introductions.
- Agenda for this evening's meeting has been revised (See handout).
- Resignation of Mike Noble; Election of officers slated for annual meeting (September 9, 2009)

PUBLIC COMMENT: Introduction of Greg Hart

MINUTES: Orton/Daddario move to accept the minutes of the December 10, 2008 meeting. Unanimous.

COMMITTEE REPORTS:

Executive: Committee met February 23 and reviewed most of the items in the meeting packet. In addition, the Committee reviewed funding projections under the National Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009 (ARRA).

Youth: Youth Council Chair Dee Burlingame reported that the Youth Council met March 5 and discussed the following items: (i) ARRA funding, program recommendations and its focus on Summer Youth; (ii) raising minimum wage on July 1 to coincide with Summer Youth program; (iii) Status of CNA, Community Brigade and Welding programs; (iv) RFP_ bidders' conference for youth programming held February 7 and currently in second round of advertising; the Committee will meet and provide recommendations.

Marketing/Board Development: Committee Chairman Dale Rice reported on the status for bids on the redesign of the WIB (and IDA) web pages. He noted that CNA and Community Brigade ads have been approved.

One-Stop: Mr. Connor reported on the items discussed at the March 5th One-Stop Partner meeting: (i) Gateways to Careers scheduled for April 29; (ii) ARRA funding; (iii) Summer Youth and effect of ARRA funds; (iv) distributed System Improvement Indicator report; (v) Gas Card policy review; (vi) Room usage fees (for Group Rooms and Classrooms); (vii) Flex Time schedules; (viii) Human Services Building security (magnetometer and security guard presence); (ix) individual partner reports.

USDOL Audit Task Force: Task Force Chair Daphne Pickert thanked the Task Force members Bruce Green, Mark Webster and Lisa McKeel, along with staff Jim Connor, Kim Gilbert and Ray Fountain. She reported that the original charge of the Task Force changed significantly with the signing of the ARRA, and the Task Force began identifying new program opportunities.

CONSENT AGENDA: Approving Training Providers: McDougall/Long move to accept. No questions or comments. Resolution passes unanimously.

OLD BUSINESS: None

NEW BUSINESS:

Resolution: Accepting Gas Card Initiative Procedure: Orton/Pickert move to accept. Ms. Hantz reports that the WIB had been offered “free money” in the form of gas cards, and initially we did not know exactly how much would be provided. She noted that the initiative began approximately 2 weeks ago, and half of the funds have already been expended in the form of the gas cards. Recipients include Youth in the CNA program, Adults in classroom training, and/or Dislocated workers to attend a job fair. All recipients are registered and enrolled in WIA. Our initiative has already been audited (and approved) by NYSDOL. Passes unanimously.

STAFF REPORT:

Mr. Fountain comments that many of this evening’s resolutions have come about as a result of American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (ARRA) funding and the subsequent need to increase staff and funding limits on customers. He attended a WIB Director meeting on Friday (March 6), and he and Natalie attended a NAWB conference (March 7-10). ARRA legislation was signed February 17th and the Feds have 30 days from that date to write the Final Rule, followed by a 30-day comment period for the state level.

The four main points of the ARRA are: (i) Transparency/Accountability: The act requires rigid standards on spending, data collection and review of outcomes. It is important to keep the public informed on how these funds are spent. (ii) Expedite Expenditures: The funds need to be spent, and spent concurrently with formula funds. (iii) Emphasis on Training: Innovation is key to the program’s success. The Act encourages keeping administrative expenses to a minimum, and with concentration on training/retraining. Local areas are encouraged to look at service delivery and look to their respective boards for staffing. Shortchanging staffing levels can seriously endanger a successful provision of services. (iv) Prioritize the Hard-To-Serve population: ARRA provides incentives to allow people of all educational and economic backgrounds to participate (e.g. supportive services, needs-related payments).

Mr. Orton asks once we have people trained, do we have jobs available for them? Ms. Hantz and staff are working to determine areas in which people would most likely be hired (now and future hires). Examples include the steel mill and paper mills.

Mr. Fountain then commented on the NAWB conference, noting the attitude was quite different than in years past. He noted that we need to position ourselves to be ready to grab additional funds, unused by other areas/States.

Mr. Backus inquired about drug testing, and was advised that it could be required, but is not currently. Mr. Backus noted that it was counterproductive to educate customers, only to see them fail a drug test. Mr. Fountain noted that SEACAP provides drug and alcohol awareness to youth at the onset of the Summer program.

NEW BUSINESS: (continued)

Resolution: Amending Policy No. 3: Individual Training Accounts (ITAs): Rice/Orton move to accept. Ms. Hantz reports that this resolution proposes an increase of the Individual Training Account from \$4,000 to \$8,000 per year. She noted that the ITA limit in 2001 was also \$8,000, before the decrease in funding levels. The proposed level is consistent with tuition charged by SUNY Canton, among others. Passes unanimously.

Resolution: Amending Policy 2: Self-Sufficiency: Pickert/Caswell and Long move to accept. Ms. Hantz reports that this resolution will open up our programs to more people, by changing the definition of self-sufficiency. Passes unanimously.

Resolution: Priority Focus for the Use of Funds Available under the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009: Daddario/Long move to accept. Ms. Hantz reports that currently there is no absolute definition of “green job,” and with the ARRA’s focus on energy we need to establish that we can provide training for these types of jobs. Currently, our demand occupation list doesn’t include green jobs, so we could not fund training in that area. This resolution enables us to fund such jobs. Passes unanimously.

Resolution: Youth Programming Recommendations: Webster/Caswell move to accept. Mr. Fountain reports this resolution encompasses the recommendations of the USDOL Audit Task Force and the Youth Council. Passes unanimously.

Mr. Hooper noted that the USDOL Audit Task Force had been charged with reporting their findings at this meeting. That having been done, he thanked the Task Force for their hard work and announced the dissolution of the task force.

Mr. Fountain was asked about the status of the Deputy Director position. He noted that he had received a number of applications and was currently reviewing them.

EXECUTIVE SESSION: None

ADJOURNMENT: Adjourned at 7:40 PM by unanimous consent.