

**NORTH COUNTRY REGIONAL WORKFORCE INVESTMENT BOARD
And NORTH COUNTRY WORKFORCE PARTNERSHIP, Inc.
(CLINTON, FRANKLIN, ESSEX, HAMILTON COUNTIES)**

**Friday March 13, 2009 8:30 a.m.
Conference Room 220 at Workforce Development Office**

MEMBERS PRESENT:

John Van Natten, Chair	Glens Falls Bank	Clinton
Susan Manning, Vice Chair	NYCO	Essex
Joe Riccio, 2 nd Vice Chair	Adirondack Medical Center	Franklin
Patty Bashaw, Secretary	Essex County for Aging	Essex
John Bernardi, Treasurer	United Way	Essex/Clinton
Allen Dunham, Past Chair	Kidsville (Denton)	Franklin
Carol Calabrese	Essex Co. IDA	Essex
Terry Gach	Trudeau Institute	Franklin
Peter Grosskopf	Clinton Com. College	Clinton
Ray Hawksby	Service Emp. Union	Clinton
Dr. Barry Mack	CV-TEC	Clinton
Elaine Leavitt	Upward Bound	Clinton
Roseanne Murphy	Empire State Development	Clinton
Eileen Gordon	ACAP	Essex
Garry Douglas	Chamber of Commerce	Clinton
Clifford Donaldson	NYS DOL	
Elaine Reynolds	Wyeth	Clinton
Dan Alexander	Denton Publications	Essex
Marie Benedict	St. Regis Mohawk Tribe	Franklin
Mark Moeller	CBNA Insurance	Franklin
Hope Coryer	ETS	Clinton
Patricia Lucia	Pl. Housing Auth.	Clinton
Lynn Edmonds	Consultant	Essex
Erin Hynes	The Dev. Corporation	Clinton
Joey Varin	Georgia Pacific	Clinton
Gary Wagoner	Westaff	Clinton

MEMBERS EXCUSED:

Fred Fink	Attorney	Hamilton
Fran Wynnink	Belcam	Clinton
Steve Shafer	FEH BOCES	Franklin
Sylvie Nelson	Sar. Lake Chamber of Com	Franklin
Thomas Millea	I.B.E.W.	Clinton
Greg Wallace	Wallace Construction	Hamilton
Richard Witt	Witt Industries	Hamilton

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Guests Present:

Scott Wilson, Chair Essex County Council
Alan Jones, ACAP
John Masella
Linda Manchester, NYS DOL
Greg Hart, Workforce Development Institute

Staff Present:

Paul Grasso, Executive Director
Mary Beth McKee, staff
Keri Mack, staff
Ashley Cousens, staff
Brandon LaLone, staff
Danielle Mashtare, staff intern

CALL TO ORDER: John VanNatten, Chair, called the meeting to order at 8:35 a.m. Friday, March 13, 2009. John introduced two new members to the Board: Erin Hynes from the Development Corp. and Joey Varin from Georgia Pacific. Also, John introduced Scott Wilson from Westelcom who is the Chairman of the Essex County Council.

John then called upon staff member Ashley Cousens to introduce two new staff members Brandon LaLone who is the Maintenance Specialist and Danielle Mashtare who is an intern from CV-TEC and Beekmantown Central.

Consent Agenda: John VanNatten

John advised there is a busy agenda for this morning and he suggested this Consent Agenda be expanded to include:

Minutes of January 9, 2009
Executive Director's Report
Programmatic and Fiscal Reports
Authorization to Enter into Contract for Website Design Services
Annual Fiscal Review – reviewed previously by Executive Committee
Conversion of Line of Credit

Prior to a motion to accept this expansion of the Consent Agenda, John noted Fred Fink submitted a memo to members yesterday relative to loan pricing and John provided a history relative to the loan. He reminded members that at the time this building was to be purchased the Workforce Board believed there was adequate financing but that was not the condition at that time. John said they needed 100% financing and Glens Falls Bank looked into it and offered the 100% financing of the building. Pricing the loan considers many things---risk, the organization itself, term of the debt, cash flow which includes the leases and strength of the borrower/guarantor. Many of the leases are with the State of New York who could cancel them

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at any time and there is no guarantee on this debt. It won't be priced as it would be with a strong borrower. John advised that at any time this Board wishes to seek out re-pricing, etc. to do so and he further advised he would excuse himself from any of the discussion and meetings.

Motion by Garry Douglas to accept all the items in the Consent Agenda, seconded by Allen Dunham and approved by members present and voting with one abstention—John VanNatten.

