

**WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT BOARD**

**MARCH 26, 2002**

**8:30 A.M.**

**TOMPKINS COUNTY**

**PUBLIC LIBRARY**

**PRESENT:** A. Pedersen, B. Blanchard, R. Bohman, N. Carlisle, D. Czerwonka, M. Dolan, D. Herath, J. Little, T. Mallinson, D. Mastro, J. McPheeters, M. Gould, T. O'Neill, M. Opperman, L. Patz, J. Rossi, C. Sowards, M. Stamm, I. Stein, S. Pronti

**EXCUSED:** M. Goldstein, N. Zahler, L. Dillon

**ABSENT:** M. Babbage, T. Colbert, P. Gardner, C. Haynes, C. Hoose, J. Maglione, D. McDonald, S. White

**GUESTS:** C. Santos, Tompkins Community Action; T. Riley, New York State Department of Labor; B. Heath, Tompkins County Workforce Development Board Staff; B. Fuller, Tompkins Cortland Community College; L. Leonard, LaTourelle Country Inn

**CALL TO ORDER**

Chairman Pedersen called the meeting to order at 8:32 a.m.

**APPROVAL OF MINUTES**

It was Moved by Mr. Bohman, seconded by Ms. McPheeters, and unanimously adopted by voice vote of members present to approve the minutes of January 22, 2002, as submitted.

**ANNOUNCEMENTS**

Mr. Pedersen welcomed Scott Pronti from Emerson Power Transmission to the Board. He also announced that the next meeting would be held April 23, 2002, at 8:30 a.m. for strategic planning purposes. He asked Board members to complete the survey that was mailed out and return it as soon as possible so the results can be incorporated into the planning process.

**ADDITIONS/DELETIONS TO AGENDA**

None

**APPROVAL OF NEW BOARD MEMBERS**

It was Moved by Mr. Mastro, seconded by Mr. Czerwonka and unanimously adopted by voice vote of members present to approve the appointments of Leslie Leonard from LaTourelle and Jeffrey Wesche from the Computing Center as members to the Workforce Development Board for terms to expire June 30, 2002.

**AMENDMENT TO WIA TRAINING ELIGIBILITY**

Mr. Czerwonka reported at the last Workforce Services Committee, the Committee

passed a resolution to change the WIA training definition from 250% of poverty to the high mid range (estimated 75 percentile) of the prevailing wage for the targeted demand occupations.

It was Moved by Mr. Czerwonka, seconded by Ms. McPheeters and unanimously adopted by voice vote of members present to approve the following resolution:

## **RESOLUTION – CHANGING WIA ELIGIBILITY CRITERIA FOR EMPLOYED WORKERS**

RESOLVED, on recommendation of the Workforce Services Committee, that the WIA Eligibility Criteria is hereby modified to individual earnings of 250% of the poverty level for demand occupations or the prevailing hourly base wage, if higher, for the \*targeted demand occupations; and it is further

RESOLVED, that the prevailing hourly wages shall be defined as the high midrange (estimated 75th percentile of the distribution of wages) of the Wage Data and Occupational Employment Survey for the Southern Tier, most recently published by the New York State Department of Labor Research and Statistics Division.

### **\*Targeted Demand Occupations/Industries**

- Healthcare – all occupations
- Construction and Manufacturing Skilled Tradespersons
- Heating Ventilation and Air Conditioning (HVAC)
- High Tech Workers (includes technical support staff)
- Entry-level manufacturing positions
- K-12 Teachers and Administrators
- Accountants and Chief Financial Officers
- Retail
- Daycare

## **2001 RECAP**

Ms. Giordano identified the long-term objectives as outlined in the Five-Year Plan as well as the 2001 goals and objectives and the status of them. She stated in July 2002 the Board would be entering its third year. She noted one thing that has not been completed is the employer survey and reported this is being pursued with the help of the Department of Labor. She hopes to be sending out something via email in the near future. The creation of a comprehensive and coordinated workforce recruitment and retention system has also not been met. Ms. Giordano pointed out that when that goal was set, there was discussion about putting together a package of materials that can be used by businesses in the community, but other priorities have come up and it has not been completed. She did note that TCAD has put together a brochure in this area. Ms. Opperman stated that when the brochure was created through TCAD, a specific group of individuals helped create it and it might be useful to have that same group work on the materials for Workforce Development since they have the background information. Ms. Giordano asked, given the economy, if this is still a priority and stated it should be discussed at the strategic planning meeting that will be

held in May. Ms. Opperman stated that national searches occur during recruitment at Cornell and when the economy slows down, it is more difficult to bring people to the area and a recruitment package would be beneficial.

## **LOCAL ECONOMIC NEWS**

Mr. Stamm reported that Kolar closed after many decades in the community and there have been short-term layoffs in other machine shops. He stated Cornell's long-term plan is to downsize, but to offset that he indicated TCAD is working with a couple of biotech companies that are looking at expansion and he expects expansion in some of the smaller companies in the community. He noted the mall is expanding, and he anticipates significant growth in the commercial/retail sectors. Mr. Stamm also reported on the Emerson project stating Emerson closed its plant in Syracuse and is looking at the possibility of relocating their operations to either Ithaca or Indiana. There is the possibility of 120+ new jobs being created. The Industrial Development Agency has approved a tax abatement package, the State is putting together a package to help make improvements and buy equipment, and NYSEG will also be providing help. He indicated Workforce Development would also have a role eventually. Mr. Pedersen stated the Executive Committee has met to discuss Emerson project to see what type of package might be possible to offer. He stated workforce development funds cannot be used to recruit individuals Emerson is looking to locate here, but funds can be used to train the existing labor pool for the possibility that jobs may be created. He stated the Executive Committee supports doing whatever can be done to bring the jobs here, but no final decisions have been made. Discussions with Emerson continue and additional information will be provided at the April meeting.

