



Workforce Development Board

Bringing Jobs & People Together

1000 Coffeen Street
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A proud partner of the American Job Center Network

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Board Meeting Minutes

September 19, 2024 at 8:00 am
Italian American Club, Watertown

Welcome/Call to Order: Chairman Matt Cooper welcomed Board Members at 8:00 am. Quorum was established.

Privilege of the Floor: There was none.

Approval of Minutes:

- Chairman Cooper asked for a motion to approve the June 20, 2024, Board Meeting minutes. Mr. Todd made the motion. Chairman Cooper next asked for corrections or discussion. There were none. The motion was seconded by Ms. Dwyer and approved unanimously.
- Chairman Cooper asked for the motion to approve the September 6, 2024, Executive Board Meeting minutes. Ms. Petit made the motion. Chairman Cooper next asked for corrections or discussion. There were none. The motion was seconded by Mr. Aiken and approved unanimously.

Correspondence: There was none.

One-Stop Operator Report: Ms. Munson stated that the May/June surveys were all positive. Lewis County visit was on June 21st. The quarterly desk review was of the Disability Resource Coordinator (DRC) program.

The WorkPlace participated with the Teacher Ambassador Program this summer, hosting two individuals. The program provides an opportunity for these individuals to get a feel for workforce development and to bring it back to their schools. Client services are almost back to pre-pandemic numbers. Classroom training (CRT) is way up, still working on increasing enrollment in on-the-job training, and youth programs are a little down because not all that start the program complete it. Trade Act participation is dwindling down, the last will graduate in June. Job orders have slowed down from last quarter. CDL-A and CDL-B were added and account for 12 of the current 76 customers. CRT comes after all other funding sources and only covers tuition fees and mandatory expenses.

One-Stop Partners' Meeting – June 12, 2024 – Highlights:

- Scott Mathys (Lewis County Opportunities) has a transportation program that helps customers with vehicle repairs.
- Ms. Hellinger (Lewis County OFA) discussed their Respite Café program.
- Mr. Ginger (Jefferson-Lewis BOCES) stated that they will be running an EMS program in Lewis County this fall. It is currently a high school program, but they are looking at adult education class offerings as well.
- Ms. Marcum (Jefferson County DSS) shared their Transportation Initiative program, which was formerly known as Wheels to Work. They have \$14,000.00 to spend by December 31, 2024.
- Ms. Munn (Jefferson County OFA) discussed a new program she is rolling out where she is having volunteers call older adults who would like someone to check in on them.

Summer Youth Employment Program (SYEP) Report: Mrs. Amelia Worden, Youth & Young Adult Coordinator, stated that the number of worksites participating has gone down. Mr. Aiken asked for a list of the current worksites, it was later emailed to the Board. Ms. Petit asked how many students the program has the capacity to handle. Mrs. Worden explained that it is all based on the amount of funding received. Mrs. Worden then spoke of the current budget remaining in WIOA, both In-School and Out-of-School, and the TANF programs. The increase in minimum wage has had an impact on the program as well. Limits of the program are six months or \$10,000. Participants are now often reaching the \$10,000 threshold much sooner than before.

Ms. Petit inquired about what the measure of success was and the tracking of the program data. Ultimately, success in the program is being hired at the end of the program. Graduation is considered a success as well. With the addition of Mr. Comstock to the Youth Program they will be able to start gathering more follow-up feedback for tracking program data. This will also allow more timely counseling to participants that are having issues at their worksite. Currently, worksites do not always let us know there is an issue with an individual until we go to make the same placement as the year before and find out that the individual actually didn't work out very well and they do not want them to return.

Anne Garno conducted a training session for the SYEP counselors talking about Mental Health First Aid.

For 2025 we are going to try to increase the number of participants that enroll in Direct Deposit.

The OFA picnic was a huge success, a lot of the youth attended to help out. The end of summer picnic was also well attended, and fun was had by all. Shout out to this year's SYEP counselors, they did an amazing job!

Mrs. Worden introduced Mr. Jonathan Comstock as our newest Employment & Training Assistant. Mr. Comstock has served as a SYEP Counselor for several years. We are very pleased to have him join us in a permanent position and are confident that he will do a wonderful job in this new position. Welcome Jon!!

Mr. Comstock then explained the new Youth Employment Program (YEP). It is a year-round program that runs from September 1, 2024 to June 30, 2025 for up to 50 youth. It is designed to provide youth with employment opportunities, education needed to succeed, and career exploration opportunities. Applications are accepted on an on-going basis.

Eligibility requirements and the target group were discussed. The education component is focused more on the younger age group, 14–15-year-olds and provides topics such as, financial literacy, OSHA sexual harassment training, the importance of sleep, hygiene, and mental health, job searching and career exploration, mock interviews, soft and hard skills, and best job practices, as well as resume and cover letter writing. The program is a great opportunity for those businesses that want to extend their summer youth workers. The employment opportunities are focused more on the older age group, 16+ youth, by partnering with local businesses to provide youth with work experience, workplace connections, and skills for success.

