

WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT BOARD

**MAY 27, 2003
PUBLIC LIBRARY**

8:30 A.M. TOMPKINS COUNTY

PRESENT: B. Blanchard, R. Bohman, D. Czerwonka, L. Dillon, P. Gardner, M. Goldstein, C. Haynes, D. Herath, L. Leonard, D. McDonald, J. McPheeters, M. Opperman, A. Pedersen, J. Rossi, C. Sowards, M. Stamm, I. Stein, M. Turnbull, B. Kreutter

EXCUSED: M. Gould, J. Maglione, T. Mallinson, T. O'Neill

ABSENT: N. Carlisle, T. Colbert, M. Dolan, B. Fortier, J. Little, D. Marsh, D. Mastro, L. Patz, J. Wesche, S. White, N. Zahler

GUESTS: FYI Website Team: James Vieweg, Kevin & Stephanie Chu, Yuliya Kuvinskaya, Ian Blissard, Kingsley McBean, Matt Norton; Daphne Chu, Kalit Chu, AJ Kircher, Challenge Industries; Joe Kozlowski, John Flynn, NYSDOL; Jim Cunningham, AM&T; Beth Fuller, TC3; Kim Kathan, Tech Prep Program; Louis McDonald, Office of Employment and Training; Tim Joseph, Tompkins County Legislature; Nancy Caffrey, NYSDOL; Steve Whicher, Tompkins County Administration

STAFF: Debra Giordano, Jennifer Luu, Bernie Heath

CALL TO ORDER

Chairman Pedersen called the meeting to order at 8:30 a.m.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

It was Moved by Ms. McPheeters, seconded by Ms. Stein and unanimously adopted by voice vote of members present to approve the minutes of March 25, 2003, as submitted.

LAUNCH OF THE FULL YOUTH INTEGRATION WEBSITE

Ms. Sowards stated that the Office of Employment and Training and TC3 collaborated on a grant, resulting in the award of \$26,000 to be used for enhanced outreach to youth in Tompkins County. The funding was used to pay youth to create a website for youth in Tompkins County and includes various links and tools that youth may find helpful in obtaining and retaining employment.

The Full Youth Integration Website team provided a presentation of the website to the Board. The site may be accessed at <http://www.tompkinsworkforceny.org/youth/>.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Mr. Pedersen announced that Mr. Goldstein is retiring from Challenge Industries in June. He thanked Mr. Goldstein, on behalf of the Board, for his contributions to the Board and for chairing the Partners Table.

Mr. Pedersen also announced that Bernie Heath from the Workforce Development Board will be leaving at the end of June and thanked her for her contributions.

Mr. Flynn announced that the New York State Department of Labor has compiled a report on NYSDOL's Division of Employment Services operations/performance for Tompkins County that covers the last nine months. The report was distributed and is available in the Board office for review.

COMMITTEE UPDATES

YOUTH EMPLOYMENT COUNCIL UPDATE

Ms. Opperman stated that the group has been meeting and it was decided that energy would be put into three subcommittees; the Policy and Evaluation Committee, the Joint Ventures Committee, and a committee to work on youth job fair activities. The Policy and Evaluation Committee will be looking at youth contracts and the Joint Ventures Committee is reviewing youth programming and the possibility of creating a youth passport that will be used by youth to show a cumulative record that can be used from job to job.

MARKETING & OUTREACH

Mr. Pedersen reported, on behalf of the Marketing and Outreach Committee, that the annual meeting of the Board will be held June 19, 2003, at the Ithaca Country Club. Karen Shadders, Vice President of People Planning and Resources at Wegman's Corporation will be the guest speaker.

TCAD-WFD CONSOLIDATION

Ms. McPheeters reported that the Board is very highly thought of in New York State and has been able to bring over \$2 million dollars into the community in the last four years. She stated that the Board is experiencing financial difficulties because federal funding guidelines have changed and allow only a small percentage of funds to be used for the funding of administration. She also noted that although grant opportunities have been consistently sought, most grants do not allow for the funding of administration costs either.

Ms. McPheeters stated that in years prior to the WIA legislation being enacted, the Private Industry Council partnered with neighboring counties such as Cayuga County and Broome County to provide employment services; however, it was not the best match because the employment situation in Tompkins County

differs from those areas. She also noted that should the Board again partner with another local area, local control would be lost. Another possibility would be to seek funding from the County, however it is unlikely they would be able to fund operations at the current level due to the tight budget times the County is facing. A third option would be to have the Board partner with another community entity such as Tompkins County Area Development (TCAD). The Board has an excellent relationship with TCAD and they have a shared community strategy. A special committee has been formed with members from the Board and the TCAD Board to look at scenarios to bring the Board under the umbrella of TCAD. Ms. McPheeters requested endorsement from the Board to continue those discussions. She stated that TCAD is a non-profit, which would provide additional opportunities for funding. She noted that the fiscal structure and staffing would be placed under the umbrella of TCAD, but the Board structure would not change and would remain independent of the TCAD board.

