

# COUNTY OF ULSTER

## Workforce Development Board

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Tomasine Oliphant, Director

### Ulster County Workforce Development Board Meeting (via Zoom)

April 13, 2021

Minutes

**MEMBERS PRESENT –** John Eickman, Arnaldo Schwerert, Angela Patella, Eugene Knudsen, Frank Falatyn, Jim Ferraro, Don Lucarello, Stephen Casa, Michael Berg, Anthony Mignone, Donald Mapes Jr., Alex Cordova, Sean Mahoney, Chris Marx

**MEMBERS EXCUSED -** Tony Marmo, Mike Iapoce, Nels Leader

**MEMBERS ABSENT -** Heidi Rosborough, William McKnight

**ALSO PRESENT –** Tomasine Oliphant, OET Director/WDB Director, Faith Golden, OET Deputy Fiscal Director, Lisa Snyder, OET, Lisa Berger, Tourism Director, Tim Weidemann, Economic Development Director, Jonah Schenker, Hudson Valley Pathways Academy (PTECH) Principal

The meeting was called to order at 3:35pm by Sean Mahoney WDB Chair. There was a quorum.

#### 1. APPROVAL OF MINUTES:

Sean asked for a motion to approve minutes from February. Motion by John Eickman, seconded by Michael Berg. All in Favor. None opposed. Minutes approved.

#### 2. FINANCIAL REPORT: Faith Golden, OET Deputy Director

Faith went over the financials for the board. We are a little bit ahead on DW spending and have started to accrue some of that with the TET money. Doing a good job spending Adult and DW money despite limited trainings available. Adult money is a little bit ahead on spending. We have a bit left to add more training before end of program year. Under-expended on youth, but State may allow us to carry-in to next year. We had a little more to spend from last year. We will ask in June if we can definitely carry in. Doing a good job on spending DW money, which gives us freedom to add more trainings. Very little left of Admin. money. Eugene asked if funding will be increased for next year. Faith said it changes from year to year. Preliminary allocation shows a slight increase for next program year. No anticipation of being under-funded. Eugene stated demand may be increased and funding may not increase. This is always a possibility. Eugene asked if there is anything that the board can do. Michael said that it may be possible for some agencies to assist with funding.

#### 3. DIRECTOR'S REPORT: Tomasine Oliphant, Director

Green Careers Coalition: Making some great movement and have been able to pull together employers, unions and training providers. Tomasine thanked Stephen Casa and Chris Marx for their help. Also working with SBDC. Tomasine will share video link on Green Careers to board when it is completed. Discussed resources on

website Green Careers internships, CLP, etc. Also collaborating with Economic Development and SBDC to help individuals get into entry-level positions in manufacturing. Working with SBDC team to develop a program for entrepreneurs with YAEP Program.

Youth Ad Hoc Committee has been very supportive getting the word out for YAEP and SYEP. We already have 40 applicants for SYEP.

We are seeing an increase in training needs for welding and would like to add this to the Demand Occupations List. Sean made a motion to add welding, seconded by Anthony. All in favor - motion approved. Training will be available to any age group. Donald will let the Carpenters Union know.

Hospitality Workforce Subcommittee: Chris gave background: SUNY Ulster's SBDC received Cares Act funding with a broad objective for recovery of small businesses. The team focused on green careers, manufacturing, hospitality and small businesses supporting underserved communities. Meetings have been ongoing. Chris noted that there has always been a need for a hospitality workforce, but now the need is critical. There are 100 positions available just in Ulster County. These are not just entry level positions, but also many family-earning wage jobs within the 40K-70K range in this area. Lisa and Tomasine suggested we put together a hospitality sub-committee of WDB to address this critical need. There is a drive thru job fair in the works. Lisa Stated she was pleased to marry her experience in WDB to the hospitality industry. They have been the hardest hit and they are hiring. The career pathway is very clear with few obstacles in this sector. Tomasine led a conversation in some of the northern counties who put together a list of soft skills and job ready skills for applicants to use. This is a good model that will be put together to meet the needs of our industry partners. Looking forward to walk-up/drive-thru job fair. We need to start changing the dialogue around the jobs in this industry and talk to young g people about this immediately accessible career. Lisa hopes that she, Chris, Tomasine and Arnaldo will be able to report back with progress each quarter.

