

**ROCKLAND COUNTY
WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT BOARD
Board Meeting Minutes**

Date: June 10, 2021
Time: 8:00 to 9:30 AM
Location: Virtual Meeting by zoom due to COVID-19 pandemic restrictions

WDB Board Attendees:

Lynne C. Allan	Howard Hellman	Robert Pitkofsky
Ann Byne	Brian Levy	Pat Rajala
William Edwards	Don Lucarello	Matthew Shelley
Michele Green	Kelly Maher	Sr. Kathleen Sullivan
Eileen Guzzo	Tom Ossa	

Absent:

Joe Allen	Elena Hansen	Ramon Soto
Kathy R. Canter	Renold Julien	Robert Woodill
Bob Dutra	Gregory Parseghian	

Excused: Mary Shinick

Invitees:

Larry Codispoti	Don DoBell Ph.D.	Dan Tauken
Stephanie Compasso	Phyllis Morena	
Chris D'Ambrese	Guillermo Rosa	

WDB Staff members: Debra Thomas Deborah Studnitzer

The meeting was called to order at 8:02 AM

A motion was made to approve the agenda:

Brian Levy – motion
Michele Green – second
Approved

A motion was made to approve the minutes from the last meeting:

Matt Shelley – motion
Howard Hellman – second
Approved

A motion was made to accept, with regret, the resignation of board member Jill Warner:

Brian Levy – motion
Eileen Guzzo – second
Approved

Lynn informed the Board that Tom Scaglione is no longer with DOL

Guillermo Rosa informed the Board that Jeremy Shulman has resigned as the director of Economic Development and Tourism and is no longer with the county. A new director would be announced next week.

Guillermo said the county would be in a much better financial position. The county worked hard to retain employees during the pandemic. Although there was a hiring freeze there were no furloughs or layoffs. The largest impact of the pandemic was on sales tax revenue and the sales tax revenue was coming back strongly.

The county was already working on requesting funds through the American Rescue Plan. An internal working group has already been formed with representation from many of the county departments. The county is using the interim guidance plans as it is their experience that final guidance usually is very close to the interim guidance. The county will need assessments of all the communities and a strong plan to maximize the amount of funds awarded. As is required the county will be hiring an outside accounting firm to manage the funds obtained. There will be many opportunities for small businesses, non-profits, housing, and programs for equality.

Palisades Institute County Executive Forum - Sr Kathleen Sullivan

Sr. Kathleen reported on the Executive Forum that was held as a zoom meeting due to the pandemic. Ed Day, Rockland County Executive and Steve Neuhaus, Orange County Executive attended. Ed Day reported on the continued growth and innovation used to attract businesses to the county. He also reported that the county has a resilient stable tax rate. Unemployment in the county is now at 6.4%, it was at 13.4%. Rockland County has the lowest unemployment in the state.

Debi added that Orange County and Rockland County work in close collaboration. There is a pipeline to a workforce within the seven counties of the Hudson Valley.

WDB Attorney – Larry Codispoti

Larry reported on the steps taken to update the by-laws. They had considered using Westchester and Putnam counties by-laws as templates but both were out of date. The Dutchess County by-laws were very similar to Rockland County's and were used as a template.

Larry informed the Board that the WDB is a hybrid organization, subject to federal laws and regulations and non-profit laws under the state of New York. Rockland must follow both. The by-laws are DOL compliant.

Adjustments made to the by-laws include:

- The process for appointing new board members. The Nominating Committee vets, and recommends the candidate. The full board votes and makes a recommendation to the County Executive.
- Remote Meetings are provisional allowed under NYS Governors State of Emergency. Once that state of emergency is lifted remote meeting may not be allowed unless there is new legislation to continue.
- Conflict of Interest. Last year the Board had developed a strong policy regarding conflict of interest. A form has been created and is updated every year.

Procedure to approve the updates requires a two-thirds vote during a board meeting with a quorum.

A motion was made to approve the by-laws as stated:

Ann Byne – motion
Brian Levy – second
Approved

Larry informed the board that Matt Shelley has been functioning as a Compliance Officer. It was suggested that a small committee to review compliance issues be formed. Brian Levy offered his services to serve on that committee. Lynn requested that Board members with interest in joining such a committee follow-up with Brian over the summer.

