



SWW Workforce Development Board

Meeting Minutes

of June 9, 2021 Online (ZOOM) Meeting

thejoblink.org

BOARD MEMBERS PRESENT: Joe Serafini (Chair), Scott Brazie, Michael Bittel, Dan Dudley, Mark Fish, Maureen Grabowski, Michael Kelly, Patricia Klimkewicz, Kathy LaFond, Michael Mastropietro, Tara McCaughey, Marcy McNamara, Zack Moore, Mike Munter, Laura Oswald, Dominick Patrignani, Caelynn Prylo, Tracey Riley, Shelby Schneider, Wendy Skawinski, Mary Ann Spezio, Tracy Stadel, Ryan VanAmburgh, John Wheatley. (24)

EXCUSED: Ash Anand, Gary Dake, Turina Parker (3)

GUESTS: Jen McCloskey, Liza Ochsendorf, Traci Ross, Emily Walters, Kathleen DeMuth (ACCES-VR)

STAFF: Gretchen Steffan, Executive Director

Welcome

Chairman Serafini facilitated the meeting and welcomed all. He introduced our new members from Saratoga County, who included:

1. **Gary Dake**, President of Stewart's Shops, who could not be with us today.
2. **Ryan VanAmburgh** Co-Founder of Career Jam & The Small Business Solutions Center
3. **Patricia Klimkewicz**, Dean of Health Sciences of Hudson Valley Community College
4. **Michael Kelly**, Director of Enterprise Growth & Solutions for Arnoff Moving & Storage
5. **Michael Mastropietro**, Business Manager/Financial Secretary for IBEW Local 236

1. Approval of April 14, 2021 Minutes

Motion to Approve: by Michael Munter; **Second:** Maureen Grabowski

Discussion: None; **Vote:** Approved unanimously.

2. Board PY21 Calendar & Meeting Method

Gretchen will poll WDB in August, on remaining 2021 committee/board meetings for in-person or virtual meeting preferences.

3. Presentation on WRAP IT Grant

Caelynn provided a PowerPoint presentation on an upcoming opportunity to participate in a front-end web development and Python data analytics applied learning program. Those who have an interest in coding, or are looking for an opportunity to gain a marketable skillset can fill one of the 75 slots for this program. This is a 12-week program, that meets 2-days a week for 12 weeks. AlbanyCanCode is collaborating on this program and if applicants to the program do not have technology, SUNY ADK can loan laptops for the duration of the program. This is a good upskill program with a success coach to help learners succeed.



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4. Discussion Local Plan for SWW

Action Item - TABLED

This item was tabled until the week of June 21st so board members will have more time to review the plan and provide inputs/recommendations. Gretchen will send a poll to determine meeting date and time.

5. Executive Committee Report

Chairman, Joe Serafini provided insight on the significant responsibility the WDB has for reporting to NYS DOL. This year is extraordinary because of all of the compliance items coming due which includes: MOU, 4-year Local Plan, 4-Year Regional Plan, Center Recertification and Board Recertification. The work of WDB's is highly-regulated by WIOA/USDOL/NYS DOL and this pandemic recovery year has been especially challenging. The normal amount of administrative process involved in running this system under normal circumstances is formidable. However, this year with all of the huge compliance deliverables to NYSDOL and USDOL, has been extraordinary.

The Executive Director has been clear that she will not be with us for a long-time, but has made the business case to ensure we plan for succession. As a result, the PY21 budget has increased. The Executive committee concurs that we need to spend more of our WIOA resources to set us up for near-term success. We support additional increases for staffing, compensation, benefits, marketing, the one-stop-operator and meeting management. These changes are to ensure we can improve professionalism, operational efficiency, and to recruit and retain talent in the future. The Executive Committee encouraged the board to approve the PY21 budget motion, which then goes to the counties for approval.

6. Approval of PY21 SWW WDB Budget

Action Item

- a. Jenniffer (Fiscal Agent and Saratoga County Director) provided an overview of WIOA funding, how it comes into the system and is allocated.
 - i. Jen also explained the structural change in Washington County/L.E.A.P., which will simplify operations, significantly reduce paperwork/ process/non-valued added administrivia and improve cash flow for Washington County.
- b. SWW WDB Proposed Budget Changes were explained by Gretchen topically including salary/benefit changes, addition of a part-time administrative professional, meeting management, marketing investment for media and fortifying the One Stop Operator budget line for MOU facilitation. Jen then explained that the cost of the WDB is shared among the 3 Centers. It does not come off the top of the funding, it comes off at the back end once we have reconciled all charges at year-end. Expenses are kept track of by Saratoga County. At year-end a formula is used based upon funding levels, for example: Saratoga gets approximately 40% of the funding based upon population, and so they carry 40% of the expenditures of the WDB incurred that year. There are documents and policies on how those costs are allocated between the Centers, and that is how costs are shared. Just like any other budget, it is included as overhead in the Centers budgets. It was reported that in PY21 the Centers did get a significant increase in funding. Jen referred back to the WIOA funding requirements mentioned earlier, that our system has expenditure levels that we have to meet, or we will lose that funding. There is also year-to-year carryover, which happens when there is more money in Center budgets than needed to cover expenses. Upon discussion,



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Jen offered that according to statewide surveys SWW is the only board structured this way, with a low salary and no benefits for the Executive Director. So, to be competitive and to be the board we need to be, these changes are long overdue.

