

WORKFORCE INVESTMENT BOARD

NOVEMBER 14, 2006

8:30 A.M.

TOMPKINS COUNTY PUBLIC LIBRARY

PRESENT: B. Blanchard, R. Bohman, L. Dillon, C. Haynes, D. Herath, J. Little, K. Luz Herrera, T. Mallinson, J. McPheeters, M. Opperman, R. Pass, L. Patz, A. Pedersen, J. Rossi, M. Stamm, M. Turnbull, J. Wesche

EXCUSED: P. Carey, P. McKee

ABSENT: T. Colbert, W. Cooke, D. Cooper, J. Fogler, R. Fortier, L. Leonard, K. Mann, D. Marsh, E. O'Donnell, S. Pronti, N. Zahler

GUESTS: J. Kozlowski, T. Doherty, NYSDOL; L. Holmes, Tompkins County Office for the Aging; S. Gillis, TST BOCES

STAFF: J. Mattick, Jennifer Luu

ANNOUNCEMENTS

No announcements were made.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

It was Moved by Ms. McPheeters, seconded by Mr. Bohman and unanimously adopted by voice vote of members present to approve the minutes of September 26, 2006 as presented.

BUDGET UPDATE

Mr. Little stated the Board had an expectation that the County would provide funding for 2007; however, since the last meeting, the County Legislature made the decision to fund the WIB with Industrial Development Agency funds. The amount of the request was unchanged, but could impact the IDA and how they had planned to spend their surplus funding. A letter is being written that will be sent to the County asking that a meeting be held to discuss long-term options.

Ms. Opperman asked what the source is for the IDA funding and whether there are any other counties in New York State that fund their WIB's in this manner. Mr. Stamm stated the funds come from fees associated with projects the IDA approves. Ms. Mattick stated she is not aware of any other WIB in New York State being funded this way.

Ms. Blanchard stated she sent a letter to the Legislature prior to their voting on the WIB's funding request. In that letter she provided the history of the WIB and tried to encourage the Legislature to fund the WIB long-term.

Ms. McPheeters stated she serves on the IDA and that group looked at the WIB's request at their last meeting. She stated she voted against using IDA funds in this manner as she does not believe this to be an appropriate use of IDA funds. She stated there is also a possibility that now that the County has an empire zone, the fees the IDA receives could go down. She did note that there was assurance by County officials at that meeting that there would be support for the WIB in the future using County funds if necessary.

Mr. Stamm stated the leadership in the County, during a tough budget year, with a fairly large IDA fund balance, felt they could use surplus IDA funds to fund the WIB, TCAD, and the Empire Zone Coordinator and use County funding if needed for any shortfall. He stated he would like a more formal commitment from the County, for example, if the IDA fund balance falls below a certain level what level County is willing to contribute.

Ms. Luz Herrera stated the County's action to use IDA funds is not much different than before when they have used surplus funding to cover certain initiatives. She stated the Legislature has several new

members who are still being educated, but there is commitment from the County for economic development and the Workforce Investment Board. She sees this as an opportunity to recognize the County's commitment even though they chose to use IDA surplus funds.

Ms. Opperman asked how much of the IDA funding is taxpayer money. Mr. Stamm stated the funds come from employers for projects that are underway in the County.

Ms. McPheeters stated that a significant amount of time went into exploring long-term options for the WIB and it was decided the best course was to stay a single-area WIB and seek County support. She stated that if the County decides staying a single-area is no longer feasible they need to make that decision and she does not believe money should be spent this year to prolong the situation. She stated there has not been a clear commitment made by the County, and it is needed.

Ms. Luz Herrera stated she believes the County does support a single county WIB and that the County is willing to pay to have a say in what the WIB does.

Mr. Haynes stated there has been discussion at the Executive Committee level about holding an economic and workforce summit with WIB members and County officials that highlights the synergy between economic and workforce development. Additional discussion will be held at future meetings about holding this type of event. Ms. Opperman stated additional education is also needed so County officials are informed about what the WIA legislation mandates and what areas local officials have a say in.

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR'S REPORT

Ms. Mattick's written report was distributed and it is included at the end of the minutes.

