

# Workforce Investment Board of Columbia & Greene Counties

## Minutes for October 11, 2011 5:30 p.m.

Columbia Greene Community College

**MISSION:** The C-G WIB will provide leadership, influence, focus and oversight for the local workforce development system. *Strategies to Achieve Vision and Mission:*

- Promote collaboration between economic development, education and training resources.
- Measure system performance for quality improvement.
- Promote the system with the public

### **WELCOME**

Chair Karen Schoonmaker welcomed WIB members. The meeting began with introductions and local business/agency updates.

### **Chair Karen Schoonmaker conducted role call:**

**Present:** Frank Alguire, Barbara Arisohn, Lisa Benfield, Betty Betts, John Betts, John Craft, Ann Luby, Cindy MacKay, Kathryn Nelson, Mary Prazma, Tracy Racicot, David Scott, Karen Schoonmaker, Terry McGee Ward, M. A. Wiltse and Anthony Zibella.

**Excused:** Gina Armstrong, Russ Coloton, Nancy Costine, Fran DelGaudio, Terri Drobner, Pam Dusharm, Mark Fingar, Patrick Gabriel, Kary Jablonka, Kate Konopka, Larry Krajeski, David Lester, Tina Sharpe, Sally Sharkey, Lynn Strunk, Deb Tuttle, Mike Veeder and Joe Wolodkevich.

**Consultant:** Katy Drake

**Guests:** Maureen Boutin (Workforce Office) and Nancy Bell (DOL-DEWS)

With 16 members in attendance, a quorum was not present.

### **STATUS OF VACANCIES**

- Organized labor representatives for Greene and Columbia are in recruitment
- One Greene business representative is in recruitment
- One community service based organization is vacant due to Tracy McNally's resignation from the Greene County Chamber of Commerce.

### **ACCEPTANCE OF MINUTES**

Frank Alguire made a motion to accept the Board meeting minutes for July 12, 2011. John Betts seconded the motion and the minutes were approved, however without a quorum the meeting minutes will need to be brought before a full Board at the next meeting for a final approval. All Board meeting minutes are sent electronically to all members and are posted on the website- [www.columbiagreene.org](http://www.columbiagreene.org).

### **CORRESPONDENCE**

The following correspondence is available for member review after the meeting or upon request:

### **Letters Sent:**

- July 25, 2011 Quarterly report sent to each CLEO.
- September 27, 2011. Packet of WIB information to Greene County Legislator, Mr. Christian Pfister, regarding recruitment for WIB vacancies for Greene County.

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## ***Letters Received:***

- July 8, 2011. Letter regarding Columbia Greene WIB Governance Review from Ms. Nancy Bell, DOL.
- July 15, 2011. Letter regarding NEG OJT review from Ms. Nancy Bell, DOL.
- August 3, 2011. Copied on letter to Chairman Speenburgh regarding the Management Determination for CGCC Single Audit Report from Mr. Timothy Burleski.
- August 26, 2011. Copied on letter to Mr. Mark Decker regarding the review of the Summer Youth Employment Program from the Office of Temporary and Disability Assistance.
- September 16, 2011. Letter Ms. Nancy Bell regarding the Summer Jobs Express! Program Review for 2011.

## **COMMITTEE MEETINGS**

Committee reports were distributed via email prior to the meeting and reviewed by Committee Chairs or members at the meeting. Committee reports are attached to the minutes for reference.

## **ONE STOP DIRECTOR'S REPORT**

MA Wiltse distributed the One Stop Center's Participation Report for PY11 (July 1, 2011- September 30, 2011). The report included: An overview of Core and Intensive Services for the program year, Skill Development and Training Services, employment statistics, adult education classes, and a quarterly report of local activities (job orders and job openings). MA reported that due to mechanical problems with the swipe card machines (and no funds to invest in replacing it), the swipe card system which provides attendance data will be wrapping up for Columbia Greene WIO. Number of participants will have to be hand counted in areas such as attendance in workshops and other staff provided services. We will no longer be able to provide information regarding the number of customer visits per quarter.

