

WORKFORCE INVESTMENT BOARD
MINUTES OF NOVEMBER 1, 2000 MEETING

A meeting of the Workforce Investment Board was called to order by Chairman Lynn Blevins at 6:22 PM, Wednesday, November 1, 2000 at The Lobster House, Norwood, New York.

Members Present: Jack Backus, Genevieve Baxter, Lynn Blevins, John Bogosian, Don Brining, Sue Caswell, Richard Daddario, Greg Davis, James McFaddin, Joanne Novak, Walt Paul, Peter Phelan, Walter Todd and Tim Weaver.

Members Absent: Doug Beachard, John Deal, Sherrie Furgison, Donald Hooper, Joseph Kennedy, Robert LaClair, Jr., John Lancaster, Cynthia Lottie, Ron McDougall and Linda Randi.

Others Present: Edmund J. Russell, Jr., Raymond Fountain, David Williams, Ed Short, Steve House, Jim Connor, Natalie Haggart and Gretchen Wood of the Office of Economic Development. Anthony LaGatta of the Department of Labor.

CHAIRMAN'S COMMENTS

Appointment of Nominating Committee After a brief discussion and at Chairman Blevin's suggestion, the Board charged the Youth Committee with the task of seeking nominations of officers. Mr. Connor is to coordinate the effort.

Standing Committee Structures and Meeting Dates Chairman Blevins noted that the Marketing and Monitoring Committees have been combined to form the Marketing and Quality Programs committee. The new structure should provide adequate membership for quality committee discussions. The new committee structure will take effect in 2001. Mr. Paul indicated that a representative from one of the Partner Agencies should serve on the Executive committee.

Chairman Blevins announced that the next Workforce Investment Board meeting will be on December 6. A 2001 meeting schedule will be presented to the Board at that time.

Suggestions submitted to NYATEP At the invitation of the New York Association of Training and Employment Professionals, Chairman Blevins submitted suggestions on how local and the State WIB might better communicate. No response has been received from the New York State Department of Labor as of the date of this meeting.

Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy Committee (CEDS) Mr. Russell briefly discussed the history and purpose of this committee including a yearly plan update for St. Lawrence County that is submitted to the Economic Development Administration (EDA). The plan is necessary for the County to qualify for public works grants from the EDA. Staff includes Economic Developers throughout the County and a handful of members of the private and public sector. Mr. Russell presented the idea of expanding the current CEDS committee to include the WIB Board. By law, the WIB is charged with economic development as well as employment &

training responsibilities. Mr. Russell then gave two examples of successful projects funded by the EDA because of the Economic Development Plan and the committee's efforts: the Massena Industrial Park received \$150,000 for a sewer and waste water plant in Massena; and the Ogdensburg Bridge and Port Authority received \$1 million for the access road project in their industrial park. The OBPA access road project not only helped bring in the Chatham Forest Products, Inc., project, but also led to another \$1 million in funding from the State. After a brief discussion, the WIB agreed, pending Board of Legislators action, to join with the current CED's committee in order to enlarge both numerical and geographic representation. Mr. Russell will provide the information to the Board of Legislators for their consideration.

Chairman Blevins then announced that the New York State Department of Labor has offered two reservations to St. Lawrence County WIB Board members for a Welfare-to-Work conference. This conference will be held at the Desmond Hotel in Albany and will run from November 29 through December 1. There is no cost to the WIB or its representatives for attending the conference. All registration fees and lodging are provided by the Department of Labor.

MINUTES

Moved by Mr. Daddario and seconded by Ms. Caswell, the minutes of the July 11, 2000 special meeting were accepted. Approved unanimously.

FINANCIAL AND PARTICIPANT REPORT

Mr. Fountain reported that because we are still in the beginning stages of WIA, there is still no reporting standard. Mr. Short indicated that the only real difference in the new report is that reporting of the Summer program budget and the Youth program budget are now combined where under JTPA they were reported separately. Mr. Fountain indicated that revised budgets will be available to the Board by the January, 2001 meeting. Mr. Brining moved, seconded by Mr. McFaddin. The Financial and Participant Report for month ending September 30, 2000 was approved unanimously.

OLD BUSINESS

Lease with County for One-Stop Space (Executive Committee Pending)/Resolution Authorizing Chair to Sign Lease with St. Lawrence County for One-Stop Career Center Space

Mr. Daddario began the discussion by stating his concern over the length of the lease and if funding will be available over the ten years. Mr. Russell indicated that he could not predict what type of funding would be available but that an employment and training program of one form or another has always existed and there is no concern regarding this on the County level. Mr. Paul also expressed his concern with the ten year lease and indicated that the Workforce Investment Act only has three years remaining. The Welfare-to-Work program is set to end in 2001.

Mr. McFaddin pointed out section seven in the lease which allows partners to vacate their space at the end of the first two years of rental. Mr. Russell indicated that there would be no penalty to a partner if they chose to opt out. Mr. Paul indicated that this is a fair option and inquired if the

lease has been reviewed by counsel. Mr. Russell stated that the County lease follows the same layout as the current lease at 95 and 101 Main Street and that the partner agencies were involved. The WIB has not obligation to continue rental of any vacated space of a partner.

