

Workforce Investment Board of Columbia & Greene Counties
Minutes for April 8, 2009 5:30 p.m.
Columbia Greene Community College- Main Building Room 105

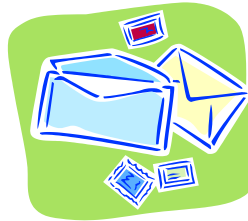
WELCOME

Anthony Zibella welcomed new members, Mr. Kary Jablonka (Columbia County Office for the Aging) and Mr. Ken Flood (Columbia Hudson Partnership) and guests.

Chair Tony Zibella called the meeting to order with roll call.

Attendance:

Present: Frank Alguire, John Betts, Fran DelGaudio, Pam Dusharm, Ken Flood, Patrick Gabriel, Kary Jablonka, Kate Konopka, Rob LaBuff, David Leavitt, Ann Luby, Cindy MacKay, Florence Ohle, Mary Prazma, Betty Rosato, Karen Schoonmaker, Sally Sharkey, John Seacord, Mike Veeder, Sarah Witham M. A. Wiltse, and Anthony Zibella.



Excused: Deneen Byrne, Russ Coloton, Tom Every, Diane Franzman, Carrie Haddad, Susan Hollister, Stan Ingalls, Mike Kutski, David Lester, Rebecca Main, Jessica Nabozny, Linda Overbaugh, David Scott, Lynn Strunk and Jim Svetz.

Consultant: Katy Drake

Guests: Maureen Boutin (WIO), Cori Overdorf (DOL), David LaFleur (VESID)

With 22 members in attendance, a quorum is present.

STATUS OF VACANCIES

There is a total of one vacancy for a Columbia County business.

ACCEPTANCE OF MINUTES

A motion was made by Ann Luby, seconded by Cindy McKay and carried by the Board to accept the Board Meeting Minutes from January 13, 2009. All Board meeting minutes are posted on the website, www.columbiagreeneorg.org.

CORRESPONDENCE

Frank Alguire, WIB secretary, noted that the following correspondence is available for member review:

Letters sent:

- February 2009. Quarterly reports sent to Mr. Wayne Speenburgh, Chair of Greene County Legislature and Mr. Art Baer, Chairman of Columbia County Board of Supervisors
- February 2009. Letter sent with monitoring report to MA Wiltse, Director of the One Stop Center.

Letters received:

- January 2009. Letter received from Paul Miller, Director of Workforce Investments regarding approval for the gas card initiative.
- February 2009. Notice of Obligational Authority (NOA) from DOL regarding request submitted to support individual training plans under the Trade Adjustment Assistance Program (TAA).

COMMITTEE MEETINGS

Committee reports were distributed prior to the meeting and reviewed by Committee Chairs and/or committee members. Committee reports are attached to the minutes for reference.

Business Services

Frank Alguire, the newly appointed Chair of the Business Services Committee reviewed the report from the March 12th meeting. Mr. Alguire updated the Board on the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (ARRA), reviewing the stimulus money by funding streams. The majority of Adult and Dislocated Worker funding will be spent on Individual Training Accounts (ITAs). A resolution from the committee will be put before the Board regarding "mini ITAs" for customers with advanced degrees (Associates and above). The Business Services Committee will also be putting recommendations before the Board regarding the Training Provider List. The committee is in process of reviewing the In Demand Occupation List, which will be presented to the Board for approval at the July meeting.

Continuous Quality Improvement

Katy Drake, the consulting Director for the WIB, presented the results from the recent CQI policy review. The results of the policy review and recommendations are included in the attached committee reports.

Executive Committee

Tony Zibella, Chair, reviewed the Executive Committee report, announcing the appointment of Mr. Ken Flood to the Business Services Committee and Mr. Patrick Gabriel to the Youth Council.

Youth Council

MA Wiltse reviewed the Youth Council report noting that Columbia Greene anticipates close to \$270,000 in ARRA and TANF funds to serve youth during the summer of 2009. The ARRA funding expands the definition of youth to age 24. The focus for older youth (ages 21-24) will be in placing them in summer jobs that have the potential to lead to a regularly scheduled position. MA Wiltse reviewed the resolutions put before the Board to increase each Youth Program's contract by approximately \$3,000 for PY08 (ending June 30, 2009).

One Stop Operator Director's Report

The One-Stop Operator's report was provided to all members. The report provided a review of Core Services, Skill Development and Training Services, DOL Employment Services Statistics for Columbia Greene, a local quarterly report for local activities, Adult Education Information and Marketing information. MA Wiltse reviewed the current Center staffing pattern, noting the role of each staff member. Workforce Staff were commended on their ability to handle the significantly increased number of customers visiting the center. DOL Employment Services Statistics for Columbia Greene were reviewed with February 2009 unemployment rates at 8.2% for Columbia County and 9.1% for Greene. Counties outside of the Hudson Valley (such as Schoharie) were reported to have an unemployment rate as high as 11.2%.

