



Workforce Development Board

Bringing Jobs & People Together

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Board Meeting Minutes

March 21, 2024, at 7:45 am

Italian American Club, Watertown, NY

Welcome/Call to Order: Chairman Matt Cooper welcomed Board Members at 7:59 am. It was agreed to change the order of the agenda to accommodate both Board member's schedules and the guest speaker.

New Business: Director Mayforth introduced Sean Hennessey, Department of Labor Commissioner's Representative for the North Country; and Anne Garno as the new Assistant Director.

- Resolution: 23-05 – Approval of Membership Renewal Lewis County Chamber of Commerce
Chairman Cooper asked for a motion of Approval. Mr. Hagemann made the motion. Mr. Cooper asked for questions or comments. There were none. The motion was seconded by Ms. Pettit and approved unanimously.
- Resolution: 23-06 – Amending Use of Perkins Grant Funds for PY23
Chairman Cooper asked for a motion of Approval. Mr. Kilmer made the motion. Mr. Cooper asked for questions or comments. There were none. The motion was seconded by Mr. Hagemann and approved unanimously.
- Resolution: 23-07 – Approval of Oversight and Monitoring Policy and Procedure Revisions
Chairman Cooper asked for a motion of Approval. Mr. Hagemann made the motion. Mr. Cooper asked for questions or comments. There were none. The motion was seconded by Ms. Pettit and approved unanimously.

Approval of Minutes:

- Chairman Cooper asked for a motion to approve the December 14, 2023 Board Meeting minutes. Mr. Aiken made that motion. Chairman Cooper next asked for corrections or discussion. There were none. The motion was seconded by Ms. Pettit and approved unanimously.
- Chairman Cooper asked for the motion to approve the March 8, 2024, Board Meeting Minutes. Ms. Pettit made the motion. Chairman Cooper next asked for corrections or discussion. There were none. The motion was seconded by Mr. Castillo and approved unanimously.

Guest Speaker: Megan Farry, Senior Director of Strategic Partnerships & Communications, New York State Association of Training and Employment Professionals (NYATEP) presented the State of the Workforce Report 2023.

Key Findings:

- Employment in New York State slightly lags behind the national average
- Workers statewide are concentrated in a handful of key sectors and low wage roles
- Nearly half of New York households cannot meet basic monthly expenses
- Education and skills drive labor market outcomes in New York
- The North Country consistently has higher unemployment rates than the rest of the state

- New York has the 4th highest average housing costs in the country
- 70% of jobs in 2031 will require postsecondary education or training

See our website for further information.

Privilege of the Floor: There was none.

Correspondence: There was none.

One-Stop Operator Report: Due to time constraints, One-Stop Operator Munson asked if there were any questions. Chairman Cooper asked why a huge decrease for Lewis County numbers? Ms. Munson and Director Mayforth advised this was due to changes in what activities can count from the pandemic to now. That change involved matching customers to employment opportunities with and without direct contact. The numbers will be skewed for another quarter, and then should be correctly represented. Mr. Dupee asked if pre-Covid numbers could be included in the report. Ms. Munson concluded her report by highlighting the upcoming events.

Director's Report/Financial Report: Director Mayforth shared that our funding is granted for 2 years, but that we must spend 80% in the first year with a 20% carryover. We are playing catch up due to being granted a waiver for the previous two program years. She does not believe that we will be granted a waiver this year. Our spending is moving in the right direction. She discussed TANF funding, which is for our summer youth program. This normally comes out in April, but may be delayed this year due to the State budget delays. Adult services are moving in a good direction.

Director Mayforth next discussed unemployment numbers. Our region had the highest UI rate in the state for January at 6.0%. This is a very normal rate for our area and is close to our pre-Covid numbers. Director Mayforth shared that in 2020 our workforce consisted of 54,000 people. In 2023, that number had dropped to 44,000 people. She also shared that seasonal employment this winter was higher than normal.

Director Mayforth next discussed upcoming events.

Upcoming Events:

- April 3, 2024: Spring Job Fair at the Hilton Garden Inn (Watertown)
- April 24, 2024: WorkPlace Forum on Childcare at BOCES
- May 23, 2024: Career Jam at the Watertown Arena, Agriculture Hall & grounds
- June 12, 2024: One-Stop Partners Meeting at The WorkPlace, Watertown
- June 20, 2024: WDB Meeting at the Lewis County Dept. of Social Services

Roundtable Discussion:

Ms. Pettit commented that the number of candidates to hire are increasing and the quality of the candidates is improving. Ms. Marks shared that two months ago she only received five applications. This month she has already received 82. Further discussion ensued.

Director Mayforth announced Mr. Zembiec and Mr. Hagemann's retirements. Marshall Weir will be Mr. Zembiec's successor.

Ms. Petit asked to learn more about the new Assistant Director, Anne Garno. Ms. Garno shared that she

has a Master's in Education and is working toward a Master's in Public Health. She has been employed at the North Country Prenatal/Perinatal Council, Inc. for the last 12 years as the Director of Education supervising youth and professional development programming. She is passionate about addressing poverty through equity, education, and employment.

Next Meeting: June 20, 2024 at the Lewis County DSS Conference Room
Breakfast at 8:30 am with meeting to start shortly after

Adjournment: Chairman Cooper made a motion to adjourn the meeting. Ms. Pettit seconded the motion. The meeting was adjourned at 9:12 am.

WDB Attendance:

Aiken, Rob
Anderson, George
Carlisto, Don
Castillo, Rod
Cooper, Matthew
Dupee, Dan
Dwyer, Amy

Flint, Travis
Gulliver, Daren
Hagemann, Robert
Keruski, John
Killmer, Robert
Marks, Shellie
Mayforth, Cheryl
Pettit, Jody

Prasuhn, Mark

Others in Attendance:

Booth, Sara
Garno, Anne
Harris, Stephanie
Hennessey, Sean
Munson, Angel
Weir, Marshall