Ms. Novak indicated that it would be beneficial to amend section two of the lease to reflect the leasing of space to be contingent on funding from WIA or similar programs. Ms. Caswell moved the Resolution with the amendment, seconded by Mr. Weaver. Mr. Paul and Mr. Davis voted nay and Mr. McFaddin abstained from voting. The resolution did not pass with only eleven Board members voting aye.

Year-Round Youth Program RFP (Youth Council pending)

Mr. Paul reported on behalf of the Youth Council. Only one RFP was received by Literacy Volunteers of America which was declined. The Council recommends to the WIB to extend the submittal deadline for another two months. The Board agreed with the Youth Council recommendation and charged Mr. Connor with drafting a rejection letter to Literacy Volunteers with an invitation for them to resubmit an RFP.

Mr. Paul then briefly discussed the School-to-Work program and inquired whether the Workforce Investment Board would contribute \$6,000 to the funding. Chairman Blevins indicated that this will be put on the agenda for the December meeting in the form of a resolution. After a brief discussion which included conditions under which the allocation would be made, Chairman Blevins directed staff to prepare a resolution for inclusion on the Agenda for the next meeting.

NEW BUSINESS

Resolution Establishing Self-Sufficiency Standard for St. Lawrence County (Dislocated Worker Committee)

Mr. Fountain reported that under the WIA legislation, criteria must be established by the Local Board for determining whether employment leads to self-sufficiency. At the September committee meeting there were many models presented and the Dislocated Worker committee recommends accepting 200% of poverty level as the standard. Mr. Fountain stated that the committee was concerned over the issue of fringe benefits and recommended that the standard be raised to 225% of poverty for employment where no health insurance is offered. The final recommendation of the committee is to establish the self-sufficiency for a dislocated worker at or above 90% of the individual's pre-lay off wage. Mr. McFaddin moved, seconded by Mr. Brining. The motion passed unanimously.

Resolution Authorizing Individual Training Accounts (Dislocated Worker Committee)

Mr. Fountain advised Board members that the WIB must establish a training account for eligible individuals to finance training services. Mr. House had recently attended a meeting with WIB staff from other counties and the general cap placed on training accounts was \$4,000. Mr. Fountain indicated that the original recommendation from the dislocated worker committee was

to follow suit and suggest a \$4,000 cap for St. Lawrence County as well. It was discovered, however, that an individual attending a BOCES program is not eligible to apply for TAP or Pell funding. The Committee decided to recommend a cap of \$6,400 for the Individual Training Accounts. Mr. Fountain went on to explain that an individual may only use an ITA for a demand occupation and that it is only applied to tuition funding. Support services and other fees will be given separate consideration from the \$6,400 cap.

Chairman Blevins asked if the ITA is for a one-time only deal. Mr. Fountain indicated that it was, but feels that the Board should revisit the issue in eighteen months after a history has been established and it can be reviewed. Mr. Fountain then noted that the Legislation's intent is to create competition among the vendors as well as increasing the customer choice of institutions to attend. Payments are made directly to the vendor in increments payable on account. Mr. McFaddin moved, seconded by Ms. Caswell. The motion passed unanimously.

Resolution Authorizing St. Lawrence County Workforce Development Area Training Provider List (Dislocated Worker Committee)

Mr. Fountain explained that a vendor needs to be certified by a Workforce Investment Board before they can provide services. Once a vendor has been approved and enrolled on the State website, any individual from any County may obtain services from the vendor. Vendors may enroll at anytime to become certified. Mr. Weaver asked who decides what classifies as a demand or non-demand occupation. Mr. Fountain indicated that the decision is made at the State level. Mr. Brining moved, seconded by Mr. Daddario. The motion passed unanimously.

COMMITTEE REPORTS

None.

STAFF REPORTS

MOU Status Mr. Russell indicated that the status has remained unchanged as two signatures are still needed at the State level.

Appleton Dislocated Worker Report Mr. Fountain indicated that entry level wage for dislocated workers has been uniformly good. Staff of the One-Stop Career Center have been meeting with the newly laid off workers and a job fair has been scheduled for November 15. Under the WIA legislation, the educational opportunities are different than those received by workers who were laid off under the JTPA legislation. Mr. Russell indicated that the St. Lawrence County Industrial Development Agency and Empire State Development continue to work with Appleton paper to find a buyer for the mill.

Summer Youth Remediation Report The Summer Youth reflected an average improvement of almost one full grade in math and reading.

MEMBERSHIP COMMENTS

None.

EXECUTIVE SESSION

None.

ADJOURNMENT

Chairman Blevins thanked Board members for attending the meeting. On motion of Mr. Daddario, the meeting adjourned at 8:05 PM. Motion passed unanimously.

Respectfully submitted,

Joanne M. Novak, Esq.