Member Binders: John advised these were developed as a result of the last Executive Committee meeting relative to role and responsibility of Board and Council members. Ashley and other staff members distributed a copy of these new binders to each member. Ashley advised that she and Danielle have been working for a few months on these Member Binders and she said there is much information and many references that she believes will interest members. She noted that without the fine assistance extended by Danielle they would not have been prepared so expeditiously.

Shared Work Program: John Masella

John explained this is a program by which employers are able to reduce the work of employees by 20% to 60% and employees will receive UI benefits equal to percentage of reduction. Employees do not have to look for work, the UI Unemployment Insurance Law is waived at that point. Employees can receive up to \$405.00 a week and still receive partial UI benefits.

Employers are asked to group their employees in units i.e. production, office, sales, distribution so that if a company needs one unit more than the other, specific units can be reduced, but all don't have to be reduced.

It does affect the experience rating and comes out of the Unemployment Account but not as much as if the employer laid employees off.. Claimants are able to receive up to 20 weeks but under the Federal Benefits Plan that can be extended up to 40 weeks.

All employees working in the same unit must have their hours and wages reduced by the same percentage. No additional people will be hired for that same unit while the Plan is in effect unless someone quits or is terminated.

Employers must have at least five full-time employees (35-40 hours per week). They must file an application to the State Labor Department Liability and Determination Section and the Plan is due two weeks before they want to start the program. New York State is good about making adjustments to the Plan. The employer must have paid UI tax contributions for at least four consecutive calendar quarters before applying. The business must be located in New York State or have a base of operations in this state.

The employer must certify that fringe benefits will continue for the employees on the Plan.

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John reported there are three companies that have taken advantage of this Plan during the last year.

John advised there is one office in Albany handling the Shared Program Plan and it is a "paper" process. Hopefully they will update to electronic process in April. The efficiency of handling the paper work is fairly good. The telephone number is 518-457-2635.

Corporate executives are not qualified for this program.

Direct Deposit is not available unless the employee already has an Unemployment Claim in place. The manner in which it will be done currently is to provide a Debit Card in the mail.

The employer is able to have a complete shut down for a period of two weeks and this will not affect the Shared Work Program. Employees would be able to receive their regular Unemployment benefit.

John asked that if anyone has questions about the Plan to contact his office or Stacy Soucy who coordinates the program in this area 518-561-0430.

SITE SELECTION: Al Dunham called attention to an article in the PRESS noting that Plattsburgh is # 14 in Economic Development according to the SITE SELECTION publication.

Stimulus Program: Paul Grasso

Paul distributed a list of the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act WIA Funding Allocations (ARR). New figures listed are different from the amounts listed in his Executive Director's Report: \$427,012 for Adults, \$495,492 for Dislocated Workers and \$989,721 for Youth or about 1.9 million dollars.

It is anticipated the WIA money expected July 1 will be \$1.2 million dollars.

We will need to spend both funds concurrently though the WIA funds will have performance outcomes and to date the ARR funds do not have performance outcomes for the summer youth program other than work experience.. The Office of Management and Budget will be the arbiter of success of the ARR program but we will need to know the matrix for that success. The focus seems to be to spend the money on young people and urban areas --particularly dislocated workers and low income and low skill people.

For the first time in a long time it will be possible to buy classroom training such as 30 seats at BOCES and/or Clinton Community College but we would have difficulty in this area to place 30 of anyone in one company. To do so we would have to implement performance based contracts which means we pay a percentage when an individual enrolls, when he graduates and

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when a job is secured.

Funds need to be expended by June 30, 2011 so there will be stringent spending requirements on this money.

The OMB has advised they want double the number of dislocated workers served nationally. They want a 50% increase in the number of adult workers served nationally and they want a 500% or 600% increase in the numbers of youth served nationally.

Paul reported the 2010 funds need to be spent “effectively and wisely” and this will present significant challenges. This will be the first time since 1998 that the system has utilized Summer Youth programs. We can extend our existing contracts to provide for Summer Youth but for the year long program we’ll have to go to an RFP for that. Time will be required.

We will have to provide linkages between our training and other parts of the stimulus legislation. What projects are going on in the North Country, how can we work with organizations responsible for completing those projects and to work with employers to provide training and employees? We have to work and link closely with Green projects and Health Care. There is also a lot of money going into Weatherization and we may be able to link with that to train and provide employees.

Career Pathways is also an important part of this legislation – the grouping of Careers that have common requirements.

Paul called attention to the memo in the agenda packet and noted the staff will need some direction as to how the money will be spent. The Executive Committee will meet in April when there will be a more accurate spending plan but the Board doesn’t meet until May—or special meetings could be called.

