

**WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT BOARD
8:30 A.M.**

JANUARY 24, 2006

TOMPKINS COUNTY PUBLIC LIBRARY

PRESENT: B. Blanchard, R. Bohman, J. Fogler, C. Haynes, L. Leonard, J. Little, K. Luz-Herrera, T. Mallinson, D. Marsh, P. McKee, J. McPheeters, M. Opperman, A. Pedersen, J. Rossi, M. Stamm, I. Stein, J. Wesche, N. Zahler

EXCUSED: L. Dillon, L. Patz, S. Pronti

ABSENT: P. Carey, T. Colbert, W. Cooke, D. Cooper, B. Fortier, P. Gardner, D. Herath, K. Mann, E. O'Donnell, R. Pass, M. Turnbull

GUESTS: J. Kozlowski, T. Doherty, New York State Department of Labor; S. Varvyanis, Cornell University; D. Bradac, Tompkins County Office of Employment and Training

STAFF: J. Mattick, Jennifer Luu

CALL TO ORDER

Chair Opperman called the meeting to order at 8:38.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Ms. Opperman welcomed Kathy Luz Herrera to the Board as the representative to the Tompkins County Legislature. She also welcomed Ms. Blanchard, who will now be representing business on the board.

LONG RANGE PLANNING

Ms. Opperman stated the Board spent time at the last meeting discussing the future of the WIB. The Executive committee has met a couple of times and prepared some ideas for consideration. The WIB has had a lot of success over the last five years.

Ms. Mattick provided an overview of the last five years including the success of the system and the current state of affairs (attached). She stated that enhanced community awareness and partnerships were an expectation of the original legislation and Tompkins County has met or exceeded that expectation. The greatest challenge for the WIB and the One Stop Center continues to be the reductions in state and federal funding.

Ms. Opperman reminded the Board of the three key imperatives (below) and stated as the Board looks forward it is important to remember the key imperatives and what the Board said they wanted to do. She stated when there were opportunities to find creative funding it was possible to look beyond the key imperative and do more, but those funding streams are no longer available and/or are not anticipated in the future.

- Key Strategic Imperative #1

Ensure A Pipeline Of Skilled Workers For The Jobs Of Today And Tomorrow

- Key Strategic Imperative #2

Promote Tompkins County As An Inclusive, Diverse Destination That Is Attractive To Individuals And Organizations, Values Its Mature Workers, And Retains Younger Workers

- Key Strategic Imperative #3

Enhance Services To Businesses, With A Particular Focus On Industries With Existing Or Looming Skills Shortages And Small Businesses

The three options that were considered by the Executive Committee were:

1. Remain status quo – keep the WIB defined as it is with a director and connected to Tompkins County
2. Merge with another workforce investment area
3. Become a non-profit corporation
 - a. Merge with another non-profit and/or
 - b. Become stand-alone non-profit

The Executive Committee met with the Finger Lakes Workforce Investment Board (FLWIB), which is a non-profit corporation. The FLWIB is a four- county workforce investment board and is not tied to the county structure, but rather the counties deferred their authority to the non-profit. The Board could look at aligning with a non-profit with a similar mission or become a standalone non-profit organization.

Ms. Blanchard asked if standalone non-profits receive county funding. Ms. Opperman stated they receive county funding to support their one-stop centers, mostly through free space in county facilities and ancillary services i.e., purchasing, IT support, etc., and also receive some financial support as well. The FLWIB uses the 10 percent administrative allocation to cover board staff and program funding is used to pay for the individuals providing programming services.

Mr. Marsh asked how funding is allocated, is it done county by county, and if Tompkins County were to become part of that area, how would resources be shared. Ms. Opperman stated that this would be a challenge if the Board became part of another workforce investment area. Tompkins County does not have a lot of funding to bring to the table and in the Finger Lakes Workforce Investment Area the amount of money allocated to each county is not based on the county's size, but rather competitively based on how well each county has met its goals.

Ms. McPheeters stated the Executive Committee also looked at the possibility of merging with Cortland Cayuga, which does allocate funding based on a formula, but what it doesn't do is allow you to look at the future because you end up always trying to plan based on the past. She stated one concern she has about merging with the Finger Lakes is the distance from Tompkins County and participation on that board could be difficult. She stated when they created their area it was strategic because they did not want to become partners with Monroe County. She stated that Tompkins County does have some things in common with the Finger Lakes such as their new technology park, but they have much more manufacturing. Cayuga Cortland really isn't a good fit and the only other real option would be Broome Tioga, which is the area Tompkins County left to become a standalone workforce investment area because we didn't have a lot in common with them.

