

# Workforce Investment Board of Columbia & Greene Counties

*Minutes for October 5, 2004*  
Columbia Greene Community College- Room 105

## **Attendance:**

*Present:* Kit Ali, Rikki Beal, John Betts, Bruce Bohnsack, Russ Coloton, John Craft, Paul Dellio, Karen Diffley, Barbara Eacott, David Lester, Cindy MacKay, Irene Norsworthy, Florence Ohle, Hilton Perez, Barbara Roemer, Dawn Saul, David Segalla, M. A. Wiltse, Sarah Witham, and Anthony Zibella.

*Excused:* Gail Aadland, Jim Cullie, Tom Every, Diane Franzman, Jim Galvin, Susan Hollister, David Leavitt, Joyce Lissandrello, Jim Molloy, and Lynn Strunk.

*Absent:* Pam Dusharm, Aaron Flach, Ralph Marino, Jessica Nabozny and Thomas Deere.

**Guests:** Jen Fuentes, Judy Soderblom, David Wallingford-NYS DOES, and Suzanne Pollard, Empire State Economic Development

**WIO Staff:** Maureen Boutin

**Consultant:** Betty Ann Falkner

With 20 members in attendance, a quorum is present.



## **WELCOME**

The meeting began with a welcome to all members and guests. New members Florence Ohle and Barbara Roemer were welcomed to the Board.

## **STATUS OF VACANCIES**

- There are two vacancies in Greene County, one for a business representative and one for a union representative. There is one vacancy for a Columbia County union representative. All vacancies are pending appointments by the legislature and board of supervisors.

## **CORRESPONDENCE**

There were six letters received. The secretary read the correspondence. Members who wished to were also able to review the correspondence. One letter was from David Paciencia of Taconic Hills Central School, confirming the schools interest in Youth Employability Program. In another letter, Margaret Moree of the NYS Department of Labor authorized the release of funds under Strategic Planning for a Human Capital Advantage Project. Walter Wrobel a Financial consultant with NYS Department of Labor reported on the Workforce Investment Office's compliance with financial management & cost allocations systems. Gerald Simons the Columbia County Board of Supervisors Chairman sent notification of reappointments to the WIB. The Greene County Legislature confirmed the appointment of Florence Ohle to WIB and the appointment of Thomas Deere to serve as a veteran's representative to the WIB. Margaret Moree of the NYS Department of Labor approved the extension of the ending date of Strategic Planning grant.

Eight letters were sent out this past quarter. Letters approving the Board's June funding decision for youth programs were sent to M. A. Wiltse for the Yes Program; Joan Morse of Greenville Central School; Rick Morgan of New Lebanon Central School and Dr. Selma Friedman of Catskill Central School. A Thank you letter a certificate of appreciation was sent to Brian Keeler for his work as a Board member. A quarterly update letter was also sent by the WIB consultant to Columbia & Greene Supervisors and Legislators. Welcome letters were sent to Barbara Roemer and to Thomas Deere

## **ACCEPTANCE OF MINUTES**

A motion to accept the June 14, 2004 minutes was made by Paul Dellio and seconded by Dawn Saul. All were in favor and the motion was passed.

## **COMMITTEE MEETINGS**



### **Skills Standards Committee**

Chair Rikke Beal informed the Board that they worked on reviewing the status of the Providers on the Individual Training Accounts (ITA's) list, and their performance. The committee also reviewed the Supportive Services policy, which is one of the most generous in the state. The committee proposed changes to the policy to reduce funds paid out up front.

### ***Continuous Quality Committee***

Vice Chair Kit Ali reported on the activity of this committee. Since the committee had two new members, WIO Director M. A. Wiltse reviewed the make up of the local system. The committee is preparing to work on the recertification of the Career Center. The committee asked that M. A. Wiltse do a self-assessment, update the Business plan and the One-Stop Operator Agreement. The committee will meet again in November.

### ***Employer Services Committee***

Vice Chair M. A. Wiltse reported on the work of the Employer Services Committee. Committee members received a summary of the Industry focus groups held this summer. The report was sent to all board members who were asked to read the report and be prepared to discuss it during the Board Member Education section of the board meeting.

