

Workforce Development Board of Columbia and Greene Counties

Workforce Development Board Meeting-August 19th, 2025, 8:30 am

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

The meeting opened at 8:30 am with roll call.

Present: Blake Garrison, Florence Lorenz, James Hannahs, Jamie Budai, John Rutkey, Kathryn Nelson, Mark Fingar, Mike Torchia, Nicole Frisbee, Patrick Brown, Rachel Puckett, Scott Brazie, Susan Sommer Evens, Robert Davis

Excused: Aimee Skiff, Arica Cooper, Chris Brown, Joe Wolodkevich, Laura Becker, Lisa Thomas, Mike Veeder, Peggy Moon, Dr. Jim Niedermier, Dr. Victoria Walsh

Guests: Amanda Bishop, Vice President for Administration and Finance/CFO, Columbia-Greene Community College, Emma Cohen, Commissioner's Capital Region Representative, NYSDOL, Holly Wanek, Jeanette O'Neill, Danielle Palleschi-CG Workforce Career Center (CGCC)

Acceptance of meeting minutes from 6/17/25

Motion: Florence Lorenz

Second: Patrick Brown

All in Favor: 14, All Opposed: 0, Abstained: 0

John Rutkey opened the meeting and welcomed visitors.

Greene County Economic Development Update: James Hannahs announced that on September 30th, the Catskill DRI project will have an open meeting for the public to hear the proposals.

Presentations and Resolutions: Amanda Karch presented the budget draft for program year 25. This year a committee was formed to develop the budget to provide oversight and guidance in the process to ensure a wide range of perspectives and expertise. There was an explanation that funds traditionally managed by the Career Center will be managed by the WDB to have a broader outreach. For example, marketing and printing will be funded by the WDB Centralized budget since those activities will provide functions for the entire system. Discussion was also had that rental costs will decrease for the WDB Centralized budget over what was initially anticipated since Greene County will be providing office space in the County Building free of charge. This will be done to enhance service for Greene County residents as the County Building houses many partner offices.

Resolution PY25-01 to accept the PY25 Budget:

Motion: Florence Lorenze

Second: Mike Torchia

All in favor: 13, All Opposed: 0, Abstained: 1 (James Hannahs)

Amanda Karch explained that the RFP for Service Provider was going through revisions with NYSDOL and to ensure approval the timeline for submission will be after this WDB Meeting. A resolution was proposed to allow the Executive Committee to provide Provisional Approval upon completion so that it can be distributed publicly before a full WDB vote.

Motion: Blake Garrison

Second: Rachel Puckett

All in favor: 14, All opposed: 0

John Rutkey and Amanda Karch discussed the potential merger with the Capital Region Workforce Development Board. Conversations and meetings with NYSDOL have given a timeline of activities that will need to be in place to formalize a merger. All local elected officials in each of the 5-county areas will need to meet to agree to move forward. Both Amanda and Brian want to ensure that their Boards have a voice in the process and will start by having their Executive Committees meet. The regional benefit is becoming clear and service on the ground in Columbia and Greene County will not change. According to NYSDOL, funding allocations will stay stable, and CG would actually have a higher allocation in one fund.

Many events are planned for the Fall. Amanda Karch and Danielle Palleschi, (Disability Resource Coordinator) explained the schedule. HR Connections will be returning, and John Bagyi will be finalizing content to present on November 4th.

There is a series of events being planned in partnership with the Columbia-Greene Addiction Coalition, ReEntry Columbia, Columbia Economic Development Corporation, and Greene County Economic Development. This series is geared towards employers and community partners to focus on engaging and retaining employees with barriers to employment.

September 24th will be an Economic and Workforce State of the Counties with keynote speaker, Adam Bosch, CEO of Hudson Valley Patterns for Progress.

October will be the Community Action Poverty Simulation, (Funding from the Workforce Development Institute-WDI)-Date to be announced.

November will be Recovery Ready Workplace with PARSE (Date to be announced)

December will be Justice Involvement and Employment (Date to be announced)

Amanda Karch announced that there was an extension given by NYSDOL for the Local Plan. The Workforce Development Board and Career Center will have a table at the Columbia County Fair, August 27th-30th

Next Meeting: October 14th, 2025 at 8:30 am

Meeting ended: 9:26 am

