

**WORKFORCE INVESTMENT BOARD
MINUTES OF AUGUST 23 2001 MEETING**

A meeting of the Workforce Investment Board was called to order by Chairman Lynn Blevins at 7:42 AM, Thursday, August 23, 2001 at McCarthy's Restaurant, Canton, New York.

Members Present: Jack Backus, Genevieve Baxter, Doug Beachard, Lynn Blevins, John Bogosian, Donald Brining, Sue Caswell, Richard Daddario, Bruce Green, Donald Hooper, Joseph Kennedy, Kristy Langtry, Ron McDougall, James McFaddin, Stephen Novacich, Joanne Novak, James Picunas, Linda Randi, and Tim Weaver.

Members Absent: John Lancaster, Walt Paul, Peter Phelan

Others Present: Natalie Haggart, Steve House, Ed Short, and Edmund Russell of the Office of Economic Development; Barbara Lake Potter of the Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy Committee

Chairman Blevins welcomed all members to the meeting and introduced Barbara Lake Potter, a member of the Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy Committee.

MINUTES

Moved by Mr. McFaddin and seconded by Mr. Brining, the minutes of the June 27, 2001 meeting were accepted. Approved unanimously.

CHAIRMAN'S COMMENTS

Chairman Blevins noted that anyone interested in a tour of the new building should contact Don Brining.

Chairman Blevins then indicated that appointments would need to be made to the Nominating Committee for new officers of the WIB. Chairman Blevins appointed Mr. Daddario, Ms. Caswell, and Mr. Backus to the Committee.

COMMITTEE REPORTS

Marketing and Quality Assurance Committee: Mr. Russell noted that this Committee did not meet last month and therefore, there is no report.

Youth Committee: Mr. Russell reported that there was a meeting scheduled, but it has been postponed to September. Mr. Russell then noted that the Summer Youth Program was winding down. It served approximately 425 youth at approximately 118 different sites around the County. Mr. Russell remarked that there had been very few problems with the youth (injuries, etc.), but there had been some turnover in staff. He added that 3 or 4 of the Summer Tutors had left the program as they had received permanent employment. Mr. Russell noted that this year's program was the largest program run in a number of years, and he commended Mr. Connor and his staff for doing such an outstanding job.

Services Committee: Mr. Picunas reported that the Services Committee reviewed two issues. He noted there were four requests by training providers for local certification. All of the requests except one were considered demand occupations, and Mr. Picunas noted that as there could be an opportunity in the future to provide training, that all of the requests be approved by the full Board. He noted that the Support Services Guidelines were also reviewed by the Services Committee.

Mr. Picunas then explained that Support Services payments were made to customers receiving Intensive and Training services to enable the customer to return to or obtain work sooner than they otherwise would. Examples of Support Services include payments for transportation, health care, childcare, temporary shelter, supplies, etc. Mr. Picunas indicated that these guidelines closely resemble the Support Services guidelines under JTPA. He added that none of the Services are overly liberal in their payment amounts. Mr. Picunas reported that the Committee recommends adoption of these guidelines by the full Board.

In response to a question from Mr. McFaddin, Mr. Picunas explained that training would normally not be funded in a non-demand occupation. Mr. House added that the law allows for exceptions whereby the customer can document an employer connection in that particular occupation, or the customer is committed to relocating to an area where the occupation is considered in demand.

Mr. Russell noted that there is no reason not to approve the certification because there is no track record on performance. He added that the State will be issuing performance reports on these training providers and it will be up to the WIBs to determine whether or not to continue their certification as an eligible training provider. He also noted that a training provider that is decertified may appeal to the State, who makes the final determination.

Executive Committee: Mr. Russell deferred his report on the Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy to later in the meeting.

CONSENT AGENDA

There was no consent agenda requiring action of the WIB.

OLD BUSINESS

Resolution Authorizing Certification of Eligible Training Providers: Mr. McFaddin moved, seconded by Mr. Brining. The motion passed unanimously.

NEW BUSINESS

Resolution Approving Support Services Guidelines: Ms. Baxter moved, seconded by Ms. Caswell. The motion passed unanimously.

