

Workforce Development Board of Columbia & Greene Counties

Minutes for May 19, 2020 3:30 p.m. Virtual Meeting

MISSION: The C-G WDB 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

Chair Mike Veeder called the meeting to order at 3:35. Katy Drake took attendance when admitting board members and guests into the Zoom Meeting. Roll call was then read to verify attendance. Chairman Veeder welcomed all members and thanked them for their attendance during these challenging times. This virtual meeting was recorded for future reference.

Present: Debra Armstrong, Lindsay Arp, Scott Brazie, Jamie Budai, Terri Drobner, Mark Fingar, Chris Foster, Susan Gallagher, Myra Garcia, Jim Lapenn, Maryanne Lee, Kathryn Nelson, Ann Marie O'Hanlon, John Rutkey, Joe Sacchetti, Brya Scali, Lisa Thomas, Cindy Tipple, Michael Torchia, Deb Tuttle, Mike Veeder, Jane Wais, Terry McGee Ward and Joe Wolodkevich

Consultant: Katy Drake

Excused Karl Heck, Florence Ohle, Kathy Roop, Joshua Taylor and Aimee Skiff

Guests: MA Wiltse/WIO Interim Director

With 24 out of a 31 member Board in attendance, a quorum was available.

In advance of the meeting, the agenda, meeting materials and a link to the full policy manual were sent to Board members via email. <http://www.columbiagreenetworks.org/policy-link.html>

New member, Mr. John Rutkey/Ginsberg's was welcomed to the Workforce Board.

ACCEPTANCE OF MINUTES

Michael Torchia made a motion to accept the board meeting minutes for January 14, 2020. Mark Fingar seconded the motion. At the end of the meeting, the motion was carried with all members in favor. Meeting notes are posted on the website-- www.columbiagreenetworks.org.

STATUS OF VACANCIES

Mr. John Rutkey/Ginsberg's was appointed to the CGWDB as a Columbia County business representative. One Columbia County business representative is in recruitment. Two Greene business representatives are in recruitment for future vacancies. The new WIO Director, Mr. Chris Nardone, will start on June 15, 2020 – his appointment to the Board is pending.

PRIORITY BUSINESS

Incumbent Worker Policy

In February, the WDB approved by email the Incumbent Worker Policy as written. By -laws require a meeting vote to ratify the approval of the Incumbent Worker Policy. By zoom poll, the board voted unanimously to approve the policy.

When responding to the original vote, a Board member recommended the wage for the Incumbent Worker Policy be raised from \$2.00 to \$4.00 above minimum wage. A discussion

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was held on raising the wage to \$4.00 above minimum wage for the Incumbent Worker Training Policy. By zoom poll, the Board voted by majority (70%) to raise the rate to \$4.00 above minimum wage

Due to the COVID 19 crisis, the Interim Workforce Director recommended that wage requirements above minimum wage be waived if the training is related to implementing safety protocols dealing with COVID-19. The waiver would allow the many essential workers making minimum wage to qualify for safety protocol trainings that may be required as businesses start to plan for re-opening. By zoom poll, the waiver was approved with all in favor.

Youth Services

The letter sent to Catskill Superintendent regarding the WIOA funded TASC program was sent to all Board members with the meeting materials. Concerns regarding low enrollment for the Catskill TASC program have been monitored throughout PY19. The raising of Greene County school districts compulsory school attendance age (end of the school year the student turns 17) may continue to impact the already low enrollment as the program mainly serves students ages 16 to 18. When the program had to stop in person instruction in March due to COVID 19, only three students carried over to the YES program for follow up. To date, four students have received their GED in PY19. In total for PY19, nine students were served in the Catskill TASC program. On top of low enrollment concerns, state projections indicate an over 20% cut in funding (prior to COVID- 19) for the upcoming year. WIOA regulations require a minimum of 20% of youth funding be spent on Work Experience. All current Catskill TASC students are being followed by the YES instructor. In the future, youth who drop can enroll in the YES program, but will need to wait to sit for the TASC until their class graduates as the YES program is not an Alternative High School Equivalency Program.

