



Workforce Investment Board of Columbia & Greene Counties
Minutes for January 15, 2008 8:30 a.m.
Columbia Greene Community College- Professional Academic Building

WELCOME

Karen Diffley welcomed new members:
Welcome new members: Ms. Mary Prazma, (Herringtons), Dr. Fern Aefsky, (Superintendent Hudson City Schools) Ms. Carrie Haddad (Carrie Haddad Galleries) and Mr. Jim Svetz (The Muddy Cup).

Chairperson Karen Diffley called the meeting to order and did roll call.

Attendance:

Present: Dr. Fern Aefsky, Frank Alguire, John Betts, Deneen Byrne, Karen Diffley, Tom Every, Diane Franzman, Jim Galvin, Carrie Haddad, Susan Hollister, Kate Konopka, Mike Kutski, Les Lak, David Lester, Cindy MacKay, Rebecca Main, Terry McGee Ward, Mary Prazma, John Seacord, Deb Spaulding, Jim Svetz, M. A. Wiltse, Sarah Witham and Anthony Zibella

Excused: Russ Coloton, Pam Dusharm, Barbara Eacott, Stan Ingalls, Mike Kutski, David Leavitt, Linda Overbaugh, Betty Rosato, David Scott, Sally Sharkey, Tina Sharp and Lynn Strunk

WIO Staff: Consultant: Katy Drake

Guests: Maureen Boutin (WIO) and Sam Pollard (Empire State Development)

With 23 members in attendance, a quorum is present.

STATUS OF VACANCIES

There are a total of three vacancies with one business vacancy for Greene County, one Greene County Organized Labor vacancy, and one joint vacancy for the Office of the Aging.



ACCEPTANCE OF MINUTES

A motion was made by Frank Alguire, seconded by Diane Franzman and carried by the Board to accept the Board Meeting Minutes from the October 10, 2007 meeting. All Board meeting minutes are posted on the website, www.columbiagreeneorks.org.

CORRESPONDENCE

The following correspondence is available for member review:

Letters sent:

- Recruitment letters
- Letter sent to the U.S. Department of Labor regarding the WIB agreement for the Community Job Based Training Grant

Letters received:

- October 5, 2007 letter from DOL for "Advance -NY" Grant for Dunn Builders Supply Corporation for \$31,820.00.

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- Appointment of Dr. Fern Aefsky by Columbia County Board of Supervisors
- Copy of the resolution appointing Mr. Jim Svetz to the WIB from Greene County Legislature.
- October 29, 2007 letter regarding the Youth Review from Ms. Carrie Aubertine, DOL.
- Appointment of Ms. Carrie Haddad by the Columbia County Board of Supervisors.
- WIA PY2006 Sanction Notice sent on December 20, 2007 regarding Older Youth Earnings Change at Sanction Level One.
- December 19, 2007 letter informing the Columbia Greene WIB of DOL Workforce Program Specialist.

COMMITTEE MEETINGS

Committee reports were distributed prior to the meeting and reviewed by Committee Chairs and/or committee members. Committee reports are attached to the minutes for reference.

Business Services

Jim Galvin, Chair for the Business Services Committee, reviewed the committee report and provided an overview of the resolutions that will be brought before the Board at the end of the meeting.

Mr. Galvin also provided an update on a four day training program on land use sponsored by Pace University and the Dyson Foundation that will be held locally. Mr. Galvin encouraged the attendance of a business member representing the WIB at the training program to help provide insight on the impact of affordable housing on the local workforce.

Continuous Quality Improvement

Vice Chair Les Lak reviewed the CQI Committee report. The Workforce Investment Office was commended for the work on a security policy. New Board members were offered a tour and Program Service's catalog following the Board meeting.

Executive Committee

Board Chair Karen Diffley reviewed current Board vacancies. MA Wiltse, the Workforce Investment Office Director, reviewed the progress on grant #13-N "*Regional Economic Transformation Strategies through a Sector or Cluster Based Approach*". An RFQ seeking to hire a consultant to assist the four WIBs in the completion of the required Transformational Work Plan was discussed. The Request for Qualifications (RFQ) outlining the scope of the work plan is on the website if anyone knows of anyone interested in applying for this opportunity. It was noted when reviewing the five sectors for this grant (energy, advanced manufacturing, construction, nanotechnology and biotechnology) that DOL does have specific healthcare grants, funded separately and distinctly, to address needs for healthcare workforce development.

Youth Council

Youth Council Chair, Terry McGee Ward, reviewed the Youth Council report. Dr. Aefsky discussed the need to coordinate services and opportunities between the counties and within programs in order to better link resources and needs. Dr. Aefsky informed the Board that the Hudson School District has a grant funding ten jobs for students but is having difficulty finding employers to place the students. Any Business member who may have opportunities for these students, who will be paid out of the grant, should contact Dr. Aefsky directly. The need to create a website matching grants, programs and resources was discussed and will be further explored by the Youth Council.

