

ST. LAWRENCE COUNTY WORKFORCE INVESTMENT BOARD MINUTES OF MARCH 31, 2010 MEETING

CALL TO ORDER: Chairman Sue Caswell called to order the regular meeting of the St. Lawrence County Workforce Investment Board at 6:48 PM at the GranView, Ogdensburg.

Members Present: Jack Backus, Sue Caswell, Kathy Daniels, Rich Daddario, Cliff Donaldson, Bruce Green, Don Hooper, Ron McDougall, Richard Orton, Daphne Pickert, Dale Rice, Mark Webster, Lisa McKeel

Others Present: Ray Fountain, Kim Gilbert, Steve House, Natalie Sweatland, Dee Burlingame, Todd Doherty, Suzan Denny

CHAIRMAN'S COMMENTS: The Chairman welcomed the membership.

PUBLIC COMMENT: None

MINUTES: Pickert/McDougall move to accept the January 13, 2010 meeting minutes. Unanimous.

NEW BUSINESS:

Resolution: Resolution "Support for the Continued Operation of the Ogdensburg Correctional Facility": Orton/Daddario move. Mr. Fountain reports that this resolution speaks for itself in that it shows support for the continued operation of the Ogdensburg Correctional Facility. Even though the issue is one that seems to have worked itself out, the general consensus is that we need to continue to work on this issue. Passes with 12 "aye" votes and 1 abstention from Mr. Donaldson.

Resolution: "Youth Program Recommendations": Webster/Pickert move. Ms. Burlingame reported that currently we have little funding for a summer youth program, so are going to use this funding for a small college internship program. This resolution is to allow staff to make decisions about youth programming without going to the Youth Council should funds become available at the last minute. Mr. Fountain went on to report that the \$1.2 billion summer funding bill was passed by the House and forwarded to the Senate where it was not passed. Another bill for \$600 million was passed by the House and forwarded to the Senate for action. At the State level, the TANF money was not in the Governor's budget, but the Assembly has \$35 million and the Senate side has \$21 million and will have to come to some kind of consensus to get funds to have a summer program. Passes unanimously.

Resolution: "Appointing Youth Council Member": Moved by McDougall/Orton. Ms. Burlingame reported that Gabe Hinkley, North Country Bridge Program, attended the last Youth Council meeting and the Council got a chance to talk with him and felt he would be a good fit for the Youth Council. He has a great deal of experience working with youth. Mr. Hinkley would fill the spot left vacant by Eric Matott on the Council. Passes unanimously.

COMMITTEE REPORTS:

Marketing/Board Development: Committee Chairman Dale Rice reports that the Marketing and Board Development Committee approved a few ads including a TV commercial running on Channel

2 (Fox) until May 2nd, an ad running on North Country This Week on the webpage of North Country Now until the end of June, and an ad on the Weather Channel crawl until the first week of May. Steve commented that we also have a commercial starring some of the One-Stop staff on a DVD that can be used at some future time. These ads were paid for from DPN funds.

Executive: Executive Committee met on February 12th to discuss administrative options for the WIB and the One-Stop Career Center and again briefly prior to this meeting. Mr. Fountain reported that the Committee has met with several different committees of the BOL to discuss what the options are for moving forward for the One-Stop Career System knowing that our funding is shrinking. We need to get more efficient in some areas as far as taking the services for which we traditionally have had enough funding to stand alone on or in conjunction with the Office of Economic Development and look to see if there are better and more inexpensive ways to do business. It's hard to make plans when you don't know how much money you are going to have from month to month. We have about \$980,000 appropriated as of July 1st which is the start of our fiscal year unless we receive more funding. Therefore, we really don't have enough information to make a presentation on the future of the WIB and One-Stop.

Ms. Caswell commented that Dallas Sutton requested to be on the WIB. Mr. Sutton is the Bank Commercial Lender for all the NBT Bank offices in the area. His request is going before the BOL on April 5th. Mr. Sutton is replacing Eric Matott. We still need a replacement for Tracey Long.

Youth: Youth Council Chair Dee Burlingame updated the Youth Council on WIA Youth Programs as follows: CNA - One from the last class has been scheduled to take the test; NYSARC - Two van attendants completed training and are now on NYSARC payroll, two janitorial are currently in work experience training; and one Direct Care Aide was having medical difficulties and is, hopefully, going back to training (We are recruiting five more for a start in May.); Catholic Charities - Four are currently active and we are continuing our recruitment efforts; Welding Classes: The welding classes are a success. There were 15 slots in the class and 16 youth were invited to participate. All 15 who showed up for the classes are still attending; Literacy Volunteers - three are currently meeting and working with tutors, one is trying to connect with this service, continuing recruitment for one more; and independent training – two CNAs are attending class and two healthcare clericals are attending class at BOCES. We're planning for two or three more CNAs. Looking to serve 35 interns this summer and if more money comes in having a scaled down summer program. Ms. McKeel commented that a youth from last year's program who got a \$45/hr. job in Utica would be a good story to tell.