### ***Youth Council***

Maureen Boutin, Youth Council member reported on the activities of this group. The Council reviewed the status of its four youth programs. The newest program is the YES Youth Services program operating at the college which prepares youth who are eighteen or older for the GED test. Eight students have begun class. The Youth Council also reviewed the Youth Futures survey that was sent out to Columbia and Greene counties eleventh and twelfth graders. The results of the youth survey will also be discussed in the Board Member Education section of the board meeting. Board members received an update of the Employability Certificate Program.

### ***Executive Committee***

Chairman Anthony Zibella reported on this committee's activities. The committee reviewed the strategic plan activities and discussed including this in the Board Member Education for the upcoming Board meeting.

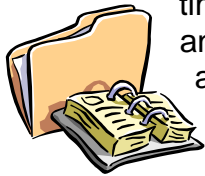
## One Stop Operator Director's Report

M.A. Wiltse briefly reviewed the Participation report for the One-Stop Center. She pointed out to members that the report included the annual report for the Title V program. This program serves adults aged 55 and above by providing community service work experience jobs. The intent of this program is to transfer participants into private sector employment. In the past, there was very little push to move participants into private sector jobs if the participants were happy in their subsidized placement. This leniency occurred because private sector employment could affect these low-income individuals' social security and other benefits. A new push at the federal level is now requiring all participants to continually conduct a job search. If their job search is not at an "acceptable" level then they can be terminated from their community service job. Neither participants nor their host organizations are happy with these changes.

M. A. Wiltse also referred members to the budget report, which shows the loss of funding. The outlook for future additional funding looks bleak also. Members asked questions on youth contracts and wages paid to youth.

### ***Unemployment Statistics***

Hilton Perez reported on the unemployment rates and comparisons listed for Columbia and Greene Counties. Members were invited to look at the insurance duration rates-the amount of time in weeks that a person is on unemployment. Both counties are below the state and national average. Hilton asked that the numbers listed under Quarterly report activities be checked. The numbers were checked and a revised report will be made an attachment to this report.



## **OLD BUSINESS**

*There was no old business to discuss*

## **NEW BUSINESS**

### **Resolutions & Discussion:**

Members asked questions on changes to the Supportive Services offered to eligible individuals enrolled in training through the WIA Title IB.. Current policies are very generous, including offering funding for transportation reimbursement on a biweekly basis. The office would like to ensure that participants who receive transportation reimbursement uphold their end of the WIA bargain (notifying WIO when they find employment) by reimbursing for transportation costs after the person has completed training and found employment. Certain upfront training enrollment fees will no longer be covered by WIO, to help insure that participants who enroll are serious about their training and a cap is put on the amount we will cover for tools and equipment. A question was asked about the return of tools. M. A. Wiltse told the board that the school keeps the tools at its facility, so it has never been a problem getting them returned if a student drops. A question was also asked about the medical costs. With the change, the participant pays the doctor directly, submits proof of payment to WIO and then is reimbursed.

## Workforce Investment Board of Columbia & Greene Counties

- **Resolved to accept** the Skills Standards committee recommendation to revise the funding of specific Supportive Services items, as outlined in the policy brief. A motion was made by Rikke Beal and seconded by Irene Norsworthy. All were in favor with no abstentions.

### GOOD AND WELFARE

- **Member Education- Economic Development Reports**

- *Jim Galvin of Columbia County Economic Development* was unable to attend the Board meeting. He will update the Board on Columbia County activities at the next meeting.



- *Irene Norsworthy of Greene County Economic Development* reviewed current projects in the works in Greene County. Irene reported that American Trim- a high-end textile firm that makes trim for RV's will be staying in the East Durham area and receiving funding for a 6,000 square foot expansion. They employ forty-five persons. Community Preservation working on the buildings next to the new Greene County Office building was notified that they received SHPO approval for their historic rehabilitation project. Serta Mattress is progressing on moving into Greene County and hiring 200 employees. From January to June, the Economic Development office closed old MicroBusiness loans and assisted with five to six startup businesses. The office was awarded \$300,000 under a Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) to fund new main street interiors. Greene County has once again funded \$50,000 toward the exteriors of county main streets. The Micro Enterprise Program has courses set up and will run as a revolving loan fund. Classes will begin in January, with lots of interest already being shown. The Grandview School has been sold to Wide Waters for development. A Price Chopper Plaza expansion of over 11,000 square feet is in the process, talk is of Hollywood video locating there. The Irving School annex has been approved for a Senior Development. Up on the mountain, work continues on the Windham Sewer and Water project.
- Greene County Economic Development will be putting out a Request for Proposals within the next thirty days to consultants to begin a Visioning Process that will answer the question of 'What do you want to see in Greene County?' In the spring there will be Main Street forums. More info will follow. They are also working with Ulster Vision addressing workforce questions.
- Irene also reported that the 2<sup>nd</sup> home market is very busy in Greene County. Home Depot is very pleased with its Greene County store and the quality of employees it has hired.

