

ST. LAWRENCE COUNTY WORKFORCE INVESTMENT BOARD
MEETING MINUTES
December 11, 2013

CALL TO ORDER: Mr. Hooper, called to order the regular meeting of the St. Lawrence County Workforce Investment Board at the Human Services Center in Canton at about 8:02 a.m.

Members Present: Jack Backus, Lynn Blevins, Richard Burns, Chris Cooper, Joseph Hoffman, Donald Hooper, LouAnne King, Lisa McKeel, Daphne Pickert, Peter Reiter, Dale Rice, Thomas Sullivan and Dallas Sutton.

Others Present: Lori Barr - WIA, Beatrice Beguin – NYS Commission for the Blind, Alan Beideck – NYS DOL, Dennis Donahue – NYS OCFS, Pam Dority – ACCES-VR, Larry Fetcie - WIA, Tom Plastino - WIB, Chris Rediehs – SLC DOSS, Penny Scott - WIA, Bob Shepherd – Youth Council Chair, and Dave Sickler – NYS DOL.

CHAIRMAN'S REPORT/COMMENTS: Mr. Hooper asked for introductions due to new members as well as guests. Mr. Hooper announced Dennis Donahue from the NYS OCFS would be giving a short presentation.

Mr. Donahue is with the NYS Commission for the Blind. Mr. Donahue provided information about the various programs that are offered through his organization and the potential benefits that employers could get by working with disabled employees. Mr. Donahue explained how the OCFS provides programs to assist visually impaired clients and potential employers.

PUBLIC COMMENT: There were no public comments at this time.

MINUTES: Ms. Pickert moved and Mr. McDougall seconded a resolution to accept the September 11, 2013 meeting minutes. Approved unanimously.

COMMITTEE REPORTS:

Executive Committee: Mr. Hooper reported that the Executive Committee had held two meetings and had included several items on the full Board's agenda from these meetings. Mr. Plastino also brought everyone's attention to the minutes from the October 7th Executive Committee meeting for further details on the issues discussed at the Executive Committee meetings.

Youth Council: Mr. Shepherd reported that the Youth Council met on November 7th. He reported that recruitment efforts have commenced for in-school and out-of-school youth for a CNA class planned for this spring. The Council met with Holly Bender from the DOSS and its recommendation to appoint her to the Council would be on the Board's agenda today.

Marketing & Board Development: Mr. Plastino reported that the Marketing & Board Development Committee has not met since the last Board meeting.

STAFF REPORTS:

DSS Commissioner: Mr. Rediehs reported that the Space Reconfiguration is on hold, as is the move of DOSS employees from Judson Street building to the Human Services Building. Mr. Rediehs is not sure how long it will be on hold or if it may be indefinite. However, he is still assessing the WIA space requirements for the upcoming new lease(s) with the County.

Mr. Rediehs also said that the number of County residents applying for help with the Department of Social Services has continued to rise each year. The Employment Counselors do a wonderful job providing services. In 2014 the WIA Counselors will assist the Employment Unit with Job Clubs and Workshops in addition to assisting with job search skills. Mr. Rediehs expressed his gratitude cooperation and work of the Employment Counselors.

Fiscal Manager: Ms. Scott reported that adult numbers for the first quarter of the program year are somewhat low due to cuts to the budget that happened in the first quarter because of sequestration. We are gearing up for the spring semester with public service announcements; there has already been a good response and we are hoping to increase the amounts of the ITAs for the spring semester. There is a plan to offer a CNA Class for Youth with the spring semester; and a possibility of two classes depending upon interest.

Executive Director: Mr. Plastino distributed a list of WIB members including contact information. He also distributed the 2014 WIB Meeting Schedule.

2014 WIB Meeting Schedule – Pickert/McKeel; approved unanimously.

The results of the 2013 Regional Economic Development Council competition are to be announced today. There are a couple proposals that have been categorized as priority projects that have direct relationship to employee training. Mr. Plastino is interested to see how these projects as well as others turn out; it may be something we could look into in future.

Mr. Plastino reported that we have to watch carefully the government happenings after the holidays; there are possibilities of government shut down, sequestration, and a debt ceiling standoff. We could end up back trying to make ends meet and cash flow work; or, if we're lucky, nothing at all. However, there may be multiple Executive Committee meetings if there are decisions to be made between regular WIB Meetings.

Mr. Plastino plans to address the Career Center Coordinator hiring issue. It has been put on hold due to various budget issues; before an actual hire is made, Mr. Plastino thinks it would be a good idea to wait until after the sequestration issue is decided for 2014. In addition, Mr. Plastino feels that the WIB should attempt to reduce the amount of space that is leased from the County.

