

Workforce Investment Board of Columbia & Greene Counties

Minutes for April 5, 2011 5:30 p.m.

Columbia Greene Community College

MISSION: The C-G WIB will provide leadership, influence, focus and oversight for the local workforce development system. *Strategies to Achieve Vision and Mission:*

- Promote collaboration between economic development, education and training resources.
- Measure system performance for quality improvement.
- Promote the system with the public

WELCOME

Chair Karen Schoonmaker welcomed Board members and guests. Nancy Costine (Columbia Hudson Partnership) was acknowledged as a new Board member. Barbara Arisohn (ACCES – VR) was welcomed as a guest standing in for David LaFluer. Ms. Arisohn will be joining the Board following David's retirement in late April.

Chair Karen Schoonmaker called the meeting to order:

Present: Frank Alguire, Gina Armstrong, Betty Betts, John Betts, Russ Coloton, John Craft, Terri Drobner, Pam Dusharm, Patrick Gabriel, Kary Jablonka, Larry Krajeski, Ann Luby, Cindy MacKay, Florence Ohle, Mary Prazma, David Scott, Karen Schoonmaker, Deb Tuttle, Mike Veeder, M. A. Wiltse and Anthony Zibella.

Excused: Nancy Costine, Fran DelGaudio, Mark Fingar, Susan Hollister, Kate Konopka, David LaFleur, David Lester, Tracy McNally, Tracy Racicot, Sally Sharkey, Lynn Strunk and Joe Wolodkevich.

Absent: Jessica Shufelt

Consultant: Katy Drake

Guests: Sandy Arnone (Greenville CSD), Barbara Arisohn (ACCES-VR), Maureen Boutin (Workforce Office), Nancy Bell (DOL-DEWS) and Stuart Duffield (CGCC)

With 21 members in attendance, a quorum is present.

STATUS OF VACANCIES

- Organized labor representatives for Greene and Columbia are in recruitment
- One Greene Business Representative is pending appointment and one Business Representative is in recruitment

NEW BUSINESS

Ms. Sandy Arnone, teacher from the Greenville Youth Program, provided an overview of the program for the Board. The Greenville Youth Program currently serves 16 students, from freshman to seniors, in the afterschool Hometown Graphics Program which is funded through the WIB. Ms. Arnone presented a glog illustrating the work readiness and technology skills the students focus on during the year. Graphic materials created by the students were passed around in addition to the photos and videos on the glog. The Greenville contract is for \$14,750 plus funds for internships. Ms. Arnone's salary is used as a match for the contract as she donates her time for the program. Ms. Arnone has been running this program for over 10 years.

ACCEPTANCE OF MINUTES

John Betts made a motion to accept the Board meeting minutes for January 11, 2011. John Craft seconded the motion and the minutes were approved by the Board. All Board meeting minutes are sent electronically to all members and are posted on the website- www.columbiagreene.org.

CORRESPONDENCE

Secretary Frank Alguire noted that the following correspondence is available for member review:

Workforce Investment Board of Columbia & Greene Counties

Letters Sent:

- *March 21, 2011 Letter sent from Katy Drake to One Stop Operator MA Wiltse regarding PY10 monitoring results.*

Letters Received:

- *March 14, 2011. Letter from DOL regarding WIB membership changes.*
- *March 15, 2011. Letter from Tony Madrazo from Holcim regarding WARN notice.*

Upon review of the correspondence, Mr. Alguire updated the Board on the status of Holcim. MA Wiltse informed the Board that the Workforce NY Office and DOL Unemployment Insurance representatives met with Holcim employees. TAA (Trade Adjustment Assistance) will be applied for, with hope of obtaining potential Dislocated Worker discretionary training funds from the State, if Holcim employees do not qualify for TAA.

COMMITTEE MEETINGS

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

ONE STOP DIRECTOR'S REPORT

MA Wiltse distributed the One Stop Center's Participation Report for PY10 (July 1, 2010-March 31, 2011). The report included: An overview of Core and Intensive Services for the quarter, Skill Development and Training Services, unemployment statistics, adult education classes, and a quarterly report of local activities (job orders and job openings). Maureen Boutin updated the Board on the local NEG-OJT contracts. In the Columbia Greene area, five contracts have been written for an approximate total of \$42,000. Several other contracts are in the works. MA Wiltse noted for the Board that long term unemployed customers are still being called in for meetings to receive information regarding their eligibility for the NEG OJT program. An update on Trade Adjustment Assistance (TAA) for the approximately 40 Kaz workers impacted by the full business closing was provided. TAA provides additional funds for impacted workers to receive retraining. (After note: It has since been determined that all workers, from the lay off over two years ago and the current lay-off, qualify for TAA.)

