

PRIVATE INDUSTRY COUNCIL  
MINUTES OF MARCH 24, 1999 MEETING

A regular meeting of the Private Industry Council was called to order by Chairman Lynn Blevins at 6:26 PM, Wednesday, March 24, 1999 at The Lobster House, Norwood, New York.

Members Present: Jack Backus, Genevieve Baxter, Douglas Beachard, Lynn Blevins, Sue Caswell, Richard Daddario, Greg Davis, Donald Doig, Donald Hooper, Robert LaClair, Jim McFaddin, Joanne Novak, Peter Phelan

Members Absent: Maureen Buck, Richard Callan, John Deal, Richard DeLaPorte, Joseph Kennedy, Ron McDougall, Linda Randi, Robert Snider

Others Present: Jim Connor, Natalie Haggart, Steve House, John Manson, Edmund Russell and Ed Short of the Office of Economic Development, and Tony LaGatta of NYS DOL

**MINUTES**

Moved by Mr. McFaddin and seconded by Ms. Baxter, the minutes of the February 24, 1999 meeting were accepted. Approved unanimously.

**CHAIRMAN'S COMMENTS**

Mr. Blevins welcomed members and staff to the meeting. He spoke briefly on the NAPIC Conference held in Washington DC, and attended by himself, Ms. Novak, Ms. Caswell, Mr. Backus, Mr. Russell and Mr. Fountain. Mr. Blevins noted some of the St. Lawrence County conference attendees met with Senator Schumer's staff and also with Representative John McHugh. Mr. Blevins stated his belief that, with the support and backing of St. Lawrence County, a highway could be built in the North Country. He added that a highway would cost approximately \$2 million per mile to build, and calculated a highway from Alexandria Bay to Massena would cost approximately \$150 million, but that if the residents of St. Lawrence County made the construction of a highway a priority, it may be possible. Finally, Mr. Blevins remarked that while the rest of the country is doing well, New York State and St. Lawrence County especially were not, as is reflected by the high unemployment rate in St. Lawrence County.

Ms. Novak stated she wanted to reiterate Mr. Blevins' comments regarding the corridor project. She also commented on a statement she heard, which stated that in 1899 we were more competitive with the rest of the country (transportation-wise) than we are in 1999, and if we let this project pass us by, it will affect us for many years. She agreed with Mr. Blevins' point on the status of St. Lawrence County as compared to the rest of the country, and noted some organizations (i.e. PIC's) have forged together with other organizations, to create partnerships whereby common problems and concerns can be addressed. She indicated that the Workforce Development Board might need to consider joining with other agencies to deal with issues important to this region.

Mr. Backus thanked the PIC for the opportunity to attend the conference. He stated he felt that while the rest of the nation is moving ahead and trying to find people for jobs, we are trying to find jobs for

people. He added that there are problems unique to this area, that many people don't understand the geographic size of St. Lawrence County and that this issue needs to be reinforced.

Ms. Caswell conveyed her impressions of the conference. She reminded attendees that a Workforce Investment Board Taskforce was created in 1996, in anticipation of the Workforce Investment Act (WIA) and the changes it would bring. She noted that some Boards appear to be ahead of us and some appear to be behind us. Ms. Caswell stated she attended a Board Issues workshop, and felt that Boards need to be more involved and committed to accomplishing goals.

Mr. Blevins then suggested that different members of the PIC attend the meeting each year.

### **OLD BUSINESS**

Resolution Modifying St. Lawrence County Office of Economic Development Program Budgets: Mr. Russell noted that this resolution shifts money from support services and staff salaries to training programs. The resolution was moved by Mr. Phelan and seconded by Mr. McFaddin. Passed unanimously.

### **NEW BUSINESS**

Resolution Establishing a Support Services Policy: Mr. Russell briefly reviewed the policy and its changes. A discussion arose about the circumstances that would allow staff to waive the 2.5 GPA. Mr. House explained that there are sometimes circumstances in the home (e.g. illness of a child) that may contribute to a poorer academic average, and that these situations are kept in mind when considering waiving of the 2.5 GPA. Mr. Blevins suggested a documented process to make it easier for students to know what is expected of them. Mr. House replied he is presently working on this process. Mr. LaGatta noted that, from an auditor's point of view, staff could be, in reality, waiving PIC policy and the State monitor can question this. He noted that if staff discretion will be used to waive the 2.5 GPA requirement, then wording should be included in the policy to that effect. It was agreed by the membership to postpone action on the policy until the issue of GPA waivers is addressed.

Resolution Approving Workforce Development Plan for PY'99: Mr. Russell remarked the plan is basically the same as last year, with the exception of allocation amounts. He added that this would be the last year of the JTPA Plan. The resolution was moved by Mr. McFaddin and seconded by Mr. Phelan. Passed unanimously.

### **COMMITTEE REPORTS**

There were no committee reports.

### **FINANCIAL REPORT**

After brief discussion and review, moved by Mr. McFaddin and seconded by Ms. Caswell, the financial report for February 1999 was accepted. Passed unanimously.

### **STAFF REPORTS**

Mr. Russell reported that Rochelle Daniels, an attorney from Florida will be presenting a two-day WIA workshop on April 20<sup>th</sup> and April 21<sup>st</sup>. He added that Jefferson County has scheduled Greg Newton to

discuss WIA issues on May 3<sup>rd</sup> and May 4<sup>th</sup>. Mr. Russell went on to note that his office is presently working with Jefferson County to split the workshops, whereby each area will be able to take advantage of both speakers. Mr. Russell stated he would make the schedule available to the PIC when it has been finalized.

Mr. Russell then continued with the orientation section of the meeting, which he began at the February 24<sup>th</sup> meeting. He outlined the issues that the Board will need to address, citing visibility and governance as two major issues.

- ✓ **Visibility:** Mr. Russell indicated that the Board's role might be more than just dealing with Employment & Training issues. The role of the Board may also include dealing with and promoting issues that would result in a better economy – i.e. promoting improved transportation to lower unemployment. Board members suggested establishment of a marketing plan. Mr. Russell noted that the Board may need to increase its visibility and suggested that the proposed employer breakfasts scheduled to begin in late spring as one example. These breakfasts would give employers an opportunity to discuss their needs and give the Board an opportunity to increase its visibility and promote the One-Stop Career Center. He added there are many issues in which the Workforce Development Board can play a larger role.

Some Board members noted that they still do not know exactly what services are provided at the One-Stop, and without this knowledge they would be unable to accurately promote the One-Stop. Mr. Russell will provide a diagram of the One-Stop and the services that are provided there. The Board also agreed that simulating what a customer is told and the steps a customer would go through in order to receive services would also be helpful in understanding and promoting these services.

- ✓ **Governance:** Mr. Russell noted that the One-Stop currently operates without the direct oversight of the PIC, but that this would change under WIA through the agreement forged with the One-Stop operator and the Memorandums of Understanding with all the One-Stop partners.

Other issues the Board will need to address include: accountability and performance, negotiating access points outside of the One-Stop, negotiation of performance standards with the State, and establishing an agreement with St. Lawrence County.

Mr. Blevins noted that governance is the starting point. It will need to be determined how to deal with partners and what has already been done locally will not last without the governance of the Board. The Board will need to determine its relationship with the One-Stop – what each partner does.

## **ADJOURNMENT**

Mr. Blevins thanked Council members for attending the meeting. On motion of Mr. Davis, the Council meeting adjourned at 8:30 PM.

Respectfully Submitted,

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Joanne M. Novak, Esq.