

The Fulton, Montgomery & Schoharie Counties Workforce Development Board

Board Meeting

Wednesday, May 5, 2021
via Zoom

I. Opening and Attendance:

Welcome: Marty Callahan, Chairman of the Board, called the meeting to order at 4:34 p.m. Marty asked all attendees to place their name and Business or Organization into the Zoom chat box for attendance purposes. All Board Members and guests introduced themselves.

Members Present: Wendy Adams, Laurie Bargstedt, Donna Becker, Marty Callahan, Roger Cusano, Dave Fariello, Andrea Fettinger, Pamela Goldswor, Melissa Johnston, Mark Mincher, Allene Monaghan, Donna Pesta, Amy Rogers, Donald Snoop, Jeannette Spaulding, and Jeff Stark

Excused: Kerry Brunner, Erin Clemens, Art Graulich, Kathleen Kilmartin, Amy McCray, Karen Miller, Lani Pertell, Andrea Scribner, and Peter Stearns

Absent: Elijah Braemer and Ken Rose

Also present: *Mary Hill*, Program Director, FMS Private Industry Council, Inc., *Audra Dumar*, *Kris Ruggeri* and *Anne Solar*, Fulton County DSS

Staff to Board present: Gail Breen, Beverly Ball, and Kim Skiff

II. Action Items:

- **Resolution BY 2020-11:** Acceptance of the minutes from the April 7, 2021 Board Meeting
 - Motion: *Don Snoop* Seconded by: *Amy Rogers*
 - Discussion: There was no discussion.
 - Vote: All in favor
 - Motion Carried
- **Resolution BY 2020-12:** Approval of the Recommendation of the Executive Committee and Accountability and Return on Investment Committee to create and fund a new Board staff position, Executive Assistant/Program Management Assistant
 - Motion: *Laurie Bargstedt* Seconded by: *Don Snoop*
 - Discussion: Marty shared that the Executive Committee met and Gail explained that after the last Program Management Specialist resigned, she had asked Beverly to consider taking the position. Beverly declined, although she has since taken on many of the Program Management responsibilities. Gail stated that Beverly has explained that, although she enjoys much of the program management duties and monitoring, she is not

interested in focusing primarily on the policy aspects of the position and likes many of the duties of the Executive Assistant. Gail approached the Executive Committee, which is the board Personnel Committee regarding a new position that better defines Beverly's actual job duties and responsibilities. She proposed that we establish the position of Executive Assistant/Program Management Assistant and raise Beverly's salary by \$5,000 for her increased responsibility. The Executive Committee agreed and asked that it be reviewed with the Accountability Committee as a co-sponsor and then sent to the full board for approval.

Marty shared that any change of staff positions must originate from the Executive Committee and then go to the whole board for approval. He stated that the Executive Assistant and Program Management Specialist position will not be abolished but will remain vacant and unfunded until there is a future need. Gail shared that if the region really grew or there were more dollars coming, it would be more responsibility than one person could handle. At that time, we might need to consider moving both positions back to full time positions. It's easier to leave the positions vacant than to try to recreate them down the road.

Andrea stated that the Accountability Committee had a very positive conversation about this. She offered to go into an Executive Session if the board members felt it was necessary since it is a personnel issue. The Board was fine with the recommendation. Marty and Andrea reiterated that it was supported by both committees and made logical sense to establish the new position. Andrea also reminded the board members that the pay is not approved by the board, but that Gail can make those decisions because it's her responsibility. It is only the creation of the position that needs to be voted on by the board.

- o Vote: All in favor
- o Motion Carried

III. Information Sharing:

Accountability and Return on Investment Committee: Andrea said that they reviewed the financial reports for March. All of our budgets should be at 75% expended. Both the PIC and the Workforce Development Board are under budget which is to be expected, based on lack of enrollments in classroom training and employer based training. Hopefully, with COVID declining, that will get better in the next few months.

Gail and Kim gave us some information about the PY'21 budget draft. They presented a budget with 20% carry-in and a carry-in budget for 30%. We hope to be able to carry in up to 30%, but it might be more because not all workforce areas have even spent their all their PY'19 funds. Kim added that the TANF funding amount used to estimate is the same as PY'20. Desk rent remains the same as PY'20 with the largest differences in the Department of Labor Amsterdam rent. They will be presenting a more final draft of the budget, as well as a three month budget to the Accountability Committee in May. A three month budget assures the board that the budgets are being developed and thought out. Once we receive final funding notification from the Department of Labor and other places, we will know what our full year will look like, but that three months will get us through the first three months of the next fiscal year.