It was Moved by Ms. McPheeters, seconded by Ms. Blanchard and unanimously adopted by voice vote of members present to continue discussions and develop a strategy to support the Workforce Development Board and Tompkins County Area Development working together.

Ms. Blanchard stated she hopes that people will not interpret this as a lack of enthusiasm on the part of the Tompkins County Legislature to fund the Workforce Development Board. She stated that the County is facing tough economic times and any alternatives programs can find to help during these times is appreciated.

Ms. Opperman stated that the two groups working together is a natural collaboration and noted that it was TCAD that brought the original group together to discuss Tompkins becoming an independent Workforce Investment Area.

NOMINATIONS

Mr. Czerwonka reported that ballots will be sent out via email for the following nominations for 2003-2004 and the results announced at the annual meeting on June 19, 2003.

- President - Marty Turnbull
- Vice-President – Doug Czerwonka
- Secretary – Lee Dillon
- Treasurer – Jean McPheeters

STATE OF THE WORKFORCE

Ms. Giordano stated that one of the goals of the Board has been to build awareness within the community about the state of the workforce and the Board's activities. She stated she has been working with representatives from TCAD and the New York State Department of Labor to compile information about the state of the workforce. The report will be used to begin a dialogue in the community on

how to address the issues contained in the report. It is hoped that the report will be ready for release at the annual meeting on June 19th.

Ms. Giordano reported that last week six focus groups were held with community members to discuss workforce issues. Those groups represented were, large employers, small employers, high-end job seekers, entry to mid-level job seekers, community leaders, and workforce development professionals.

The Board broke out into working groups to react to the information gathered in the focus groups, including competitive advantages and disadvantages.

Advantages to living in Tompkins County:

- Highly educated workforce
- Good schools; educational opportunities
- Great place to raise a family
- Beautiful physical environment, not too far from larger cities
- Small town atmosphere
- Community “culture”
- University town – brings diverse people to area and access to technology

Disadvantages

- Housing availability and cost
- High taxes
- High-energy costs
- Physical isolation (poor air service, no interstate)
- Only 54% of property taxable
- Low-wages
- No Economic Development Zone
- Regional job provider, but do not receive state/federal funding for it

In addition, the Groups identified/confirmed key workforce issues to be included in the report and reported back on what they believe the key issues to be and suggestions for potential solutions:

KEY WORKFORCE ISSUES AND SUGGESTED SOLUTIONS

1. Underemployment

Defined as being employed at a level below capabilities (i.e. hours; skills/education) and lacking opportunities for career growth

- Create more diverse job opportunities with career pathways
- Utilize Cornell Tech Transfer opportunities
- Create a more business-friendly environment

2. Decline in Funding

- Educate Legislators/elected officials

3. Renewed Focus on Incumbent Training

4. Bias Toward Non-College Bound

5. Lack of Basic Skills

- Educate parents/guidance counselors/students
- Prioritize basic skills in youth/adult in grant writing
- Partner with trade associations
- Include youth of low-income families in “education” of basic skills
- Higher profile for BOCES
- Funding for adult basic skills (no eligibility requirements)

6. Housing, Daycare, Transportation

- Affordable housing for low income people (lack of)
- Explore Cornell University/Ithaca Neighborhood Housing Services cooperation in the issue of affordable housing (possible solution – neighborhood revitalization)
- Encourage more employer sponsored daycare through collaboration among employers
- Creation of community daycare fund

7. Skills Mismatch

- Educate guidance counselors
- Job fair/career fairs (focusing on skills)
- Market/Promote Website
- Early awareness of job skills/requirement in 7th-8th grades
- Internships – focus on demand occupations
- Short term customized training for demand occupations
- Stronger partnerships with building trades
- Utilize TC3/BOCES to develop training programs to fill in gaps
- Newspaper/media advertising to promote awareness

ADJOURNMENT

The meeting adjourned at 10:00 a.m. The next meeting is scheduled for September 23, 2003, at 8:30a.m. in the Borg Warner Room at the Tompkins County Public Library.

Minutes prepared by [Jennifer Luu](#).

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