

Board Meeting Minutes
March 20, 2025 at 8:00 am
SUNY Jefferson ~ Watertown, NY

Welcome/Call to Order: Vice Chairman Castillo welcomed Board Members at 8:02 am.

Guest Speakers: Craig Cashman and Mary Jane Mathewson with Community Action Planning Council (CAPC) were asked to present on the Community Needs Assessment that CAPC performs every 3 years.

Mr. Cashman gave a brief history of the Economic Opportunity Act, which led to the creation of Community Action Planning (CAP) agencies. CAP agencies were given the goal of how we address poverty. This was also known as the “War Against Poverty”.

He next shared that our CAPC started in Jefferson County in 1966, and gave an overview of the main programs that CAPC runs to include:

- Child Care Resource Center
- Family Center
- Head Start/Pre-K
- Housing & Energy Services

Further discussion ensued regarding sources of funding, and that CAPC is being very conservative on spending as 66% of their funds do come from the Federal government. Mr. Cashman next turned the presentation over to Ms. Mathewson to discuss the Community Needs Assessment in detail.

Ms. Mathewson gave an overview of the background, methodology, data collection process and data sources (quantitative and qualitative) that make up the Community Needs Assessment (CNA). Ms. Mathewson shared that the Assessment data is the starting point for their strategic planning for the next 3 years. Further discussion ensued with highlights to include:

- Ms. Pettit expressed concern that people didn’t feel our schools were safe.
- Mr. Aiken stated the focus groups were very small and asked how we can get the information out to people so that there is a larger dataset to review.
- General discussion that surveys in other counties similar to ours yield almost identical results, to include the Annual Community Surveys that SUNY Jefferson conducts for Jefferson, Lewis and St. Lawrence counties.
- Mr. Hennessey asked about the mobile food pantry, which Ms. Mathewson shared is growing every month. They also have online ordering for the food pantry, which has made it significantly easier to know how much food to order.
- Ms. Pettit asked what percentage of Jefferson County’s population meets the poverty level. Director Mayforth shared that it is 17%, but that 41% meet the definition of ALICE (otherwise known as the working poor).
- Mr. Todd shared that BOCES is closely monitoring the school lunch threshold for changes. If it changes dramatically, it could be devastating for families in not only our area, but throughout the country. Ms. Mathewson shared that in addition, if SNAP (Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program) also sees cuts, this will create a major burden on food pantries.

Privilege of the Floor: Vice Chairman Castillo next asked if there was privilege of the floor. This became further discussion of the presentation with additional highlights of:

- Ms. Dwyer asked why it seems that many people just do not want to work. Director Mayforth shared that with our low unemployment numbers, there is no real pool of candidates to work.
- General discussion of the economy in general.
- Large numbers of layoffs will produce a better pool of candidates for businesses to choose from, but a return to the recession numbers of 2008-2009 would be devastating for the community.
- Mr. Castillo asked what the bigger trends are that we should be researching to help our area evolve.

Approval of Minutes:

- Vice Chairman Castillo asked for a motion and a second to approve the December 19, 2024 Board Meeting minutes. Mr. Todd made the motion. Ms. Pettit seconded. Vice Chairman Castillo next asked for corrections or discussion; there were none. He then asked for a vote; all were in favor.
- Vice Chairman Castillo asked for a motion and a second to approve the February 28, 2025 Executive Board Meeting minutes. Mr. Aiken made the motion. Ms. Pettit seconded. Vice Chairman Castillo next asked for corrections or discussion; there were none. He then asked for a vote; all were in favor.

Correspondence: There was none.

One-Stop Operator Report: Ms. Munson reviewed customer service data for October 1, 2024 to December 31, 2024. She next shared that the December, 2024 customer and business surveys were primarily positive with praise given to quite a few staff members by name for the last quarter. There were a couple of actionable items for Jefferson County that we might be able to incorporate, and that data was shared with the staff members.

The Lewis County quarterly visit was held on December 17, 2024, the quarterly desk review was of the Jefferson County Youth program, and the One-Stop Partners' Meeting scheduled for December 11, 2024 was cancelled due to lack of attendance.

Executive Director's Report/Financial Report: Director Mayforth started by sharing the January 2025 unemployment data with the board members. She next discussed A Stronger Workforce for America (ASWA) Act and the fact that it is a bi-partisan topic. The ASWA was supposed to be voted on in December, but it was not. It is now back on the table.

Director Mayforth stated that we did take a 9% funding cut for Program Year 25, but that we are well aligned to deal with that decrease and with the 50% spending on trainings requirement if ASWA passes with that language still in place, which she does not believe it will. She will not know the budget for the Youth Employment Program (YEP) or the Summer Youth Employment Program (SYEP) until after the State budget passes, as they are State-funded programs. Director Mayforth next shared that in her research, she found that 40% of the Federal workforce is 50 years old and older. Further discussion ensued regarding this and succession planning.

She next shared information on upcoming programs to include SYEP, our April 8th Job Fair, Career Jam, and the guest speaker from GenWhy that is presenting at JCC on April 29th at 9:00 am and 1:00 pm. Further discussion ensued on the events we have coming up in the next few months.

New Business:

- Resolution: 24-06: Approval of Membership Renewal to Advocate Drum
Vice Chairman Castillo asked for a motion and a second on the resolution. Ms. Pettit made the motion; Ms. LaValle seconded. Vice Chairman Castillo next asked for corrections or discussion; there were none. He then asked for a vote; all were in favor.

- Resolution: 24-07: Approval of Membership Renewal to Naturally Lewis
Vice Chairman Castillo asked for a motion and a second on the resolution. Mr. Aiken made the motion; Ms. Pettit seconded. Vice Chairman Castillo next asked for corrections or discussion; there were none. He next asked for a vote; all were in favor.

Roundtable Discussion: Vice Chairman Castillo asked if there were any further topics of discussion. There were none.

Next Meeting: June 19, 2025 at 8:00 am ~ Location: Lewis County DSS. Mr. Aiken mentioned that June 19th might not work as it is a holiday. The consensus was to move the meeting to Wednesday, June 18th if Lewis County DSS can accommodate us. Ms. Munson will send out an updated calendar invite as soon as the date is confirmed.

Adjournment: Mr. Prasuhn made a motion to adjourn the meeting. Ms. Pettit seconded the motion. The meeting was adjourned at 9:31 am.

Attendance:

Rob Aiken
George Anderson
Rod Castillo
Amy Dwyer
Travis Flint
Daren Gulliver
Marybeth LaVallee
Cheryl Mayforth
Shena Patrick
Jody Pettit
Mark Prasuhn
Stephen Todd

Others in Attendance:

Craig Cashman
Anne Garno
Sean Hennessey
Mary Jane Mathewson
Angel Munson