- **Board Member Education- What will be the WIB's role in the future?**

- M. A. Wiltse began the discussion by informing the board that the information given to board members in summary format will form part of the local report in the Regional State of the Workforce report. The release will happen on December 8<sup>th</sup> at the Crowne Plaza Hotel in Albany from 10 a.m.-3 p.m. The keynote speaker will

## Workforce Investment Board of Columbia & Greene Counties

be Steve Gunderson. All Board members are encouraged to attend. A bus may be provided if there is enough interest.

- M. A. Wiltse reported that six focus groups representing thirty-four employers spent 1 ½ hours discussing the issues of recruitment, training and retention. She also mentioned that the Youth futures survey of Columbia and Greene county 11<sup>th</sup> and 12<sup>th</sup> graders was completed by over 1,000 students. With this information as a base, the Board can consider what strategies it would like to work on.
  - One area of discussion was the image of the NYS Job\Talent Bank
    - The individuals and jobs listed are much diversified.
    - All groups- employers & partners- should be feeding into this system.
    - Some people are unclear of the unemployment process-
      - Hilton Perez informed the board that the unemployed person must be actively looking for work within jobs that are suitable to the person's skills for the first 13 weeks of unemployment.
      - After 13 weeks if the person has not found a job in their field, the law requires that they look for a job they are capable of performing.
      - No cards or forms are required to be signed confirming the job search except for individuals received assistance from the Department of Social Services.
      - The DOES office verifies that each individual is qualified for a particular job before referring them and then they ask the employer to verify that the person applied.
  - Youth Survey responses indicated that young people have job interests skewed to a few career areas in which employment opportunities are limited. They also don't appear to have access to a lot of career information that could help them make better choices.
  - With this background information-Board members indicated an interest in pursuing outreach efforts to address these issues. The board discussed doing more to build relationships between businesses and schools.
    - An example was cited of the Columbia County Chamber's Teachers in the Workplace program.
    - Also mentioned was the Career Day held at CGCC, sponsored by Questar and mandated for all Columbia and Greene County 10<sup>th</sup> graders. Members asked about adding a manufacturing panel to the day and addressing this need with the Guidance Association.

### 2-1-1 Program

- Jim Beal, Executive Director of the United Way of Columbia & Greene Counties, Inc. addressed the Board. Jim retired from the United Way of America after twenty-five years working in the Disaster Relief area. He told the Board that the United Way is about more than just fund raising; it's about Community Impact.

## Workforce Investment Board of Columbia & Greene Counties

- This Community Impact means that the United Way is looking to make substantial changes in the lives of individuals and wants to collaborate with other groups in the community.
- The 2-1-1 Network-puts individuals in touch with non-emergency quality of life issues through just one telephone call. The program is similar to an EAP program with different agencies on line to offer assistance. Currently, Columbia and Greene County is part of the Capital Region. The system is in place in Westchester and Rochester. The 2-1-1 Network calls for a collaborative effort in the local communities.

### Your Board

Chairman Anthony Zibella encouraged all board members to fully participate by reading materials sent out prior to board meetings. This will enable the meetings to be even more streamlined and productive. He asked members to come to meeting prepared to bring input from their businesses. If members have suggestions for improvement, they can be addressed to him or the WIB consultant for inclusion at future board meetings.



### Mark Your Calendar

- **Upcoming Special Events**
  - Fall Job Fair-October 26<sup>th</sup> CGCC
  - Coats for Kids Program- Collections during the month of October. For additional information-contact Jen Maxwell of Community Action at 943-9205.
- **Board Meetings** – all Board members are encouraged to put these dates on their calendars and to make attendance at the Board meetings a priority!
  - **January 11, 2005- 8:30 a.m.**
  - **April 12, 2005-5:30 p.m.**
  - **June 14, 2005- 8:30 a.m.**

**ADJOURNMENT**- A motion to adjourn the Board meeting at 7:15 was made by Paul Dellio and seconded by Sarah Witham.