

ST. LAWRENCE COUNTY WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT BOARD
MEETING SUMMARY
February 22, 2017

Members Present: Jack Backus, Lynn Blevins, Sue Caswell, Dave Evans, Don Hooper, LouAnne King, Ron McDougall, June O'Neill, Peter Reiter, Dallas Sutton, Zvi Szafran.

Others Present: Tom Plastino – WDB, Jennifer Free – WDB, Penny Scott – WIOA, Larry Fetcie – WIOA, Christ Rediehs – DSS and Anthony Hayden – NYS DOL.

Absent: Chris Cooper, Rich Daddario, Pam Dority, Peggy Fockler, Daphne Pickert, Dale Rice, Ryan Schermerhorn, Ellie Sullivan-Stripp, Thomas Sullivan, Eric Tessmer and Leo Villeneuve.

There was no quorum for today's meeting.

Mr. Rediehs reported that DSS has two different functions with respect to WIOA. First, they are a partner of the One-Stop and second is in its role that has included Fiscal Agent, including the supervision of WIOA funded time and the oversight of the One-Stop. In the review of how the County is handling its reimbursement there has been some rethinking of this arrangement and a need to remove the DSS from the second role. Going forward it will just have the role of the partner of the One-Stop. The responsibilities for supervising Penny Scott and her staff will be taken on by the County Administrator, Ruth Doyle. The role of Fiscal Agent will no longer be under DSS. This is necessary for us in order to make sure that we are protecting the reimbursement that DSS and he has. To date, there has never been a charge for his time for any services he has given for WIOA. His time is connected with other state agencies such as Office of Temporary and Disability Assistance and Office of Children and Family Services and Department of Health. As they were looking at where his time was going it should be to these other activities. Reimbursement for all of that is 80% but it is compromised if we were to continue on with DSS having this secondary role with WIOA. He does not feel this change will create any challenges. He feels having WIOA become a separate entity will not change the way the WIOA program has been operating.

Ms. Scott reported that we recently had a procurement review for DOL. There are three findings with the review. The contracts were supposed to begin July 1, 2016 and they were not started until September 1, 2016. The delay was due to the transition to WIOA and the time it took to get the final RFP released after much communication with DOL. The next finding was that back in September of 2015 the WDB approved a resolution for us to be able to sole source some of the youth elements that we did not receive proposals on. Those youth elements included OJT, Summer Youth, work experience, supportive services, follow up services. At that time, we were unaware that a contract was necessary between the WDB and the Employment and Training staff. We are currently working on getting this contract established which will be the corrective action for this finding. The WDB selected three of the four contracts submitted. The last finding is that we should have received a letter of withdrawal for the contract not selected and we did not.

Ms. Scott noted that there are resolutions that the Executive Committee approved at their last meeting. One resolution was an approval to transfer funds from Dislocated Worker to Adult of \$125,000 so that we may serve more individuals. We did request that transfer on February 8, 2017. The second resolution the Executive Committee approved was amending the ITA policy to increase the maximum allowable amount for an ITA in any program year from \$4,000 to \$5,000 due to the increase in the cost of tuition, books and required fees over the last three years.

Ms. Scott reported that one of the goals DOL requires us to reach is 80% by June 30, 2017. It looks like we will be on track. It is projected that we will be at 84% for Adult, 80% for Dislocated Worker, 87% for Youth and 96% for Admin. She also noted that we have received our allocations. We are expecting little change in Adult, we will take a cut of approximately \$12,000 in DW and a cut of \$8,000 in Youth – total decrease of approximately \$20,000, which equals 2.1%.

Mr. Plastino reported that we have not received any Common Measure or Customer Service Indicator reports since reporting on them at our October meeting. He also reported on the Comprehensive Economic Development Plan. The final review draft should be done by the end of the week.

Mr. Plastino indicated that the WIOA system is still operating for Program Year 2016 under a continuing resolution, which expires on 4/28/17. One of the things that have been marked for elimination by the new administration is federal investment in workforce training; whether or not this is going to be successfully implemented down the line is unknown at this time. We have no choice but to proceed with our program at this time and follow the guidelines within WIOA as far as deadlines, etc., assuming that the system is going to continue as it was passed two years ago.

Mr. Plastino stated that there are three key elements. Mr. Plastino stated that we still have to compete the role of One-Stop Operator. This needs to be done no later than 7/1/17, meaning we have a little less than 5 months to implement this. The timeline is going to be tight, but achievable. We also have to have a Memorandum of Understanding among the partners put into place by 7/1/17. NYSDOL has divided the MOU into two parts. One focuses on service delivery (in place by 7/1/17) and the other focuses on the infrastructure costs (to be put in place by 12/31/17).