MA noted that the Notice of Obligational Authority (NOA) for funding during the next 3 quarters that started October 1st, will not be available until after October 20<sup>th</sup>. While the PY11 budget has significantly limited training dollars, CG WIO is able to continue providing services. Center closings and significant layoffs have occurred in other workforce areas.

## **OLD BUSINESS**

### **One Stop Center Recertification**

The Board received an update on the MOU for the local recertification of the Columbia Greene One Stop Center. Signatures on the MOU are still pending. The CQI Committee will continue to monitor the recertification until complete.

### **Columbia Greene One Stop is now a National Work Readiness Credential Test Site**

The Work Readiness Credential (WRC) is a transferable certification of work readiness skills that is recognized nationally. The credential is validated and provides a business defined standard of work readiness. The Columbia Greene One Stop Center is now a NWRC test site. MA Wiltse reviewed the results of the NWRC and the Summer Jobs Express Program (information included in committee reports).

## **NEW BUSINESS**

### **Status of the NEG Disaster Grant**

New York State has been awarded \$16 million under the NEG Disaster Grant in response to Tropical storms Irene and Lee. NYSDOL has received a Notice of Obligational Authority for \$1.8 million to be expended by March 2012. The Workforce Office is attempting to work with the Department of Labor on the federal NEG grant for disaster relief. It can provide government, public education, and non-profit organizations with free, temporary employees for clean-up, deconstruction and/or providing assistance to storm victims. Workers hired under this grant must be dislocated workers which include: workers who lost their jobs as a result of the Hurricane, workers who have been laid off from their jobs and unlikely to return to their previous occupation and the long term unemployed. The NEG Disaster Grant allows for temporary positions for up to six months with a cap at \$12,000. The Workforce Investment Office has contacted the two Counties, and officials from the towns, villages, public parks and school districts informing them of the program. The program is getting a very slow start because of administrative issues regarding the cost involved with this “free” program. The current position of NYS is that interested local organizations and municipalities must be the “employer of record”, which means they could be responsible for Unemployment Insurance benefits and increased Worker Compensation rates, once the program is over. At this time, only the town of Halcott has agreed to take on this risk and has expressed interest in the NEG disaster grant for repair of their highway garage. The Windham/Ashland/Jewett school district and the Town of Hunter had expressed interest, but have not responded to inquiries since the “Employer of Record” issue has come up.

Maureen Boutin updated the Board on benefits available under the *Disaster Unemployment Assistance due to the effects of Hurricane Irene and Farmers and the Self-Employed directly affected by Hurricane Irene and Tropical Storm Lee.* (Fact sheets available)

Frank Alguire discussed the long term negative impact the storms had on local farms. The DOL Farm Representative has been visiting all the local farms to present the disaster unemployment insurance information. The benefit provides farmers assistance for lost income, but does not address the rebuilding of their farm lands. Low interest disaster relief loans were discussed as an option for those recovering and rebuilding.

### **Regional Economic Development Councils**

Ann Luby provided an overview of the New York State Regional Economic Development Councils established by the Governor. The Governor has created ten Regional Councils to empower each region to find effective strategies and solutions to local economic development challenges. Close to one billion dollars will be available across the state, with some of these funds set aside to incentivize the regional strategic planning process, The four regions with the leading strategic plans will receive up to \$40 million in additional awards. The remaining balance will be divided up between all the regions. Lieutenant Governor Bob Duffy serves as the Chair of each Regional Council and has attended all meetings. Columbia Greene is in the Capital Region Council along with Warren, Washington, Saratoga, Rensselaer, Schenectady and Albany Counties. The Capital Region’s Co-Chairs are Michael Castellana (President & CEO,

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SEFCU) and Dr. Shirley Jackson (President RPI). A list of Capital Region Representatives was distributed along with a copy of the public participation strategy. Additional information and link for comments can be found on the website: [www.capitalregionopenforbusiness.com](http://www.capitalregionopenforbusiness.com). Council meetings are open to the public. The next meeting is Thursday, October 20<sup>th</sup> at 9:30 a.m. (public portion) at Saratoga Springs City Center, Meeting Room 1, 522 Broadway, Saratoga Springs. The November meeting may be held in Columbia or Greene County. Information on the local meeting will be distributed to Board members once available.