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One Stop Operator Director's Report

The One-Stop Operator's report was provided to all members. The report provided a review of Core Services, Intensive and Training Services, DOL Employment Services Statistics for Columbia Greene, a local quarterly report for local activities, Adult Education Information and Marketing information. Graphs comparing data quarterly and annually were requested, but are difficult to create due to the ability to access certain information from the OSOS system. The State is aware of the challenges of the OSOS system, as all one stop centers struggle with obtaining relevant information from the system. MA Wiltse will continue to work on obtaining the information requested.

OLD BUSINESS

Budget and rescission information has not yet been finalized, though it is clear drastic cuts are pending for the PY08 budget. Information will be provided to the Board once the final information is received.

Information on grant #13-N "*Regional Economic Transformation Strategies through a Sector or Cluster Based Approach*" was provided in the Executive Committee Report.

Chair Karen Diffley announced the appointment of Mr. Frank Alguire as Secretary to the Board.

NEW BUSINESS

The Workforce Investment Act requires that local WIBs set criteria for determining whether employment leads to "self-sufficiency". Local WIBs are also required to establish policies that govern the implementation of Individualized Training Accounts (ITAs) and On-the-Job –Training (OJT) services. The Board reviewed information on 200% poverty level standards, median household income levels for both counties, average wages paid by employers by county and average wage change paid in both counties between 2002 and 2006.

A motion was made by Mr. John Betts to accept \$16/hour as the new self sufficiency standard. The motion was seconded by Ms. Diane Franzman. The Board carried the motion with all in favor.

Mr. Jim Galvin made a motion to accept revised ITA funding amounts. The maximum amount of an ITA will still be based on the mean hourly wage of the occupation for which training is approved, with ITA amounts now ranging from \$3,000 (for jobs paying at least \$9.87) to \$8,000 (for jobs paying at least \$13.87) (Based on the average wage change paid in Columbia and Greene Counties between the years 2002 – 2006.). This motion was seconded by Mr. Frank Alguire. All Board members were in favor and the motion was carried.

Ms. Kate Konopka made a motion to accept a revised OJT policy that sets the minimum hourly wage rate for an OJT contract at \$9.87. (Based on the average wage change paid in Columbia and Greene Counties between 2002 – 2006.) Mr. John Betts seconded the motion. All Board members were in favor and the motion was carried.

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GOOD AND WELFARE

Board Chair

Mr. Galvin provided an update on economic development for Columbia County noting that three IDA loans are in process. Coach Farms has been purchased and will be remaining in Columbia County. The site will consist of cheese making in one section of the property and ice manufacturing in another section. A bio-fuel study is in process to determine what the local area can sustain. Additional commerce park lands are being sought in the county. Mr. Galvin also noted that the local trainings for Zone and Planning Committees has been extended to seven sessions to meet the growing needs of the county.

Mr. Frank Alguire provided an update for Greene County and announced the grand opening of Wolfgang B Specialty Foods. Mr. Alguire discussed a current focus for Greene on tourist attractions to replace tourism lost with the closing of Catskill Game Farm and the Speedway. Zoom Flume is currently planning an expansion.

Mr. Alguire noted the transition in progress for the county's computerized loan system. Other current development projects include financing a vet in Coxsackie, another expansion for Big Top Tent Rentals, Prattsville Agway and Lavalley LLC-an assisted living center in New Baltimore.

Dr. Fern Aefsky announced that the Questar III LPN Program has moved into the Hudson High School. A tour of the program will be offered in the future. Dr. Aefsky also announced the new school based GED Program in Hudson which has already successfully graduated four students.

A tour of the Workforce Investment Office and catalog of services was provided for new members following the meeting.

The motion to adjourn was made by Diane Franzman and seconded by Frank Alguire. The meeting was adjourned at 10:10 with the tour following.

Please Mark Your Calendar

Upcoming Special Events	<i>Date, Time, Location</i>	<i>Information:</i>
<i>WIB Full Board Meetings</i>	April 8, 2008 5:30 pm July 15, 2008 8:30 am Meetings are held in The Professional Academic Building at the College unless otherwise noted	Contact Katy Drake at Drake@mhccable.com or 945-1508

Respectfully submitted,
Katy Drake/WIB Consultant

Attachment: Committee Reports

Business Services Committee

Employee Enhancement Program~

Appreciation was extended to the Business Services Committee by MA Wiltse for the suggestions made at the last meeting in September regarding the Employee Enhancement Program. Due to previous low enrollment, changes have been made to the program. The implemented changes have resulted in immediate success for the program with 18 people enrolled in the last class; close to triple the previous class sizes. The program continues to meet for three hours once a week for four weeks to address issues such as balancing home and work, customer service, communication and work relationships.