Michael spoke about a huge number of medical personnel who will be leaving the field after the pandemic. Asked what training will be available. Eugene stated that Ulster BOCES is offering surgical technologists, CHA and HHA. Chris stated that SUNY Ulster has mobile phlebotomy and patient care tech. Training for hospitals for CNA has been upskilled. Nursing program is full and at capacity with the number of clinical placements in the area. SUNY is working with BOCES to hold on to the surgical technology program and keep it in the county.

Tim Weidemann, Director Economic Development presented the Ulster 2040 Plan. There are a lot of challenges in our economy right now. Joint effort with OET, Tourism, etc. Tim shared the report on the work that Arnaldo, Chris, Lisa and Tomasine have done. Spoke about updated economic development strategy and the needs for a new plan to grow Ulster County's economy. This is an ongoing process that needs to be updated regularly. Needs to be done in a way that is flexible and can be adapted. A group of 12 from different backgrounds joined the meetings. The committee relied on a lot of regional reports. Discussed housing costs, shrinking population of 18-30 year olds and increasing elderly population. Tim spoke about service sector employment and United Way's ALICE report: wages declining, households struggling. Recovery is a precarious one. Challenge of equity and inequality. It will likely take longer to feel the full impact and longer to recover. We need to start thinking of a new way to address economic development issues which led to work on Ulster 2040. People of UC are the engine of the economy and quality of jobs is as important as having a job to begin with. Focus on 4 industry clusters: Agriculture, Food & Beverage, artists, makers and creators, makers ..... Also calling attention to social and economic structure. Housing, childcare, and transportation are needed.

We need to change the way we think about manufacturing. Health and wellness care are critical. Agriculture, food and beverage – need to produce as much as we can locally. Clean energy and the environment offer tremendous opportunity. Social & economic infrastructure: invest, support, streamline. Green New Deal will be announced shortly and additional investments for Ulster county. Need to re-brand as exciting opportunities. Tim spoke about Green Careers Academy, Green Business Champions. Want to help businesses make transition. Need access to people for business to survive and thrive. Spoke about connecting the creators and makers. Tim asked for feedback, questions. Are we missing anything? Eugene asked about Ulster County’s ability to sustain manufacturing vs. China and Asia. Tim stated that Ulster County can and will have to. In the next wave, we will see the impacts of marijuana legalization and there is a growth industry poised there. The Green New Deal is an area of tremendous opportunity for Ulster County. Need to find areas where we can succeed and invest in them. Frank stated that he has lost a valued employee to another company as they can pay more. He added that Global Foundries is very scared about Amazon coming to Dutchess County. We will lose employees to these huge companies. Need to develop a meaningful workforce to train people for these jobs. Michael stated that the number of women who have lost their jobs is tremendous. Spoke about increase in childcare spending that will enable women to come back into the workforce. Tim asked what can we offer if we can’t always offer the increased pay? Housing, childcare, transportation?

Jonah Schenker spoke about efforts in schools, government, etc. It is critical to get message to kids in high school. Need to be connected around language. Tim asked how do we start ensuring that k-12 is putting the message out to keep kids in the area? We need to be united in messaging for students. We are all saying the same thing but saying it in different ways.

Sean stated Tim made an impressive presentation and applauded the work the committees have done. There are a lot of challenges that we all need to work through. Tim stated that he will be reaching out in the next couple of months to set up working groups. He will provide his contact info to the board.

Angela stated that she was in contact with a training program called the Professional Culinary Institute, run by Harold Kaplan. Has a program in Dutchess County and is looking to explore other areas to develop their program in the culinary field. Angela suggested to him to consider Kingston as a possible location for this program. Eugene stated that BOCES offers training to high school students but no professional culinary training for adults. Eugene spoke about BOCES looking to support Ulster County industries. Angela said that the PCI has many certificates and will provide information on PCI to Tomasine and the board. Eugene would also be interested in speaking with Mr. Kaplan.

#### **4. MOTION TO ADJOURN**

Sean thanked everyone for their input and asked for a motion to adjourn. Motion made Stephen Casa, seconded by Donald Mapes. All in Favor. Meeting adjourned at 4:38pm.

**ULSTER COUNTY WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT BOARD**  
**NEXT MEETING:**  
**Tuesday, June 8, 2021**