Local business closing and rapid response services were reviewed. Ann Luby provided information regarding the Department of Labor's Shared Work Program. The Shared Work Program provides employers an alternative to layoffs. An employer can use the program to reduce the hours (20 -60%) of all or a specified group of employees. Under the program, the

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employees can collect partial unemployment insurance benefits to compensate for their reduced work schedule & lost wages. Employees maintain their benefits under the program. Businesses can obtain more information or apply on line at www.labor.state.ny/ui/dande/sharedwork1.shtm or can contact (518) 457-5807.

Maureen Boutin shared information regarding the April 29th Workforce Job Fair to be held at Columbia Greene College. The Job Fair will include service and training providers in addition to hosting companies with local job openings.

OLD BUSINESS

Update on RFP #13-N “Regional Economic Transformation Strategies through a Sector or Cluster Based Approach” and “Internship Grant”.

Updates on both the 13N Sector Strategy Grant and the Internship Grant are covered in the committee reports.

NEW BUSINESS

The American Recovery and Reinvestment Act was discussed in committee reports and the One Stop Operator’s report.

As reviewed in the Committee Reports, the following resolutions were made:

Resolution: The Business Services Committee put forth a resolution to approve **Ulster BOCES** to the local Training Provider list and **New York Rural Water Association** to the State list. The Technology Skills program and the Commercial Drivers License School were not approved for the local list. Patrick Gabriel made a motion to approve the resolution. Kate Konopka seconded the motion. The motion was carried, with all in favor.

Resolution: The Business Services Committee put forth a resolution to fund mini ITAs up to \$1,000 so that customers with advanced degrees (Associates and above) can upgrade their skills or gain the additional skills necessary to secure a position in their field. Florence Ohle made a motion to approve the resolution. John Betts seconded the motion. The motion was carried with all in favor. The mini ITAs are available based on the additional funding from the ARRA.

Resolution: The Youth Council put forth a resolution to approve the amended YES Program budget. Frank Alguire made a motion to approve the resolution which was seconded by John Betts. MA Wiltse and David Leavitt abstained. The motion was carried with all others in favor.

Resolution: The Youth Council put forth a resolution to approve the amended Greenville Youth Program budget. Sarah Witham made a motion to approve the resolution. The motion was seconded by Karen Schoonmaker. David Leavitt abstained from the vote. The motion was carried with all others in favor.

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Resolution: The Youth Council put forth a resolution to approve the amended Catskill GED Program budget. Frank Alguire made a motion to approve the proposal which was seconded by John Betts. Dave Leavitt abstained from the vote. The motion was carried with all others in favor.

GOOD AND WELFARE

Mr. Frank Alguire updated the Board regarding tourism, planning and economic development for Greene County. Due to the economic downturn, job creations within local businesses and deals have been slow. No deals were processed in February, March or April. More deals than normal are expected in the spring. The businesses Green in Greene and River Street Bakers have just closed on their microenterprise loans. In May, the County Main Street awards will be announced. Mr. Alguire updated the Board on the recent layoffs at Holcim. Holcim does have contracts through the end of the year and is focusing on consistency in their plant operations under a new plant manager.

Mr. Ken Flood provided a brief update on economic development and planning for Columbia County. Business activity is noted as good, with three buildings under construction in the Commerce Park. The funding for the "New Business Seminar" which is sponsored annual by Columbia County was restructured at this time to offer those funds for small business assistance. 22 businesses took advantage of the initiative. Columbia County is noting a trend toward smaller businesses.

Ms. Ann Luby discussed the reorganization at DOL in which her role will focus her more on policy development. Ann will continue to serve as the DOL representative to the Board.

Mr. John Seacord was congratulated on his upcoming retirement from VESID. Mr. David LaFleur is expected to be appointed to the Columbia Greene WIB as Mr. Seacord's replacement.

The motion to adjourn was made by Frank Alguire and seconded Ann Luby. The meeting was adjourned.

Please Mark Your Calendar

Upcoming Special Events	Date, Time, Location	Information:
WIB Full Board Meetings	July 14, 2009 8:30 am	Contact Katy Drake at Drake@mhccable.com or 965-1421
Job Fair	April 29, 2009	Contact Maureen Boutin at 828-4181 for more information
<i>Meetings are held in The Professional Academic Building at the College unless otherwise noted</i>		

Respectfully submitted,
Katy Drake/WIB Consultant

Attachment: Committee Reports

Business Services Committee

March 12, 2009

Impact on Columbia Greene for the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (ARRA)–WIA Stimulus Funds.

