

# Workforce Investment Board of Columbia & Greene Counties

*Minutes for October 7, 2003  
Room 105  
Columbia Greene Community College*

## **Attendance:**

*Present:* Karen Diffley, Rikki Beal, John Betts, Bruce Bohnsack, Jim Cullie, Kit Ali, Pam Dusharm, Diane Franzman, Jim Galvin, Hilton Perez, Joyce Lissandrello, Jim Molloy, Cindy MacKay, Irene Norsworthy, Hilton Perez, Lynn Strunk, M. A. Wiltse, Sarah Witham, Richard Phelan and Anthony Zibella.

*Excused:* Paul Dellio, Barbara Eacott, Tom Every, Aaron Flach, Brian Keeler, Keith Valentine, Al Hulick, Alan Rabideau, Dawn Saul, George Skraastad, and Carol Wilber.

*Absent:* Patrick Hernandez and David Leavitt.

**WIO Staff:** Maureen Boutin

**Consultant:** Betty Ann Falkner

With 20 members in attendance, a quorum is present.



## **WELCOME**

The meeting began with a welcome to all members and guests. Chairman Karen Diffley welcomed guests Laeda Baston, the new Department of Labor representative to oversee our local area, Susan Hollister of Hudson River Bank and Trust who will be joining the Board on her official appointment and new member Diane Franzman of the Columbia County Health Care Consortium.

## **STATUS OF VACANCIES**

- There are two vacancies in Greene County, one for a business representative and one from an educational institution.

## **CORRESPONDENCE**

There were five letters received. A letter was received from Margaret Moree regarding the Department of Labor's technical assistance meeting. A letter was received from Dr. Geraldine Wolfe regarding the action the district has taken in regards to staff in the GED program. A letter was received from Maggie Moree indicating the final performance benchmark under the Skills Gap II project has been reached. A resignation letter was received from Dr. Geraldine Wolfe.

There were two letters sent. A welcome letter was sent to Diane Franzman. A recruitment letter was sent to Jeffrey Baltes head of the Greene County Superintendent's Association.

## **ACCEPTANCE OF MINUTES**

A motion to accept the June 19, 2003 minutes was made by Tony Zibella and seconded by Lynn Strunk. All were in favor and the motion was passed.



## **COMMITTEE MEETINGS**

### ***Executive Committee***

Chairman Karen Diffley reported on this committee's activities. The future activities of the Board include the submission of a grant application to the New York State Department of Labor to receive \$100,000 in funding. M. A. Wiltse explained that the grant was due on September 30<sup>th</sup> and that once it was reviewed, revisions would be sent back to each local area and once the plan was accepted, funds would be released to conduct activities like having a futuristic speaker address the local Workforce Boards across the region. Our WIB will work in conjunction with other Boards in the Capital District region, including Albany-Schenectady-Rensselaer, Saratoga-Warren-Washington and Fulton-Montgomery-Schoharie. This will allow for better use of limited funds. The Kick-off will probably be held in Albany and a bus will be provided to transport Board members and elected officials to the meeting. Plans are also in the works to have a local kickoff event in the form of a dinner with local elected officials. Board members are encouraged to attend these meetings.

### ***Skills Standards Committee***

Chairman Rikki Beal summarized the committee's activities in reviewing the ITA Report for the past program year that provided the results of the training activities that Dislocated workers (those laid off from their jobs) and Adults (those people who were low-income and unemployed or underemployed) participated in. The committee also reviewed the number of students who completed the Pre-Vocational training program and found that the six-week computer literacy program was highly successful. Ninety-two people participated during the course of the year, with eighty-eight percent of them finding employment

### ***Continuous Quality Committee***

Kit Ali reported on the committee's efforts to create a survey to track improvement in meeting attendance, board member buy-in, and board member education. Some reasons why meeting attendance is low may be the meetings are boring, there is little understanding of what is necessary for members to know and people need reasons for being on the board. The proposed survey would seek to capture the comfort level of board members and seek a base for continuous improvement.

