



SWW Workforce Development Board

Meeting Minutes

of June 29, 2022 Online (ZOOM) Meeting

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BOARD MEMBERS PRESENT: Scott Brazie, Scot Chamberlain, Dan Dudley, Doug Ford, Maureen Grabowski, Michael Kelly, Patricia Klimkewicz, Michael Mastropietro, Tara McCaughey, Zack Moore, Mike Munter, Laura Oswald, Turina Parker, Dominick Patrignani, Michael Prime, Caelynn Prylo, Tracey Riley, Matthew Rose, Joe Serafini, Wendy Skawinski, Mary Ann Spezio, Ryan Van Amburgh, John Wheatley. (23)

EXCUSED: Ash Anand, Michael Bittel, Gary Dake, Kathy LaFond, Mark Fish. (5)

GUESTS: Jen McCloskey, Liza Ochsendorf, Roberta Davis, Shelley Smith, Lynn Sickles, Abbe Kovacik, Mark Stratton.

STAFF: Gretchen Steffan, Executive Director

Welcome...

1. WDB Member Updates

- Mark Fish is retiring as Superintendent of the Greenwich Central School on Friday. We thank him for his commitment to our Board and wish him well in retirement!
- Mark Stratton, Superintendent of the Corinth Central School has been appointed as his replacement effective July 1st. Welcome Mark!!!
- Michael Bittel, President & CEO of the Adirondack Regional Chamber of Commerce is retiring. A search for his replacement is underway. We thank him for his commitment to our Board and wish him well in retirement!
- This will be Joe Serafini's last meeting as Chair. Mike Munter will be the new Chair effective Friday, July 1st, with Gary Dake serving as Vice-Chair. Congratulations and thank you to all!

2. Approval of May 25, 2022 Meeting Minutes

Motion to Approve: by Mike Munter **Second:** MaryAnn Spezio

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

3. Presentation on Childcare by Southern Adirondack Childcare Network and Brightside Up, Inc.

Lynn Sickles, Executive Director of SACCN and Abbe Kovacik, Executive Director of Brightside Up provided insights and statistics on pre-Covid, Covid and post-Covid conditions in the childcare sector. They provided information on what is a childcare desert, and where they are located within Saratoga-Warren-Washington Counties. Abbe and Lynn showed the group survey data to help us understand the need for childcare, availability of childcare regionally, what is currently being done to resolve the gaps between need and availability, and presented an inventory of regional providers. We discussed supportive and wraparound services available regionally to help parents meet the childcare needs of their family, and finally how their agencies work with our 3 Career Centers and Regional Economic Development to meet local childcare needs.



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4. Presentation by Presentation on NYSDOL Regional Labor Market Statistics *(data/analysis)*

Kevin Alexander provided an overview of current regional labor market statistics in comparison to 2019 data. We currently have a 2.5% unemployment rate, which is a historical low. In 2019 it was 3.5%. Both numbers are considered full employment. Compared to May of 2019, the labor force grew in SWW, with Saratoga gaining 3,000 positions and both Warren and Washington gaining 500 each. Although we do have seasonal fluctuations in our area, we need to remain cognizant of our aging populations and the retirement trends in our government workforce, which is regionally significant. Kevin also shared the results of the NYSDOL Business and Job Seeker Survey.

5. PY22 SWW WDB Budget Presentation Discussion

Discussion: Scot Chamberlain and Matthew Rose recused themselves from voting on this matter, due to their affiliation with Saratoga County to ensure no conflict of interest exists. *

Motion to Approve: by Mike Munter **Second:** Joseph Serafini

Vote: Approved by quorum vote of 21 (with Chamberlain and Rose recusal*).

6. PY21 Fund Transfer Request

Jen McCloskey, Fiscal Agent and Director of the Saratoga County Department of Employment and Training provided background on a budget fund transfer request for \$100,000 from Dislocated Worker to Adult. She noted that all participants eligible for the Dislocated Worker program will be enrolled in the Dislocated Worker program, and no eligible participant will be denied services, including training services, due to transfer of funds.

Motion to Approve: by Ryan VanAmburgh **Second:** MaryAnn Spezio

Discussion: Question by Mike Munter on the % of the request compared to the allocation, which was answered.

Vote: Approved unanimously

7. Committee Updates

- a. Executive Committee met with Gretchen on June 8th about Board and Centers Operations, Membership status, Committee progress, RFP OSO Status, BOCES Agreement to provide career services for high school seniors who do not yet have a defined career plan and to assist those students in creating a pathway toward employment sustainability, Advocacy, Bylaw revision, Fiscal Monitoring, Potential Board Management software purchase, Budgets, and our Board meeting agenda. Gretchen will expand on these items during her operations update later in the agenda.
- b. **Business Needs Truck Rodeo Sub-Committee** report by Michael Kelly. The Truck Rodeo continues to meet biweekly and will meet more frequently as we move through the summer. The date has been set for Saturday, September 24 at SPAC in Saratoga. 26 organizations have been invited to participate and 16 have confirmed participation. There will be a touch-a-truck component within the event to promote multiple CDL opportunities. We continue planning operational and promotional components of the event. Volunteers will be needed and Mike will be reaching out for support.



