

Finger Lakes Workforce Investment Board, Inc.  
**VETERANS OUTREACH MEETING MINUTES**

Thursday, April 14, 2022  
Via Zoom

ATTENDANCE:

**Members:** Claire Eirmann, Chris Caughey, Michelle Coomber, Alé Mendoza, Rick Plympton, Karen Dean, Zack Brooks, Phil Rouin, Jeremy Marshall, Todd Sloane, Heman Sweet, Jennie Erdle-Krampen, Ed Hemminger  
**Staff:** Lynn Freid, Dréa Badger

**I. Introductions/Approval of the Feb 10, 2022, Minutes**

Motion to approve the minutes: Phil Rouin; Seconded by Michelle Coomber

During introductions, Mr. Hemminger stated that Tammy Brissett will take over at the Vet Outreach Meetings for future meetings and will send the information to Dréa Badger for Tammy to be added to the Vet Outreach List.

**II. Career Center COVID-19 Update**

Ms. Eirmann stated the DOL is bringing in 50% of appointment in person. Can only have scheduled appointments but continues with virtual opportunities as well. No word at this time when the office would be fully open (to walk-ins), but will keep everyone updated

**III. Radio/Podcast/Social Media Update**

Ms. Freid stated that it was left off for her to reach out to Ms. Erdle-Krampen from FLCC as Jennie had a structure and flow for this project to follow. Ms. Freid mentioned that it would be an active not passive activity.

Ms. Erdle-Krampen invited Professor Heman Sweet for that reason. FLCC is creating an updated work study job description to provide a better, all-encompassing role for a Veteran student which would include connecting directly to other veteran's in-house and within the community. The position could oversee this effort: FLCC has a podcast studio, connection to internal marketing professionals, and social media contacts. All of this could be part of a job description that FLCC will fill each year; once this is complete there can be focus on how to move forward with this project.

Ms. Freid stated that the FLWIB also reaches out to Hobart/William Smith for possible interns. Mr. Rouin suggested reaching out to Keuka College as well.

Ms. Freid will reach out to Keuka via the FLWIB board member.

Ms. Badger stated that resources have been added to the Veteran Page on the FLWIB website. If anyone has any social media, or other efforts that are veteran based, the FLWIB will put that on the website and throughout the social media threads.

**IV. Fort Drum Outreach**

Mr. Marshall said that he plans to go up to Fort Drum tomorrow, 4/15, and meet with soldiers to discuss what they are looking for when they get out of the military. This is to capture what soldiers are looking for; some know they are going back home, and some do not know exactly what they will be doing.

Next career fair will be on 5/5/22; there is a current outbreak of COVID at Fort Drum but looks like that career fair will still happen in May. If anyone wants to go to Fort Drum, reach out to Mr. Marshall.

Mr. Mendoza asked whether there is data on separating or transitioning soldiers coming into the Finger Lakes region. If there is an ideal area or if there is any information captured on this topic.

Mr. Marshall stated that they do not track that information as much because of the robustness of the data. Mr. Marshall and Mr. Rouin both get information for vet populations in each county. They try and keep track of those that 'come back' to the area and help those, but no data on who left Fort Drum and came to the FLX.

Mr. Marshall was looking through the transition assistance website and those companies that are looking to hire can send that information to transition assistance website for them to provide to soldiers that are leaving. Many specialized soldiers are getting recruited 6 months prior to separation; Finger Lakes can still be competitive if we can provide employment options and recruit those soldiers that have those skills.

Mr. Hemminger asked if part of the target to focus on is the family of the veterans: there are additional opportunities for the families as well in the region so putting out information on social media, reaching out to churches (or things like that), where family members of veteran's may be located so that they can bring that information back to their loved ones in the military.

Ms. Freid said that a group did reach out directly to veteran's and their families; they found that marketing to veterans was not successful but marketing to families had a much better success (in 2012, Farm to Fork grant through RIT). We are better at getting the physical flyer out there, but we can be much more social media savvy at this time.

Mr. Hemminger stated that also churches or community-based organizations, the families may pass on this information to the veterans in their lives.

Ms. Erdle-Krampen asked Mr. Marshall if he still uses a packet that provides Finger Lakes information for the full region about what we have to offer. Also provide information to those that are not veteran's and letting people know what is available.

Mr. Marshall does continue to use the Finger Lakes folders that has print off jobs in the counties, good array of information and available employment, includes tourism information as well. The packet encompasses additional information on the quality of life in this region. There are wineries, manufacturing, healthcare, everything that people want is here. Post-secondary education is discussed, employment, but includes the full person that could come to the region (family included).

Ms. Freid asked the Department of Labor if they would be able to do the personal outreach. Ms. Eirmann stated that currently they cannot have people travel but will follow up when that may be more available to the DOL staff to get out into the community.

