

WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT BOARD
FEBRUARY 27, 2001 8:00 A.M. TCTC BOARD ROOM

PRESENT: Lisa Patz, Rich Bohman, Irene Stein, Jack Little, Milt Goldstein, Alan Pedersen, Michael Stamm, Steve White, Doug Czerwonka, Carl Haynes, Denny Mastro, Barbara Blanchard, Mary Pat Dolan, Dammi Herath, Todd Mallison, Mary Opperman, and Marty Turnbull

EXCUSED: Tim O'Neill, Kevin Rhodes

ABSENT: Ivy Allen, Mark Babbage, Melissa Brous, Nathan Carlisle, Tom Colbert, Lee Dillon, Bob Fortier, Paul Gardner, Mary Gould, Joyce Maglione, Doug McDonald, Jean McPheeters, Cindy Hoose, Nancy Zahler

GUESTS: Jim Greenman, Sara Wokan, and WFD staff

CALL TO ORDER

Chair Pedersen called the meeting to order at 8:10 a.m.

ADDITIONS/DELETIONS TO AGENDA

None

There was consensus of members present to change the time of future meetings to 8:30 a.m. Ms. Giordano will secure a location.

DIRECTOR'S REPORT

Ms. Giordano stated that Workforce Development recently partnered with Tompkins County Area Development to work with Stork H&E Machinery. A meeting was held with officials at H&E and a marketing strategy was decided on that consisted of a lead story on Channel 7 and articles in the Ithaca Journal and Syracuse Herald. Recruitment and training options were also discussed. Mr. Barry, CEO of H&E was very pleased with the assistance provided and since the meeting all but a few skilled positions have been filled.

Ms. Giordano stated a plan is being put together to handle the displaced workers that are anticipated with the closing of JC Penney.

Ms. Giordano stated that the test web site is up and the Marketing and Outreach Committee will be having a presentation at its meeting this Friday. The content and flow of the site is still being worked on. She stated the partners also discussed the options of having affiliated partners. They will not be board members, but would be partners for referral and delivery of service. She said that Economic Development has been asked to take a lead role in business services and we will be formalizing how those services will be delivered.

Ms. Giordano reported that in reference to the INVEST Grant she had heard that the

money had already been obligated, but she has spoken to individuals at the State and was told that there is money available; however, there are more requests than funds, but additional funds are anticipated. She reported she has been told that the Job Ladders (funding directly to employer) would be approved. A counteroffer has been requested for the other portion of the grant that is targeted to specific training programs. Ms. Giordano is working with TC3 to discuss this and a counteroffer will be made.

Ms. Stein stated that the Public Library has a reference library that is an information source for businesses and it may be useful to have some coordination with them. Ms. Giordano reported that she presented to the Library last fall and provided a list of the resources available at WFD and she will contact them again. Mr. Bohman stated that in other WIA's around the state, libraries are a partner in the WFD System and it may be useful to consider our library as a partner in the future.

Ms. Giordano reported that a decision has not been made yet on the High-Tech Worker Grant, but she has received encouraging news that only 13 out of 33 local boards applied and it is hoped that all of the requests will be funded.

TOMPKINS COUNTY'S ECONOMIC OUTLOOK

Mr. Stamm reported that significant job growth has been seen in heavy manufacturing noting both Borg-Warner and Wilcox Press have grown. He said it is hoped that stability can be maintained in this sector in the future. He said that energy services continue to grow, light manufacturing has been out-pacing other areas and he expects continued growth in this area. He noted that there have been a lot of entrepreneurial efforts in this area. High-tech (bio-tech and hi-end electronics) continues to out pace the nation and continued growth is expected. He stated that government dollars have not been used to invest in dot com companies and he expects this to continue in the future.

He reported that TCAD has not been involved a great deal in retail, but he expects explosive growth in coming years. He noted the proactive approach by government as instrumental in this area and stated it has not always been this way. He noted that there has been very slow growth in office space, but he expects this to grow with Cornell's downtown presence. He said that there have been sewer problems in the community's infrastructure and this is close to being resolved and the infrastructure will be provided where it is needed. He said a lot of work is being done in air services, but there are no easy answers to this problem.

Mr. Stamm noted that the work done recently with H&E should be viewed as a real success because the County was very close to losing this company. Ms. Blanchard stated that this effort should be commended and noted the County did a lot of work to get access funding to fix the bridge near H&E's plant and if the company had left the County could have been viewed negatively by those entities providing that funding. Mr. Mastro asked what types of jobs were being offered at H&E and where in the region most employees are coming from. Ms. Giordano stated that the employees being sought ranged from entry level to highly skilled. Mr. Stamm stated the employees are coming from all contiguous counties.

