



SWW Workforce Development Board

Meeting Minutes

of February 3, 2023 Meeting at QUAD, Saratoga Springs NY

thejoblink.org

BOARD MEMBERS PRESENT: Scott Brazie, Scot Chamberlain, Dan Dudley, Doug Ford, Maureen Grabowski, Kathy LaFond, Tara McCaughey, Elizabeth Miller, Zack Moore, Mike Munter, Laura Oswald, Turina Parker, Dominick Patrignani, Michael Prime, Tracey Riley, Tricia Rogers, Matthew Rose, Joe Serafini, Mark Stratton, Ryan Van Amburgh, John Wheatley. (21)

EXCUSED: Ash Anand, Gary Dake, Patricia Klimkewicz, Chris Koval, Michael Mastropietro, Wendy Skawinski Mary Ann Spiezio (7)

GUESTS: Jen McCloskey (*Saratoga County Career Center*), Liza Ochsendorf (*Warren County Career Center*), Mike Graney (*Warren County Career Center/NEW Student to Careers Development Specialist*) Roberta Davis (*Washington County Career Center*), Shelley Smith (*LEAP*), Carm Basile (*CTDA*), Jonathan Scherzer (*CDTA*), Melinda Mack (*NYATEP-New York Association for Training & Employment Professionals*), Brian Williams (*Capital Region Workforce Development Board*) (9)

STAFF: Gretchen Steffan, Executive Director

Welcome & Introductions of WDB Members, Honored Guests and Staff by Chairman Munter.

- 1. Membership Updates...**Saratoga County Renewals for Scot Chamberlain, Gary Dake, Patricia Klimkewicz, Michael Mastropietro and Tara McCaughey. Welcome to Chris Koval, Owner/Partner in Koval Brothers Dairy, LLC located in Stillwater, who was appointed by Saratoga County on January 4th.
- 2. Approval of December 14th Meeting Minutes - Action Item**
Motion to Approve: by Dominick Patrignani **Second:** Maureen Grabowski,
Discussion: None; **Vote:** Approved unanimously.
- 3. Approval of OSO Respondent ACTION Collaboration - Action Item**
Motion to Approve: by Elizabeth Miller **Second:** Turina Parker
Discussion: None; **Vote:** Approved unanimously.
- 4. Presentation by Carm Basile, CDTA CEO and Jonathan Scherzer, CDTA Director of Business Development.** Our Business Needs Committee has been discussing regional transportation needs for workforce development and wanted a greater understanding of what it takes to expand access into our more rural sections of SWW. Carm and Jonathan graciously agreed to meet with us and provided an overview of the mobility solutions that connect the region's communities. With over 750 employees, CDTA currently covers 2,300 square miles, has 300 vehicles that cover 50+ routes, making 12 million trips annually. They provide universal access to area colleges, universities, private employers, and government agencies. They see themselves as a regional community partner and have recently added some new mobility solutions including CDPHP Cycle regional bike-sharing program, FLEX on demand which is a CDTA ride-hailing service in Albany & Saratoga Counties, and DRIVE E-car Sharing a new program offering hourly access to sharable electric cars for community members. Their systems cover a 5-County area and their territory is legislated by NYS. Densely populated regions with



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businesses and residences are important to CDTA viability, and they take their responsibility to communities seriously by providing transportation options. The Workforce Board is looking at expanding access to transportation systems in the SWW region and CDTA assured us they want to partner with us to help. They need volume, population density, and business partnerships to build new routes into their system, to ensure economic viability. Their routes and services have to be open to everyone. Therefore, careful planning including all stakeholders is necessary to meet the varied needs of all involved parties. Expanding the reach of their service area, will also expand the need for trained staff to accommodate growth. At the conclusion of the presentation both CDTA and the SWW WDB are looking forward to partnering on expanding CDTA's trail of success to the north.