Andrea shared that the WIOA Services and One Stop Operator contract review was completed. After the decision to accept the PIC's proposal was made, a startup meeting was held. She was happy that she was able to participate because she was on the scoring committee as well. A

review of the proposal ensued, and they were able to give their opinions and suggestions to Mary and the PIC staff. Andrea thanked Mary and Gail for allowing her to participate. She thought it was a great experience and shared that she also thinks that we'll do this every time that there is a start-up meeting with a successful bidder. Mary stated it was great to hear from a board member and somebody who was involved in the scoring of the RFP proposal.

The full minutes from the committee meeting are available on the website for review.

Next Meeting: Tuesday, May 25, 2021, at 3:30 p.m. by Zoom.

Business Services and Employer Engagement Committee: Pam shared that Gail gave an update on a presentation by Tech Valley Shuttle that she had seen on a Capitol Region Career Center Zoom meeting earlier that week. That ties in directly with our businesses as we have ongoing concerns about transportation for employees. Gail stated that Trent Griffin-Braaf of Tech Valley Shuttle has been in conversations with Hill n' Markes about the possibility of providing transportation from western Schenectady County to businesses along the Route 5 corridor. Amy said that the company has done a great job for them at Keymark. Cricket also shared that she had a very positive long standing relationship with Trent. Everyone agreed that Trent should be invited to our committee meeting to give a presentation on his company's services.

The committee also discussed a job fair that we're hoping to organize for later this spring and then also we talked about any implications for the legalization of recreational use of marijuana.

As we moved into talking more about the job fair, initially we were talking about holding a drive through job fair with FMCC hosting us. However, with concerns about traffic and maybe some people getting clogged up in some of the areas when they're trying to get to another employer waiting to see other people, we felt an outdoor walk thru job fair may be a better idea.

Marty and Gail announced that the Job Fair will be held on May 26th from 10-12 at FMCC. Gail stated that a flyer is being developed for Department of Labor's email blast. She said we are concerned about the number of job seekers coming out to job fairs. WE are focusing on "the early bird catches the worm." It's basically the good jobs are here now, it's the time to get a great job as opposed to waiting until September and have competition from 100 other people

Laurie also mentioned about the possibility of doing a remote job fair where people would have separate "rooms" where they could meet with individual employers. Nancy Reccio expressed some concerns that many of our customers were not technologically knowledgeable enough to do a virtual job fair.

The Greater Capital Region will once again be sponsoring a Career Jam this spring. Usually it's an in-person event targeting grades six through eight but this year it will be held virtually and expanded to include adults and dislocated workers as well. Gail shared that the four WDB's of the Greater Capital Region are sponsors of the virtual event, allowing it to extend out for an additional month.

The full minutes from the committee meeting are available on the website for review.

Next Meeting: Thursday, May 20, 2021, at 8 a.m. by Zoom.

WIOA (MOU) Partners Committee: Did not meet.

Next Meeting: June 4, 2021 at 9:00 a.m. by Zoom.

Workforce Systems Oversight Committee: Donna stated that Beverly started the meeting by giving the March Program Report. Centers were open for appointments specific days of the week along with working remotely on alternate days. Staff were able to provide remote services every week day to customers who preferred not to come into the Centers in person. Total traffic during March was 35 in Amsterdam and 23 in Cobleskill. 56% of these visits were from unique customers. These numbers are slightly lower than where the numbers in November 2020. For the month of March, there were 6847 activities logged by the PIC staff.

Gail gave us an update on the Local and Regional Plans. A technical advisory that was posted by Department of Labor to provide guidance on conducting a local and regional plan was released. The Local Plan will need to be filed by June 30 and there's a public comment period of up to 30 days. The Regional Plan has to be filed by August 31 and that also has a comment period of up to 30 days. The Local Plan is specific to each local workforce development area. The Regional Plan incorporates the individual local plans of each particular region. We are part of the Mohawk Valley region, which includes Herkimer, Madison, and Oneida Counties.

Gail gave us an update on reopening the centers. Starting May 3 everyone is back in the office five days a week. Information is going out through email and Facebook. Services will be by appointment only, and all the COVID protocols will need to be followed. We will continue to provide all services remotely as well.

The full minutes from the committee meeting are available on the website for review.

Next Meeting: Wednesday, May 26, 2021, at 8 a.m. by Zoom, unless otherwise determined.

IV. Environmental Scanning:

Gail thanked the Fulton Montgomery Community College for all they are doing to help make the job fair possible. We will be asking our employers to bring a pop up tent if they have one, because if it's raining they'll need it and if it's 85 degrees and sunny they'll need it.