Mr. Plastino discussed that the one year renewal for the space we lease with the County expires on 6/30/17. There is a month to month continuation in the lease, but we will need to put in place a replacement between now and 6/30/17 if possible. He stressed that we have a fair amount of work ahead of us that we need to get moving forward on.

Mr. Plastino proposes that we set the 2017 meeting dates for April 19, 2017, June 14, 2017, September 13, 2017 and December 13, 2017. This was agreed to by the WDB.

It was noted that the nomination/election of officers has always been done through the Executive Committee; this will not be changed.

Mr. Plastino reported that our County Administrator, Ruth Doyle, has questioned whether the County is subsidizing the operation of the One-Stop in several ways, i.e., that County money is in effect providing some of what it takes to keep the One-Stop running that is not reimbursed from WIOA funds. She also feels that there is not nearly enough activity at the One-Stop, which means the staff there is not doing as much as it should be. Mr. Plastino has provided to the BOL both written and verbal reports on the fact that the One-Stop is meeting its numbers when it comes to the Common Measures and the Customer Service Indicator numbers are also more than satisfactory. He also mentioned that the days in which a crowd of individuals at One-Stop locations are changing around the State as well as in St. Lawrence County as more individuals and employers are now doing such work on their computers in their own homes and offices. Everyone was in agreement that this is an excellent time to look at how the current structure is operating.

At the last Executive Committee meeting, the committee took official action on February 3, 2017 to recommend to the county to give us some kind of direction in preparing the documents that will be required to be put in place the

mechanisms that will get up and running the one stop operator and the MOU part one by 7/1/17. The resolution recommends that the County essentially give us authorization to prepare those documents so that we don't do anything precipitous either to continue with the current status or to change it and that they assign to the board a role of examining some of the procedures and the way things are functioning at the one stop and deliver a report between now and December 31, 2017 that will permit the county to make a decision which then would direct us to perhaps change the whole system.

Mr. Plastino pointed out that there are two technical points that need to be understood. There has been some confusion around the country that WIOA requires a competition of everything. WIOA requires competition of One Stop Operator; this does NOT mean One Stop manager. We have received official notice from DOL that the definition of the Operator is as a "system coordinator". Examples of system coordination roles are to coordinate MOU implementation, convene partner meetings regularly to build affiliation and commitment, assess satisfaction of customers and partners with the system, work with partners to continuously improve the system, etc. Over and above the One-Stop "System" Operator, there are four other functions that COULD be competed if the local WDB and the CEO wished to do so. They include the role of One-Stop Manager and delivering any or all of the core Career Services (Adult, Dislocated Worker and Youth). In theory, the role of the Fiscal Agent could also be competed but it would have to be done separately from the other five. Only one function MUST be competed and that is the One-Stop System Operator. There is also a misconception that WIOA requires the One Stop Operator be bid out every 4 years. WIOA says it has to be bid out AT LEAST every 4 years.

Look at letter from Tony Joseph.....

Mr. Plastino feels we need to populate a committee to conduct the One-Stop System Operator competition. This committee would be the one that is responsible for preparing and distributing the RFP and reviewing the proposals for action by the full WDB. In light of the fixation in WIOA on potential and real conflicts of interest, Mr. Plastino recommended that the WDB must be careful that the committee should not include any potential bidder on anything that could be competed or anyone else with potentials interests in the outcome.

Discussion occurred among the attendees with respect to there being a shortage of individuals wanting employment in our area. General consensus was that the size of the labor force is lower than it's ever been. Mr. Blevins feels that we need to bring the education community, the worker and the employer together because there is a huge need for employees. Some felt that the population has dropped in our area, which causes a decline in commercial activity which causes the population to drop. Dr. Szafran discussed how they are trying to do at SUNY Canton change this by attracting people from around the State and retaining them in the North Country with highly skilled people. He feels the more welcoming the community is the more likely people will stay in the area. He reported that they are currently working with a number of the local farms. They are developing a certificate of work readiness at SUNY Canton. He stated that the local farms they are working with have agreed that if a student wants to go to college and pursue a degree in anything, and are willing to work on the farm for a minimum of 20 hours per week, they will pay their tuition. He reported that SUNY Canton has received final approval from State Ed to offer their first degree in Agriculture this Fall. Everyone was in agreement that we all need to work closely together to create a tight line and realize how much each of us need one another to expand career services.

The meeting was adjourned at 9 a.m.

NOTE: The Executive Committee went into session to approve a resolution to hire temporary staff for the 2017 TANF and WIOA funded summer youth program. Minutes will be transcribed separately.