

PRIVATE INDUSTRY COUNCIL MINUTES
April 22, 1998

A regular meeting of the Private Industry Council was called to order by Chairman Lynn Blevins at 6:15 PM, Wednesday, February 25, 1998 at The Best Western University Inn, Canton, New York.

Members Present: Jack Backus, Doug Beachard, Lynn Blevins, Maureen Buck, Dick Callan, Sue Caswell, Dick DeLaPorte, Dick Fishel, Doug McDonald, Jim McFaddin, Peter Phelan, Nicole Scott

Members Absent: Greg Davis, Steve Matzan, Ron McDougall, Joanne Novak, Linda Randi, Bob Snider

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

MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING

Mr. McDonald moved, seconded by Ms. Buck, that the minutes of the February 25, 1998 meeting be approved. Passed unanimously.

FINANCIAL REPORT

Mr. Fountain advised the Council that the committee to revise the financial reports will be meeting in the near future. Ms. Buck then moved, seconded by Mr. McFaddin that the financial report be received. Passed unanimously.

OLD BUSINESS

Modifying Program Budgets for the St. Lawrence County Office of Economic Development Employment and Training Unit:

Mr. Russell explained that funds left in the 1997 Title IIB Summer Youth Program are being shifted to the Title IIC Youth Program increasing same by \$50,000. In addition, the resolution establishes a budget for the CREW program. Mr. Russell advised the Council that as of March 18th 285 County residents were employed on crews at 30 worksites with wages totaling \$498,000 and that there were 31 more worksites requesting crews. Mr. Fountain briefly explained how Sweetgrass and FEMA monies were being used to effect a \$3,700 savings for the County Forester, and to allow the Summer Youth program to employ an additional 33 young people this summer. Mr. McFaddin then moved, seconded by Mr. McDonald attached Resolution #98-04-04 modifying program budgets for the St. Lawrence county Office of Economic Development Employment and Training Unit. Passed unanimously.

By-laws Review:

Mr. Blevins reported that the By-laws Committee had met at 5:00 p.m. and had moved through another couple of Articles. He indicated that he hoped the Committee would finish its work in another 2-3 meetings and would then make recommendations to the full Council. He asked that Council members think about a new, creative name for the Council and bring any suggestions to the next meeting.

NEW BUSINESS

Supporting Transportation Corridor:

Mr. Russell advised the council that he felt that inclusion of railroad issues with highway issues may diminish the effectiveness of both. He indicated that if the Council wished, separate resolutions could be approved for these two important transportation issues. Mr. Phelan then moved, seconded by Mr. Backus, attached resolution #98-04-05 Supporting a Transportation Corridor. Passed unanimously.

Mr. Blevins suggested that a copy of the resolution be sent to the Governor. Mr. Russell indicated that a clause could be added to the resolution stating that copies of the resolution would be sent to the Governor, to our State Legislators and to Senator McHugh. Mr. McDonald then moved, seconded by Mr. McFaddin that resolution #98-04-05 be amended to include a clause forwarding copies of the resolution to State legislators, Governor Pataki and Senator McHugh. Passed unanimously.

Considerable discussion about transportation issues ensued. Mr. Russell agreed to develop a resolution stressing the importance to St. Lawrence county of the rail link between Syracuse and Massena, pointing out the weak transportation in the area and encouraging the State to expedite to transfer of rail from ConRail to CSX.

Welfare-to-Work Plan, Peter Phelan:

Mr. Phelan distributed copies of a draft of the Plan which the Department of Social Services is required to submit to Albany. The Plan outlines the parameters of employment for the TANF (Temporary Assistance to Needy Families) program. Mr. Phelan stressed that DOSS cannot go beyond the parameters outlined in the Plan. He indicated that the Plan also contains an outline of the interactions with other Agencies such as BOCES, OED and DOL. DOSS contracts with OED for staff and employment services, with BOCES for remedial education and with DOL for employment search and referrals.