5. Presentation by Melinda Mack, Executive Director NYATEP on Advocacy vs. Lobbying. Our Resource & Development Committee wanted a greater understanding of the differences between Advocacy & Lobbying, and how they might support legislative efforts to affect change and support regional workforce development. Melinda provided an overview of NYATEP, WDB Policy, Operational and Strategy roles, and the differences between lobbying and advocacy. Lobbying is specifically defined within law, and lobbying activity is regulated at both the Federal and State levels, needing to be carefully navigated. Melinda defined lobbying examples, along with descriptions of advocacy that WDB members can engage in to educate and inform elected officials on workforce development related policy issues. Melinda emphasized that our elected officials need to know our issues in order to help, so ongoing engagement is vital.

6. Committee Updates

- a. Mike Munter reported that the **Executive Committee** met with Gretchen on January 23rd about the upcoming MOU, Local Plan Update, Board Membership, Program & Fiscal Monitoring, Virtual Reality Technology, Cell Engagement Technology, Board Effect implementation, status of the One Stop System Operator RFP, Career Center Operations, Budgets, Website Redevelopment & WDB/System Rebranding, Committee Progress, and our Board meeting agenda, which Gretchen would expand upon later in the agenda.
- b. The **Youth Committee** report by Gretchen Steffan for Mark Stratton, Committee Chair. The first meeting on January 18th was an organizational meeting, and very exciting! Discussions on the roles and responsibilities of the Youth Counselors in our Career Centers, the importance of our Summer Youth Program, and Warren County's new Student-to-Careers Development Specialist occurred.

The focus areas of future work together in building-up our regional youth included skills development in: Social Skills, Improving Interpersonal Communication, Understanding Time Management and its Impacts, Understanding the Dynamics of Dignity & Respect, and Instilling Confidence & Positivity.

We identified that employers can teach technical skills, but the "person" needs a good foundation for technical & work success. We want to utilize successful area youth working in the Trades in this development effort, who can tell their successful career and life stories, and how they achieved their goals to date. Our target population for storytellers are 20+ year-olds.



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We also identified the need for parental outreach. Parents need to understand career options, the concept of career pathways, and commensurate salaries for trades vs college. We identified several community-based organizations that we can partner with for help.

Some ancillary items the committee will be focusing on based upon initial discussions, will be virtual reality learning and development, job fair and event support, focus on middle school and 9 & 10th graders, and how we can work more closely with our BOCES partners on State-Aid opportunities.

- c. The **Business Needs** Committee report by Gretchen Steffan for Gary Dake, informed the WDB that we decided to put the engines in idle and set the brake on the 2023 Truck Rodeo. After much discussion, while the September 2022 Truck Rodeo was a great success, we need to pause the next Truck Rodeo as the CDL schools are so backed up that prospective driving students can't get cab time, and are leaving the programs in frustration. Since the Rodeo does require a lot of effort, we think our energy is better spent in other areas for now.

Our **Childcare** discussions have risen in complexity as the sheer amount of data, new developments, and 2023 initiatives at the local/state/federal level has exploded. Matt Rose our Sub-committee chair is regrouping right now and has other committee volunteers poised to help with a reset on focus and strategy before our next meeting on March 21st. QUAD is moving forward with an internal survey on childcare need, as well as a survey being done simultaneously in the Industrial Park by Saratoga Eagle. The survey results will determine whether an on-site Childcare Center is viable at QUAD in the Industrial Park.

Our **Transportation** discussions have resulted in today's presentation from CDTA. We will continue to identify ways and structures to improve transportation access to our more remote areas for transport to businesses in need of workers. We also await the LCLGRP Rural Transportation Survey results from last Fall, for additional insight.

Supporting the Trades... The WDB has been collaborating with Doug Ford's WFD Coalition and especially supportive of their work with regional school counselors. There is an upcoming Counselor's Workshop they are sponsoring at WSWHE BOCES on 3/3/23 to educate and inform about the plethora of trade career options for students, and will provide the 100+ participants with a Resource Guidebook for Business Partners. We plan to be included in that Resource Guide!