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- c. **Resource & Development Committee** There was no meeting of the R&D Committee since our last Board meeting.

8. **Center's Operations Report** by Jen McCloskey, Liza Ochsendorf, and Roberta Davis.

Jen reported that SYEP is in full swing with 60 program participants who started on Monday. The EMS Pilot partnership with HVCC started this week too, with 6 in the cohort. New staff members are doing very well. She is completing several fiscal monitoring projects and this is a very busy time for her administratively as resolutions need to be brought before the Board to administer funding. Jen thanked the other Center Directors for their timely reporting for system-wide fiscal monitoring.

Liza reported that she and Jen are working very closely with Abbe and Lynn as part of our Federal Childcare grant for the Community project part of that proposal. A part of that grant allows us to set aside an account for businesses to contribute to that will be a childcare sustainability fund; one in Warren County and one in Saratoga County. This is an area where the board can really be helpful because businesses are beneficiaries of having adequate childcare and we really need to make sure that we're solving this issue together. For both the private and public sector. Very busy with summer youth employment, and had our orientation on Monday. Liza thanked Gretchen for being there all morning and providing helpful insights to our young people, especially with her HR background. We had a great turnout for a rainy morning and had about 30 youth of 36 program participants. 18 of those students will have a job coach, for which we are using County ARPA money to pay for the coach. Some of our youths are starting tomorrow with Operation Food Chain, which gives a meal to students during the summer, and then others are starting next week. The other ARPA money we got was over \$500,000 from Warren County ARPA monies, for various workforce development initiatives that I submitted in last January. Transportation funding will allow us to give 100 bus and bike to local employers in Warren County for them to give to workers, particularly in our tourism and hospitality industry. Flexible spending funds for anything that may come up during an impending recession. Training funding because our WIOA training dollars are primarily limited to underemployed or unemployed folks and we want to do more training for businesses, as well as incumbent workers. \$30,000 in Technology funding, so we can have laptops and iPads to loan out. Finally, we will have a new position to work with the schools and both these to have more intentional long-term curriculum program services around career exploration for local students. Wendy Skawinski offered that traffic in the Career Center has been steady, but slow. Have not seen nearly the number of customers that we thought we would on a daily basis. But we are open, and have the resources available for anyone who comes through the door for help.

Roberta reported that traffic in their Center is still slow too, and they've been largely open to the public all year. People are coming in for job searching and for emergency services. Currently working on our community needs assessment, which is done every 3 years. This survey helps us to understand if the programs that we're running are effective, and if Washington County resident's needs are being met by our services. We have still one position open, which is our senior employment counselor position. We are immersed in SYEP, did our orientation yesterday, and it went very well. We have a really good group of kids that we're working with this year, and we're excited to get them going. They start working on Tuesday. We have 5 LPN students enrolled for the Fall semester. Looking forward to a good Summer.

9. **WDB Operations Update**

Gretchen Steffan updated the WDB on the still outstanding MOU and the OSO RFP which yielded no responses. We are talking with NYSDOL about next steps, and potentially asking for Sole-Source status. Supporting committee work, ongoing administrative process (Compliance/WDB Directors/NYSDOL CPE), and ensuring



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Quarterly Monitoring is on track (*1st, 2nd & 3rd quarters completed. 4th Qtr. up next*). The Centers Certification-upcoming, R&D Committee pre-audit will occur post-SYEP. Started conversation with BOCES on an agreement to support career counseling in local districts, replicating successful models in the Cap Region, which will support our 2022 initiatives/action items. Next Quarterly EEO Report is due July 5th. As the EEO Officer for the SWW System this report is mandatory and sent to the NYSDOL Division of Equal Opportunity Development. Attended the Workforce Development Discussion at the Carpenter's Local 291 in Albany yesterday, along with Doug Ford one of partners who formulated the event. There were-valued added presentations and commentary from area leaders about planning-forward initiatives for trades to support the business growth and regional economic development.

10. Additional Opportunity for Board Member Announcements / Comments

Doug Ford (*who works for Curtis Lumber, and is also President of the Saratoga Builders Association Inc.*) reported that approximately 140 people attended the aforementioned event, with some heavy hitters from the construction industry, schools and related businesses. We are hoping it the right people are listening. Obviously, this is not something that's going to get fixed overnight, but regionally we were making a lot of inroads and we're having a lot of opportunities coming our way, as a result of the work that we're doing. Everybody's competing for labor right now. It's not just the construction industry, so we anticipate a rough road ahead. If we can convince the schools to help us educate the students on the opportunities in the trades, that's a step in the right direction. Right now, school counselors for the most part, don't understand the trades and can't talk to it, which is not their fault. That part is on us to do the education, but if we can just get the opportunity to get in front of students and let them know what the opportunities are, I think there would be a lot more coming towards the construction trades and industry. The misconceptions from 40 years ago are gone. This is a field that's wide open to women as well as men, and young people can move up quickly within the construction industry. If they come in with the right attitude, and the right ethic, they can advance quickly. So, that was the message that we told the legislators yesterday, and we hope that they heard us. We will keep pushing forward.

11. Adjournment at 10:02 am

**Next SWW WDB Meeting
Wednesday, October 19, 2022 at
SUNY ADK Wilton, or via ZOOM 8–10 am**