

PRIVATE INDUSTRY COUNCIL MINUTES

January 29, 1998

A regular meeting of the Private Industry Council was called to order by Chairman Lynn Blevins at 6:17 PM, Thursday, January 29, 1998 at The Lobster House Restaurant, Norwood, New York.

Members Present: Jack Backus, Doug Beachard, Lynn Blevins, Dick Callan, Sue Caswell, Greg Davis, Dick Fishel, Ron McDougall, Jim McFaddin, Peter Phelan, Linda Randi, Nicole Scott, Bob Snider

Members Absent: Maureen Buck , Dick DeLaPorte, Steve Matzan, Doug McDonald, Joanne Novak

Others Present: Edmund Russell, Raymond Fountain, Jim Connor, Steve House, John Manson, Connie Martin and Dave Williams of the Office of Economic Development; Tony LaGatta of NYSDOL.

MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING

Mr. McFaddin moved, seconded by Mr. Phelan, that the minutes of the October 29, 1997 meeting be approved. Passed unanimously.

CHAIRMAN'S COMMENTS

Mr. Blevins initiated a brief discussion about Council meeting dates, times and locations. Council members agreed to meet the 4th Wednesday of each month at 6:00 p.m. at various locations around the County.

On the issue of By-laws review, Mr. Blevins suggested the task might be accomplished by a committee-of-the-whole in the first 15 minutes of each meeting. Mr. Phelan suggested that since the Workforce Development Task Force had already addressed some of the relevant issues, the Task Force be assigned the task of reviewing the By-laws to make recommendations to the Council. During the discussion which followed, the Council agreed that the By-laws Committee meetings would be published and open to anyone interested in attending and that the minutes of the By-laws Committee meetings would be copied to all PIC members. Mr. McDougall moved, seconded by Mr. Phelan that the By-laws be reviewed for legality by the County Attorney, or if he is unable to do so in a timely manner, another attorney hired by the Council. Passed unanimously. Mr. Callan suggested that a target date be established for completion of the By-laws review. Staff agreed to give the Committee some input about possible changes to the By-laws.

Mr. Blevins asked for volunteers to serve with Mr. Fountain and Mr. Short on a committee to review and revise the financial and participant reporting forms in order to make them more meaningful to PIC members. Mr. McFaddin volunteered and Ms. Caswell indicated that she would rather work on this committee than on the By-laws Committee. Mr. Blevins indicated that he would be contacting some other people to serve on this committee.

Mr. Blevins complimented the OED staff for assistance given to the County during the ice storm. Mr. Fishel indicated that relief work was on-going through the joint efforts of the NYSDOL and the OED.

FINANCIAL REPORT

Mr. Fountain reviewed the financial reports indicating that PY '95 funds have been closed out and that PY '96 moneys have been expended in most categories. He reported that PY '97 had been moving along well until the beginning of January. The ice storm may impact program performance. Mr. Fountain has talked with Jefferson County and the Access Consortium about whether to, how to and when to approach the State about these problems. Mr. Russell explained that the Governor has the ability to adjust performance standards. This is a serious issue because failure to meet performance standards has dire consequences for SDAs. Mr. Fountain indicated that he will know more in a couple of months and may have to come back to the Council for a recommendation for action to remedy the situation. Mr. Fountain also expressed concern that Workfare programs are lowering the number of Welfare recipients served by JTPA. Considerable discussion followed about national performance standards and how they are determined.

STAFF REPORT

C.R.E.W. Program: Mr. Russell reported that Mr. Fountain and Mr. House and their staff have worked on the program with the Department of Labor. By January 20th when the County offices reopened, there were two crews working in the County. By the following Monday, there were 151 people in 32 crews working in the County. As of today, there are crew requests for 251 people. Mr. House briefly explained the process by which the allotment was made to the County and the ways in which the program might work. Ms. Randi expressed a couple of concerns: the safety issues for untrained crews working in dangerous circumstances; and the C.R.E.W. program cutting into work for private firms. Mr. House explained that the crews are made up of unskilled laborers working with municipalities to clear brush, etc. Mr. Fishel advised that the crews are required to view safety training videos and provided with basic safety equipment (hard hats, goggles, etc.). There was some discussion on the following topics: unemployment issues for CREW workers if they were on the job for 6 months or more; possibility of work for Summer Youth Program crews; a process for evaluation of performance of CREW workers. In response to a question from Mr. Blevins about problems with organizing the CREW program in other counties, Mr. Fishel and Mr. Fountain agreed that St. Lawrence County's ability to organize the program rapidly and smoothly was in large part due to the spirit of cooperation between the DOL and the OED fostered by their work together in the County's One Stop Career Center. There was some discussion about the impact of the ice storm on area farmers. Mr. Russell briefly described how the SBA Disaster Relief Program works.

Welfare-to-Work: Mr. Fountain reported that on January 21st the County received the information and application for the \$1,000,000 grant. The deadline for submission is March 10th. The application must first be submitted to the State which has 15 days to review and comment, which means that the application must be sent to the State by February 10th. The PIC is the local entity which must approve the application. Mr. Fountain advised that staff was looking into a possible extension of the deadline in light of the recent ice storm disaster. In light of the difficult timeline, Mr. Russell asked that the Council allow staff to prepare the application and submit it to the State, then meet with the PIC to review it before it is sent to the Federal government. Mr. Fountain indicated that the One-Stop application deadline for the State was also coming up very soon. He advised that some SDAs had arranged to run the applications by an executive committee or officers of the PIC in order to meet the deadline. Mr. McFaddin suggested that in this situation the Council could trust the staff to prepare the application and present it to the PIC officers in order to complete the application in a timely manner. It was the consensus of the Council members that staff would work with the PIC officers to prepare and submit the application and then prepare an executive summary for the Council.

OLD BUSINESS

Update of OJT Procedures Manual: Mr. Russell explained that the wording of the manual had been changed to accommodate the changes in the minimum wage law. Mr. McFaddin moved, seconded by Ms. Caswell that attached resolution number 98-01-01 modifying the St. Lawrence County Office of Economic Development Job Training Partnership Act OJT Operational Procedures Manual be approved. Passed unanimously.

NEW BUSINESS

Establishing Needs-based Payment Support System: Mr. House briefly explained the reasons for establishing the Needs-based Payment Support System. Mr. McDougall then moved, seconded by Mr. McFaddin, attached resolution number 98-01-02 establishing a JTPA Title III Worker Adjustment Assistance Discretionary (WA-DISC) Needs-Related Payments Support Services System. Passed unanimously.

Most In Need Policy: Mr. Russell briefly explained the need for this policy and reviewed the same. Ms. Caswell then moved, seconded by Mr. Beachard, attached resolution number 98-01-03: Most In Need Policy. Passed unanimously.

Workforce Development Board: Mr. Fishel stated that since the Board of Legislators had approved a Workforce Development Board we would soon be looking at moving to a 23 member Board. He asked if that would happen after the By-laws are reviewed and revised, or concurrent with that process. Mr. Russell indicated that that was up to the Council. He suggested that membership might be the first issue the By-laws Committee addressed. In the meantime, he suggested that Council members start talking to prospective new members from the private sector.

ADJOURNMENT

On motion of Ms. Scott, the meeting adjourned at 8:15 PM.

Respectfully Submitted,

Sue E. Caswell,
Secretary