SPECIAL COMMITTEE REPORT

SEPARATION OF PROGRAM AND POLICY

Mr. Mastro provided a brief overview of the separation of program and policy. Program staff will report to the County Personnel office and policy staff will report to County Administration. A Memorandum of Understanding between the County and the WFDB outlines responsibilities and helps protect both the WFDB and the County. The Plan has the full support of the County Administrator and the County Personnel Director. It was Moved by Mr. Little, seconded by Mr. Bohman and unanimously adopted by voice vote of members present to adopt the separation of program and policy recommendations as outlined by the Special Committee. Mr. Pedersen stated that this is the type of activity that needs a lot of investigation and a recommendation in a relatively short time and thanked the Special Committee for their work.

CORNELL DAY CARE VOUCHER PROGRAM

Ms. Opperman stated that Cornell is interested in a community fund for childcare. Undergraduate and grad students put a plan together. The idea is that no family should go into poverty in order to pay for child care and that together as a community we can support people's child care needs better than trying to do it individually. A concept was formed and costed-out by the students. The issue of hours of daycare, infant care, cost of care, and also the idea of having more on-site daycare were discussed. In the area of cost, a decision was made to set aside a fairly significant amount of money each year to defray the cost of care for those who have financial need. She said the easiest way to administer the plan would have been for Cornell to do it, but a decision was made to participate in the Community Development Fund that is administered through the Day Care Council. It is hoped that the program will begin in July 2001. She said it is hoped that other employers will join the fund and help provide better, affordable care to their employees' families. Ms. Patz asked about continued funding for the Ithaca Child Care Center. Ms. Opperman stated that funding would continue for IC3 and Cornell's on-site centers. She said Cornell's money will be used annually for Cornell families, but other businesses may choose to endow the fund. The money will either be vouchered to day care providers or go through an employee DCAP which would make the funds tax free up to \$5,000, but this has not been finalized. Cornell has made a commitment to work through the Day Care Council on these ideas so the fund is developed in a way that employers of all sizes can use. Mr. Mastro asked what outreach is being done in the community. Ms. Opperman said the Chamber of Commerce has begun approaching employers to discuss the different ways to participate. The program is need-based and based on combined income.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

It was Moved by Ms. Dolan, seconded by Mr. Haynes and unanimously adopted by voice vote of members present to approve the minutes of January 23, 2001 as submitted.

QUALITY AND ASSESSMENT COMMITTEE REPORT

Mr. Little did not have a report, stating the committee meets tomorrow February 28, at Noon.

WORKFORCE SERVICES COMMITTEE REPORT

Mr. Goldstein reported that the Workforce Services Committee met on February 14th. The Committee approved the change to the Self-Sufficiency definition. The definition establishes eligibility for employed workers to receive intensive or training services. The current definition is 70 percent of the lower living standard based on family income.

One of the reasons for changing the definitions is to be able to focus on currently employed individuals looking at career advancement. The Committee approved the new definition as 250 percent of the poverty level of individual annualized earnings. Ms. Giordano reported that staff has indicated that the current level is extremely limiting and individuals who meet that definition are already eligible for other training programs and there is still a gap of people who are not being served. Mr. Goldstein stated that information received from other counties indicates that they are setting their definitions at 200-250%. Ms. Dolan stated she supports the simplicity of the definition and noted it addresses a variety of people.

Mr. Bohman asked that if by increasing eligibility if there would be enough money to serve everyone. Ms. Giordano stated that with the current definition very little training money has been spent because people are being served with other funds. She stated that this is not an entitlement and not everyone who qualifies will be given training funds. She stated the committee discussed the possibility of targeting the money towards specific occupations, but felt at this point there was not enough information available. She stated modifications might need to be made. She stated the goal of the money is to work toward wage progression. It was Moved by Mr. Goldstein and unanimously adopted by voice vote of members present to approve the self-sufficiency definition as: 250 percent of the poverty level of individual annualized earnings

MARKETING AND OUTREACH COMMITTEE REPORT

No report

YOUTH EMPLOYMENT COUNCIL REPORT

No report.

ADOURNMENT

The meeting adjourned at 9:17 a.m. The next meeting is scheduled for April 24, 2001, at 8:30 a.m. in the Borg-Warner Room at the Tompkins County Library.

Minutes prepared by [Jennifer Luu](#).

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