STAFF REPORT

Mr. Russell reported that two reports had been received from the New York State Department of Labor. The first report indicated that our expenditure of JTPA funds was in compliance with regulations. The second report was from Jim Fleet regarding a review of the current Summer Youth

Program. Mr. Russell noted that Mr. Fleet's report was a positive appraisal of the program, which reflected Jim Connor's diligence in running the program.

Mr. Russell also explained that the Federal government has recently rescinded Dislocated Worker funds nationally, and that he will provide the Board with a more detailed report. He added that the decrease in Dislocated Worker funds was offset by an increase in Adult funds, and that because of this, there would be no drastic impact on the services we provide. He also reported that he recently learned that the Bush Administration intends to cut between 5% and 7% of next year's WIA funding, which will present a challenge to us in light of our high unemployment rate and increased training needs.

Mr. Russell then reported briefly on the St. Lawrence County Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (CEDS) 2001 Update. He provided a brief history on the Economic Development Authority (EDA) and noted the CEDS report was key to applying for EDA funding. He reviewed the report's 6 objectives: Downtown Revitalization, Establishing Micro-Business Support Systems, Infrastructure Development and Enhancement, Retention and Expansion of Existing Businesses, Recruitment of Industrial Business, and School-to-Work, Work-to-Work, Welfare-to-Work Transition.

Downtown Revitalization – The Committee may wish to review how downtown businesses can reestablish the link with their communities. He added that, historically, downtown served a vital function for communities, but changes in shopping patterns (malls, etc) have changed that.

Establishing Micro-Business Support Systems – Mr. Russell noted Micro-Enterprise Revolving Loan Fund programs do good work to help microenterprises, and there are many of them within the County.

Infrastructure Development and Enhancement – He suggested the Committee review highway transportation links and telecommunications within the County, along with the lack of an industrial park within the County that has a large amount of acreage.

Retention and Expansion of Existing Businesses – He suggested that the Committee may wish to determine if economic development strategies are offering enough to businesses, and can a climate be created whereby business can expand or get access to the funding needed to prevent closure.

Recruitment of Industrial Business – Historically, Mr. Russell noted, recruitment of industries has been concentrated on Canada, which has been reasonably successful, however with Free Trade and the differentiation of the dollar, this recruitment tool has become less attractive. Mr. Russell suggested possibly reversing this process, and track US firms wanting to do business with Canadian firms without relocating to Canada. He cited as an example, the Canadian hi-tech industry, which by the year 2020 should have a significantly higher number than are in the area at present.

School-to-Work, Work-to-Work, Welfare-to-Work – Mr. Russell noted that there have been significant changes and progress made in these areas, and more concentration could be made on integrating services.

He noted that the Committee's goal would be to review the present plan, provide possible recommendations for the new plan. He added that the economic development organizations in the

County that have staff would become staff to the Committee, along with the County's Planning Department. Mr. Russell indicated that this Committee would meet in November and/or December and begin developing a broad scope of work, and hopefully provide a full report by September, 2002.

Mr. McFaddin inquired about any lobbying efforts being done at present. Mr. Russell noted that we do not lobby, but the Committee could make this part of their plan. Mr. Short noted that Federally funded programs could not conduct lobbying efforts. Mr. Russell noted these efforts would be done as member of the CEDS, not the WIB.

Dr. Kennedy suggested this report as a way to rethink current strategy, instead of just adding to it. He cited promoting the education industry as a way to invest. Chairman Blevins suggested a resource assessment (water, colleges, etc.) and how to use them as an advantage locally.

Mr. Brining suggested the need to broaden the area and look for a regional point of view, as opposed to just St. Lawrence County. He noted that jobs coming into the neighboring counties can have a positive economic benefit to St. Lawrence County, and we should be working cooperatively to get businesses into this region.

Mr. Blevins asked that anyone interested in serving on this Committee should contact him or Ed Russell.

EXECUTIVE SESSION

The Board did not go into Executive Session.

ADJOURNMENT

Chairman Blevins thanked Board members for attending the meeting. On motion of Mr. Daddario and seconded by Mr. Novacich, the meeting adjourned at 8:50 AM. Motion passed unanimously.

Respectfully submitted,

Joanne M. Novak, Esq.