OLD BUSINESS

One Stop Center Recertification

The Board received an update on the MOU for the local recertification of the Columbia Greene One Stop Center. The MOU is still pending review and approval from all the partners. It is expected that the approved MOU will be presented to the Board at the next meeting.

ADDITIONAL NEW BUSINESS

Board Discussion-Columbia Greene One Stop becoming a National Work Readiness Credential Test Site

The Work Readiness Credential (WRC) is a transferable certification of work readiness skills that is recognized nationally. The credential is validated and provides a business defined standard of work readiness. The credential is a computerized test that includes four assessment areas: situational judgment, reading, math and active listening. The test is timed at three hours and fifteen minutes and successful candidates must pass all four modules within one year in order to receive the credential. Candidates may retake any of the parts of the assessment that they do not pass. The WRC costs approximately \$60 per candidate. The closest test site is currently in Albany.

The Board discussed the value of the Columbia Greene Workforce Office becoming a test site. The current budget does not allow the CG WIO to pay for the test for all customers. The value of the credential to local businesses was explored. Board members would like more information regarding the credential. A speaker will be arranged for the next Board meeting.

Workforce Investment Board of Columbia & Greene Counties

GOOD AND WELFARE

- Best wishes to David LaFleur on his upcoming retirement.
- Thanks to David Scott for his time and focus on marketing information to better support the NEG OJT opportunities.
- Appreciation to Gina Armstrong and Alan Frisbee for their time visiting the youth programs this past quarter.
- Appreciation to Mike Veeder, Joe Wolodkevich, Kate Konopka and Karen Schoonmaker for their presentations/upcoming presentations to the Catskill GED program.
- Appreciation was extended to Ann Luby for the DOL assistance to Holcim for rapid response.

Frank Alguire updated the Board on Greene County economic development and tourism happenings over the past quarter. Three zip lines are up and running at Hunter Mountain. Blackthorn Resort, rebuilt with assistance through state and quantum loan funds, will be reopening soon.

Ann Luby, provided the Board notice of the Martin Luther King Job Fair at the Empire State Plaza on April 14th from 10:30 – 4:30.

Mary Prazma discussed the pilot program for the Comfort Inn for Columbia County.

Please Mark Your Calendar

Upcoming Special Events	<i>Date, Time, Location</i>	<i>Information:</i>
WIB Full Board Meetings	Tuesday, July 12, 2011 8:30 a.m.	Contact Katy Drake at Drake@mhccable.com or 965-1421
Career Fair	Wednesday, April 27, 2011 10 -2 Columbia Greene College	Reminders with meeting agendas to follow.

Definitions

OJT- On the Job Training

ARRA- American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009

TANF- Temporary Assistance for Needy Families

UI- Unemployment Insurance

ITA- Individual Training Account

SYEP- Summer Youth Employment Program

CLEOs- Chief Local Elected Officials

OTDA- Office of Temporary and Disability Assistance

PY 10 – Program Year beginning July 1, 2010- June 30, 2011

NEG- National Emergency Grant

WARN ACT- The Worker Adjustment and Retraining Notification Act

TAA- Trade Adjustment Assistance

Business Services Committee

March 17, 2011 8:30 am

NEG OJT (National Emergency Grant -On the Job Training)

The committee received an overview of the OJT company status, hired status and contract amount. The marketing efforts of the NEG OJT program were outlined, including press releases, email blasts, HR emails, Chamber & JSEC events, job seeker workshops, letters and cards. The WIO is focusing the NEG OJT program on both the employer and job seeker.

The eligibility of the candidate for the NEG OJT has been an issue at times for the successful connection between workers and OJT contracts. The WIO does assist businesses to identify the gaps for training needs under NEG OJT when qualified candidates are matched to a position.

An overview was provided indicating that 32 businesses received detailed NEG OJT information, with 18 businesses passing the DOL vetting process. Seven businesses did not follow through, to date. Two companies are not eligible and two companies have issues pending. Two NEG OJT contracts have been written.