John Wheatley provided the committee with a report and snapshot overview of the upcoming need for a telecommunications workforce initiative for hiring 23,000 skilled workers, resulting from the Federal Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act. These jobs are needed to build and maintain broadband infrastructure in rural areas based upon current and future needs, as well as the wireless infrastructure needed to support 5G wireless technology.



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- d. **Resource & Development** Committee report by Gretchen Steffan for Ash Anand. The committee discussed the topics of advocacy and lobbying and today's presentation by Melinda Mack of NYATEP is the result of those discussions. We will revisit the topic in March when we reassemble. As the committee revisits committee purpose, Ryan Van Amburgh, will be doing a research project of other WDB's across the country for ideas and programs that might be of interest to us and replicable.

This committee has discussed the need for a comprehensive financial literacy program, as the basics are not enough. We would like a program for our Centers for both Adults and Youth that covers financial institution features/benefits, the basics of checking/savings accounts, how to develop credit and a good credit score, and why they are both VERY important. Understanding contracts and the liability of signing one, and also what kind of contracts you may be asked to sign (*car loans, student loans, lease agreements, cellphone contracts etc.*) and how important it is to read and understand the fine print. Maureen Grabowski will be taking the lead on sourcing potential programs that meet our needs and criteria.

7. **Center's Operations Report** by Liza Ochsendorf (Warren County Career Center) for all 3 Centers. All centers are prepping for SYEP (*Summer Youth Employment Program*), updating application forms, streamlining the process, and looking to be more consistent across the three counties. All Centers are receiving several ITA's (*training sponsorship requests*), and are busy with Youth GED (*General Educational Development*) programs.

Washington County is hosting a job fair on February 17th at First Presbyterian Church of Hudson Falls; is happy to report that they hired a Senior Employment Counselor who started three weeks ago; and is still recruiting for a Youth Counselor.

Saratoga County is launching newsletter; working closely with schools and businesses to determine work experience opportunities for youth; and increasing EMT enrollment for the next cohort.

Warren County is planning and organizing several high school Job Fairs (*LG, Queensbury, Glens Falls*); GFHS is doing a summer job fair and career exploration component featuring industry speakers; The Worksite Mentoring Program from Y-Reconnects Grant with Warren County Probation and Big Brothers Big Sisters continues; Lehigh Cement closing in April, and they're hosting a job fair for their employees on February 28th at The Queensbury Hotel from 11am-2pm; meeting with BOCES and GF Middle School to discuss a trades club for girls similar to one from downstate that is a great success.

8. **WDB Operations Update** Gretchen Steffan reported that there are several operational responsibilities which support WIOA compliance: This year, the next MOU, the Local Plan Update, EO Quarterly Reporting, Board Membership reporting, Quarterly Program & Fiscal Self-Monitoring, One Stop System Operator RFP/now decided will need to be onboarded and systems implemented, Grant Reports & NYSDOL Meetings, Policy Development, Career Center Service Delivery, System Budget Reporting, Committee Progress, Board Meeting Agendas/Minutes/Website/Meeting Postings are all administrative compliance issues that require regular attention and substantial planning.



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Some new things we are implementing, exploring, collaborating on and project planning for include: Cell Engagement Technology, Board Effect implementation, Virtual Reality Technology, Website Redevelopment & WDB/System Rebranding, Advocacy, WDB Meeting Planning for CPE purposes, Grant & Regional Collaborations, & statewide WDB Director's initiatives.

9. Additional Opportunity for Board Member Announcements / Comments...

Elizabeth Miller informed the group that an acquaintance from the Albany Business Journal is interested in meeting our group and perhaps doing a story about our work. The WDB membership enthusiastically embraced the idea.

10. Adjournment at 10:00 am

Motion to Adjourn: by Maureen Grabowski Second: Mike Prime

Discussion: None; **Vote:** Approved unanimously.

Next SWW WDB Meeting Wednesday, March 29, 2023 at QUAD in Saratoga from 8–10 am