

**WORKFORCE INVESTMENT BOARD**  
**SEPTEMBER 30, 2008**

**8:30 A.M.**

**RAMADA INN**

**PRESENT:** Martha Turnbull, Michael Stamm, Patrick McKee, Mark Coldren, R. Bohman, Lisa Holmes, P. Gardner, D. Bradac, D. Herath, K. Luz-Herrera, M. Opperman, S. Sammis, J. Little, B. Bantle, Leslie Leonard, E. O. Donnell, B. Myers, A. Pedersen, , Nancy Zahler, Tompkins County Youth Services Department;

**GUESTS:** J. Kisloski, Candor Central Schools Superintendent; R. Dougherty, Candor High School Principal; Suki Tabor, Ithaca Youth Bureau; Linda Schoffel, Cornell Cooperative Extension of Tompkins County; Nancy Zook, Tompkins County Youth Services Department; Eric Hartz, Groton High School Principal; Martha Armstrong, Tompkins County Area Development; Doug Moore, Michael Hughes, Cathy Leonard, NYSDOL; Paula Hurley, Trumansburg Central Schools Superintendent; Sandy Sherwood, Dryden Central Schools Superintendent; S. Greener, TC3; Heather Cooper, Tony DiLucci, TST BOCES; Steve Grimm, Lansing Central School Superintendent; Victoria Zeppelin, Tech Prep Program; J. Pastel, Ithaca Central Schools Superintendent; Janie Nusser, South Seneca Central Schools Superintendent

**STAFF:** J. Mattick, Jennifer Luu

### **CALL TO ORDER**

Chairman Pedersen called the meeting to order at 8:33 a.m.

### **APPROVAL OF MINUTES**

It was Moved by Mr. Little, seconded by Mr. Bantle and unanimously adopted by voice vote of members present to approve the minutes of May 20, 2008.

### **WIA YOUTH CONTRACT EXTENSION**

Ms. Myers, on behalf of the Youth Council, reported that the Council has met and reviewed the performance and expenditures with the current contractor, Tompkins County Office of Employment and Training and they are very pleased with the contractor's performance. The Council is recommending the extension of the current contract with the Office of Employment and Training for a one-year period through September 30, 2009. She noted the Council would be issuing a Request for Proposals for the Program in spring 2009 for services to begin October 1, 2009.

It was Moved by Ms. Myers, seconded by Mr. Stamm and unanimously adopted by voice vote of members present to approve the contract extension with the Tompkins County Office of Employment and Training to operate the WIA Youth Program for a one-year period, beginning October 1, 2008 and ending September 30, 2009, and authorize the Workforce Investment Board Director to negotiate contract amendments accordingly.

It was Moved by Mr. Little and unanimously adopted by voice vote to adjourn the business portion of the meeting at 8:40 a.m.

### **A COMMUNITY CONVERSATION: BUILDING A STRONGER WORKFORCE WITH OUR YOUTH**

Mr. Pedersen welcomed the visitors in attendance and introductions followed. He stated the WIB has been having discussions about the future workforce over the next five to ten years and felt it crucial to involve schools in those discussions. Today's meeting is being held with chief educators in the County and surrounding districts to begin a dialogue about what some of the issues are that businesses are facing over the next 5 to 10 years as well as discuss the concerns of the education system and how the two can collaborate and be supportive of each other to build a stronger workforce.

Ms. Mattick provided an overview of the educational attainment, sector based employment, unemployment data, and industry employment and growth for the seven county region that was part of the study conducted by Chmura Economics and Analytics. The slides she presented are included with these minutes.

Ms. Mattick reported educational attainment for the region is high; however, unemployment continues to increase faster than the state average. There are a lot of basic skill jobs available, but it is becoming more critical

for entry-level workers to enter the workforce with a high school diploma. The long-term employment forecast for the Tompkins County Labor Region projects that in the next ten years over 600 jobs will be created annually that will require a two year degree or higher for employment. Ms. Mattick also provided demographic information on individuals receiving Welfare in Tompkins County and their level of education. In December 2007, 66 percent of those receiving assistance were women, 79% of the total were Caucasian and 61% had either a high school diploma or GED. Additionally, an employer survey was conducted and only 51% of those businesses surveyed indicated the quality of the workforce now available in the region is adequate for their organization's needs.

Following Ms. Mattick's presentation, school administrators provided their thoughts on what they are currently experiencing within their schools and some of the challenges they face daily. In the past it was possible to have students on either a career or higher education track. This is no longer the case. With the inception of new state standards, expectations have completely changed in the last ten years and the goal is to have every student who graduates be college bound. GED rates have been increasing and on a positive note there are students who participate in the GED program at TC3 that go on to enrolling at the college for an advanced degree.

The school administrators also spoke about the ongoing problems they were having with children not getting to school on time. School districts are seeing continuing increases in elementary school children, not just high school, late to school. This results in young people missing important instructional time and disrupts the educational process. The school districts cited this an area where the business community could help by reinforcing to both parents and children the expectation of punctuality in the workplace. Poverty and social class need to be considered in the discussion as this seriously impacts many students. Opportunities for job shadowing, internships, and career exploration need to be brought to the students because these opportunities are difficult for students in the outlying areas to pursue on their own.

The school administrators provided an overview of educational mandates placed on schools since the early 1900's and how this leaves very little room for creativity and additional instruction. This is why it is so critical that what students are learning in their core subjects is relevant beyond the classroom.

It is not uncommon for some students to need five or six years to complete their high school education and it is critical that these students remain engaged and supported without facing negative connotations. Students need to find relevance in the curriculum and this is an area that businesses can be supportive in. If a student can see how what they are learning can be used in "real life" situations it makes learning more meaningful.

The business community spoke next and there was strong support to have businesses come into the schools to provide students with career exploration. This needs to occur as early as middle school to help students find relevance in what they will be learn during their high school career. Businesses were very supportive in finding additional ways they can help educators.

There was also discussion about the ways new workers view the workplace and the way they get their jobs done, and businesses adapting to these new methods. The workplace is no longer a 9-5 job, but rather finding a work/life balance that works. Businesses need to be prepared to adjust to this way of thinking. It was also noted that community agencies need to be involved in the discussion because they interact with a large number of young people and they are active community partners. These agencies often provide the support and encouragement to youth to stay in school and also to help prepare them to enter the workforce. A suggestion was also made that it could be possible to implement a summer program that would allow teachers to participate in a job experience program so they would have a good sense of what is needed by businesses and incorporate those needs into their curriculum.

Mr. Pedersen concluded the meeting by suggesting discussions continue at both the WIB and superintendent's level to strategize meaningful ways for businesses and schools to work together with a progress report to be given at the next WIB meeting.

## **ADJOURNMENT**

The meeting adjourned at 10:13 a.m. The next WIB meeting is scheduled for Tuesday, November 18, 2008 at 8:30 a.m. in the Borg Warner Room at the Tompkins County Public Library.

Minutes prepared by Jennifer Luu.