Career Fair

The Workforce Investment Office and DOL are hosting a career fair on April 27th from 10:00 to 2:00 at the college. Business registrations are starting to trickle in. Businesses that attend are asked to have job openings or expect openings in the near future. Marketing is occurring with letters being sent, postings on the web sites, papers, flyers, agency contact and postings at the college. 700 attendees participated last year. The cost to businesses is \$35 for the booth and lunch. Maureen Boutin can be contacted to register or for more information.

13N MSSC (Manufacturing Skills Standards Council) ITA and Customized training

The MSSC initiative focuses on advance manufacturing training in a regional effort. The classes have been contracted with two BOCES. The training is being offered in Albany as Questar III did not have an instructor available. The training prepares people for entry level jobs in manufacturing. MSSC training provides the fundamentals in manufacturing. Currently, under the 13N grant, 25 regional people are in the MSSC trainings with two people from the Columbia Greene area. Two other students from the local area were registered but did not attend. A national certification is awarded for completion of the course. Stewart Duffield updated the committee that the college is looking into incorporating parts of the MSSC curriculum to prepare the student for certification at Columbia Greene College. Offering technical and soft skills training that can be transferred based on a high degree of commonality in advanced manufacturing is the goal of the college. The program would focus on skills and knowledge that is highly transferrable between businesses and career paths.

National Work Readiness Credential (NWRC)

Information was distributed regarding the National Work Readiness Credential. NY State is strongly encouraging the credential. GE Battery is now using the National Work Readiness Credential by giving preference for interviewing for those with the credential. This validated assessment focuses on soft skills and basic academics for workplace success. There is a curriculum that relates to the skills covered by the NWRC. Information was provided to the

Workforce Investment Board of Columbia & Greene Counties

committee that outlined the skills covered by the test. There is \$60 per person cost to take the test. While the CG WIO does not have the funds to pay for the test for all customers, the Workforce Office can become a certified testing site. The closest site right now is in Albany.

The Committee discussed the value of the credential to local businesses. Businesses discussed giving interview preference to applicants with the NWRC. If applicants would be willing to front the \$60 cost of the test was questioned. It was stressed that CG WIO does not have the funds for every job seeker to take the test.

Marketing the NWRC with a table at the career fair to educate the job seekers and businesses on the National Work Readiness Credential was suggested. Businesses being willing to reimburse for the test cost if the applicant was hired was suggested as a means of encouraging job seekers to independently take the credential. Working with Temp Agencies to provide this service was also suggested.

Columbia Greene becoming a test site was discussed by the committee as funds may be available in PY10 for CGCC to become certified. Ways of marketing to students was also explored. MA will look into moving forward to become a site for testing for the National Work Readiness Credential for this year.

Holcim

Frank Alguire provided an overview of Holcim for the Committee. Holcim bought the plant from St. Lawrence Cement several years ago. The plant has had several owners since originally built in 1912. Frank provided an overview of the efforts over the past few years to keep Holcim operating. Market conditions, taxes in NY and the condition of the plant all contributed to the closing. This is the 5th plant Holcim has closed in the US. Ninety day notice has been given for the closing with a WARN notice filed. The plant employed many long term employees due to the pay rate. The plant will be maintained by 4 to 6 employees in a mothball status with regular maintenance occurring with the hope to potentially reopen in 3 to 5 years if the economy rebounds. Holcim is offering relocation to any employee who wants to move. The Rapid Response staff will be meeting with the employees next week. Discretionary dislocated worker funds for training for employees will be applied for once the company applies for TAA. As jobs are not being off shored, the workers of Holcim will not qualify for TAA funds, but the Workforce Office may be able to secure the discretionary funds to retrain workers.

Local Business News

David Lester reported on recent restructuring of Taconic with 45 people across the US being laid off. The Germantown site was the most impacted by the layoffs. The volatile state of pharma over the past few years has had a heavy impact on Taconic. David shared information to counteract rumors and pass on assurance that the Germantown Site is still strong and profitable, with no plans of closing.

Executive Committee

March 21, 2011 5:30 p.m.

