

Finger Lakes Workforce Investment Board, Inc.
VETERANS OUTREACH MEETING MINUTES
Thursday, February 10, 2022
Via Zoom

ATTENDANCE:

Members: Julia Murphy, Chris Caughey, Michelle Coomber, Susan Smith, Barb Egenhofer, Rick Plympton, Karen Dean, Zack Brooks, Phil Rouin, Jeremy Marshall

Staff: Lynn Freid, Dréa Badger, Michael Woloson

I. Approval of the October 14, 2021 minutes

Motion to approve the minutes: Zack Brooks; Seconded by Michelle Coomber

II. Career Center COVID-19 Update

Ms. Murphy stated there was a change during the day on 2/10, that the career centers (DOL) do not need to mask starting 2/11/22 (masks worn based on individual preference).

III. Radio/Podcast/Social Media Update

Ms. Badger discussed this topic and asked for anyone to volunteer or provide ideas on how to get into Radio/Podcast and/or Social Media.

Ms. Murphy brought up that DOL has their 'hands tied' when it comes to social media and/or travelling for podcast/radio but they are willing to help where they were able to.

Ms. Freid states background information on this topic. Discussing that FLCC had a template to follow based on earlier meetings and will investigate getting that information from Jennie Erdle. Ms. Freid stated that Phil Rouin also has gone on a radio show with Joe Davis to discuss veteran information previously.

Ms. Egenhofer, from the GRE, mentioned a group called "Disrupt HR". They have a meeting coming up in April and are selective about speakers for those meetings. She has tried to get in front of that group and partners with all the local HR groups. This will be a hybrid meeting and discussing talent strategies that the Greater Rochester Enterprise has. One that was 'disruptive' enough for their focus is "Veteran's Connect" Program. Ms. Egenhofer stated that this may be an option to be more inclusive with the Veteran's Connect program and/or including a larger network for Veteran's in the area.

Ms. Badger will follow up with Barb about this program and making it a bit more inclusive.

Ms. Coomber asked for more details about Veteran's Connect; Veteran's Connect was recently picked up by Ms. Egenhofer – this is a grant funded program through a foundation specific to recruitment of veterans from Fort Drum. They wanted to bring Vets and their families from Fort Drum to the Rochester area and provide tours, things to do, get them out and about to fall in love with the region – then connect those vets with services and job opportunities to bring them into the region. COVID hit shortly after the funding was awarded; funding left over from 2021 and was reapplied for the idea that they could use funds for marketing and events but also connecting with other services and possibly provide a relocation bonus to come to the Rochester region. \$75k grant in 2021 and \$75k for 2022. Barb stated they are specific funds but brainstorming to try and spend the money for successful recruitment.

Mr. Marshall stated he is not directly connected to that program but was aware that it was in the area.

Ms. Coomber stated that the program sounds great.

Ms. Freid mentioned that during a meeting earlier in the day, Mr. Caughey shared currently veteran traffic is low and that the veteran's prefer in-person versus virtual services. Mr. Caughey stated that it is different for different people. Face to face is helpful when working with Vets; based on the individual.

Ms. Murphy called on Ms. Coomber as she has been able to set up face-to-face meetings with veterans recently. The Vets get folders with services and information provided when they have an in-person meeting, and Ms. Coomber likes to give Vets the option to come in if they prefer. She has been able to provide updates on UI to seasonal workers; the vets are happy to see that the DOL is still there and she is happy to provide whatever services they need or to answer any questions. It is still a process to move toward 'fully open'.

IV. Guide to Veteran's Scholarships

Ms. Badger discussed the Guide to Veteran's Scholarships. A website that provides an overview of educational scholarships: <https://study.com/resources/college-scholarships-for-veterans#0173>

All-in-one place for veteran's and families to use funds for post-secondary education as a source for those in the region.

Mr. Marshall said he uses study.com and the scholarship guide to help those vets that were prior to the GI Bill or have exhausted the GI Bill. He has had some success with this guide.

Ms. Freid stated that its excellent to hear that this is legitimate and helpful.

V. Fort Drum Outreach

Ms. Badger asked Mr. Marshall and Ms. Egenhofer for updates on their plans for Fort Drum.

Mr. Marshall said that the last job fair was cancelled and will be into the future. With mandates loosening, he thinks they will schedule in-person job fairs in the future. Fort Drum provides a virtual job fair but the frequency of those is unknown. Still on-going to attract veterans to this area, Vet Connect is a great program. Not more than that at this point.

Mr. Brooks had an update and stated that Fort Drum was planning to have a career fair on May 5, 2022 in-person. Fort Drum mentioned that they are doing virtual career fairs but no additional information. This may be employers can reach out to Fort Drum and do a direct employer to provide openings and options at that employer directly.

Mr. Marshall said they do have those employer direct career fairs throughout the year for those employers that has multiple job openings and will set up a virtual job fair at any time with that business. Those job openings can be sent to the Fort Drum recruiter and it is sent to all veteran's that are transitioning out of Fort Drum.

VI. Other Business/Roundtable

Mr. Marshall has hired a new Service Officer at Ontario County. Ron Z, is being accredited right now and working with employment and workforce development at the county. Phil will be looking for a service officer as well.

Mr. Rouin stated that he is indeed looking for a veteran's service officer and will be posted next week (2/14).

Mr. Marshall shared the specifics of the position: must be a veteran to be a veteran service officer – sit down with vets to identify and apply for benefits, federal, state or local, help navigate benefits system. Look at what else the vet may need and help with outside resources as well. Need a high school diploma and a veteran – send anyone to Phil. Mr. Rouin stated there is a civil service exam required for the position in Yates County. Also must be accredited within 18 months of appointment.

Mr. Rouin reported that vets would rather meet in person and masks are still required. Joe Davis is Phil's go-to guy in the county and did a great job during the radio show so if the future podcast needs. Mr. Rouin mentioned the term of service sponsorship program, working with Jason Skinner and FL Vet Advocacy group. There will be a dashboard that provides information about area for relocation, jobs available, and will look to have the dashboard up for free for the first year; after the first year the counties will likely need to pay for the service. There is training available and are going out to folks that wanted to be sponsors to have visibility on the dashboard at this time.

Ms. Badger asked whether all counties will have access and Mr. Rouin stated that all counties would have access but may look at how each county is funded and the dashboard will be available. Wanted 500 sponsors in New York for the dashboard.

Mr. Caughey reported that case loads are low around the state. There was a lot of return to new employment at the end of the summer, but the case loads now are quite low. Labor market information: it is a job seekers market and wages continue to go up.

VII. Rolling Veteran's Outreach Meeting (Day/Time)

Ms. Badger wanted to provide a rolling meeting to get on everyone's calendars. This would look like the 2nd Thursday of every other month at 3pm. There were no objections to keeping the meeting at this day and time.

Action Item: Ms. Badger will send out meeting invites

Ms. Coomber would love to have more veteran's funneled into the office and offered to provide cards and contact information to make an appointment.

Ms. Freid said we can bump that on our social media platforms.

VIII. Adjournment

The next meeting will be held on Thursday, April 14, 2022 at 3pm.

Respectfully Submitted,
Lynn Freid
Executive Director