Gail had her last presentation for this year with the students from P-TECH. This particular one was "Acing Your First Interview" and was held with sophomores. Most of the students had never been on a job interview before. They had a good time talking about in-person interviews versus Zoom interviews and the fact that it doesn't matter if you're in person or on Zoom, you're only on time if you're five minutes early. The kids were really great and they were not afraid to participate.

V. Board Member Go Round:

Wendy Adams (Lamont Engineers): As of May 3rd they have pretty much a full staff in the office, with the exception of those that are already out in the construction field or have an accommodation with regards to childcare and schooling.

Laurie Bargstedt (HFM BOCES): Laurie thanked Anne Solar and FC DSS for over 20 years of coordination of the Gateway Meetings for service providers to share information. The person at FC DSS who's been coordinating this has moved on to another opportunity, but Anne assisted Laurie in gathering those emails, and today was able to get an email out to those members. The Gateway services providers provide a lot of wraparound services to employees and potential employees. She is delighted that they're going to be able to continue it until someone can take it over permanently.

Laurie shared that for the first time in her career of almost 30 years, they will be offering virtually no programming this summer, which is heartbreaking to her. It's been such a very difficult year for their teachers trying to manage things during COVID, and her teachers are begging for time off.

They really need to recoup, but they'll come back strong and revitalized and ready to tackle it like they always do.

Donna Becker (Schoharie County DSS): There are a lot of job openings; not just in DSS, but throughout all of the county departments. They are listed on their website. She asked if it would be beneficial for her to send them to our office to blast out. Mary asked her to send them to her. She would get them out to the appropriate people.

Donna reported that very soon there will be an Emergency Rental Assistance Program for anybody who has had trouble paying their rent due to COVID. They are still waiting to hear from the state for details on the requirements to qualify, but they are in the process of making a plan with area agencies to provide outreach and assistance. Once the website is live and the information comes out, they're be looking for other organizations to help them get the word out. They want broad coverage as many folks in the area who really need this assistance online need to apply as soon as possible. She believes the funds will go quickly because it is one big pot of money, not a specific allotment for each county. They are trying to take care of the 30% Area Median Income (AMI) first, then the 50% AMI and then the 80% AMI. She will let Gail know when this comes out so people can act quickly. She stated that if any of the Board Members are landlords, there may be assistance for them as well, if their tenant has had issues related to COVID.

Marty Callahan (Gehring Tricot Corporation): Having the same hiring and recruitment challenges as others. Their sales are there, however, and they are making a lot of products. They had a major breakthrough with one of their machines they had invested in. They should have had it up and running within three to four weeks back when they received it in December. However, needed parts just came in. They did a test and it's running, so they are over the hurdle.

The school district has once again teamed up with Helmont Mills to use their internet connection for graduation ceremonies. There is a ball park next to their facility where they will hold their outdoor graduation ceremony. The internet cable runs a couple hundred feet from the home plate to their building. They allow parents and immediate family members to drive up in their vehicles so everyone's keeping to social distancing rule. They are then able to stream it live.

Roger Cusano (Universal Plastics): Business continues to be strong and steady. They are still trying to hire new people and have been working closely with temp agencies. He needs added support on shop floor. Marty asked how supply chain was going. Roger shared that some lead times have been pushed out about a month, but they can't vary too much from supplier to supplier. They haven't seen a huge impact on pricing.

Dave Fariello (St. Mary's Healthcare): Dave has a new email david.fariello@nysmha.org because they are continuing with their departure from Ascension and are migrating from a Google platform to actual Microsoft platform. Google is continuing to run for a short time and will transfer stuff over, but it's been quite a project trying to migrate the computers into that. The HR portion and his Employee Health portion is up and running. Everything is due to go online in September.

The Rao Pavilion is a huge project and many jobs will eventually be created. A lot of services including Primary Care and Pediatrics are going to be moving into the Pavilion. They also still continue to have over 20 Full-time nursing positions available.

Andrea Fettingner (Fulton County Office for Aging): Just wanted to say Happy Older Americans month.

Pamela Goldswor (Townsend Leather): Everything at Townsend is moving right along. They recently held a vaccination clinic with about 30 people attending. She stated that if anyone is

interested in holding a vaccination clinic she could share the information of what they went through.

They are still recruiting for open positions. Lots of people are happy to come in, but they don't seem to stay past a couple of days. She shared that they feel like they are reinventing themselves all the time, but she is looking forward to the job fair. She hopes it is going to help. And hopefully the end of the pandemic is getting close, so it'll be nice too.

Melissa Johnston (NYS DOL): Staff continue to be focused almost 100% on Unemployment Insurance. Some of the positive news is some of the programs they're working on, PUA mainly, the workload has been dropping off here and there, a couple times a week so it's allowing them to pivot back to their primary purpose in the Division of Employment and Workforce Solutions, which is to help people get jobs and help them to maintain compliance with their Unemployment Insurance work search requirements. They are actually able to do some outreach and cold calls, and they've been doing full appointments over the phone with Unemployment Insurance recipients.

