

Executive Board Meeting
June 6, 2025 at 12:00 PM
Hilton Garden Inn, Watertown

In Attendance: Cheryl Mayforth, Anne Garno, Rod Castillo, Rob Aiken, and Matt Cooper.

Absent: Jody Pettit

Director Mayforth gave an overview of the June 17, 2025 full board meeting. This included the resolutions, officer nominations and election process, and the scheduled guest speaker, Dawn Cole from United Way of Northern NY. All agreed that hearing the ALICE update would be beneficial and noted that Ms. Cole is a great speaker.

A question was raised regarding the status of migrant workers in the area, given the limited recent media coverage. Currently there is no pathway for legal entry through an agricultural program for dairy farms like there is for orchards and vegetable farms.

Discussion ensued regarding trends in the local labor market. Although unemployment is down, hiring has slowed as employers are dealing with uncertainty at the federal level. Additionally, international traffic from Canada has significantly declined. A concern was raised if there is a point when it becomes unwise to continue to try and establish new business/manufacturing when existing businesses are already struggling to adequately fill vacancies.

Director Mayforth provided an update on funding status for Employment and Training Department programs. For the program year beginning July 1, 2025, we will face a 10% reduction in funding. Job Corps is currently on pause at the federal level, and WIOA has not been re-authorized. The federal budget suggests moving Department of Labor funding to block grants managed at the State level. The impact of free community college for adults is also hard to anticipate.

Vice President Castillo presented a paper outlining possible strategies to encourage Fort Drum soldiers to remain in the area following the completion of military service.

The full board meeting will be held at Lewis County Department of Social Services building on June 17, 2025.

The meeting was adjourned.