One of the more important standards we are required to meet is the Common Performance Measures. We did propose to contest two of the performance measures having to do with Dislocated Worker measures and had gone so far as to schedule an interview with the DOL over one of the measures, i.e., the average wage of dislocated workers entering into employment. However, after researching several years' figures, Mr. Plastino did not feel he could make a convincing case and the interview was cancelled. Nonetheless, he said that this measure is one that we will have to pay close attention to next time around.

OLD BUSINESS:

Amending 2012-13 Summer Youth Budget: Mr. Plastino explained that during the Summer Program more youth were able to take advantage of services offered through the Seaway Valley Prevention Council which caused expenditures to exceed the planned expense.

Resolution Amending the 2012-13 Summer Youth Budget: Pickert/Backus; McKeel – Abstain; approved unanimously.

NEW BUSINESS:

Approving new Youth Council Member: Mr. Plastino reminded the Board that Ms. Holly Bender was approved as a new Youth Council member at the last WIB meeting on the condition that Mr. Shepherd speak with her about the Council and her membership and recommend appointment. This condition was met and the appointment was fine with Mr. Shepherd; therefore Ms. Bender attended her first Youth Council meeting in November.

Request for appointment of a Regional Business Services Coordinator for SLC: At the last WIB meeting the Board approved Mr. Plastino to write a letter requesting the appointment of a Regional Business Services Representative be located in SLC. Mr. Plastino has not completed the letter yet. Currently there are two Business Services Representatives – one in Watertown and one in Plattsburgh. Due to medical/family issues their availability will be limited across the region will be limited for the foreseeable future. Because of these recent developments this issue has been overtaken by a far bigger problem. Mr. Plastino will suggest that they appointment someone in the St. Lawrence County area and have that person cover for a while. We'll see how that goes.

Executive Director Contract with SLC IDA LDC: Mr. Plastino reminded the Board that the hourly rate that the WIB pays for his compensation to the IDA Local Development Corporation will increase by 1.75% on January 1. However, since the contract has a not-to-exceed cap, the maximum amount paid will stay the same. The result would be that Mr. Plastino would simply work fewer hours.

Appointing a new member to the WIB: Mr. Plastino reported that the Executive Committee met on October 7th and authorized forwarding to the SLC Legislature the following names as members of the WIB: Dr. Joseph Hoffman, Mr. Thomas Sullivan and Ms. Pamela Dority. The Legislature approved Dr. Hoffman and Mr. Sullivan in December and will vote on Ms. Dority in January.

Resolution Approving the Appointment of Dr. Hoffman, Mr. Sullivan, and Ms. Dority to the WIB membership: Sutton/Blevins; approved unanimously

Resolution Amending the WIB's ITA Policy: Mr. Plastino reported that during a recent review DOL auditors had recommended that the WIB generally update the County's current ITA Policy. While staff is working on this update, which will be presented to the Executive Committee before being brought to the next WIB meeting, Mr. Plastino proposed amending the maximum expenditure for an ITA immediately to protect the County from clients who might demand the maximum training amount allowed by the WIB's current policy (\$8,000). Mr. Hooper wondered why not wait until the whole policy is updated. Mr. Plastino said that the DOL had pointed out there have been recent incidents elsewhere in the State where recipients had complained that they had not been given the full amount and had won. Therefore, Mr. Plastino recommends amending the maximum expenditure to \$4,000 from the \$8,000 that it is currently. Any requested expenditure that exceeds the maximum may be approved by the WIB.

There were many questions and much discussion regarding ITAs and how they are utilized, as well as how ITA funds have been spent in the past. Mr. Plastino and Ms. Scott explained current and proposed policy and practice.

Resolution Amending the WIB's ITA Policy: Blevins/Sutton; McKeel/Hoffman – Abstain; approved unanimously.

Resolution Amending Supportive Services Guidelines: Mr. Plastino explained that the current Supportive Services Guidelines require the One-Stop Manager's signature and authorization in certain places, explicitly in the Guidelines. Because there is not a One-Stop Manager, he proposed this wording be amended so that the Assistant Fiscal Manager or Executive Director's signatures would suffice. He noted that here will be other policies and guidelines which contain the same language and that staff will have to go through them and see what updates may be needed.

Resolution Amending Supportive Services Guidelines: Pickert/Cooper; approved unanimously.

Mr. Donahue thanked the WIB for having him and offered to do an In-service for staff. Mr. Donahue then offered NYS OCFS as a member of the WIB if they were interested.

2014 WIB Meeting Schedule: Mr. Hooper asked if everyone had looked at the proposed 2014 WIB Meeting Schedule.

Approved 2014 WIB Meeting Schedule: Pickert/McKeel; approved unanimously.

NEXT MEETING:

The next regular WIB meeting will be March 19, 2014 at 8:00 a.m.

EXECUTIVE SESSION: None

ADJOURNMENT: Moved by Mr. Cooper and seconded by Mr. Burns; the meeting adjourned at 10:13 a.m. by unanimous consent.