

Tompkins County Workforce Development Board
Services to Individuals with Disabilities Committee

MINUTES

**Tuesday, February 13, 2024 | *Workforce Development Board Conference Rm.*
119 E. Seneca Street, Suite 200B, Ithaca, NY 14850**

Present: A. Tunison, B. Flaherty, J. Slade

Excused: J. Beaumont, D. Barr, J. Lynch, B. Seekins, C. Stanley

Staff: C. Sponn, D. Achilles

Guest: C. Buchanan; Challenge Workforce Solutions

Call To Order:

Mr. Tunison called the meeting to order at 8:34 a.m.

Approval of Minutes: April 11, 2023
June 13, 2023
August 8, 2023
December 13, 2023

Due to lack of voting members present to achieve quorum; the vote for approval of minutes was tabled until the next meeting.

Discussion

2024 Committee Planning and Goals

The group discussed inviting employers to a committee meeting to discuss how they serve individuals with disabilities and in the future having an event with several employers where they can learn from other employers and be connected with appropriate resources/agencies. Wegmans was mentioned as a model and an invitation to speak at the next committee meeting will be extended.

The group discussed the workforce/disability resource summit that occurred in Broome County and the workforce challenges that were mentioned such as transportation. The group discussed rallying around certain issues and advocating through change in collaboration with other groups.

New Committee Name and Duties Vote

Mr. Sponn reported there will be a final vote at next meeting to finalize the committee name and duties.

NY SCION and Connecting with Businesses

Mr. Sponn had an initial meeting with the new CEO of Downtown Ithaca Alliance, Ms. Rohrer, and it was a positive meeting. Mr. Sponn said she already is interested in hosting youth for a job experience. She will give more access to businesses downtown and has a vision for an inclusive and diverse workforce working downtown.

Disability Resource Coordinator (DRC) Report

Mr. Sponn reported Ms. Stanley is not available for an update at this meeting and for the upcoming year there will be a focus on partnerships with local businesses.

Director's Report

Future Tompkins County Government Building

Mr. Sponn reported that in 2028 a new County building is planned to be completed. The Career Center would move to this new building. Mr. Sponn reported he advocated for the first floor and raised concerns about accessible parking for participants. Mr. Sponn said he will call to this committee if any hurdles come about during this process.

New Tompkins County Website

Mr. Sponn reported that this year there will be a new website platform for the County. This will be transformational for the department as it will be more accessible and allow the department to communicate information better. Mr. Sponn also wants a webpage that reflects the SID committee work and mission so the general public can be aware of the work being done.

DRC Webpage

Mr. Sponn reported a DRC webpage has been complete and lists all of the services of the DRC and there will be more additions to the page.

Youth Employment Resource Team (YERT)

Mr. Sponn reported the YERT team will be meeting this February and future field trips to partner locations are being scheduled.

Career Center Update

Mr. Sponn reported that Ms. Caci is no longer with the department and that position will be posted in a few weeks. Mr. Sponn said the new department is moving in the right direction in enhancing services, streamlining procedures, and updating policies. As the year progresses and more staff are onboarded there will be an increase in workshops and events.

Mr. Sponn also reported he has been advocating for modern day technology in the Career Center conference room. This would include conference room technology that would allow for hybrid events, which will make the Career Center more accessible. The Tompkins County Legislature Chair is in agreement a change is needed and so is County Administration.

Members Updates

Ms. Slade reported that ACCES-VR will be working with the New York State Department of Labor business service representative when hired.

Mr. Tunison reported that OMH account referrals are making sure that individuals are reaching employment. Contracts are being executed with partners in mid-March, and are just waiting for approval to move forward.

Mr. Flaherty reported that Mental Health is hiring 1 Employment Specialist. Mental Health has not collaborated with ACCES-CR but is receiving referrals.

Ms. Buchanan reported that Challenge Workforce Solutions is moving into Youth Services.

Adjournment:

Mr. Tunison adjourned the meeting at 9:38 a.m.