



SWW Workforce Development Board

Meeting Minutes

Of February 10, 2021 Online (ZOOM) Meeting

thejoblink.org

BOARD MEMBERS PRESENT: Ash Anand, Michael Bittel, Dan Dudley, Mark Fish, Maureen Grabowski, Kathy LaFond, Marcy McNamara, Mike Munter, Patricia Myers, Laura Oswald, Turina Parker, Caelynn Prylo, Tracey Riley, Shelby Schneider, Joe Serafini, Wendy Skawinski, Mary Ann Spezio, John Wheatley. (18)

EXCUSED: Scott Brazie, Tara McCaughey, Zack Moore, Dominick Patrignani, Tracy Stadel. (5)

GUESTS: Jen McCloskey, Liza Ochsendorf, Traci Ross, Emily Walters (4)

STAFF: Gretchen Steffan, Executive Director

Welcome	Chairman, Joseph Serafini facilitated the meeting.
2. Approval of Minutes - <i>Action Item</i> December 9, 2020 meeting	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Motion by Shelby Schneider, ▪ Seconded by Turina Parker, ▪ Unanimous approval.
3 Approval of New Policy- <i>Action Item</i> Adult/Dislocated Worker Follow-up Services	<p>Jen McCloskey introduced the policy and background on how it will be used at the Career Centers to follow-up once benefits extinguish and new employment commences.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Motion by Mike Munter ▪ Seconded by Caelynn Prylo, ▪ Unanimous approval.
<p>4. Board Member Group Process Discussion</p> <p style="padding-left: 20px;">a. Sharing perspectives on:</p> <p style="padding-left: 40px;">i. business climate</p> <p style="padding-left: 40px;">ii. economic issues</p> <p style="padding-left: 40px;">iii. trends</p> <p style="padding-left: 20px;">b. concerns</p>	<p style="text-align: right;">Mr. Serafini</p> <p>Early last year the COVID virus became a pandemic. Since our Board is a microcosm of the greater society, the Executive Committee wanted to gain perspectives from WDB Members in their professional practice for an Environmental Scan. An invitation for perspectives on the business climate, economic issues, trends seen or emerging, as well as concerns you have in your organization or business sector. A range of inputs were shared and included:</p>



thejoblink.org

SWW Workforce Development Board

Meeting Minutes

Of February 10, 2021 Online (ZOOM) Meeting

- No business disruption, but hiring is very difficult. Anticipate financial constraints in 2022, due to Federal and State budget issues.
- COVID testing difficult. Inconsistent testing methodology, availability/timing of testing, insurance reimbursement, information/misinformation and false + results.
- Essential business. Very busy. New norms. Disinfecting mandates with cleaning supply shortages.
- Misinformation and impacts on testing, symptoms, quarantines. Transacting business at non-traditional locations.
- Remote work and remote learning required learning curve.
- Enrollment drastically down in higher education for both degree programs and professional development. Staff being diverted to other roles.
- Conducting labs requires in-person instruction. Quarantines impact schedules/timelines, requiring summer make-up sessions to complete requirements. Students with greatest needs, are in a much worse place. Finding new ways to help.
- Rebuilding systems that typically don't change quickly, in a highly regulated environment.
- Spending thousands and thousands of dollars that were unbudgeted.
- Walking a tightrope of staying open and safely staying open.
- Listening to multiple stakeholders to make informed decisions, but having information change daily.
- Being reactive all the time, when trying to achieve positive outcomes and keeping our purpose in mind.
- Important to lead through this challenge, and do the best job we can in a very difficult situation.
- Many local businesses going out of business, which is devastating the economy. Closures are causing people to lose their jobs and will have long-term consequences.
- Vaccine distribution inadequate. Some won't get the vaccine. Those not vaccinated will not be engaged in the community for a prolonged period.
- The impacts of closures and their economic consequences means our regional not-for-profits will be receiving less donations, which is consequential.
- There are certainly monetary impacts of the pandemic, but the mental health concerns are as impactful.