Columbia Greene's successful course model of these soft skill trainings has been referred to other areas and businesses. Job readiness was noted as currently the greatest business challenge in our region, as well as most other regions. Grant #13-N will help coordinate the soft skill training programs across the region.

OJT~

The law requires that the local WIB set the criteria for determining whether employment leads to self sufficiency and establish policies that govern OJT. In 2002, the Columbia Greene WIB defined self sufficiency by an hourly wage of \$11.00/hour. The wage guideline was increased in late 2002 to \$15.00/hour. Information was distributed on "Local Income Levels and WIB Policies".

In reviewing the information, 200% of poverty level is a standard for services and that level is used in comparison with median income family level. The data reflected that the poverty standard has changed in an increase of \$1.60 per hour while median household income has risen by \$2.76. Wage comparisons between Columbia and Greene were reviewed with an increase for Greene by an hourly difference of \$2.13 while Columbia was reflected as having an hourly increase of only \$1.60. The average wage paid by both Columbia and Greene County employers between 2002 and 2006 was documented as an increase per hour of \$1.87.

The goal remains to capture as many people as possible in the program. A potential raise in the self sufficiency hourly wage to \$16 was discussed. It was noted that companies can pay for services if the employee is making above the \$15 self sufficiency rate.

Motion: A motion was made to update the local Self-Sufficiency level to a wage rate of \$16 per hour.			
Motion made by: Mr. Frank Alguire		Seconded by: Mr. Russ Colton	
Approved: All	Abstained: None	Opposed: None	
Motion Approved and will be presented to the full Board in January.			

ITA –Individual Training Accounts~ Information regarding ITAs was reviewed by the committee.

Motion: To accept revised ITA funding amounts. The maximum amount of an ITA will still be based on the mean hourly wage of the occupation for which training is approved, with ITA amounts ranging from \$3,000 (for jobs paying at least \$9.87) to \$8,000 (for jobs paying at least \$13.87). The updated amounts are based on the average wage change paid in Columbia and Greene Counties between 2002 – 2006.)			
Motion made by: Mr. Frank Alguire		Seconded by: Ms. Sarah Witham	
Approved: All	Abstained: None	Opposed: None	
Motion Approved and will be presented to the full Board in January.			

On the Job Training (OJT)~Information regarding OJT was reviewed by the committee.

Motion: To accept a revised OJT policy that sets the minimum hourly wage rate for an OJT contract at \$9.87. (Based on the average wage change paid in Columbia and Greene Counties between 2002 – 2006.)			
Made by: Mr. Frank Alguire		Seconded by: Ms. Deb Spaulding	
Approved: All	Abstained: None	Opposed: None	
Motion Approved and will be presented to the full Board in January.			

Workforce Housing Initiatives and Education~

Jim Galvin updated the committee on a four day training on land use that will be sponsored by the Dyson Foundation in conjunction with Pace University. The series is expected to begin in the spring. It was suggested that an employer representative from the WIB attend to discuss the impact of affordable housing on the local workforce. Anyone interested in representing the WIB to carry the message of the need for affordable workforce housing should contact Katy Drake (drake@mhcable.com). The training series will be held locally over the course of four weeks.

Continuous Quality Improvement (CQI) Committee Audit

Fall WIO Audit

The audit summary from September 19, 2007 was distributed and reviewed at the December 5, 2007 meeting. As a recommendation resulting from previous CQI audits, MA Wiltse drafted a security policy. Policy 709, Security Management was distributed via email for committee review. The committee made the following suggestions to the policy:

- Adjust “staff and customers” in the policy description to “all involved”.
- Add when a second staff member should become involved in the security procedures.
- Designate a person to be in charge of the walkie talkie and relocate the walkie talkie from the main lobby.
- Add to the procedures the requirement of an annual security drill with random designated areas blocked.

The manual can be found at : <http://www.columbiagreenevents.org/policy-link.html>

The security of forms was also discussed with a recommendation that a method to control documents be established.

Chair John Craft commended MA Wiltse for her work on the security policy.

Future Action Items Include: MA Wiltse will create a master list of forms as a control measure, update the mileage policy noting the current rate of reimbursement (\$0.0) and update the security policy per the suggestions of the CQI committee.

New Board Member Information Packet

The committee reviewed the information distributed to new members. Definitions of Regionalization and Rescission will be added to the WIA terminology list. No other recommendations were made at this time. Any additional suggestions should be forwarded to Katy Drake at drake@mhccable.com.

One Stop Reports

The following reports were distributed and reviewed by the committee:

- New Customer Count
- Service Utilization by Category with a comparison to PY 06
- Front Door Traffic Report
- WIA Participant Services from July 1, 2007 to September 30, 2007

It was noted in the review of the Front Door Traffic Report that as a cost saving measure, customer swipe cards are issued when the customer returns for a second visit. It was also noted that the swipe card machine was broken for approximately three weeks, which impacts the data reviewed.