Due to low enrollment and budget cuts, Terry McGee Ward made a motion that the Board NOT renew the contract for the Catskill TASC program \$49,589.64 for PY20. Current and future students can be served through the designated YES program. Brya Scali seconded the motion. The motion carried with all in favor. As voting was done via the call/video and zoom chat box results were verified before confirming. Katy will draft a letter for the Chair to review to send to the Catskill TASC program informing them of the Board's decision. Based on enrollment and PY20 funding, the Board did not want to waste Catskill staff's time in putting together a PY20 budget and program plan since funding the program is not possible for PY20. Should funds be available in the future, a Request for Proposals (RFP) can be issued for youth services.

The policy on the designation of youth services & the fourteen program elements was sent to the Board in advance of the meeting. The Council made a motion to continue the CGCC/WIO/YES designation to provide the identified required program elements as outlined in policy 601.1. The Board approved the designation of services with all in favor. Maryanne Lee, as a trustee for CGCC, abstained from the vote. As voting was done by confirmation via the zoom video/call and the chat box vote results were verified before confirming.

The Council recommends continuing the Youth Incentive Program Policy through PY20 based on available funding. As of March 2020, \$1,450 has been spent on incentives. Additional funds will be expended on milestones reached from mid- March – June 30, 2020. Based on the current level of student engagement while instruction is virtual, it is strongly believed less than a total of \$3,000 for PY19 will be spent on the Incentive Policy. The Workforce Office recommends continuation of the policy for PY20 in hopes of encouraging students to stay

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engaged and working towards their goals. Mark Fingar made a motion to approve the Incentive Policy for PY20. Maryanne Lee seconded the motion. The motion carried with all favor.

The Board discussed the need to add computer and/or internet access to supportive services, especially during this time when all training and instruction is being done virtually due to COVID-19. The availability of internet access in the two counties was discussed, along with businesses offering free internet to new customers during COVID – 19. Based on available funds, the Executive Committee recommends adding the access of computers and/or internet access as a supportive service for youth, with the limit set at the discretion of the WIO Director. Jim Lapenn made a motion to approve adding the access of computers and/or internet access as a supportive service for youth, with the limit set at the discretion of the WIO Director. Maryanne Lee seconded the motion. The motion carried with all in favor.

Adult and Dislocated Worker - Supportive Services

Based on available funding, the Executive Committee recommends adding access to computers and/or internet access as a supportive service for adults and dislocated workers with maximum limit based on WIO Director's discretion. Maryanne Lee made a motion to add access to computers and/or internet access as a supportive service for adults and dislocated workers with maximum limit based on WIO Director's discretion. Brya Scali seconded the motion. The motion carried with all in favor.

Workforce Office & Services During COVID-19

MA Wiltse, the Interim WIO Director, shared information on how services are being provided during the COVID-19 crisis. While the centers remain closed, Workforce Office staff are serving customers virtually. The Summer Youth Employment Program is moving forward hoping to serve students through virtual opportunities and open air work sites. Stipends for project work (social media project shared) and virtual job shadowing are being planned. OTDA approval is still pending. With schools closed, recruitment of students for the SYEP has been a challenge, especially in Greene County.

Election of WDB Officers

The election of officers is scheduled for the next meeting. Due to Terri Drobner's upcoming retirement the Board is seeking nominations for Chair (Columbia County), Vice Chair (Greene County) and Secretary (General Membership). A nominating committee has been appointed. Members should contact Lisa Thomas, Deb Tuttle and Kathy Nelson with nominations or to express interest in an office.

Information on the next meeting will be shared when available based on CGCC/WIO re-opening. If necessary, a virtual meeting will be scheduled in late summer to address priority business.

Meeting adjourned at 4:44.

Notes by Katy Drake/ WDB Consulting Director