

Workforce Investment Board of Columbia & Greene Counties

Quarterly Board Meeting

Minutes for January 10, 2006

Columbia Greene Community College- Room 105

Vice Chair Karen Diffley called the meeting to order and did roll call.

Attendance:

Present: Kit Ali, Jim Cullie, Karen Diffley, Pam Dusharm, Barbara Eacott, Tom Every, Diane Franzman, Jim Galvin, Warren Hart, Susan Hollister, Stan Ingalls, Ken Johnson, Mike Kutski, David Leavitt, David Lester, Cindy MacKay, Ralph Marino, Terry McGee-Ward, Jim Molloy, Barbara Roemer, Patricia Shaw, David Segalla, Tina Sharpe, M. A. Wiltse, Sarah Witham and Anthony Zibella.

Excused: Bruce Bohnsack, Tom Cappadona, Russ Coloton, John Craft, Paul Dellio, Siobahn Pellegrino and Lynn Strunk *Absent:* John Betts, Laurie Goff and Dawn Saul.

WIO Staff: Maureen Boutin

Consultant: Betty Ann Falkner

With 26 members in attendance, a quorum is present.

WELCOME

Chairman Zibella welcomed new member, Mike Kutski the Columbia County Union representative. He also welcomed guests Rebecca Main of The Bank of Greene County, David Wallingford of the New York State Department of Labor and Sherill Restifo of New York State Department of Employment Services, Hudson office.

STATUS OF VACANCIES

There is one business vacancy for Greene County expected to be filled at the January Greene County Legislators meeting. There is one community organization vacancy to be filled in Greene County.



CORRESPONDENCE

There were four letters sent and five letters received. Correspondence was not read due to time concerns. Correspondence was made available to all members.

ACCEPTANCE OF MINUTES

A motion to accept the October 4, 2005 minutes was made by M. A. Wiltse and seconded by Cindy Mackay. All were in favor and the motion was passed.

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COMMITTEE MEETINGS

Marketing Committee- Chairman Jim Cullie reported on the activities of this group. The Marketing committee was brainstorming ideas about getting information out to groups of persons not previously served by the Workforce system. There is a small group of persons that fit under the category of Discouraged Workers. The committee wanted to invite groups that work with this type of individual to a luncheon meeting with a motivational speaker who deals with discouraged workers. The idea was to raise awareness of what's available to assist these people. Several of the Board members who deal directly with this population felt it would not be a productive dialogue. They pointed out that there are major infrastructural system changes that would need to be made to make a difference in the lives of these people. There are not enough people with the same priorities and there exists an information gap. The Board did agree that the committee needs to determine its target audience and develop a strategy. All agreed that raising awareness of the system was important as well as getting the word out on the system. The committee will take this new information back for further discussions of marketing ideas.

Employer Services Committee- Chairman Jim Galvin reported on the work of this committee. Jim told the Board that in a follow-up from the joint Employer Services/Youth Council meeting that a Columbia-Greene Community Services workshop titled, 'An Internet Career Planning Guide for Parents and Their Teenagers' would be held in the Spring. He also told the Board about a survey that will be created and directed to school guidance departments to inquire what career information schools provide to students and discuss how Workforce New York could supplement schools with additional career development support. Jim then mentioned that the committee learned that a portion of the Incentive funds-\$25,000 will be used to train employed workers. The training must lead to some type of Industry recognized credential.

Skills Standards-Chairman Pam Dusharm reported on the activities of this committee. She told the Board that they met and discussed the use of various Zoomerang surveys. They asked to review a new survey that would ask businesses what their skills needs are. Committee members learned that a business skills survey was last completed in 2001. Pam also told the Board about a project that is in the review process to assist the Tourism/Hospitality industry in Columbia and Greene Counties. This pilot project will look to provide an industry recognized credential. The employers that agree to participate in this project will determine which credential to train for.

Youth Council- Susan Hollister reported on the activities of the Council. The Youth Council learned that some of the Incentive funds to be awarded to our WIB for passing all its performance measures will be used to keep the youth program running at current levels. Council members viewed a copy of a newsletter that is designed for current workforce participants and to provide follow-up information to past participants. The newsletter will be published on a quarterly basis and will appear on the web site.