STAFF REPORT:

NAWB Conference: Ms. Caswell and Mr. House told the group about their trip to the NAWB conference in Washington. One of the issues discussed was that the public doesn't know what the WIB does. Ms. Caswell feels that the Jim Connor should canvass the college students who participated in the college internship program in 2009 and get their success stories out there in the public eye and to the attention of the local elected officials. She reported that she has two employees who started working for her through the youth program and one of them has become a big part of her business. Mr. House reiterated how important it was to get out to the public who we are and how our programs affect the community. He reported that he attended two or three workshops on how to creatively and effectively apply for grants and other funding sources.

Combined Discretionary Funds Letters: This is a copy of a letter that was sent out to elected officials based on the resolution passed at the last meeting concerning the cutting back of the dislocated worker funding for GM employees. We've held off on sending the letter hoping that we could get to a point where the discussions were less contentious.

Monitoring Review – Recovery Act Funds: We got an e-mail from the State which appeared to approve the discretionary funding until March 31st; we still think it should be continued until June 30th. We did have some questions on exactly what the letter said and there were a lot of contingencies connected with the letter and Kim will call the State to get clarification. There is a monitoring letter that talks about the monitoring that was done on the Recovery Act funds. We received a clean bill of health from the auditors. The auditors actually commented that since our operation is well run we tended to get the newest auditors on their staff.

Approval of St. Lawrence County Local Plan Modification: There is also a letter approving the Local Plan Modification with the revisions requested by the State on December 17, 2009.

New Training Providers: There were two things going on; first, the onset of the American Recovery Reinvestment Act and the emphasis on training and second, the DOL was having problems with the eligible training provider site. When those things were going on we thought that it would be best for our customers, if instead of the WIB approving the training providers every quarter, if you would allow staff to review the requests and approve them on our own and provide you with a report of the approved providers.

WIA Common Measures Summary Report: Mr. Fountain explained that we knew that we would not meet the Entered Employment Rate Common Measure due to St. Lawrence County's high unemployment rate with layoffs coming from high-wage companies. We usually ask for the State to lower our goal, but they are very reluctant to do so.

Call with Congressman Owens: Mr. Fountain and Mr. Donaldson participated in a conference call this afternoon with Congressman Owens to talk about the funding cycles and how they were affecting us. One of the issues that he and Mr. Donaldson pointed out was that traditionally the funding in NYS is calculated using a formula and the amount usually tends to fall within a fairly close level based on your previous year's funding. Our funding has declined about 25% in some areas. In the Adult program, 1/3 of the funding is awarded based on substantial unemployment which is over 6.5%. There are 33 LWIAs in NYS; normally there are 10-15 LWIAs in that 1/3 category. Now that the economy is so bad, all 33 LWIAs are in that 1/3 category, so instead of dividing the available funding by 10-15, the State is dividing by 33 which makes our allocation much lower. Another factor that really hits us hard is our population. They pointed out to the Congressman that all the rural counties that he represents took a 15-25% hit in funding while Saratoga County, one of the most prosperous counties in the State, got an 85%. The formula works during reasonable times, but when everyone has high unemployment, the rural areas are put into alarming financial situations.

Mr. Donaldson commented that now the Healthcare Reform Bill has been passed, that Congress will now focus on WIA Reauthorization. There was a press release sent out today by DOL that on March 28th 46,000-48,000 fell off UI because the US Senate did not pass an extension before they went on their break. Here in SLC that was about 157 people. That number will dramatically decrease over the next month, but there will still be people falling off. For those individuals and families it's getting them back into the One-Stop to offer whatever services we or other agencies can provide.

In regard to youth funding, Pat Fahey, Federal liaison at DOL, is hoping that Senator Murray will bring the jobs bill back us and she is also hoping that Senator Murray will ask for more than the \$600 million in the previous bill.

He commented that there are hundreds of people applying for any job that becomes available which is an indication of just how bad things have become.

OLD BUSINESS: None

EXECUTIVE SESSION: None

ADJOURNMENT: Moved by Daddario/McDougall the meeting adjourned at 7:31 PM by unanimous consent.