The Columbia Greene allocation of the WIA Stimulus Funds under the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act were reviewed. The local amounts reviewed are based on the formula allocation for PY09, which is a concern as it indicates funding has gone down from PY08. The majority of the youth funding will be spent on a Summer Youth Employment Program this summer. An expanded definition of youth was provided under the ARRA, with the program now serving youth from ages 14 to 24. Concerns were expressed regarding the College/One Stop Center being responsible for unemployment insurance for the older youth (who are out of school) after the stimulus funds are expended. A Summer Youth staff member has been rehired from last year to set up work sites and reach out to kids. Summer Youth Program opportunities are based on income eligibility, job location, and interest match. Transportation is available for the younger youth to the college program. Advertising the Summer Youth Program at job fair with income guidelines was suggested. Visits will occur to each school. It was noted that New York is better off than most states, as we have maintained small Summer Youth Employment Programs over the years through TANF funds.

The Adult and Dislocated Worker money will be spent on training (ITAs). With the stimulus funds, the amount of money we will have in PY 09 (July 2009 – June 2010) returns to the PY 2001 level. MA Wiltse noted the money will be easily spent on customer training. State parameters regarding how quickly the stimulus funds need to be spent are expected shortly. They want all money spent in the first year. The State is likely to set a percentage of the stimulus funds they want spent by December 2009. Local areas that do not reach that amount are likely to have the excess recaptured and reallocated to other areas.

In Demand Occupation List

WIA training funds are available only for occupations that are considered “in demand”, as determined by the local Board. In light of the economic downturn, the state is requesting that all WIBs review their in demand list, to insure they are effectively directing training funds. A list of occupations that are projected to have a favorable or very favorable employment outlook in the Capital Region Labor Market, over the next eight years, was distributed to the committee. The list was developed by NYS Labor Market Analysts. After a brief discussion the committee requested that the list be organized by employment prospects and average annual openings and eliminate commission job titles such as hair dresser, fitness trainers and real estate agents.

Also discussed were mini ITAs to serve customers with advanced degrees (Associates and above) who need to brush up on skills in order to find a job in this challenging economic climate. A motion to fund mini ITAs up to \$1,000 so that customers with advanced degrees can upgrade their skills or gain the additional skills necessary to secure a position in their field was approved

Training Provider List

A listing of the schools requesting to be added to the Columbia Greene Provider list was distributed for committee review. Providers must apply to the WIB in which they are physically located. The following schools and their offerings were reviewed:

- Technology Skills, Inc.
- Commercial Drivers License School, Inc (Albany)
- Ulster BOCES
- New York Rural Water Association

A motion to approve Ulster BOCES to the local Training Provider list and New York Rural Water Association to the State list was carried. The Technology Skills program and the Commercial Drivers License School were not approved for the local list.

Gas Card Policy

The Business Services Committee reviewed the supportive service policy which now includes a gas card initiative which allows registered job seekers to get reimbursed for actual job seeking costs. Customers in training will receive a \$75 gas card once per month. NYSDOL awarded the \$12,500 grant specifically for gas cards for rural counties. This policy was approved by the Executive Committee in order to meet the necessary deadlines for implementation. The gas card initiative funds must be spent by June 30, 2009. The One Stop Center Director is monitoring the implementation of the grant funds and may adjust the approved amount of the gas cards if it is necessary to stretch out the availability of the funds.

Needs Related Payment Policy

Under ARRA, each WIB will be required to have a “Needs Related Payment” policy. Needs Related Payments are to provide living expense money to participants no longer eligible for UI benefits. “Support Services” was clarified as a reimbursement for costs that has been incurred due to training (such as books, travel, child care). The goal of support services is for customers to go to school at little or no cost.

April 29th Job Fair

Due to the anticipated lack of businesses with current job openings attending the Job Fair, the committee discussed options to make the event relevant. Inviting training providers—such as Ulster BOCES, Questar III, and Columbia Greene Community College to attend was suggested. Contracted employers, who work on commission, such as Mary Kay, Pampered Chef and Taste of Home consultants have been eliminated from the fair this year, per DOL guidance. Due to the lack of employment opportunities, focusing on training options and community services was suggested, more in line with a Career and Service Fair. Representatives from businesses with “green” job opportunities have been contacted to attend the fair. The workshop held in advance of the fair to better prepare people attending, was discussed and noted as a significant success. It has strong attendance each season.