As of the last two weeks, they have presence again in the Cobleskill Center. Staff have been doing a lot of training in new technologies and new virtual services that will be rolling out over the next few months to help UI customers get back to work as soon as possible. And for those that don't feel comfortable coming into the Center, there are some new virtual services that will be available to help them.

Amy Rogers asked when UI recipients will be required to start actively showing that they're actually trying to look for work. Melissa stated that they are required to do that, and when they meet with them for their appointments, they go over that requirement. Staff ask where they're looking and let them know that in future meetings they're required to prove that. Amy stated that they should have absolutely no problem trying to find a job somewhere with all of them available. She added that it just seems very disappointing that we can't do anything about it.

Gail added that on the call today with DOL the issue was addressed. As you know, the boards are made up 51% of business and there are some boards that have written letters to Department of Labor pretty much demanding to know when people are going to be held accountable. We were told to convey that if you, as a business, reach out to a former employee and say your job is here, come on back, and they do not accept that job, you should immediately report it to the Department of Labor. It doesn't mean that Department of Labor necessarily has staff to follow through immediately, but they are putting them into the system as people who could lose their benefits if they have not taken a job from a former employer. So if you have someone who has refused an offer to come back to work, please get in touch with DOL. Amy asked Melissa to send her the number for DOL to report that.

Mark Mincher (Operating Engineers, Local 158): Will be retiring from Engineers at the end of this month after 35 years. He was recently able to place a Cobleskill resident in a FT Diesel Tech position within a week. For those who invest in themselves, they are easy to place. He has been getting some good candidates with strong skills and has been putting them to work. But they have millions of dollars' worth of equipment, cranes and bulldozers, sitting at the training center. He shared that it is heartbreaking, given the fact that during the COVID you could be sitting in a bulldozer by yourself, without real danger of infection.

Allene Monaghan (ACCES VR): They are still working remotely through either Zoom or Team Meetings. July 5 is the date that they expect to increase to three days per week in the office. There is no date planned for returning full time, but they are hoping for the end of August. She thinks they will start seeing customers around September or October. She is not sure when they're going to start up their Community information sessions but believes it will coincide with when they begin to see the public again.

Donna Pesta (SUNY Cobleskill): Next week is their last week of class. She stated that this has been a brutal semester. They are going to celebrate graduation next week by letting graduates walk across the stage and get a photo. Unfortunately, family won't be able to attend. But the SUNY Chancellor is going to come out for one of their ceremonies so that's really nice. They'll see what happens next fall.

Amy Rogers (Keymark Corporation): Still actively recruiting, but getting people is a tough thing. They held a small COVID vaccine clinic at the plant today for some of their employees and family members that had not gotten their vaccines. They are just trying to get as many people vaccinated as want to.

Amy and Marty both said they plan to be at the upcoming Job Fair on May 26th.

Don Snoop (Mittel Cable TV): Very busy.

Jeannette Spaulding (Schoharie County Community Action Program): They have a few people retiring, including their Community Services Director. She has been there just shy of 25 years. The Director of the Employment Training Center is shifting down to part time. They have a new Director for the Center and her name is Sue deBruijn. Jeannette stated that the pandemic certainly helped the staff to make that decision to retire just a little bit sooner.

They are open only to the public for a certain number of programs. The rest of it is through virtual meetings. WIC has extended their in-person waiver so the staff are able to work remotely from home, not having to see families. A lot of our services are open still, but by appointment only.

Jeffrey Stark (Organizing Rep. IUPAT District Council): The painters have one person that's an apprentice. They are taking new apprentices starting at \$15.80 an hour plus \$21 in benefits, right out of school. He is also looking for 25 to 30 journeymen painters, starting at \$31 an hour with \$21 and benefits.

Mary Hill: Stated they are excited to have a new contract in place with the Board and continue their work together. Staff are very excited about having another four years and are looking forward to developing some new ideas to reach the customers and to get them in the doors.

Kimberly Skiff: Reminded the Board Members to take a look at the FMS Newsletter if they're looking for workers because there might be a good fit there for somebody. She will be presenting a three month budget to Accountability in a couple of weeks.

VI. Board Member Feedback?

VII. Adjournment:

Motion to close the meeting:

Motion: *Don Snoop* Seconded: *Mark Mincher*

Meeting Adjourned at 5:31 p.m.

The Annual Board Meeting will be held on June 2, 2021 at 4:30 p.m. [via Zoom](#).