

**ST. LAWRENCE COUNTY WORKFORCE INVESTMENT BOARD
MINUTES OF JANUARY 13, 2010**

CALL TO ORDER: Acting Chairman Donald Hooper called to order the regular meeting of the St. Lawrence County Workforce Investment Board at 6:50 PM at the GranView, Ogdensburg.

Members Present: Jack Backus, Sue Caswell, Kathy Daniels, Rich Daddario, Cliff Donaldson, Bruce Green, Don Hooper, Joe Kennedy, Ron McDougall, Daphne Pickert, Dale Rice, Ryan Schermerhorn, Jeff Tyo, Mark Webster.

Others Present: Ray Fountain, Kim Gilbert, Steve House, Natalie Sweatland, Jim Connor, Dee Burlingame

CHAIRMAN'S COMMENTS: The Chairman welcomed the membership.

PUBLIC COMMENT: None

MINUTES: Daddario/Pickert move to accept the June 10, 2009 minutes meeting. Unanimous.

COMMITTEE REPORTS:

Executive: Mr. Hooper Reported: The Executive Committee met September 30. Due to the lack of a quorum at the WIB's September 9 meeting, the cancellation of the December meeting, and pursuant to the authority granted in the WIB bylaws, the Executive Committee approved resolutions (i) modifying the WIB budget; (ii) Approving an Individual Training Account policy; and (iii) Modifying a Year Round Youth Services Contract with Liberty Partnership Program. The WIB Budget was modified to include Rapid Response/Supplemental funds amounting to \$157,259. The Individual Training Account (or ITA) policy was established pursuant to a workforce development system technical advisory. The policy was intended to expedite and streamline the delivery of training services and outline procedures for the staff that have the responsibility of providing assessment services. The modification of the Liberty Partnership Program expanded by 4 the number of school districts the program serves. The Executive Committee also met December 2nd and reviewed the items in this evening's meeting packet. Lastly, Mr. Hooper reported that the WIB received the resignation of Tracey Long of Alcoa, who accepted a position as Talent Manager at Alcoa's plant in Cleveland, Ohio.

Youth: Youth Council Chair Dee Burlingame reports that the Youth Council has been putting youth to work. Eight youth started the CNA program on November 2nd. E4 of the 6 that completed the classes, passed the State test (1 employed; 3 job searching). The remaining two will schedule a retest. Liberty Partnership received 8 referrals total and is looking for one more out of school youth to refer. There are 5 participants in NYSARC's program. NYSARC's Executive Director/WIB Member Daphne Pickert said the five are doing well. Catholic Charities has 6 youth at various levels of participation. Issues regarding the Welding program certification have been clarified and resolved to everyone's satisfaction. Literacy Volunteers has 1 participant working on their GED. Lastly, the ITA has one youth that completed eligibility for one class to complete LPN training.

Marketing/Board Development: Committee Chairman Dale Rice reports that the group needs to ensure it has expended funds by July 1. It has authorized a crawl on the Weather Channel, along with a printed ad.

One-Stop: Mr. House reports that the partners raised issues on the role of the Committee and the need to define the role that the WIB members would play on the committee. Mr. Fountain thought the role of the WIB members was to bring to the WIB issues within the One-Stop, a role parallel to that of the WIB members that serve on the Youth Council. Mr. House notes that the Partners have a meeting next week and he will speak to them at that time.

Mr. House went on to report on his WIB member outreach efforts, noting he has met with a number of business leaders regarding their interest in serving on the WIB.

CONSENT AGENDA: Daddario/McDougall motion for approval of the following resolutions. These resolutions recognized local business support for the 2009 Summer Youth Program: Canton P&C, Pepsi-Cola Ogdensburg Bottlers, SEACAP, Sunfeather Soap, Wal-Mart Potsdam, Chip's Place, and North Lawrence Dairy. Mr. House reports that the contributions amounted to approximately \$1,000 in goods and services. Mr. Green notes that the thank yous should be a little more expeditious. Mr. Daddario agrees, and asks, in an attempt to avoid a delay, if the WIB needs to approve thank you notes? Ms. Gilbert notes that she solicits the businesses and will send thank you notes. Passes unanimously.

NEW BUSINESS:

Resolution: Modifying PY09 Budget (Performance Standards Award): McDougall/Pickert. Ms. Gilbert explains that this award was a result of the meeting of certain performance milestones. The funds, totaling \$10,268, will be applied toward On-The-Job Training contracts. Passes unanimously.

Resolution: Modifying Year Round Youth Services Contract (Liberty Partnership): Green/Tyo move. Ms. Burlingame reports that this resolution has come about as a result of changes within the contractor's program budget. The late start of the program has necessitated the transfer of unexpended funds from salary to transportation. Passes with 13 "aye" votes and 1 abstention (Kennedy).