**Continuous Quality Improvement (CQI) Committee
March 10, 2009 Policy Review**

Several CQI committee members met on March 10, 2009 at the Columbia Greene One Stop Center to review policies selected from the policy site by CQI Chair, John Craft. Being sensitive to the drastically increased work load of the One Stop Center Staff, the committee met with One Stop Director, MA Wiltse, as to not interfere with the customer service flow.

The policies reviewed were as follows:

Policy # 301.4 (3/09/09) Supportive Services

Findings: This policy was newly implemented in response to funding available for gas cards by NYS DEWS for PY- 08 Q3 & Q4. The policy is in effect as long as funds remain available. Funds from this initiative must be spent by June 30, 2009. The implementation of the policy is being overseen by the One Stop Director to monitor how quickly funds are awarded. Forms for reimbursement for training activities and job search activities were reviewed. Final details of dispensing the cards to the job seeker/trainee for reimbursement are still being worked out as cards cannot be mailed.

Policy #301 (10/31/02) Financial Aid Determination-WIA Title 1B

Findings: The self sufficiency level needs to be raise to \$16/hour for Adults (per 2008 Board approved change) in this section. The *Priority of Service* guidelines were reviewed.

Policy #406 Job Seeker Case Management (9/14/07)

Findings: Policy reviewed. *Job Fairs* versus *Career Fairs* or *Service Fairs* were discussed in light of the lack of companies hiring at this time.

Policy #305 ITA Training (1/15/08)

Findings: ITA amounts were reviewed; no changes anticipated as the amounts remained at the Board approved levels (up to \$8,000) through WIA funding reductions. Stimulus funds will allow for the training of more Adults and Dislocated Workers immediately. A potential change in the policy to allow for funds for customers with advanced degrees (Associate Degrees and above) to update their skills through a "mini ITA" in order to find work is being brought before the WIB in April due to the current economic climate.

Policy #201 Initial Assessment Interview (7/16/08)

Findings: This policy was reviewed due to the drastic increase in customers at the One Stop Center. Initial assessments are conducted in person, and generally take about 30 minutes. Job Search Ready Services and Career Development Services were reviewed.

General Note: In general review of the policy manual, it is noted that Policy #107 Providing the Customer with Information about Elected Officials requires an update for the Senate and House of Representatives (pending).

Final comments: The review provided a terrific in-depth overview of One Stop Center services and the policies required to implement those services. It is clear that the policy manual is reviewed and updated on a regular basis. The One Stop Director is to be commended for her intricate knowledge of the policies, the Center and the Workforce Development system.

Present for the Policy Review: Betty Rosato and Katy Drake

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Executive Committee

March 31, 2009 5:30 p.m.

Board Vacancies

Board vacancies were reviewed noting one business vacancy for Columbia County. Mr. Ken Flood (Planning & Economic Development Department) has been appointed to replace Mr. Jim Galvin. Mr. Kary Jablonka, for the Office of the Aging, has been appointed to replace Ms. Kit Ali. Mr. Frank Alguire was appointed Chair to the Business Services Committee.

Mr. Patrick Gabriel was appointed to the Youth Council. Mr. Ken Flood was appointed to the Business Services Committee.

A special Executive Committee meeting will be scheduled to address attendance and to review the by-laws.

American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (ARRA)

MA Wiltse reviewed the amount of additional funding Columbia Greene will receive under the ARRA (stimulus funds), comparing the amounts to PY08 current funding.

	Adult	Dislocated Worker	Youth	Administration
PY08 Funding	\$118,815	\$190,844	\$130,283	\$59,000
ARRA	\$61,866	\$216,216	\$151,130.70	\$47,000

The majority of the youth funds under the ARRA will be spent this summer on the Summer Youth Employment Program. An additional staff member has been hired, and has already started coordinating the Summer Youth Program. With the stimulus funds, Columbia Greene expects to serve twice as many youth this summer than it did last year. The ARRA expands the definition of youth, serving up to age 24. This year's Summer Youth Program may also have a component for students on financial management with each youth being required to set up a bank account to in which their summer paychecks will be deposited.

The majority of the Adult and Dislocated Worker funds will be spent on training. New York State was the number two recipient of stimulus funds.

Local Business Update

MA Wiltse provided the committee with information on recent business closings in the two counties. The Independent closed impacting just under 30 employees. Holcim (formerly St. Lawrence Cement) eliminated 26 positions, laying off 24 employees. Chatco is reported to have closed, (in January we think they had close to 50 employees). The WARN notice requirements were not followed by Chatco, so specific information is not yet available.