As indicated in the memo, it is planned to allocate no less than 50% for OJTs for the Adult Dislocated Worker and the other 50% for supportive services. WIA funds permit us to do supportive services – child care, work boots, goggles. With the stimulus money we are also allowed to provide for “needs based payments” and this can be cash i.e. \$125.00 for someone who has secured a job or is in training to help them survive during this time. Paul noted that many people coming in to the centers these days are “living on the edge”. Many people who come to the Career Centers don’t have the will to survive through training, etc. Most of them have a work history and they want to go back to work.

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Paul further explained that there are also instances when one member of the family has a position which supports the normal family expenses and perhaps the spouse wants to change careers—learn to work in a new and different position. The hallmark of WIA is “customer choice” and Congress encourages this component. Paul emphasized that as much money as this is, it actually gets us to our 1999 funding level so for years we haven’t had the ability to offer many choices.

Paul explained he is looking for approval from the Board to allocate the money in the percentages listed on Page 2 of the memo. He noted it may be necessary to hire staff to do the record keeping because we will be dealing with gas cards, cash, etc. Paul suggested that those consulting with folks who are seeking jobs and/or training and advice should not have to be focused on record keeping so we’ll just have to see what staff requirements will be.

Garry Douglas noted the Chamber had a very good audit this week of the 13N Program and they were encouraged to file a proposal for a second year of \$500,000. Garry advised the Chamber will do this working with Paul and the other partners and this will get into some of the green areas and Clinton Community College and he further noted that this year it was used to assist PAI, CCC, building a relationship with Clarkson College, launching the Supply Chain Conference, etc. Some of the items will be dropped in this second year.

For Youth it is planned to use the bulk of the money this year in the summer of 2009 and will reserve some money for 2010. Also, we will reserve about \$300,000. for a Building Bridges program rather than the Youth Build program which did not fit our criteria. We plan to secure involvement with Building Trades in Building Bridges program to train youth in these Trades and in Weatherization.

Motion to approve the formula to allocate the funds as listed on Page 2 of the attached memo by Garry Douglas, seconded by Hope Coryer and approved by members present and voting with the following abstentions: Dr. Barry Mack, John VanNatten, Ellen Gordon, Peter Grosskopf, Roseanne Murphy, Elaine Leavitt.

Summer Youth: Mary Beth McKee

Mary Beth advised there will be a large summer Youth Programs this year – TANF Funds and Stimulus Funds. Last year we had 200 kids in four counties and it will be much larger this year. She advised they are seeking two things – youth ages 14 to 24 and work sites for the youth. If you know any public or non-private sites let her

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know. Also businesses that might want to get involved would be considered. Mary Beth advised she isn't certain if it will be 35 or 40 hours or what the exact date will be to start the programs. If you can help with youth or work sites, contact the OneWorkSource Centers or Mary Beth.

Related to Transportation for Youth, Mary Beth is working with Head Start to determine if their buses might be used.

Roseanne Murphy left the meeting.

Marketing: Mary Beth recently has done some press releases for the PRESS REPUBLICAN. John Masella his office often does radio shows. Also, he advised we are a part of Channel 5 PROJECT ECONOMY and they do a segment from OWS Centers once in a while. Paul advised the Business Services team is trying to get on calendars of various community organizations. John Bernardi suggested submitting press releases to Denton Publications----they get into almost every household in our general area.

Standing Committees

Executive Committee: John VanNatten

John reported Executive Committee met last month. Scott Wilson who is with us today is the Chair of the Essex Council to replace Lynn Edmonds. Lynn advised she would like to remain with the Essex Council though she doesn't have time to Chair that Council any longer.

Business Services: Keri advised companies are seeking the Team to learn about the services available. They have 4 individuals involved in OJT program and they are satisfied with the cooperation, interest and support they are receiving.

Membership: John noted we have some new members today and we'd like to secure more who will be active. We are interested in sectors such as Retail, Green Technology and Nova Bus. We do have one from Nova Bus who will be on the Clinton Council.

Finance: John Bernardi noted finance matters were covered in the Consent Agenda and he advised the Audit was reviewed at the Finance Committee last month and it was clean and clear.

Paul advised Board members that Franklin County is the grant recipient for the funding and Fred Boardway of Franklin County is our Finance manager. We pay 40% of his salary and he plans to retire. He has done a fine job for us with the daily operations but he doesn't do much in the matter of analysis or projections and the question now is how do we move forward. We could determine we'd like to hire our own Finance Manager or do we want to go with status quo and have Franklin County hire a Finance Manager or do we want the not for profit become the recipient for the money. Each has pros and cons and we'll have to return to it in detailed analysis at the Executive Committee meeting in April. We should have someone in for at least

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60 days in advance of his retirement.

Membership: Garry Douglas

Garry reminded members that if you have names for the Councils from the private sector be sure to let Garry know and he'll ask appropriate Chambers to follow through on suggestions.

