

FINGER LAKES WORKFORCE INVESTMENT BOARD MEETING MINUTES

Wednesday, September 16, 2020 8:30-10:00am

Via Zoom

ATTENDANCE:

Members: Kathy Baker, Pete Bekisz, Lina Brennan, Zachary Brooks, Mike Davis, Jennifer DeVault, Sarah Eighmey, Maria Fisher, Lynn Freid, Michelle Jungermann, Michael Kauffman, Danielle Maloy, Michael Manikowski, Blair Morgan, Julia Murphy, Robert Nye, Lori Parish, Joseph Pellerite, Bonnie Percy, Rick Plympton, Vicky Ramos, Michael Rusinko, Eileen Tiberio

Guests: Amit Gupta, Andrea McGraw, John Vrabel, Michael Whirtley

Staff: Jennifer May, Debbie Sowards, Karen Springmeier, Michael Woloson, Jeffrey Weise

Absent: Debbie Culeton, Kelly Davids, Bob Doebelin, Tom Facer, Rick House, Stan Knecht, John Mueller, Jona Wright

At 8:30 a.m., Mr. Plympton called the meeting to order. Introductions followed.

New Business/Consent Agenda

Approval of Minutes from June 17, 2020 meeting

Resolution #01-20 Approval of Revised FLWIB Supportive Services Policy

Resolution #02-20 Approval of Intensive and Training Providers and Programs

Resolution #03-20 Authorization to Extend Contract with FLACRA

Resolution #04-20 Approval to Increase Funding Cap for CDL Training

A motion to approve minutes from the June 16, 2020 meeting was made by Mr. Rusinko and seconded by Mr. Davis. All in favor, motion approved.

A motion to approve Resolutions 01-20, 02-20, 03-20 and 04-20 was made by Mr. Rusinko and seconded by Mr. Manikowski. All in favor, motion approved.

ECONOMIC NEWS AND UPDATES:

Economic Issues/Trends/Concerns:

Economic Development - Mr. Manikowski stated that Henkel, formerly Zotos, is expanding with a \$20 million investment in the Geneva manufacturing site. Henkel plans to fill 180 positions and will host a drive-thru job fair on September 22nd.

Dairy/Farming – Ms. Springmeier shared the following farm report, provided by Mr. Mueller: “The harvest has been great. In spite of a very dry June, the crops look pretty good. The harvest has been very dry and we are very glad not to have to deal with the mud. Harvest has been a lot more fun this year than the last couple of wet falls. The dairy markets have bounced back from the early virus days and look positive till the end of the year. 2021 does not look good though. We will see what happens.”

Advanced Manufacturing – Mr. Plympton stated that according to the National Association of Manufactures, 72% of manufacturers have experienced poor cash flow over the last 6 months, 92% have used PPE at their sites and 66% expect business to pick up over the next 6 months.

Retail – Mr. Kauffman stated that Eastview Mall is at 75% of sales as last year, half seating at the food court and common furniture is not available as to keep customers from congregating. Conditions at the mall are slowly improving, but 12 stores have been lost, either from bankruptcy or leases ending. Dick’s Sporting Goods have chosen not to open the Eastview location until the spring.

Health – Ms. DeVault shared that Thompson Health is back to pre-COVID volumes in all departments and staffing issues are still present. Within the hospital system, all visitors and employees are screened before entering nursing homes.

Ontario ARC – Ms. Jungermann informed the group that they are also experiencing staffing issues, including struggles in finding staff for entry level positions. Bad Dog Boutique and North Star Coffee are now open, though.

del Lago – Ms. Morgan reported that the casino has reopened. Machines are spaced 6’ apart, no food or beverages are allowed on the gaming floor and extra training has been implemented for all team members. Additionally, masks are required for all guests and team members. At this time, table games and the hotel are still not open.

Program Changes:

Finger Lakes Works Career Center Operations

Geneva – DOL staff are working on UI claims and 3 staff members are providing services virtually. There is no anticipated date for the reopening of the center at this time.

Ontario – The center is open to the public by appointment and staff are also connecting with customers remotely

Wayne – The center and resource room are open to the public and customers are also being served remotely. DOL staff have not returned to the center.

Seneca – As of September 16th, the center has reopened to the public by appointment and HSE classes are being held at the center on Wednesdays and Fridays.

Yates – The center remains open to the public by appointment and visitors are screened before entry. Customers are also being served remotely.

Privilege of the Floor:

Ms. Freid stated that WDI is state funded, but has yet to receive their expected funding. She asked those who are interested to assist WDI in contacting the Governor's office regarding the funding issue.

COMMITTEE UPDATES:

Finance & Audit Committee – Ms. Springmeier shared that the internal auditors will return to the WIB offices in late September and report their finding to the full Board at the November meeting. Interviews are currently taking place for the Staff Accountant position.

Governance & Membership Committee – Mr. Manikowski and Ms. Springmeier reported that there is still a vacancy in Seneca County and a healthcare representative is preferred. Ms. Parish has been in contact with New York Chiropractic College regarding representation on the Board.

Marketing & Communications Committee – Ms. Springmeier stated that the committee met on July 29th and discussed the Business Survey which was sent to employers impacted by COVID-19, website analytics, progress of the annual report and SkillUp. The committee intends to meet again in October.

Performance & Evaluation Committee – Ms. Freid and Ms. Springmeier shared that the WIB By-Laws and responsibilities of each committee are being reviewed, with the P&E Committee having already begun. Ms. Freid also shared that emails were sent to 11,000 area residents on UI, offering services through "SkillUp Finger Lakes".

Economic Development Committee – Mr. Manikowski reported that the committee met on September 11th and discussed challenges due to COVID-19 and what economic developers are doing to assist local businesses.

Youth – Ms. Parish stated that committee meetings have been paused until November, to allow members to focus on getting youth back to school in this challenging time.

FAME – Mr. Plympton noted the NYS Workforce Strategy Group, a committee formed by NYATEP which will offer recommendations to stabilize the economy and get New Yorkers back to work. Ale Mendoza of Optimax serves on this committee. The full report will be sent to all members when it is released.

Director's Report – Ms. Springmeier shared that she has been completing annual reviews with staff, conducting interviews for the Staff Accountant position and sharing best practices with other WIB Directors. She also stated that the cash flow issues previously experienced have settled.

Success Story: OJT Program – Amit Gupta, President, MONAG International, Inc.

Mr. Gupta explained the importance and value of the OJT program, especially in the time of COVID-19. He thanked Jeff Weise and Kathy Bailey for their assistance and for streamlining the process. Mr. Gupta shared the OJT program is an invaluable tool for growth of businesses.

Presentation – Educational Challenges Due to COVID-19, Dr. Robert Nye, Finger Lakes Community College and Dr. Vicky Ramos, Wayne-Finger Lakes BOCES

Dr. Nye and Dr. Ramos shared a presentation that they appropriately titled, "Managing Uncertainty". The presentation detailed all that had to be accomplished and set into action in order to reopen K-12 schools and FLCC and the health screening measures that have to take place in order for students to remain receiving instruction in person. They also stressed that communication and flexibility are key during this time.

OTHER BUSINESS:

Ms. Eighmey shared that Anthony Road Wine Company is celebrating its 30th Anniversary.

Mr. Rusinko stated the Executive Director Search Committee has reconvened and is accepting applications through October 1st.

Next Board Meeting – Wednesday, November 18, 2020, *via Zoom*

A motion to adjourn the meeting was made by Mr. Rusinko and seconded by Ms. Parish. All in favor, motion carried. The meeting was adjourned at 9:59 a.m.