Mr. Phelan advised that all Public Assistance recipients are assessed for employability and that a plan is then developed for participation in work activities in order to become fully employed. The Plan outlines all participants' rights and lists all activities provided. In response to questions which followed, Mr. Phelan indicated that the PA case load had been reduced by approximately 40% over the past three years. He stated that there were several reasons for the reduction: cooperation between Agencies; sanctions; and standards which have been met, thereby avoiding need for County to pay in. Mr. Phelan also indicated that while there have been some increases in Medicaid and Food Stamp programs, overall case loads and expenses are down.

Mr. Phelan advised the Council that changes will be made to the Plan to accommodate new developments in legislation and program funding. Mr. Fountain pointed out that St. Lawrence County ranks in the top 5 in the State in percentage of people working and still receiving assistance, due mostly to the fact that pay scales are so low in the North Country. Mr. Phelan indicated that the

Plan was open for discussion and encouraged Council members to review the Plan and call him with any comments.

CHAIRMAN'S COMMENTS

Mr. Blevins thanked Council members for coming out on such a nice night. He stated that he believes the Council is making progress toward becoming more informed and somewhat more aggressive. He feels the future is bright.

STAFF REPORT

One Stop Grant Application: Mr. Russell advised that the One Stop Application had finally been received with an aggressive timeline: letter of intent filed by May 15th and the completed application filed by June 5th. He indicated that there were two types of grants available: Demonstration Grants – 10 to 15 grants of \$30,000 to \$80,000; Implementation Grants - 4 or 5 grants (not including what is being given to Binghamton and New York City) will be awarded in specific areas (Long island, Buffalo, Central New York, Hudson Valley and a rural area) from a pool of \$250,000 - \$500,000. He advised that the Demonstration Grant is technology oriented and that the One Stop is in need of a telephone system that connects all partners. The Implementation Grant would allow the One Stop to serve all customers. Mr. Russell believes our One Stop meets the criteria for an Implementation Grant and he pointed out that the goal of the One Stop is to provide seamless universal service. He indicated that it is difficult to decide which way to go. Mr. Fountain pointed out that an SDA can receive both Grants, but only if it receives the Demonstration Grant first. There was considerable discussion about the adequacy of the One Stop office space, the need to make the building more user-friendly, the need for a main floor location, the possibility of moving to another location which would accommodate all One-Stop partners on one floor. It was suggested that the leases for the present space be coordinated so that they all come due at the same time and so that the partners could then use their combined power to effect changes such as improving the building's façade, getting first floor space, etc. It was also suggested that it might be important to get first floor space for at least a reception area before spending money for a new telephone system.

Welfare-To-Work Plan: Mr. Russell explained that the Welfare-to-Work formula allocation would go from the Federal government to the State and then to the PIC as deliverer of services. This grant will serve the same people that are served by the competitive grant – individuals who meet two or more of the following requirements: have not completed high school; have poor math and reading skills; need counseling for drug and/or alcohol abuse; or have a poor work history. The draft plan must be submitted by May 7th; notice must be published in the newspaper between May 22nd & 27th; local and State awards made by June 10th and June 19th. This is a 4-year program to allow for a good flow of clients and will be a real challenge for staff. Mr. Russell advised that staff will be extremely busy as they will be preparing two grant applications during the same time period, as well as making changes to the JTPA Plan because State waivers are not available. Mr. Russell also explained that the Federal Government has indicated that the State must provide a 100% match. The State disagrees and has provided \$25,000,000 statewide. Mr. Russell feels there are some real problems with funding matches, as localities can provide their match in "in-kind" services.

Workforce Development System Design Team Report: Mr. Russell volunteered to prepare a written summary of the report and send it to PIC members. He offered to make copies of the full report for anyone interested. Mr. Fishel advised that he had some extra copies and Mr. Beachard stated that many industries received copies.

ADJOURNMENT

On motion of Mr. McFaddin, the meeting adjourned at 7:58 PM.

Respectfully Submitted,

Sue E. Caswell,
Secretary