SWW Workforce Development Board

Meeting Minutes

Of February 10, 2021 Online (ZOOM) Meeting

thejoblink.org

- Putting politics aside and concentrating on the greater good of getting the vaccine to people will open up the economy and improve outcomes.
- Our pandemic experiences will have both minor and major implications on how we live our daily lives. Like 9/11, there will be impacts felt for a long time to come.
- There are agencies hampering businesses. People generally want to do the right thing, and are trying to do their best with protocols. But when you have some State agencies punishing businesses with fines and “you’re not doing this right,” but we’re not going to tell you how to fix it, that’s unfair. People should get a free shot on the first pass, as most people are not malicious, and have good intent. Agencies should give someone a first-time break, to serve the people, and help them be better.
- Balancing the needs of business for hiring and staff retention, with the need for pandemic stimulus funding and employment programs is a problem. Unemployment insurance coupled with federal pandemic stimulus payments disincentivize going back to work. Folks can make more on unemployment than they can in entry-level jobs, so businesses are having difficulty hiring staff. Even local organizations offering higher wage jobs with benefits, are not getting applicants. Our local unemployment rate is about 5% and we cannot hire enough people to meet the needs of local business. These issues coupled with NYS’s generous Paid Family Leave (PFL) public policy is causing staffing shortages in businesses. People are getting a lot of money to stay at home and not work.
- Local businesses are being forced to adjust their expectations downward because they are not able to hire enough people to run their operations. This means taking less work, reducing production capacity because they don’t have the staff to do the work.
- When people are provided with financial support, without working at a job or earning that money, and there are no consequences, that’s a problem. There appears to be a disconnect in thinking and awareness that a comfortable life can be achieved without work or a job.
- Another big issue is those who have left the workforce entirely. It is estimated that 10,000 people in our tri-county region have done so. This is due to being unemployed and giving up searching for jobs, lack of childcare or affordable childcare, an inability to juggle full-time work along with childcare/remote learning



SWW Workforce Development Board

Meeting Minutes

Of February 10, 2021 Online (ZOOM) Meeting

thejoblink.org

for their children and the mismatch of the skills needed by business and the skills of the individual.

- There were statistics 5 years ago, pre-pandemic that this area would be losing 1/3rd of the workforce to retirements. Said another way, we are aging-out. It appears everyone is having a hard time finding employees.
- There appears to be other factors in hiring staff. There are some job seekers who want a job, but have transportation issues, criminal histories, an inability to communicate effectively and homelessness. The group identified Career Center Services that could help in addition to support from Community Action Agencies.

5. Committee Updates

- a. Executive Committee
 - i. Vice-Chair
 - ii. Committee Chairs
- b. Business Needs Committee. *(next meeting March 16)*
- c. Resource & Dev. Committee. *(next meeting March 18)*

Mr. Serafini

- a. According to the SWW WDB By-Laws, the Board shall have the following officers, who are representatives of the private sectors.

- Chairperson... Yours truly... 2-year term.
- Vice-Chairperson... Mike Munter has graciously agreed to fill this role short-term.
- Chair Emeritus ... (we don't have one)

Committee Chairperson's should be chosen at the next Committee meetings.

By-laws: "Committee membership shall elect a chairperson from any private sector board representative on the committee, unless otherwise directed by the Executive Committee."

Ms. Steffan

Business Needs and R&D Committee outcomes...

- b. NEEDS will be reevaluating Warehousing & Logistics Survey against current needs, gathering Economic Development survey data on historical trends/patterns on regional hiring and then comparing/contrasting with current data to formulate going-forward post-pandemic plans.
- c. R&D will be revisiting Business Service Plan documents to consider relevance in the current business climate, perform a gap-analysis based on service needs, and then formulate revisions to support post-pandemic service offerings and activities. Centers will be looking at current data collection, benchmarking against State/Federal data, and then ascertain what data is needed to track deliverables against performance objectives for the LWDA.



SWW Workforce Development Board

Meeting Minutes

Of February 10, 2021 Online (ZOOM) Meeting

thejoblink.org

<p>6. NYS DOL Unemployment Insurance Update on Fraud</p>	<p style="text-align: right;">Ms. Skawinski</p> <p>Reported on rampant Unemployment Fraud and provided DOL links for help...</p>
<p>7. Center Activities / Operations / Service Update</p>	<p style="text-align: right;">Ms. McCloskey - Ms. Ochsendorf - Ms. Walter</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Saratoga CCC has changed how they deliver services due to the pandemic, which has resulted in amazing regional collaboration. Eleven counties are working together to continue delivering workshops, expanding topical areas, working on Job Discovery, and finding different ways to help businesses recruit people and find employees through virtual and onsite job fairs. We have gathered lots on inputs on area needs, where training gaps are, and working to address barriers people have in reentering the workforce, especially childcare. ▪ Washington County’s LEAP Career Center Counselors have been diligently calling UI participants to help connect them with our services and partnership services to try and best fit them into positions and help them with any services we offer. ▪ Warren CCC at the height of the pandemic, were seeing much higher UI numbers. 14-15-16%. Down to 5 and 6 % now. The previous year we were 5.1%. For our tri-county region we have about 10,000 fewer workers in the workforce, which is why businesses can’t get the help that they need. Childcare, transportation and health are all issues affecting employment. We can’t get more people back to work until we start addressing some of these other issues systemically. These issues existed prior to the pandemic; they have just been exacerbated because of the pandemic. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Aside from the virtual workshops, we are still doing classes with probation, youth on probation, we are still doing TASC/GED Classes virtually and still have our partnership with Social Services, where people are referred from Social Services to my Employment Counselors to help those folks find a job and get off of some of those social benefits. We are seeing some challenges with some of our youth being connected remotely/virtually, and being engaged, they much preferred coming into our office for classes, so we are trying to get our youth