### ***Employer Services Committee***

Chairman Richard Phelan reported on the recent activities of this committee. A recent survey was sent out to businesses inquiring if they would be interested in participating in a job fair this fall. There was discussion that the Job Fair should be held in Greene County, it was decided that due to the cost of holding a job fair off-site and the fact that employers wanted

## Workforce Investment Board of Columbia & Greene Counties

to reach college students, that the job fair would be held at Columbia – Greene Community College on Wednesday, October 22 from 9-1.

The committee reported on the need to add the title of Vehicle Maintenance Assistant to the in-demand occupations list.

The Board also received an update on a new Department of Labor initiative that will help companies with a grant for the purpose of writing strategic business plans. This is called a 32J application. Two consultants have been selected to assist businesses CEG and MDI. CEG will assist in the following industry sectors:

1. Professional, Scientific, Technical
2. Informational Technology

MDI will assist businesses in the following industry sectors:

3. Leisure & Hospitality- Arts, Entertainment & Recreation
4. Leisure & Hospitality- Accommodations & Food Service



### ***Youth Council***

The Board heard about the activities of the summer youth program, which had 120 teens enrolled. The students involved with the Contextualized Vocation Exploration Program at Columbia Greene Community College were fourteen-fifteen years old and worked in either the Culinary, Science, Office or Health clusters. Chairman Karen Diffley reported on the end of program luncheon meeting. Visitors were able to see all the activities the students were working on while in the program and enjoy a lunch made by culinary students. Chairman Diffley encouraged all Board members to attend the luncheon next summer as well as the Annual Youth Provider Dinner held in the spring.

## **ONE STOP OPERATOR DIRECTOR'S REPORT**

M.A. Wiltse reviewed the Participation report for the One-Stop Center. Due to a new tracking system there is no information on the number of participants for core services.

Hilton Perez reviewed the Department of Labor Employment statistics. He also reviewed the Department of Employment Services goals for 2003-2004.

M.A. Wiltse reported that the GED classes did not begin until mid-September and already have seventeen students enrolled. She also reviewed the Marketing reports, which list the number of presentations that Business Services Representative Maureen Boutin or other staff made since the last Board meeting. M.A. then showed the Budget report; funds have been cut for this program year and the WIO will be applying for additional funds under the Promising Practices grants. Without these additional funds, the budget may have a shortfall. Extension reports were received from Satellite sites, which include the local Mid-Hudson Library System and Columbia Opportunities.



## OLD BUSINESS

Chairman Diffley reported on one of the charges put before the Executive Committee from the 2<sup>nd</sup> Board Retreat in August.

Members asked for a marketing committee. Chairman Diffley is looking for volunteers to staff an Ad Hoc Marketing Committee that will focus on forming a comprehensive work plan to help the Board put its best foot forward. The committee will be evaluating what marketing is being done now and look to fill gaps. The committee members will decide the time and agenda of meetings. *Volunteers to date include: Jim Cullie, Lynn Strunk, Diane Franzman, and Peggy Coryea of VESID.* Volunteers are requested to contact the WIB consultant, Betty Ann Falkner to participate. M.A. Wiltse also mentioned that some funds are being set aside under the Strategic Planning Grant for marketing activities.

Consultant Betty Ann Falkner reported on other work from the Retreat, namely the creation and improvement of a Welcome Board member packet. She provided all members with a copy of the new brochure called Member Requirements and Responsibilities. Betty Ann also outlined the procedures that are followed in recruiting new members. These procedures are being compiled into a WIB Procedures Manual. This manual will outline all procedures that apply to the work of the Board.