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Continuous Quality-Chairman Jim Molloy reported on the activities of this committee. The committee met and reviewed numbers of people utilizing the Career Resource Room. Jim told the Board that although there were less people being served the number of repeat customers has been increased. Jim commented that they find the services worthy of their use. He also mentioned to the Board that the Workforce Investment Office staff will be conducting a self- evaluation on the strengths and weakness of the Center and its services.

Executive Committee- Chairman Anthony Zibella reported that this committee had met and discussed the particulars of the usage of the Incentive Funds. The WIB received \$372, 261 for meeting all performance measures. The Board learned that 61% of the funds have to be spent before June 30, 2006. M. A. Wiltse reported on how some of the funds will be spent. \$80,000 will be used to fund ITA's and OJT's, because all of those funds have been already used in this program year. \$35,000 will be used to continue funding Youth Programs at the same level as the last program year. \$100,000 will be used for operating expenses in the next program year due to the fact that formula funds have been cut. Some monies will be spent on a Tourist project that will work with the industry to develop career ladders that will show the path to higher wages. The agenda will be to encourage employers to look at this seriously and develop ways to work together.



One-Stop Operators Report- M. A. Wiltse discussed Core Services including Unemployment Insurance Orientations that were slightly down compared to last quarter. WIA Orientations went up slightly this quarter. Usage of the Career Resource Room was also slightly lower than last quarter. However, enrollments in Intensive & Training Services have increased. Marketing efforts remain high; they are busy in reaching out to the community. The Adult Education classes-GED has eighteen enrolled with one person having taken the test. M. A.'s report featured a web page updated which showed unique visitor usage increasing for the last twenty months.

A look at the unemployment rates showed a slight increase in the unemployment numbers for Greene County from 4.0 in October to 5.1 in November. The Board then looked at the Quarterly report of Local Activities and asked questions about the number of Job openings and the job order process.

OLD BUSINESS

There was no old business to discuss

NEW BUSINESS

The discussion then shifted to a grant that is once again available to businesses. Workforce NY reissued the Business New York grant for employee training- maximum grant amount is \$50,000, and there is no application deadline. Business applicants receive points if the training they propose to provide relates to their local WIB's top five

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identified skill needs. The local Board, therefore, has to identify the top five skills needed by employers in our local area.

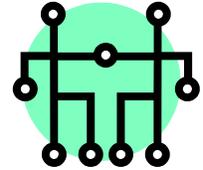
The five skills areas identified by the Business Services Committee are:

1. Employee Foundation Skills: Soft Skills, Supervisory Skills & Basic Skills
2. Computer Skills- both basic and specialized skill
3. Manufacturing/Distribution/Technical Skills
4. Process Improvement Skills
5. Occupational Health Care Skills (examples include, but are not limited to-C.N.A., LPN, Phlebotomy)

The Board reviewed the skills and asked questions about each of the skills. They learned that the WIO will review the grant applications to see if employers are providing training for these skills.

Resolutions & Discussion:

- **The Employer Services committee resolved to recommend that the Board accept the five job skills as priorities for the WIB.** A motion to approve the resolution was made by Jim Galvin and seconded by Tina Sharpe. All were in agreement with three proxies. The motion passed.



GOOD AND WELFARE

- Chairman Anthony Zibella informed the Board that its WIB Consultant Betty Ann Falkner would be resigning effective February 24th. Betty Ann told the Board that she and her family would be relocating to Winston-Salem. She expressed her appreciation to the Board for a very fulfilling five years. Anthony presented Betty Ann with a plaque commending her for her exemplary service to the Board. A Columbia-Greene Workforce hat was also presented to her.
- Board Member Education- *Meet Career Center Staff- Wendy Lee Pereira and Sherill Restifo-*
 - M. A. Wiltse introduced staff of the Career Center. *Wendy Lee Pereira* works with Intensive services, the Senior Employment Program and does case management work for the LPN program. Wendy is responsible for a sixty hour computer course offered at the Center. The class meets for seven weeks for three hours a day, four days per week. Wendy reported that between ninety to 100 people take these classes each year. Placement of these individuals into jobs is at 80-90%. She is responsible for enrolling job seekers in the Employee Enhancement class and she helps individuals to prepare their resume. Many seniors take the computer course and then are placed with non-profit agencies to gain more skills. Seniors who are 55 or older and income eligible receive part-time wages and begin

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looking for un- subsidized employment. Most of the individuals that Wendy sees take the Employee Enhancement program in the morning and the computer class in the afternoon.