MA Wiltse reported that the One Stop Center is working with the college to implement a two week training program introducing computer basics. Work is also being done to put together a CNA class with the college.

April 29, 2009 Job Fair

While at past Job Fairs approximately 60 business and organizations have been present, to date only 7 businesses are registered. The format of the fair has been altered in order to ensure it is worthwhile to job seekers. A career fair format will be followed with information on training providers up front. Career information on "green jobs" will also be available. While in past years, 400 – 600 letters were sent out to UI job seekers regarding the job fair, this year our starting list is 1500 people.

Youth Council

March 19, 2009

Internship Program

Maureen Boutin provided an overview of the internship website, formerly known as MyBeanstalk, now found at www.TechvalleyInternships.org. The program now has paid internship opportunities on the site. The internship program was established to link students ages 16-24 with paid internships within the 8 county region. The goal for the grant is 50 paid internships within the 8 counties by August 31, 2009. The current focus is on the summer session. As Career Centers have received funding to recruit students and businesses, MA Wiltse will be meeting with the Coordinators from each One Stop Center to encourage focus on the internship grant in order to meet the set goal. Government and non profit agencies were not allowed under the grant and while listed on the web site, do not count towards the 50 internship goal. The current economic downturn has made it extremely challenging to secure paid business internships.

Sector Strategies Grant Update (#13N) Work Readiness Credential & TCAP

Under the Regional 13N grant, the Work Readiness Credential Committee is investigating the soft skills required by employers for both youth and adults in our eleven county region. The consultants, Thomas P. Miller Associates, have reached out to all the local work readiness programs in the region to create a rubric of skills covered in each program. Reaching an agreement on set standards for all regional work readiness credential programs is the goal of the grant. These established standards will allow for a regional brand of the credential in order to increase the certificate's value with the businesses and the students/adults. The Council discussed the need to maintain high standards for the credential so it is truly meaningful. The success of the BEST program was shared noting that the integrity of the certificate has been maintained with high standards for attendance and the completion of a polished portfolio. The momentum of the BEST program has grown, with an estimated 50 students graduating with the certificate this year.

Out of Regional 13N grant funds, \$30,000 has been set aside for a marketing campaign to promote technical careers to parents, educators and students under the Technical Career Awareness Program (TCAP). Careers under advance manufacturing (including biotechnology, green jobs, energy and nanotechnology) will be covered under the TCAP. The goal is to make all (students, parents, school administration, teachers, guidance counselors, etc) aware of post secondary opportunities while promoting careers in growing fields.

Columbia Greene Stimulus Funds & Summer Youth Jobs

Under the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (ARRA) (stimulus funds), Columbia Greene will be receiving approximately an additional \$167,000 in youth funding. The majority of the ARRA youth funds must be spent this summer in a Summer Youth Employment Program. State provided TANF funds will also be available, providing an additional \$120,000. The eligibility requirements for TANF and WIA are different, although both are based on family income. The ARRA funding also expands the definition of youth, serving up to the age of 24. There is concern that serving youth who are not in school may result in Unemployment Insurance claims needing to be paid next year, after the stimulus money is gone. The college pays UI directly and as the grant sub recipient would be responsible. Youth Program staff are already gearing up to recruit youth and worksites. Any private business, non-profit agency, government or educational institutions, (who have not laid people off) can be a worksite. The number of summer youth program spots are expected to double from last year.

Youth Programs- additional funds for contractors for PY08

Additional funds are available to the three youth programs with current contracts with the WIB. \$10,000 in additional funds are available that were not predicted, and Columbia Greene must meet the funding expenditure requirements. Proposed amended budgets were submitted from each of the three programs—Greenville, Catskill GED and the YES Program—for Youth Council review.

The Greenville In-school Youth Program submitted a supplemental budget requesting funds for supplies & materials, equipment and travel. The budget requests are in line with their program activities. The YES Program's proposed amended budget was reviewed. The amended budget requests \$2685 to fund three more students in the YES program. The Catskill GED Program's proposed amended budget was reviewed. Further explanation is required on the equipment item (ELMO digital visual presenter with accessories) as well as the camera and other requested supplies. The Catskill Program was notified that the PY09 budget may not have funding for any supplies, yet books and other necessary supplies were not listed in the amended budget. The Council strongly felt that the equipment request for the ELMO digital presenter must be supported by the Catskill Technology Department to ensure the request is in line with the district's technology plan. It was noted that any equipment purchased under the grant is ultimately the property of the college. Once the supporting information is received, Katy Drake will email the Council the amended budget and conduct a vote via email prior to the April 8th full Board meeting.