- c. Gretchen explained the process for budget approval, which requires WDB approval, then approval by all 3 county Chief Elected Officials. A resolution was included in the Board package, which defined the process.

Motion to Approve: by Michael Bittel; **Second:** Maureen Grabowski

Discussion: No further; **Vote:** Approved unanimously.

7. Committee Updates

- a. **Executive Committee:** Chairman Serafini in addition to his earlier comments added that the executive committee appreciates the work of our committees in moving our work forward, and also appreciated the work of our Center Directors, ensuring both business and job-seeking customers were well served.
- b. **Business Needs Committee:** Gretchen reported on behalf of the Committee that they continued to evaluate surveys and data against current conditions to identify post-pandemic direction for both business and training needs. After relooking at the Warehousing & Logistics (WL) Survey and with the significant regional WL development over the last year with more currently in-process, the group feels a CDL training program is warranted for truck drivers, semi-truck drivers and bus drivers. But before investing in project planning and getting regional businesses involved to design a program that would be paid for by our system, they would like input from the WDB on their level of support. Michael Kelly with expansive knowledge of this sector offered that there is a desperate need. He also shared that beyond the training, there is an educational need for what a modern truck driver does, and what a modern CDL driver does, versus historic stereotypes.
- c. **Resource & Development Committee:** Gretchen reported for Chairman Anand. In looking at Center Operations, Wendy Swakinski provided an overview of the NYSDOL OSOS data system, which is used to input all data for those served by our Centers (Adults, Dislocated Workers and Youth). It was insightful for the group to learn about the system, the plethora of information required and included within the system, and reporting capabilities of the system. Other discussion items include: where people are looking for jobs, workforce housing and the lack of affordable options regionally, transportation challenges for job seekers and how Tech Valley Shuttle is working to help, how the Centers are using Social Media to message the community, future plans for SWW website redevelopment, how Centers are helping customers with employment barriers through ACCES-VR/SUNY ADK/AlbanyCanCode, the NYSDOL Virtual Career Center is in BETA testing phase and employment in the skilled trades sector.

8. **Center PY20 Year-end Report:** Liza provided a report on behalf of the Centers. Her concluding remarks summarized how the WDB membership can help support the workforce needs of the community, which included:



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Technology gaps: There are technology gaps with access to computers. Not only do folks use Centers for access to computers, but also Fax machines, copier, and phone. They were able to use our office for all those things, so we look forward to reopening to provide these for folks. We want to make sure there are ways we can get laptops to job seekers, not having to use our federal funds. In some cases, we can, because it is like a resource, similar to a book. But technology costs a lot of money and there is a laptop shortage now. So, any help is welcome.

Training pipeline: Working together to build a training pipeline to the in-demand industries. Many of you are business representatives, and we want to do this work together to ensure we are getting businesses the workers they need for our most in demand industries

Grant funds: It's a lot of work preparing and writing a grant, but many hands make light work. Working together to write grants to obtain non-WIOA monies, can help address our training gaps and allow for some discretionary funds that we can't spend WIOA money on.

Advocacy to legislators and representatives about local needs. Many of you do that already. We appreciate that. Continued advocacy is needed as things are going to be shifting over the upcoming months.

Vulnerable populations facing barriers to employment: All three counties are working with our local justice system, sheriff's office, and probation to help address the barriers that justice-impacted individuals face in obtaining a job. Unfortunately, NY ranks at the bottom for employment of folks with disabilities, and we need to do better with that. This existed before the pandemic and is just another thing brought to the surface by the pandemic. Some employers worry about employing people with disabilities. We want to help them see that they can make reasonable accommodations to employ workers with disabilities. We need all workers right now. Some workers with disabilities are concerned about losing their benefits and we need to ensure they can work without losing those benefits.

Chairman Serafini concluded with: "I think I speak for the board when I say we appreciate all the work the Center Directors are doing. It's all positive."

9. WDB Operations Update

Ms. Steffan discussed progress on several projects including the MOU Process Update, LWDA 4-year Plan, the Regional 4-Year Plan, WIOA Compliance Monitoring by NYSDOL, upcoming Board Recertification, upcoming, Centers Certification, NYATEP's Learning Management System, and Board Communication.

10. Additional Opportunity for Board Member Announcements / Comments

None were offered...

11. Adjournment at 10:00 am.