Financial Report –Dan Tauken

Dan reported that this is the first time in six years that 80% of year one funds have not been obligated by June. It was thought that a waiver request would be needed but an email stating why 80% was not reached would be enough. This was a wide-spread issue throughout the state. Dan further reported that DOL wants a written reconciliation. The Financial Report is attached.

A motion was made to accept the financial report with waiver:

Howard Hellman – motion
Don Lucarello – second

Approved

Local Plan

The Local Plan has been updated. The plan is based on priority sectors and sub-priorities. Priority occupations are based on two to three years of data. Employers require a reliable workforce. Stephanie has done a great job getting this done and the Board extends its thanks.

A motion was made to move forward with the Local Plan:

Tom Osso – motion

Pat Rajala – second

Approved

Rockland Works Career Center – Dr. Stephanie Compasso

Stephanie reported that the Performance Measures were mostly on target and noted the Measurable Skills Gain was an active measure, with one year to earn.

Stephanie noted that 12 new businesses were served and 102 jobs posted on the job board, with healthcare and retail still being the most in demand. Additional categories for jobs were trades and manufacturing.

A need for an On the Job Training (OJT) Policy has been identified. Stephanie explained that this will offset the training employers are using at the time of hire.

The executive committee has reviewed the OJT Policy, and had some comments.

A motion was made to approve the On the Job Training Policy

Matt Shelley – motion

Eileen Guzzo – second

Approved

Matt asked if the OJT was to train employees only or were candidates considered. The policy is that the training will take place once the candidate is hired and that there will be a job for the employee once the training is completed.

The executive committee suggested that a formal request be documented, a one-page summary documenting requirements and tangibles, one page for the employee and one page for the employer.

ITA funded training was reviewed and it was noted that RCC is developing an Advanced Manufacturing course that could be used in the OJT program.

The MOU between the WDB and RCC needed for the Perkins Grant submission is attached for review.

It was reported that Bridges has staff members on site at Rockland Works to serve job candidates with disabilities! Employees from the Senior Employment Program from the Office for the Aging are assisting at reception.

Chris reported the on June 23rd a 6-week virtual program from M&T Financial Library Workshop will cover topics of marketability and resume writing.

NYSDOL - Don Lucarello

Don reported that the staff is transitioning back to employment activities. Twenty percent of the staff is now in the new office. On Monday 80% of the staff will be attending intensive training. Twenty percent are still assisting with unemployment claims.

Business Leaders Forum – Howard Hellman

The executive board discussed Enthusiasm Inside Looking Out. This is a help program for businesses. On June 22nd, Ed Day will attend a forum with 12 county companies. To be discussed, business challenges such as finding employees and identifying skill sets needed.

Getting The Winning Edge XXV – Return to Work Conference – Michele Green

Michele reported on the forum she assisted in organizing at Hofstra University. The focus of the forum was Returning to Work after the pandemic. Workshops also included job opportunities and career paths to consider and using stress to guide productivity.

WDB Report – Debi Thomas

Debi reported that Phyllis Tucker has left the WDB, and it had been a pleasure to work with her. Deborah Studnitzer has joined the team and is welcome.

Debi reported that the need to communicate is most important and a new newsletter *The Pulse* has gone out. The motivation was to document the robust programming offered. The newsletter includes snippets of information and links to detailed information. The target audience are businesses, and the newsletter was written to provide a better understanding of what the WDB does, highlight the services offered and focus on WDB business partners.

Debi reported on the Monitoring Report for the WorkPlace. Topics included protocols, initial monitoring, preliminary findings, feedback, implementing changes. DOL will provide technical assistance in monitoring virtual communications. In the meantime, the focus will be on staff training.

Hudson Valley will be having a virtual career fair with Orange, Rockland, Westchester, Dutchess and Putnam counties participating. Rockland has nine businesses participating. It is important to get the word out on these events.

NYS DOL has a Virtual Career Center where business get matches to potential employees. The site has had 1500 views, 50 employers, and 10 interview signups.

Debi reported that there was a lot of information in the meeting packet. She requested that board members review and provide feedback.

Tom Osso reported that press releases should be posted to the Rockland News Center. News items can be posted online and the Center can do press releases. He noted that the article on the Animal Shelter received more than 2k views.

A motion was made to adjourn the meeting:

Pat Rajala – motion
Brian Levy – second
Approved

The meeting was adjourned at 9:25 AM