CQI Vice Chair

Les Lak was appointed Vice Chair of the CQI Committee.

The next CQI meeting will be a WIO audit in March of 2008.

Executive Committee

Board Vacancies

Board vacancies were reviewed by the Executive Committee at the January 3, 2008 Meeting. Greene County has one business vacancy with an appointment in process. An organized labor vacancy remains for Greene County. A joint vacancy for the Office of the Aging is pending appointment. In Columbia County Ms. Carrie Haddad from Carrie Haddad Gallery has been appointed to the Board. Dr. Fern Aefsky, the superintendent from Hudson City Schools has been appointed for the Columbia County education vacancy.

Les Lak has been appointed as Vice Chair for the CQI Committee.

Update on Grant Proposal RFP# 13-N “Regional Economic Transformation Strategies for a Sector or Cluster Based Approach”

The signed grant was received today for the start of the 90 day Tier One Planning stage of Grant #13-N. A meeting is scheduled for January 4, 2008 with NYSAC representatives to discuss joining forces on workforce intelligence. The Workforce Intelligence Project, sponsored by NYSAC and Cornell University may be able to supplement Grant #13-N, stretching grant money and building bridges and partnerships. All partners in the RFP #13-N will be meeting on January 18th with contract meetings following with partners. MA is currently writing an RFP to hire a writer to draft the strategic plan for transformational strategies that will form the blueprint for the next three years of activities, focusing on the 5 industries identified in the grant: energy, advanced manufacturing, advanced construction, nanotechnology and biotechnology. A presentation on the grant by the four WIB Representatives may be planned for the April Board Meeting. A small amount of money from the grant is directed to the WIBs but a large part of the funding will be directed to research on workforce pipelines and creating new training options to fill gaps. Soft skills and job readiness skills will be coordinated regionally under this grant.

The Next Step Program

Peter Markou has completed the feasibility study and is not recommending continuing the effort to establish The Next Step Program. Little interest has been expressed by the individuals this “junior chamber” was designed to support.

2008 Budget Projections & pending possible Rescission

Information is still just conjecture so the PY08 budget will be shared once finalized figures are received. The budget cuts are significant for PY08. Budgets and the rescission determinations are still in Congress but information to date indicates that drastic cuts are expected.

Business Services Resolutions Local Income levels and WIB Policies information was distributed and reviewed by the committee.

Youth Council

The Youth Council met on December 13, 2007. Chair Terry McGee Ward announced Dr. Fern Aefsky's (Superintendent of the Hudson City Schools) appointment to the Board and Youth Council.

Update on The Next Step Program

Peter Markou has completed the feasibility study for The Next Step Program. Due to lack of interest, Peter is not recommending continuing efforts in the pursuit of this program. Mark Decker reviewed the efforts Peter has made throughout the study. An organizing committee was established with members paid to attend the planning meetings (\$25 per session). A Boat Cruise was held in the summer with 18 youth attending. All attendees of the cruise were invited to attend a planning meeting. Five out of the eighteen showed up for dinner and recommended a "MY Space" page for posting related information on younger worker issues. Overall, 234 youth from past WIA connections were contacted throughout the study with limited success. Only 7 from WIA connections participated. Peter also conducted on line research and did not find any successful organizations serving the targeted age group.

It was suggested that this targeted group may be more interested in becoming a full chamber member or perhaps a sub committee of the chamber. A subcommittee focusing on "younger worker issues" may attract more interest than The Next Step Program has generated. Mark Decker commended Peter for the efforts he invested in research and contacting youth. As the feasibility study indicates a lack of interest by the targeted group and finances are no longer available to continue the program past the study, the Next Step Study is complete.

Youth Programs 2007- 2008

Mark Decker provided an update on the Youth Programs. A new teacher has been hired at Catskill. The Program has implemented a new case management approach to serve the 20 students currently enrolled. A waiting list of about three weeks is in place for the Program.

Enrollment for the YES Program started slow but has risen to 13 enrollees in the program. Mark reported while enrollment is strong, attendance is a concern. YES students often hold full time jobs and have child care responsibilities while they attend the program. The number of hours of participation is a concern even though enrollment is stable. Online training to supplement the YES program was discussed by the committee. The flexibility of online training may be a benefit to these students who have many responsibilities as they seek educational gains.

Mark reported that the Greenville program is going strong with 4 internships. The committee agreed to seek opportunities to nominate Sandy Arnone for teaching awards within the community for her efforts with the Greenville school to work program.

The Catskill GED Program visit will be scheduled following the holidays.

Mark Decker and the Workforce Investment Office were commended for their efforts to provide educational gains and supports to the local youth.