STAFF REPORT:

Common Measures Report: Mr. Fountain comments on the Program Year 2009, 1st Quarter Common Measures report, noting that the failure to meet the Average Earnings for Dislocated Workers standard will probably not improve. It is a measure that is hard to drive and difficult to meet, considering the current economy. Traditionally, this has been our most difficult standard, as many of the Dislocated Workers have lost high-paying manufacturing jobs with wages that are not readily replaceable. He also notes that the total Adults served for just this quarter is 2,192. Traditionally, we serve between 6,000 and 7,000 adults per year; however if the first quarter is any indication we may reach the 8,000 mark.

WIA Reauthorization: Mr. Fountain reports that work continues on the reauthorization of the Workforce Investment Act. It has been 3 years since the legislation lapsed, and funding streams (especially those without any legislation to back them) don't fare well. It was the hope that President Obama would have been able to push the legislation through, but other issues have taken priority. This issue is not on the 2010 agenda, but should be on the 2011 agenda. All three branches of government have experienced a leveling off of funding (sans Stimulus funds), compared to previous years. The good news, however, is that there is funding in the budget for a summer program. This is good for youth, good for summer youth programs.

We are starting to see, at the Federal level, a movement toward a sector approach to training (Green jobs, health care, tech valleys, e.g.). This does not work well for rural areas like ours. Health care, which has traditionally been one of the more successful programs, no longer sees the demand it once did.

GM Combined Discretionary Funds: Mr. Fountain notes that in September of 2007, with the announced closing of GM's Powertrain Plant in Massena, we received approval [from NYSDOL Deputy Commissioner Bruce Herman] of our proposal to serve the affected workers. This 3-year funding proposal eventually included the addition of St. Lawrence Zinc and Gouverneur Talc. The announcement had a widespread affect on this area, and politicians started make commitments to assist the area. Mr. Fountain goes on to note that approximately 10 months ago, the State tried to pull the funding, hypothesizing that soon-to-be-received Stimulus funds would cover any gaps. Arguing that St. Lawrence County had the highest unemployment rate in the State, and that Stimulus funds were designed to supplement – not supplant – current funds, Mr. Fountain battled the State on this issue. The State backed down... a little, but every 3 months they are required to resubmit a plan of service. The State has informed us that they would no longer provide discretionary funds after March 31, 2010. Mr. Fountain notes that his response was that St. Lawrence County had received a commitment from the NYSDOL.

Mr. Donaldson notes that he has a meeting set up for Thursday with the Executive Deputy Commissioner to discuss this issue. The time between March and June is not a long time, and he will make a case to extend the State's commitment through to June 30, 2010.

Mr. Fountain notes that less than \$1MM has been spent out of the original \$2.5MM award. Quarterly requests average about \$63,000, which should easily be absorbed by the State.

The State's position is that it should take no more than 2 ½ years to serve the GM people. Mr. House notes, however, that many dislocated workers were still receiving unemployment insurance benefits, and with the UI extensions, have just not had to consider obtaining services. One Counselor has recently received requests from three customers from GM.

Mr. Backus adds that a large number of GM employees moved from Massena to other GM plants. Many of them have since been laid off and have returned (or are planning to return) to Massena. Mr. Hooper comments that with the time frame between March 31 and June 30, there are extenuating circumstances. Mr. House reports that staff have been conservative in their spending. Ms. Pickert asks if it would be beneficial if the WIB stated, via resolution, their support of the local efforts to retain the funding until June 30. Mr. Donaldson notes that such a supporting resolution would be good and would add needed fuel to the effort. Ms. Pickert moves to approve a supporting resolution, seconded by Mr. McDougall. Resolution passes with 13 aye votes and 1 abstention (Donaldson).

Mr. Fountain notes that the State's position is that the letter from Mr. Herman is not a real commitment. Mr. Fountain read the first paragraph of the correspondence. Dr. Kennedy comments that this action speaks to the desperation of the State government.

OLD BUSINESS: Report of Nominating Committee: The Chairman appointed Ms. Caswell, Mr. Orton and Mr. Tyo to a Nominating Committee, and charged them with the task of bringing forward the name of an individual (or individuals) to be considered for the Chairmanship for the remainder of Mike Noble's term. On behalf of the Nominating Committee, Mr. Tyo moves to nominate Sue Caswell as Chairman. Mr. Daddario seconds the nomination. Mr. McDougall moves to close the nominations. Said is seconded by Ms. Pickert. and receives unanimous agreement. There being no other nominations, Ms. Caswell is elected Chairman of the St. Lawrence County Workforce Investment Board, by unanimous vote.

Ms. Caswell notes she will try to do as good a job as her predecessor, Don Hooper. Mr. Hooper is applauded for his efforts.

A 2010 meeting schedule (2nd Wednesday of March, June, September and December) is set.

EXECUTIVE SESSION: None

ADJOURNMENT: Adjourned at 7:45 by unanimous consent.