SWW Workforce Development Board

Meeting Minutes

Of February 10, 2021 Online (ZOOM) Meeting

thejoblink.org

counselor to expand the reach more, so folks can enroll in our GED classes at any time. Mental health, trauma, abusive households, grief and loss over the last 11 months are affecting our youth. We need to invest in our younger workforce, and we need to start putting systems in place for that or we are going to see a lot of long-term impacts.

- We are working with schools on a hospitality training program called Pathways Up to Success in Hospitality (PUSH). Worked closely with Hospitality Leaders and SUNY Adirondack to get this program going, to help our Hospitality businesses recruit and get workers they need for the summer because we likely won't have the J-1's again.
- We are recruiting people to take METRIX training, which we pay for, so it is free for folks. Lake George Chamber of Commerce has an Arrival to Departure local tourism class. Folks that finish and stand out from those courses, are encouraged to enroll in SUNY ADK for a certificate or a degree program. This is how we are connecting, Public, Private, and our Educational Institutions to address the Hospitality needs in Warren County.
- The Bricklayers Union reached out to us, as they need more apprentices. We had a great meeting with them. We need to do more on-the-job training apprenticeship training programs with SUNY and DOL folks who can help us do that.
- We need more funding for OJT and apprenticeship programs. So, any time there is a grant opportunity or a legislator to talk with, or write a letter as a Board; we need to make sure we are getting funding to help pay for some of those programs for businesses who cannot afford to do that.
- Transportation. Working with Greater Glens Falls Transportation and CDTA on addressing some of the transportation challenges. There is only a 10-mile gap between services GGFT and CDTA, and we want to connect that gap. Right now, we are working on extending the bike-share program that's been between Albany and Saratoga in about 5 different cities, into Warren County. Especially since recreation boom is not stopping anytime soon. So, we are in the final stages of a



SWW Workforce Development Board

Meeting Minutes

Of February 10, 2021 Online (ZOOM) Meeting

thejoblink.org

	<p>proposal to share that with municipalities who feel like affordable transportation in 3 seasons out of 4 on bikes is an option that will help residents and businesses. Businesses can have a cycle account, then their employees and guests at a hotel could use the bike-share program for free.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ We have to be creative in how we are addressing all of these issues around transportation, childcare, justice-impacted individuals. ○ Working with GGFT on is making sure all businesses know what bus route they are on, so when they post jobs, people who rely on public transportation for lower wage jobs postings can know whether public transportation is available. ○ For justice-impacted individuals, this is a pivotal moment in history. The State is requiring criminal justice reform for any police department that receives State funding. So, we're seeing a lot of folks work together to address the mental health needs and substance abuse needs in working with community stakeholders. ○ When our office was open prior to the pandemic, it was estimated that at least 1 person who came into our office every day had a criminal record that was keeping them from getting a job. Those folks have skills to use, and there are businesses that can use that help. We have to continue to break down some of those barriers. Would love the opportunity to work with the Board on addressing these barriers together.
<p>8. WDB Operations Update</p>	<p style="text-align: right;">Ms. Steffan</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ MOU (<i>Memorandum of Understanding</i>) process. Upcoming Partner meetings to gather information for document creation/submission to NYSDOL. ▪ Budget Preparation for next program year starting at the beginning of the next fiscal year on July 1, 2021



SWW Workforce Development Board

Meeting Minutes

Of February 10, 2021 Online (ZOOM) Meeting

thejoblink.org

<p>9. Opportunity for Additional Board Member Announcements / Comments</p> <p style="text-align: right;"><i>Action Item Added...</i></p>	<p style="text-align: right;">Mr. Serafini</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Any further comments for the group?2. Shelby provided an update on Melinda Mack from NYATEP.3. Motion to nominate Mike Munter as Vice Chair of the SWW WDB<ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ Motion by Michael Bittel.▪ Seconded by: Dan Dudley▪ Unanimous approval
<p>10. Adjournment...</p>	<p>Meeting ended at 9:45 am Next Meeting: Wednesday, April 14, 2021 via Zoom</p>