Mr. Hemminger brought up that when we have employers that need very specific qualifications for their jobs, look at what bases have those skills; there are specific bases or posts that will have the skills needed (ex. Optics technician, computer programming) and target the employment and openings in the FLX region to those specific areas of the military. Ms. Badger reiterated what Barb stated in the last meeting about the \$75k grant that was awarded to the region that helps recruit veterans for the 9-county area; Ms. Badger will reach out to Barb to see what metrics they plan to track with the grant; possibly track what Alé had mentioned earlier.

Ms. Coober stated that she spoke with Frontier, and they are retiring a lot of people who do not want to learn how to do fiber optics, so they are hiring a lot of new people. She plans to push vets to Frontier who would like those types of employment.

Ms. Freid asked if Frontier was in OSOS.

Mr. Caughey stated that if someone has OSOS they could search for Frontier to see what is available. He has worked with them previously and they have posted a lot of jobs. Case loads have been low and the vets they are working with through the DOL are retirement age.

Mr. Hemminger stated that NYS is doing a broadband study and all [hone and cable companies will be hiring optics people as they will need to update and put in a ton of fiber optics.

Fort Drum conversation moved into the Updates and Roundtable discussion; Mr. Marshall dropped off due to an unforeseen computer reboot.

## V. Other Business/Roundtable

Ms. Erdle-Krampen shared that FLCC has attained a Gold Star College for military friendly colleges for 2022-2023. Previously a bronze awardee; this is a great accomplishment and puts FLCC on the map with other colleges like Syracuse University, and one of 4 other colleges in the area that attained this distinction.

Mr. Sweet said that FLCC will also do a dinner dance for veteran's as well – it is in November 2022 (it is on the FLCC calendar)

Optimax update from Mr. Mendoza – on-site career fair will be on the 4/26/22 and will be in the media. Still aggressively hiring and have done many virtual opportunities with little turnout. In-person will likely provide a better understanding of the atmosphere for these manufacturing jobs. Continuing to have an open mind and not reinvent the wheel.

Mr. Plympton stated that last year Optimax hired 80 people; there is another expansion for the facility and will hire 5-10 people a month for the foreseeable future.

Mr. Sweet asked about the scope of the organization and to see if loan forgiveness was brought up as a means to keep people in the area for employment. Mr. Mendoza answered with a resounding yes – the bottom line is that companies are looking at that to engage new graduates and offset transitioning from student to workforce; creating a more scaled approach is on the table as well.

Mr. Brooks did not have specific updates but will be attending at Fort Drum on May 5<sup>th</sup> as a representative of GW Lisk and promoting the overall offerings in the Finger Lakes Region.

Ms. Freid wanted to leave with an action item: employers there is a need for employees at Frontier and Optimax. FLWIB will reach out to Optimax and Frontier about jobs available and then targeted social media for employment specific to veterans. Will make sure that the DOL is included in this marketing effort as well.

Mr. Marshall will continue to promote the area.

Mr. Caughey has promoted the job openings at Optimax and GW Lisk; Frontier's head quarters are in Rochester but may be available in our area also. Chris has 25 Veteran's and Michelle has 10 in queue. DOL explained how their program works with additional information and asked anyone interested in knowing more to reach out directly:

[Christopher.Caughey@labor.ny.gov](mailto:Christopher.Caughey@labor.ny.gov)

Mr. Hemminger stated that LanTek is looking to hire as well and that any internet company will be looking for new hires due to the increase in fiber and required internet access.

Mr. Rouin discussed a resource fair on 4/30/22 from 10am to 2pm at the Yates County Building parking lot, 417 Liberty Street. Mostly around health but may be an opportunity for employment. He is looking at "Expiration of Term of Service" program – enables the sponsor to reach out with a veteran and acclimate them to the region. Teaching motivational interviewing techniques such as SMARTER goals instead of SMART goals. Provides whole life opportunities for a veteran; things you may not always think about. It is about connecting veterans through their transition. Information in PDF attached to these minutes.

Ms. Badger asked if that was through a webinar or in-person. MR. Rouin explained that it is through a webinar and that the VA sponsored in-person classes, however mostly online; it is flexible for everyone's schedule.

Mr. Sloane wanted to make folks aware that loan forgiveness and the MOS fit through the DOL – FLCC has been awarded a federal grant, called the "Reimagine Grant" that will pay for 99% of veterans and pay for their training in full. This is for workforce raining in Advanced Manufacturing – can be employed or pre-hires. Veterans are tremendous candidates with their character and skills so this will allow employers to hire into their manufacturing positions even if they aren't a perfect fit at the time of transition. If you want to know more, email Todd: [todd.sloane@flcc.edu](mailto:todd.sloane@flcc.edu)

## VI. Adjournment

**The next meeting will be held on Thursday, June 9, 2022 at 3pm.**

Respectfully Submitted,  
Lynn Freid  
Executive Director