Youth Council: Elaine Leavitt

Elaine noted Building Bridges is moving ahead and hopefully it will start in September. Also, The Summit is planned for May 4 which will bring together out-of-school providers and in-school providers and hopefully bring us to a new place of understanding of our youth.

Welcoming Package: Gary Wagoner

Gary thanked everyone for cards and flowers and best wishes during his recent illness.

Gary advised the Community Awareness Committee and the Welcoming Committee merged and the goal is to educate communities about OneWorkSource and to reach out and market that. As Garry Douglas indicated some of the 13N funding is being used to update the website so that folks moving into our area have viable information about our area. Gary also noted the survey that was done through Adirondack Professionals does provide a lot of valuable information to new people moving into the area.

Adirondack Young Professionals: John VanNatten and Keri Mack

John noted they have their 501-3-C status and they had another Board meeting.

Keri said they are initiating another membership campaign and hope to give this a good push. John suggested Board members encourage their young folks to join this active organization. Paul noted they had an effective survey last year with interesting responses. There is a thought that it might be interesting to do another survey this year and compare.

Patty Bashaw left the meeting.

Special Events: Hope Coryer advised the committee has determined this is not an appropriate time to have any Special Events.

Leadership: John Masella

John said that through the efforts of Sue Matton and Jody Parks at the Chamber, a survey was sent out to the Chamber Business list regarding the Leadership program which contained 9 questions. It was sent out February 9, 10, 13 to be returned to John Masella and John has not received any returns. John said the Committee will meet to discuss this. John noted it also

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had the curriculum attached and he advised it does cost \$1000.00. It is a much more intense program and would require 20 members. This basic \$20,000. would not nearly cover the cost of the entire program and there would be a need to secure \$20,000. in sponsorships. If we are not going to be able to start it now, we might be able to look at it again in the Fall.

Susan Manning left the meeting.

John advised the intent of this program is to encourage some of the young folks and new people in the community to take on Leadership roles. John VanNatten had fine accolades about the program as he took it shortly after arriving in Plattsburg. There was a question about the need to charge for this and why it is so expensive. Because at one time the Chamber did take this Leadership program on, Garry Douglas spoke of the many tasks it incurs, the staff time necessary to provide an effective program and he advised it really requires a specific coordinator to handle all the details and programming required to produce a worthwhile program. John suggested this may not be the time to try to get it going again—perhaps an effort later on. John Masella will discuss this with the entire Leadership Committee.

Inquiry: Adirondack Young Professionals: Joey Varin noted that Georgia Pacific has new folks often at their plant and he wondered how they could find out more about Adirondack Young Professionals. He was directed to Keri Mack who will assist them.

Clinton Community College: Peter Grosskopf

Peter reported that on Wednesday there will be a Employment Seminar of the National Work Readiness Credential Program and it is being held at the North Dining Hall. There are 11 employers who will be in attendance to address the 65 students about their skill systems for new employees. In the near future there will be a breakfast with the Chamber staff so employers and students can learn more about this program.

John Bernardi re: Lynn Edmonds

John reported that Lynn Edmonds did a terrific job at the Essex County Council. She took it over when it had lost its focus and was floundering. She brought folks back into it and accomplished a lot and they are a strong Council now.

Cliff Donaldson: Cliff reported he was in Albany yesterday with Commissioner Smith and Deputy Commissioner Musolino and the Stimulus package was the major topic of conversation. At that time Senator Smith, Majority Leader of the State Senate, announced that he is holding Town Meetings all over the state with the exception of the North Country and he wants every agency to be represented.

Lee Rosales, Communication Director of DOL, put together a Fact Sheet which Cliff distributed

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each member in attendance.

Cliff said there were discussions relative to revamping the Shared Work Program and the STEP program. The 13N program was discussed and Commissioner reported that if anyone wants to see the 13 N program working right go to the North Country.

Cliff said that Cadovan, a medical manufacturer in Watertown, y will be leaving the area--207 employees by 2011. Production will be moved to China, headquarters to Ireland.

Cliff also advised that some companies are not paying attention to the Warren Act which says there must be a 90 day notification of layoffs of 50 or more people. The Commissioner will take action against those who have not complied.

Garry Douglas: Garry advised that at the May Board meeting, he will be able to provide an overview of the next 13N proposal.

Cliff Donaldson also reported that Mr.Rosales is preparing a Power Point relative to the Stimulus package and Pat Fayhee, the head of the Federal Legislation and deals with Washington on a regular basis, was on the telephone with DOL and advised they have not finalized a lot of the guidelines but the feds will not come up with any money until May 1. He also advised that the numbers we have are not the right ones.

Adjournment: Al Dunham

Claire Norris Goineau