- Employers commented that they would like to know when a class graduates.
- *Sherill Restifo* of Department of Employment Services- D.O.E.S. She is responsible for the Job Bank for Columbia and Greene Counties. Sherrill accepts job orders from employers in person, by phone and fax. The form asks for the job title, salary, duties, methods of contact, education and required skills. A match is made against all applicants in the database. Applicants are notified by letter and asked to respond. After thirty days, the employer is contacted to see if the position is filled. If the position is not filled, the job will be closed and reopened for a new search. The service is free.
 - Sherill shared some statistics comparing the number of job orders taken for Nov.-Dec. 2005
 - Columbia-Greene- 198 job orders; Albany-233 job orders and Ulster County-152 job orders.
 - More employers in Columbia & Greene are familiar with and use the job bank.

Sherill summed up her information by telling the employers that the Job Bank could accept any type of jobs, Civil Service posting, seasonal, short-term, and full-time. The only type of job they could not accept was for independent contractors.

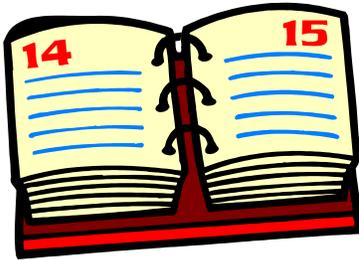
▪ **Economic Development Reports**

- Jim Galvin of Columbia Hudson Partnership reported on activities in Columbia County. Jim told the Board that the Columbia County Health Services Building has been completed and the county will be financing the building instead of leasing it. There will also be additional construction to connect Warren Street to Columbia Street, where the building is located.
 - Jim told members about a Small Businesses Grant of \$100,000 that currently has made between \$2,000-5,000 available to small businesses that hire low-moderately skilled workers.
 - Columbia County's Migrant Housing Grant has provided eight of twelve homes to replace living units that are unacceptable. The balance of four homes will be finished in the Spring.
 - They have also reconfigured their Empire Zone boundaries- it allows for more parcels in Commerce Park, where there are only three lots left.
- Warren Hart of Greene County Economic Development & Planning Agency reported on his counties activities. Greene County recently learned it has not been awarded an Empire Zone in the latest round. The cooperation and reciprocation with Columbia County has helped both

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counties. There are many rumors about all counties eventually having Empire Zones.

- Greene County has completed its first phase of its Economic Development plan. Information is available on their website www.greenebusiness.com.
- Warren reported that they have completed the fourth year of the Main Street Revitalization project. The project will be again renewed.
- A RFP is out to secure a professional Advertising/Marketing/PR firm for Greene County.
- A new Economic Director has been hired and Warren will bring him to the next Board meeting.
- The next MicroBusiness class will begin in the Spring.
- There is approximately \$400,000 available to help the tourism industry with assistance in business planning, appraisals and marketing.



Mark the Date

| Upcoming Special Events | Date, Time, Location | Information: |
|--|--|--|
| <i>Columbia County Chamber:</i> Economic Outlook '06 Forum Keynote speaker-Hugh Johnson | January 18, 2006 Columbia-Greene Community College in the Arts Center Theater 7:30 – 9:00 am | Cost of the forum is \$10. Continental Breakfast Reservations call 828-4417 |
| <i>Columbia Greene JSEC</i> Breakfast: Community Resources for your Business Speakers- James Galvin, Columbia Hudson Partnership, Warren Hart, Greene County Economic Development, Sandy Mathes-Greene County IDA | Thursday, January 26, 2006 8:00 A.M. to 8:30 A.M.- Registration and Breakfast 8:30 AM. to 10:00 A.M. - Program Meadowgreens Restaurant, Rte. 9H, W. Ghent, NY 12075 | \$15.00 Per Person (includes breakfast buffet) with pre registration; \$20 per person at the door Contact: Deb Spaulding, NYSDOL, 828-4654 ext. 205 deborah.spaulding@labor.state.ny.us |
| WIB Meetings: | Tuesday, April 4, 2006- 5:30 p.m. Wednesday, July 12, 2006- 8:30a.m. | Contact WIB Consulting Director |

ADJOURNMENT: A motion to adjourn the Board meeting at 10:00 a.m. was made by Jim Cullie and seconded by Diane Franzman.

Respectfully submitted,

Betty Ann Falkner

Workforce Investment Board of Columbia & Greene Counties

Betty Ann Falkner
WIB Consultant