Appointments and Board Vacancies

Vacancies and recent appointments were discussed. A representative from the Bank of Greene County is being sought due to Rebecca Main's resignation. The Labor Representatives from both counties are also being sought and Katy has notified both CLEOs of the importance of those vacancies. Nancy Costine from the Columbia Hudson partnership has been appointed to replace Ken Flood on the Board. David LaFleur (VESID/ACCESS) is retiring in April and his potential replacement, Barbara Arisohn, (appointment pending) will be at the April meeting.

One Stop Certification Process

The meeting for partners did not occur as originally scheduled. The MOU review and signatures by partners are still pending. No concerns have been noted in the MOU review, but the process has been at a stand still due to several reviewing partners being out of the office until the end of March. MA will reschedule the partners' meeting and move forward with the process.

National Workforce Day March 24th

Congressman Gibson has been invited to visit the One Stop Center on March 24th to see the value of the Workforce One Stop Centers. Information on the objectives of the day have been forwarded to committee members. At this time, Congressman Gibson is voting in favor of zeroing out workforce (WIA) funds.

National Work Readiness Credential Test Site at CGCC

The Business Services Committee has recommended the Workforce Investment Office become a test site for the National Work Readiness Credential. Information on the NWR credential was distributed to members. Some larger companies, like GE Battery, are now using the test for interview priority and hiring. The NWRC test targets the emerging workforce. It costs about \$600 to become a test site. The test is proctored by certified staff. Funds are available this year for the Columbia Greene to become certified NWRC test site.

April 27th Career Fair at Columbia Greene College

The Workforce Office will be hosting a career fair on April 27th from 10 – 2:00.

Local Business Update

The Committee was updated on local business activity. The business office at Kaz is closing. A separate WARN notice is not required due to number of employees being laid off (under 50). It was noted that TAA certifications are only good for two years, therefore the remaining workers had to file a new TAA petition. TAA eligibility for these employees is in question. Holcim has closed and a WARN notice has been completed. Holcim has not been determined to be TAA eligible. Holcim is being mothballed for three to five years, with the future unknown due to the economy. The plant is not for sale. The plant will be maintained by 5-6 people in this holding state.

Youth Council

March 24, 2011

Chair Terry McGee Ward opened the meeting by welcoming new Council member Gina Armstrong from the Healthcare Consortium. Fran DelGaudio (Greene DSS) and Cindy MacKay (Columbia DSS) will also be joining the Council.

Youth Program Update

Mark Decker provided an update on the three youth programs. All three Council visits for the program year have occurred. All three programs appear to be running well and have successfully added the work readiness component required.

The YES Program currently has thirteen students enrolled with six internships. Teacher Maryann Morrison from the Catskill GED program has moved over to the YES program as Teacher Sharon Tedford left the program in March. Maryann brings over ten years experience to the program. Council representatives visited the YES program on December 7, 2010 to conduct the annual evaluation.

The Greenville Program currently has nineteen students enrolled for this program year with two internships. The Council visited the Greenville program on December 8, 2010. The program is well run with even more components on work readiness added into the curriculum for PY10. Teacher Sandy Arnone will be presenting on the Greenville Program and their accomplishments at the April WIB meeting.

Council representatives visited the Catskill GED program on March 1, 2011. Prior to leaving, Teacher Maryann Morrison along with TA Deb Zwoboda had set up work readiness portfolios for all the students. Guest business speakers have been visiting the program to talk about local opportunities and work readiness skills. An experienced long term substitute will be filling in for Maryann. Due to limited GED testing sites and a much more challenging base of students, Catskill expects to have 30 GED graduates for this program year.

All three program evaluation forms will be sent out to Council members for review. Hard copies of the Program Evaluations and the student essays from Catskill were passed around for review at the meeting.

Career Fair

The Workforce Office and the Department of Labor will be hosting a career fair on April 27th from 10:00 – 2:00 at Columbia Greene College.

Summer Youth Program

A small amount of money does appear to be in the state budget for the Summer Youth Employment Program. The SYEP is funded through TANF. The Program will be about half the size of the PY09 program and less than a quarter of the size of when ARRA funds were available in PY08. The program will focus only on summer job experience, with no classes being offered for younger students again this year due to funding.

Status of PY11 Youth Contracts

The budget for the upcoming year is still unknown. At the present, the House has zeroed out WIA funding. While we do expect to be around next year, significant cuts are expected. The current youth contracts are in place through August 2011. We may know more about funding at the next meeting.