### Economic Development Update

Frank Alguire provided an Economic Development update for Greene County. Frank discussed the Disaster Loan Program which has ten loans currently under review tonight by the legislature. The loans are for up to \$20,000 with no interest and a six month payment deferral. These loans are being used by businesses which have reopened or are on the verge of reopening following the hurricane and tropical storm. Mr. Alguire discussed the tremendous amount of clean up and recovery efforts that has already occurred in the area. The strong volunteer base and the amount of donations to aid in recovery are a testament to the good will in the region. For future donations, Frank recommends contacting the Department of Emergency Services to determine where the need remains. **Greene County Department of Emergency Services, 25 Volunteer Drive, Cairo, NY 12413: T: 518 622-3643.**

Mr. Alguire discussed the NY Spring Waters 3<sup>rd</sup> shift expansion. The expansion will add approximately 20 local jobs.

The impact of the storms on local tourism was discussed by the Board. The greatest concern remains that the media coverage continues to give the impression that the region is completely inaccessible.

### GOOD AND WELFARE

Barbara Arisohn shared information on the NDEAM Awards “Profit by Investing in Workers with Disabilities”. Information on the event was emailed to all Board members.

### Please Mark Your Calendar

## PY11 WIB Meeting Schedule

Tuesday, January 10, 2012	8:30 a.m.
Tuesday, April 3, 2012	5:30 p.m.
Tuesday, July 10, 2012	8:30 a.m.
All Board meetings will be held at the Professional Academic Center at Columbia Greene College, unless otherwise notified.	
Reminders with meeting agendas will be sent prior to each meeting.	

A motion to adjourn was made by MA Wiltse at 6:53. Seconded by Frank Alguire and carried by the full board.

## **Business Services Committee**

September 22, 2011 8:30 am

### **NEG OJT (National Emergency Grant -On the Job Training)**

Maureen provided an overview of the status of the NEG OJT grant reporting that the program has ended with no new funds being available. Business name, amount of contract, administrative percentages and start date were reviewed along with the status of the contract for the twelve companies. Six contracts have been completed. Three contracts were unsuccessful with employee not working out early in the contracts. Columbia Greene contracts have been written for a total of \$113,758.10 plus \$9, 100.59 for administration. Maureen reported that the businesses appreciated the 90% funding rate available under the NEG OJT grant.

### **Regional Economic Development Council (REDC)**

The Mission Statement for the Capital Region's Economic Development Council was distributed along with a council fact sheet. Columbia Greene is an eight county region that includes Warren, Washington, Saratoga, Rensselaer, Schenectady and Albany. The Capital Region Council is co-chaired by RPI President, Dr. Shirley Jackson and SEFCU President & CEO, Mr. Michael Castellana. A public forum for the Council was held at Columbia Greene College on September 6<sup>th</sup>. A video of the public forum will be available shortly.

### **NYS DOL Consolidated Funding Application (CFA)**

The NYS DOL Consolidated Funding Application (CFA) was also distributed to the Committee in hard copy. Up to one billion dollars in economic development funding will be available through the NYS CFA as of the beginning of September. The NYS DOL is making three million dollars available in WIA funding to support training activities. Allowable training activities under the RFP are worker skills upgrading, on-the-job training and unemployed worker skills training.

Challenges in the new processes were discussed by the Committee. REDC Committees in process were questioned. Some regions have a designated workforce committee. Feedback and input can be provided directly to Capital Region Economic Development Council by visiting their web site at [www.capitalregionopenforbusiness.com](http://www.capitalregionopenforbusiness.com).