The program is funded at \$511,728, expected costs at this time are estimated at \$425,000. This includes a monetary incentive for completion of certain tasks and milestones, Resolution 24-04 lays out that plan.

Executive Director's Report/Financial Report: Director Mayforth began by announcing that "We bought a building!" It's a bit of a "fixer upper." The roof is 22 years old and will be one of the first projects the building will undergo. The elevator is also being replaced, it is, and has been, non-operational for some time now. During one of the heavy rainstorms we had, the leaking roof damaged the electrical circuit board

of the elevator. This project is currently in Otis's hands.

Employment stats for August were not yet available. Currently unemployment rate is 4.4%.

The upcoming fall Job Fair to be held at Holiday Garden Inn on September 25th will have over 55 businesses with approximately 850 jobs available.

Finances – it is required that we must spend 80% of the total budget, the past four years we have not met that.

Director Mayforth has been working with JCC, and Karen Marcum from DSS, regarding the shortage of caseworkers in the area. We are trying to get more people qualified as caseworkers. The plan is to canvas former, current, and future students that are close to having their associate's degree in this field or related fields and helping them finish so that they can take the Social Welfare Examiner exam, which is the prerequisite for the 4-year Caseworker program. Megan at JCC is contacting close to 491 students to let them know about what options they have if they are interested in pursuing employment as a caseworker.

New Business:

- *Resolution: 24-01 – Authorizing Use of Perkins Grant Funds for PY24*
Chairman Cooper asked for a motion of Approval. Ms. Petit made the motion. Chairman Cooper asked for questions or comments. There were none. The motion was seconded by Mr. Aiken and approved unanimously.
- *Resolution: 24-02 – Transfer of Funding for PY24*
Chairman Cooper asked for a motion of Approval. Mr. Weir made the motion. Chairman Cooper asked for questions or comments. There were none. The motion was seconded by Mr. Aiken and approved unanimously.
- *Resolution: 24-03 – Recognizing Youth Employment Program Award*
Chairman Cooper asked for a motion of Approval. Ms. Petit made the motion. Chairman Cooper asked for questions or comments. There were none. The motion was seconded by Ms. LaVallee and approved unanimously.
- *Resolution: 24-04 – Approval of Youth Employment Program Incentive Plan*
Chairman Cooper asked for a motion of Approval. Ms. Petit made the motion. Chairman Cooper asked for questions or comments. There were none. The motion was seconded by Mr. Aiken and approved unanimously.

Upcoming Events:

- September 25, 2024 – 12th Annual Fall Job Fair – Hilton Garden Inn
- October 16, 2024 – WorkPlace Forum, Topic - Housing – BOCES Conference Room
- November 20, 2024 – Workforce Connections – Watertown Airport Hangar

Roundtable Discussion: Mr. Aiken proposed that we consider changing the dates of the Job Fairs to better align them with the beginning and the end of the school year. Discussion ensued; it was then tabled to be discussed at a later date.

JCC enrollment is up, no significant change in continuing education numbers, returning student numbers have decreased.

The top majors are Nursing, Human Services, Criminal Justice, Business Administration, and Allied Health – Math/Science.

Mr. Todd discussed the major increase in trade enrollments, up 35%. Top trades being Electrical/Wiring and Welding. Enrollment is up so much that they are in the process of building more labs to support the programs. Lewis County BOCES now offers an EMT program. This was in response to a request from Lewis County asking if we could create the program, the County itself gave BOCES \$60,000 toward this. From initial request to up and running was about 18 months.

Mr. Aiken talked about the need for Land Surveyors and the amount of money to be made in that field. He also inquired about what it takes to start a new BOCES program and the cost. Mr. Todd explained that from concept to launch is approximately 12-18 months, more if it is a more capital intense program. First step is to identify an interest, then set a curriculum (if it is a program already offered at another BOCES school it will obviously speed up that step), NYSED approval, and then recruiting at the schools.

Next Meeting: December 19, 2024 – Hilton Garden Inn – 8:00 AM

Adjournment: Ms. Petit made a motion to adjourn the meeting. Ms. LaVallee seconded the motion. The meeting was adjourned at 9:08 am.

WDB Attendance:

Aiken, Rob
Anderson, George
Carlisto, Don
Castillo, Rod
Cooper, Matthew
Dupee, Dan
Dwyer, Amy
Flint, Travis
LaVallee, Marybeth
Mayforth, Cheryl - Director
Patrick, Shena
Pettit, Jody
Todd, Stephen
Weir, Marshall

Others in Attendance:

Comstock, Jonathan
Garno, Anne
Hennessey, Sean
Munson, Angel
Reis, Julie
Worden, Amelia