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT EFFORTS IN TOMPKINS COUNTY

Mr. Stamm gave a brief presentation about economic development efforts in Tompkins County. He stated TCAD's focus is on companies that sell products or services to customers outside of Tompkins County and that typically pay workers the highest wages, provide the best benefits and offer the most opportunity for advancement. They also assist companies and entrepreneurs in fields such as software development, agri-business, printing and publishing. TCAD assists cottage industries, high-tech firms and other manufacturers with a variety of funding opportunities and incentives, site selection assistance and technical resources and referrals.

In July, Tompkins County was awarded an Empire Zone and a Zone Advisory Board was established and recruitment is underway for a coordinator for the program.

Mr. Stamm stated some of the challenges TCAD faces include state regulations, the high costs to do business in New York State and the challenges of keeping businesses here. Advantages include having Cornell University in the community and sizable venture capital being available in Tompkins County.

Future goals for TCAD include retaining durable manufacturers and expansion of those companies, steady growth in light manufacturing, and additional expansion of high tech companies. He stated in 1999 TCAD created the County's first Economic Development Strategy and it was recently updated in 2006. The new version includes three challenges that will be addressed in the next five years: increase and diversify housing supply, improve workforce and business skills, and revitalize unique commercial districts and town centers. A copy of the full report can be viewed on TCAD's website at <http://www.tcad.org/TCAD2006EDS.pdf>.

RESOLUTION OF COMMITMENT TO THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE 2006 ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT STRATEGY FOR TOMPKINS COUNTY

It was Moved by Mr. Pass, seconded by Mr. Haynes and unanimously adopted by voice vote of members present.

WHEREAS, in 1997, the Tompkins County Board of Representatives charged Tompkins County Area Development (TCAD) with the preparation of an Economic Development Strategy to guide countywide activities related to economic development and provide an agenda for positive action, and

WHEREAS, the Economic Development (ED) Strategy prepared for Tompkins County was accepted by the County Board of Representatives in July, 1999, and

WHEREAS, the Economic Development Strategy included the formation of a Coordinating Committee responsible for implementation of the strategy, and

WHEREAS, TCAD initiated a planning process to update the ED Strategy in 2005, involving over seventy-five civic, business and citizen leaders coupled with a research component to provide in-depth information and background data, and

WHEREAS, the Coordinating Committee, (including representatives from Tompkins County Area Development, the Industrial Development Agency, the Workforce Investment Board, the Chamber of Commerce and Convention and Visitors Bureau, the Ithaca Downtown Partnership, the City of Ithaca Department of Planning and Economic Development and the Ithaca Urban Renewal Agency, the Town of Ithaca Planning Department, the Tompkins County Planning Department, the Ithaca-Tompkins County Transportation Council, Cooperative Extension of Tompkins County, and the Municipal Officials Association) has been meeting quarterly to assess progress toward implementation of the 1999 ED Strategy, to ensure that all parties are fully aware of the challenges and concerns facing committee members, and to participate in creating the 2006 ED Strategy, and

WHEREAS, the Coordinating Committee structure has proved valuable in uniting the economic development professionals in the community to provide mutual support and assistance, and

WHEREAS, the process of updating and revising the County's Economic Development Strategy is complete, bringing with it new challenges and opportunities that can be more fully realized by formalizing the role of the Coordinating Committee and converting it to an Economic Development Collaborative with a mission to:

“Cultivate a prosperous and sustainable regional economy by building the economic foundations, expanding opportunities, and fully engaging the community in ways that reflect the community's strengths and values”, and

WHEREAS, while further discussion, analysis, and action will be needed to achieve implementation of the Three Five-Year Goals, a strategy document has been developed that offers a sound approach to economic development and will serve as the basis for continuing discussion by the Legislature and the community, and

WHEREAS, the strategy has a focus on workforce development as one of the three five year goals, and acknowledges the importance of workforce development as a component of a sound economic development strategy, now therefore, be it

RESOLVED, That the Tompkins County Workforce Investment Board supports the concept of the Economic Development Collaborative and pledges to participate in strategies that will lead to fulfillment of the mission.

ADJOURNMENT

It was Moved by Mr. Haynes, seconded by Ms. McPheeters and unanimously adopted by voice vote to adjourn the meeting at 9:35 a.m.

Minutes submitted by Jennifer Luu.