### **SUNY Statewide Grant**

The SUNY Statewide Grant is a USDOL opportunity which focuses on creating an alliance between community colleges, businesses and organizations to create training opportunities at the community colleges. In our region, the focus is based on the 13N pipeline study in the areas of advanced manufacturing and biotechnology. A certificate program would provide direction and connection to the growth in Tech Valley. This opportunity, while the award announcement is still pending, is a collaboration of businesses and education entities. If awarded, the CGCC portion of the grant would be for \$300,000 over three years.

### **NEG Disaster Relief Grant**

The Workforce Office is working with the Department of Labor on the federal NEG grant for disaster relief that will provide government, public education and non-profit organizations assisting storm victims with free, temporary employees. Workers hired under this grant must be dislocated workers which include: workers who lost their jobs as a result of the Hurricane, workers who have been laid off from their jobs unlikely to return to their previous occupation and the long term unemployed. The NEG Disaster Grant allows for temporary positions for up to six

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months with a cap at \$12,000. Organizations interested in participating should contact the Workforce Investment Office.

The impact of Hurricane Irene on businesses and tourism was discussed by the committee. Maureen Boutin provided fact sheets on "Eligibility for Disaster Unemployment Assistance (DUA) due t the effects of Hurricane Irene" and "Farmers and Self-Employed Directly Affected by Hurricane Irene and Tropical Storm Lee".

### **National Work Readiness Credential**

MA Wiltse shared the results of the NWRC pilot summer project. The Columbia Greene Workforce Office is now a NWRC test site. The summer jobs express program provided work experience along with additional training in the areas of reading, math and situational judgment to the youth in the program. 18 youth completed the work experience component. Seven youth took the NWRC exam with five students passing it. One student will retest and several other students will take the exam in the near future. Situational judgment appears to be the challenge of the credential as test takers need to provide not only the best answer to the question, but also the weakest/worst response to the situation.

### **American Jobs Act**

Information prepared by NYATEP was distributed on the potential impact on New York under the proposed American Jobs Act. The Act, if passed, may allow the Workforce Office additional funding to provide youth and adults paid work experience.

Priority of service for Veterans was questioned. All vets receive priority of service and are seen by the Vet Representative. Additional information on veterans' services was requested and will be provided at the next meeting.

## **Executive Committee**

October 4, 2011 5:30 p.m.

### **Appointments and Board Vacancies**

Katy Drake reviewed the WIB vacancies and recent appointments. Tracy McNally has left the Greene County Chamber and a replacement is pending the hire of a new Executive Director. Katy is working with Mr. Chris Pfister of the Greene County Legislature on the appointments for Greene.

### **PY11 Budget**

Due to a discrepancy in the PY10 budget, there will be \$12,000 less in the Youth budget than originally planned. The reduced level of funding will impact the internship budget supporting the three youth programs. The \$19,000 set aside for wages will need to be reduced to \$10,000 for PY11. \$10,000 covered the internships for PY10 and is expected to cover internships for PY11 with little impact. The changes in the budget will be brought back to the Youth Council at the next meeting.

MA reviewed that for PY11 Columbia Greene is spending 22% of their Adult budget and 30% of the Dislocated Worker budget on training. This is a greater percentage on training than other local WIBs due to decisions in other counties to keep One Stop Centers open in each county.

### **NEG Disaster Grant**

New York State has been awarded \$16 million under the NEG Disaster Grant in response to Hurricane Irene and Tropical Storm Lee. NYSDOL has received a Notice of Obligational Authority for \$1.8 million to be expended by March 2012. The Workforce Office is working with the Department of Labor on the federal NEG grant for disaster relief that will provide government, public education and non-profit organizations assisting storm victims with free, temporary employees. Workers hired under this grant must be dislocated workers which include: workers who lost their jobs as a result of the Hurricane, workers who have been laid off from their jobs unlikely to return to their previous occupation and the long term unemployed. The NEG Disaster Grant allows for temporary positions for up to six months with a cap at \$12,000. MA distributed a draft of an unofficial fact sheet that the office is looking to utilize when communicating with local and county entities for recovery assistance.