Ms. Giordano stated that workforce development funds cannot be used as part of an economic development package and funding cannot be used to induce the relocation of Emerson to Ithaca. She noted that this is true nationwide and Indiana is faced with these same rules. She stated research of the labor force in Tompkins County showed there were 805 unemployed individuals in February 2002 and 61 percent of them were blue-collar workers. She indicated funding could be used to prepare the labor force for possible future jobs.

Mr. Stamm stated that the relocation of Emerson is not solely about the creation of 120 jobs, but also the possibility of 500-600 current workers being affected in the community if Emerson should leave. Emerson has been a very good neighbor, they have continued to buy equipment through the years and have never asked for assistance from the community.

## **YOUTH EMPLOYMENT COUNCIL**

Ms. McPheeters reported the subcommittee looking at coordinated agency/school/business/job placements has met and discussed updating the Summer Guide to Youth Employment for 2002 and developing a distribution plan with all area high schools. Providers of subsidized summer youth employment opportunities will participate in the May 1st Career and Job Fair to be held at Ithaca City High School. The fair will feature

business representatives; post secondary opportunities and an area with a computer where Career Zone and other career and job search avenues can be pursued by youth. The group also plans to meet with guidance counselors from county middle and high schools to make sure they are aware of summer youth employment opportunities.

Ms. McPheeters reported the subcommittee looking at ways to give more youth work-based learning opportunities has met and they discussed increasing both the quality and quantity of work-based learning opportunities (job shadowing, internships) and linking them progressively to more intensive internships (paid or unpaid) as they get older. The group also discussed possible steps that could be taken to improve coordination and efficiency among schools and other organizations that arrange work-based learning. The group chose to focus on the goal of helping young people make connections among their work-based learning experiences and with their school and career goals. The means identified was a portfolio that the student can update as they progress through school that includes a systematic documentation assembled by the youth that would portray to an employer or admissions officer a sequence of paid and unpaid work experiences. Ms. McPheeters stressed the importance of businesses providing opportunities for youth and noted Census statistics indicate that youth are leaving the area and this impacts the economy. She encouraged Board members whose businesses need summer workers to consider hiring youth for the jobs.

## **CENTER OPERATIONS REPORT**

Mr. Rossi reported due to the economy and the recent marketing campaign, the number of jobseekers entering the system has risen dramatically. In November 2001 there were 1400 walk-ins to the Center and in February that went up to 2300. The January unemployment rate was four percent which is much lower than most of the state. He did note that funding is distributed based on need and because of the lower unemployment rate the amount of resources is lower for this area. The total number of businesses on file has gone up, but the number of job orders has decreased from 245 in November to 163 in January. On-site business recruiting has been very strong and the "Meet the Employer" sessions has been very well attended and provides an opportunity to find out about area businesses. He noted that last week during Borg Warner's session there was standing room only. Cayuga Medical Center, Ithaca College, Tompkins County Personnel were also featured in March.

Ms. Sowards reported 357 individuals have received training since July 2001 and \$162,000 has been obligated in training funds for that same period. Sixty-seven individuals have participated in the InVEST Job Start program. She noted the Certified Nursing Assistant Program has been very good and BOCES has been very helpful with this program. To date \$100,000 has been billed to the State for the InVEST program.

Ms. Sowards reported that traffic in the Center has grown and she announced that there are four partners presently helping with staffing assistance and thanked them for their support.

Ms. Fuller reported that through the InVEST Program both Electrical Technician and HVAC training has been given and in March four individuals graduated from the Electrical Technician Program and 15 individuals graduated from HVAC. She stated that the High Tech training has been very successful and 1919 individuals have been through training.

## **DIRECTOR'S REPORT**

Ms. Giordano reported a team meeting would be held this afternoon to look at grant opportunities and set priorities. Grants under consideration include a youth proposal, the Verizon Foundation Grant, and a proposal to retain older workers. She reported the youth grant that was submitted by Wegmans in collaboration with the Ithaca City School District and the WIA program was not received. The program would have provided a mentoring program for youth. She indicated only six applications were funded and only half of the money was awarded. Ms. Blanchard asked if there is a possibility the remaining funds will be distributed. Ms. Giordano stated the funds would be re-released and made available to employers who already have innovative youth programs. Ms. Opperman asked if a response could be sought on why the proposal was not funded. Mr. Carlisle indicated he would ask Mr. Johnson from Wegmans to provide a response.

Ms. Giordano reported that a Youth Job Fair will be held at Ithaca City High School on May 1st. She will be sending out a notice and an online application will be available for sign-ups.

Ms. Giordano reported that as of July 2002 there will be a 21 percent cut in funding. She indicated operational expenses are being reviewed. The second Memorandum of Understanding is still in negotiations. Partners are negotiating in good faith and have built a new level of trust. She stated they are working on a better foundation. Mr. Bohman reported there is only one area that has submitted a second year MOU. Mr. Fortier stated time is being spent on ways to track expenses and the subcommittee has been doing a lot of work in this area. He stated the partners might be ready to vote at the May meeting.

Ms. Giordano reported she recently attended the State Board meeting. She was impressed in some ways and not in others. She indicated it is very political, but that the local chairs in attendance felt they benefited from the meeting. Mr. Pedersen stated that at a recent local WIB chairs meeting with Commissioner Angello, the Commissioner were told that areas needed more autonomy.

## **ADJOURNMENT**

The meeting adjourned at 9:39 a.m. The next meeting will be held April 23, 2002, at 8:30 a.m. in the Borg Warner Room of the Tompkins County Public Library.

Minutes prepared by [Jennifer Luu](#).

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