## NEW BUSINESS

### Resolutions & Discussion:

- Resolved to accept the Executive Committee's recommendation to renew the One-Stop Operators agreement (with recommended changes). **A motion was made by Kit Ali and seconded by John Betts. All were in favor with two abstentions, M.A. Wiltse and Hilton Perez and the motion was passed.**
- Resolved to accept the Executive Committee's recommendation to approve the creation of an Ad Hoc Committee based on the Board Retreat recommendations. **A motion was made by Jim Cullie and seconded by Rikke Beal. All were in favor and the motion was passed.**
- Resolved to accept the Employer Services Committee recommendation to add the job title Vehicle Maintenance Assistant to the In-demand Occupations List. **A motion was made by Richard Phelan and seconded by Jim Cullie. All were in favor and the motion was passed.**
- Resolved to accept the Skills Standards committee recommendation that the Workforce Investment Office print the ITA report as part of a report card on training providers to assist job seekers. **A motion was made by Irene Norsworthy and seconded by Jim Galvin. All were in favor and the motion was passed.**



## GOOD AND WELFARE

### Member Education

- [www.columbia-greenetworks.org](http://www.columbia-greenetworks.org) -M.A. Wiltse showed the Board the new look of the website and reviewed its functionality especially as it relates to Businesses. Members were especially pleased to see where they could go for workforce data. A request was made to send info to the chambers on the site and its capabilities and to ask them to establish a link to the site on their website.

### Economic Development Reports

- *Irene Norsworthy of Greene County Economic Development* reviewed current projects in the works in Greene County. She reported that the Tourism website is up and work continues on a website for Greene County Businesses. Greene County is working on its own strategic planning as regards the Tech Valley Initiative. They have sent targeted industry mailings and have formed an Amenities task force. Work continues on the new Greene County Office Building, which will bring 400 workers to downtown Catskill. Funds have been made available under a Main Street Revitalization program to prep up the facades of buildings on Main Street. To date thirty projects have been funded. Home Depot continues to push for approvals and once they are in other big chains like Wal-Mart may increase their interest in siting a store in Greene County. G&H Lumber has moved their operations to the former Ames Store in the Bryant's Plaza in Greenville. A housing construction project for over 100 housing units is also moving forward in Greenville.
- *Jim Galvin of Columbia County Economic Development* reviewed priorities and projects in Columbia County. Agriculture remains a viable business in that county. The former Hudson Cold Storage/Entenmann's building is being utilized by other food processors that are processing and distributing a squeezable applesauce packet and cheese items. The former Clermont Fruit Packers building has been leased by new local company for a year. They are looking to do year round fruit processing and other work. The county is working to get them some funds to create twenty-three full-time jobs, currently they employ eight persons. Columbia County's SBA funding has helped forty-two local companies. Columbia County's MicroBusiness project has seen 229 trainees take the eight-week class. Since the year 2000, fifty-nine people have received technical assistance through the program. Jim also reported that Commerce Park is home to nine local businesses. Three sales are under contract with four pending. He also reported on the progress being made on the waterfront park site in Hudson. In the Empire Zone area twenty-two businesses out of twenty-four are located in the contiguous area with eighteen out of the twenty-four in Hudson. These twenty-four businesses represent 15.1 million in new investment. 337 jobs are estimated to be created with the

## Workforce Investment Board of Columbia & Greene Counties

businesses accounting for over 178 million in annual sales. Other projects in the work in include the Education Committee working with Taconic Hills High School and the Chamber to create a program that would provide students who go through the program with a Certificate of Employability. They are also looking into funding possibilities to assist in developing Migrant housing. Work with the Columbia County airport continues to assist private investors with the creation of more hangars to house more planes. The board also learned that many filmmakers are working in the county. ED would like to look into that market and see what's available to tap into. Columbia County is looking into the Tech Valley initiative and wants to set up a task force. They have also found that there is a need for a large library to assist businesses coming into the area. One possible idea is to explore the library at the Columbia-Greene Community College.

**Next Board Meeting** – all Board members are encouraged to put these dates on their calendar and to make attendance at the Board meetings a priority!

- ***Wednesday, January 7, 2004 @ 8:30 a.m.***
- ***Monday, April 5, 2004 @ 5:30 p.m.***
- ***Tuesday, June 15, 2004 @ 8:30 a.m.***

**ADJOURNMENT-** 7:15 p.m.