The challenge of counties and localities being the “employer on record” and taking on the risk of Unemployment Insurance (UI) was discussed along with potential higher worker’s compensation rates.

### **Regional Economic Development Councils**

In New York State, the Governor has created ten Regional Councils to empower each region to find effective strategies and solutions to local economic development challenges. To incentivize the planning process, \$200 million will be awarded across the state in capital funds and tax credits. The four regions with the leading strategic plans will receive up to \$40 million in funding. The remaining balance will be divided up between the other six regions. Lieutenant Governor Bob Duffy serves as the Chair of each Regional Council and has attended all meetings. The Capital Region’s Co-Chairs are Michael Castellana (President & CEO, SEFCU) and Dr. Shirley Jackson (President RPI). Meetings are open to the public. A meeting is expected to be held at

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Columbia Greene College in the future. Dates and times of the meet will be forwarded once available.

Ann Luby reported that the Capital Region REDC has a web site with surveys that can be filled out on line, in order to solicit public input into the process: The link to the site is <http://capitalregionopenforbusiness.com/PublicInvolvement/PublicSurvey.aspx>

The Committee discussed concerns and challenges for the Columbia and Greene fitting into the Tech Valley region. All are encouraged to visit the web site and attend a future meeting.

**Youth Council Meeting Notes**

September 20, 2011 9:00 a.m.

**NEG Disaster Grant**

The Youth Council meeting began with MA Wiltse distributing information from the Department of Labor regarding the Hurricane Irene Emergency Grant. The Workforce Office is working with the Department of Labor on the federal NEG grant for disaster relief that will provide government, public education and non-profit organizations assisting storm victims with free, temporary employees. Workers hired under this grant must be dislocated workers which include: workers who lost their jobs as a result of the Hurricane, workers who have been laid off from their jobs unlikely to return to their previous occupation and the long term unemployed. The NEG Disaster Grant allows for temporary positions for up to six months with a cap at \$12,000. Organizations interested in participating should contact the Workforce Investment Office.

**Youth Program Updates**

Mark Decker provided an update on the three youth programs for PY11. Greenville will officially begin their Hometown Graphics program in October. Thirteen students are expected to return to the program. Four students exited the program at the end of PY10. Greenville was encouraged to hold at thirteen students and not recruit freshman at this time. To meet performance standards all students entering the program must receive a credential (diploma, GED) to successful exit the program. The Youth Council is concerned about the impact on the performance measures should Mrs. Arnone retire in the next two to three years.

The Catskill GED Program is at capacity at twenty students. Six new students have recently entered the program. Summer test results are still pending.

The YES program has started up again with ten students, six of which are new to the program. The program is going strong under teacher Maryann Morrison.

Prior to the next meeting, Katy Drake will be in touch with Youth Council Members regarding program visits for November and December.

**Summer Youth Employment Program**

Under the three funding sources available, a total of 72 kids were hired to start under the SYEP/Summer Jobs Express Program. 52 youth completed the job, 2 found other jobs on their own, 11 quit, 5 youth were let go, 1 moved, and 1 never showed. The overall success rate of the program was at 78%. Four youth were hired by their SYEP employer following the program's end.

Under the Summer Jobs Express! Program, eligible youth (over 18 years of age) participated in a Work Readiness Credential Program. Youth received instruction in reading, math, listening and situational judgment. Of the seven youth who took the NWRC, five passed. One student will be retesting and three other youth will be taking the exam. Columbia Greene is now a NWRC test site.

**Americans Job Act**

Information from NYATEP was distributed on the impact for New York should the Americans Job Act passed. The Council briefly discussed that under the Act funding may be available for work experience for youth and low income adults.