Mr. Stamm stated the theory of a standalone WIB is the best option if it is possible to have a functioning One-Stop Center and WIB staff. The budget impacts need to be reviewed. Ms. Opperman stated that if Tompkins County is best served by a combined effort toward matching workers with jobs then a decision needs to be made on how hard we are willing to work and how creative we need to be to keep that in Tompkins County. Tompkins County would be able to meet the state obligations by merging, but by doing so would be reducing in some significant way the collaboration between businesses and service agencies. She stated that there have never been enough resources available in the administrative allocation that is received to support the WIB office. In the past it has been possible to offset those funds with funds obtained competitively, but competitive opportunities are becoming scarce.

Mr. Rossi stated that if there were to be a merger, there would still be a one-stop in Ithaca. He stated that to merge, Tompkins County would need help in brokering a partnership. Ms. Opperman stated the Board has to look strategically at the issue and decide what is best for the Tompkins County workforce and then work towards those goals. How invested is the Board in seeing Tompkins County focusing itself on workforce development?

Ms. McPheeters stated the most important thing Tompkins County has to offer is it is a job center. People come here to work and that increases the County's value, but also makes it challenging. The County needs to be future focused. Is it possible to remain a standalone WIB with strategic partnerships with other WIB's because Tompkins County has jobs available?

Mr. Pedersen stated the WIB needs to identify how it can make a difference in the community. At the beginning there was a lot of energy within the system and this needs to be regained, rather than just becoming another part of the bureaucracy.

Mr. Haynes stated that partnering with other WIB's in the past has not been helpful. There is a need for partnering locally, but with a regional focus because there is a need to connect on a regional basis.

Ms. Opperman stated she is not sure that Tompkins County would get what it needs from joining another workforce investment area; the identities of those areas are set. There needs to be focus on getting jobs for customers and helping employers in Tompkins County.

Ms. Blanchard asked if it is possible to have a virtual partnership with another workforce area (perhaps Saratoga County) that has more in common with Tompkins County. Ms. Opperman stated it is possible to have a partnership in the way of contracting out certain functions to another WIB who has the infrastructure and can more efficiently handle those tasks. There has been interest by one WIB to help us in that way. It would then be possible to look creatively for grant opportunities with other WIBs focusing on worker and workforce opportunities. Ms. Mattick stated that it would be uncharted territory to form a virtual partnership with a WIB as far away as Saratoga, but it could be explored.

Mr. Stamm stated the Executive Committee looked at the administrative burden and if it is possible to subcontract that piece out to another area. Mr. Little stated he was not under the impression that it would cost less to pursue that avenue. Ms. Mattick stated she will be meeting with the Finger Lakes Workforce Investment Board to discuss contracting out the program and fiscal monitoring. The County approved \$6,000 in the 2006 budget for this purpose. The monitoring is a new state mandate and the Finger Lakes have designated staff performing the monitoring function. This will free up some staff time and meet the state requirements.

Ms. Zahler stated in terms of moving forward, it would be helpful to see what the functions are and how much staff time is spent forward planning, relationship building, etc., versus the administrative functions related to passing out the state and federal money to the community. She stated she would be more inclined to contracting out the functions related to managing those funds to free up the Board to plan for the future, but would need more information before doing so.

Ms. Opperman stated the group is on a tight deadline and a recommendation needs to be made to the County prior to the next budget cycle commencing. She stated she would like the Board to set a strategic goal and then do an analysis to see if it is feasible. Does Tompkins County want to try to remain singular and if so the Board needs to review the finances, resolve staffing and look at other ways to get the work done? If that is not the direction, then merging or becoming a non-profit needs to be considered.

She stated she has heard two arguments about remaining a workforce investment board. One, the state has indicated there will be no standalone WIBs in the future, and if Tompkins moves ahead with staying singular that is subject to change. The second argument is the business community's interest in workforce development in a different way than what the WIB permits. For example, the WIB has to deal with things that the business community doesn't necessarily find useful in terms of state and federal obligations.

Mr. Rossi stated that remaining singular is the most desirable, but is it economical and are we confident that there will be enough money to keep moving forward.

Ms. Stein asked what would be lost if the WIB remains singular and is then mandated by the state to partner with another area. Ms. Mattick stated that there has been some discussion about the federal legislation changing workforce investment areas to a minimum population of 500,000 and this would affect the entire State.

Mr. Pedersen stated he would like to see the Board explore the option of becoming a non-profit organization.

Mr. Bohman stated there are other WIA's that are looking at becoming non-profits because of the grant opportunities that are available, but he does not know how successful that has been and whether or not those funding opportunities will eventually dissolve as well. Ms. Mattick stated that while employed in Seneca County, she is not aware of any grant opportunities that the Finger Lakes Workforce Investment Board received because they were a non-profit organization.

Ms. Opperman thinks becoming a non-profit should be considered. She stated the WIB is currently seen as an arm of county government and this is not the most effective way to get businesses to participate. By becoming a non-profit it would become a separate organization with a separate identity that could allow a higher expectation from businesses to participate.

Ms. Blanchard stated it could be possible to make workforce development a program within another non-profit organization. Becoming a standalone non-profit could cast the organization as a social service agency and this is not the intent. Ms. Opperman agreed and stated one reason to look at merging with another non-profit is it would allow workforce development to leverage the services provided from that organization.

She stated workforce development has had a lot of support from the County in the past and they have been very helpful and will always be a partner. To become a non-profit would not be a departure from a county relationship, it would be a presentation to the County that the WIB will be looking at its budgets, ways to obtain additional outside funding, etc., but the County will ultimately be the ones to make the decision.

Next Steps

- Review current budget and how funding is allocated
- Amount of time spent on compliance issues
- Meet with County Administrator

ADJOURNMENT

The meeting adjourned at 9:57 a.m. The next Board meeting is scheduled for March 28, 2006 at 8:30 a.m. in the Borg-Warner Room at the Tompkins County Public Library.

Overview

- The last five years: *Building the System*
- Our work paid off!

The Last Five Years:

Building The System

- Shared System Identity
- Shared infrastructure
- Shared staff development
- Improved services for individuals with disabilities
- Created a multi-agency *Business Solutions Team*
- Resource Sharing Agreement (100% Partner participation)
- Center Management Team
- Signage for system access points at Partner locations
- Shared database implementation
- Successful collaborative grant applications
- Shared system measures

Our Work Has Paid Off!

- Significantly increased...
 - Customer Satisfaction
 - Individual & Business Customer Market Penetration
 - Diversity of job offerings and talent pool
 - Workforce resources (over \$6 Million in direct resources invested)
- Improved community awareness of workforce issues
- Enhanced alignment with economic development

Enhanced Community Awareness & Partnerships Via..

- Workforce Summit
- Staff development and teambuilding functions
- Annual meetings attended by broader community
- Regular radio show appearance
- Professional Opportunity Developers
- Coordinated Business Recruitment (WIB staff and economic development community)
- State of The Workforce Report
- Participation on other boards and committees

Noteworthy Business Services

- “Meet The Employer” sessions at the one-stop center
- Business visits coordinated through the Business Solutions Team
- Rapid response services (Axiohm, Kolar Machine & Tool, JC Penney, etc.)
- Emerson Power Transmission rapid expansion project
- Labor Market information
- Human Resource consulting services
- Coordinated with the Alliance for Manufacturing and Technology to identify small manufacturing companies to deliver strategic planning services
- Provided technical assistance to businesses for state grants
- Developed a Customer Sales and Service Training Center, certified by the National Retail Federation Foundation and overseen by an employer advisory committee

Current State of Affairs

- County Supported Board funding through December 2006
- Likely allocation cuts from state due to federal and state reductions in Workforce Investment Act funding
- These cuts will effect both Board and One Stop

Current State of Affairs

Tompkins Workforce New York One Stop

- Served 8,069 individuals between July 2004 – June 2005
- Served 4,034 individuals between July 2005 – December 2005
- Conclusion – Center continues to be crucial resource for Jobseekers
- Center served 349 businesses from July 2004 – June 2005
- Center served 245 businesses from July 2005 – December 2005
- Conclusion – Center continues to be crucial resource for businesses

The Next 3 Years: Our Challenges

- Creating and maintaining a sense of urgency
- Maintaining local control
- Supporting system infrastructure
- Maintaining Partner commitment
- Securing adequate training resources
- Staying relevant

Challenges in Supporting System Infrastructure

- Reduced WIA and partner resources
- Divisive MOU cost allocation plan negotiations
- Reduced formula funds
- Reduced competitive grant opportunities.

Addressing System Infrastructure Challenges

- Take further cost-saving measures
- Recruit additional partners to enhance services and reduce costs per partner
- Generate new revenue (foundations, local tax revenues, grants, fee for service)

Taking a Strategic Approach

Key Strategic Imperative #1

- Ensure A Pipeline of Skilled Workers for the Jobs of Today and Tomorrow

Key Strategic Imperative #2

- Promote Tompkins County as an Inclusive, Diverse Destination that is Attractive to Individuals and Organizations, Values its Mature Workers, and Retains Younger Workers

Key Strategic Imperative #3

- Enhance Services to Businesses, with a Particular Focus on Industries with Existing or Looming Skills Shortages and Small Businesses