

**Workforce Development Board  
Meeting Minutes  
Tuesday, September 15, 2020  
8:00AM - 9:30AM  
Meeting Scheduled via Zoom**

**Attendees:** Bert Brinkerhoff, Sergio Esteban, Kathy Miner, Gary Rogers, George Scharr, Randy Andre, Romanda Gibson-Stevenson, Joseph Leone, Ana Liss, Danielle Maloy, Patricia Stovall-Lane, Richard Turner, Jerome Underwood, Lynn Freid, Roosevelt Mareus, Adrian Hale, Mary Beth Artuso

**Absent:** Glen Jeter, Dana Abramson, Kyle Banks, Rachel Baranello, Thomas Battley, Catherine Chabrier, Kevin Kelly, Ann Kowal, Corinda Crossdale, Seanelle Hawkins, Dan Maloney, Todd Oldham, Daniele Lyman-Torres, Mark Rogacki, Timothy Shortsleeve, Joe Wesley

**Staff:** Peter Pecor, Antwan Williams, Lee Koslow, Viatta Carter, Theodore Jordan, Shawn Curran, Mary McKeown, Behiye Mansour, Kathy Ziegler, John Premo

**Guest:**

**Call to Order:**

The meeting was called to order by Sergio Esteban at 8:05AM.

**Introductions**

Sergio Esteban began by welcoming all attendees to the meeting. Peter Pecor included there were no new members in attendance for this meeting.

**Approval of Meeting Minutes**

A motion to approve the June 16, 2020 meeting minutes was made by Richard Turner and seconded by George Scharr. The motion was passed unanimously.

**Finance Committee:**

**Michael DeBole Provided A Packet Covering the Summary of Expenses July 1, 2019 - June 30, 2020**

Peter Pecor presented on behalf of Michael DeBole and began by reporting on our full year of financials which ended on June 30, 2020. Peter stated that with this very difficult year, we did balance our budget and were within 1% of our budget. Many of the areas in the State, which include 33 Workforce Investment areas, had issues relative to spending and were getting waivers for not meeting their 80% expenditure rate. During this crisis we had our move from North Goodman Street to the new College Avenue Career Center. Those expenses were allocated against our Dislocated Worker, Adult and Youth funding, which allowed us to therefore be in budget. We are concerned with our next fiscal year that started on July 1<sup>st</sup> and we are looking at those budgets, because we have not been referred the number of clients that we've historically seen. Due to the fact that the Unemployment Insurance claimants are not required at this time to report for services and that our offices and the offices of the Department of Labor have not been fully open during this period due to Covid-19 will directly affect our spending. We're waiting for a response from Department of Labor relative to our expenditure rate for this coming year. Peter included that overall, he is pleased with our performance and meeting our budgets.

A motion to approve the Financial Report as presented was made by Adrian Hale and seconded by Joseph Leone. The motion was passed unanimously.

## **Payroll Contracts Extension Approval**

Peter Pecor reported on the Resolution to Approve Extensions for Payrolling Contracts 2020 that was approved at the Executive, Finance & Audit Committee Meeting. This is a renewal of our payrolling contracts with TES Staffing, RBA Staffing and Career Start. Our second renewal period is starting October 1, 2020 and ending on September 30, 2021. We've been satisfied with the performance and are looking for renewal for another year. The resolution states: The Monroe County/Rochester Workforce Development Board approves the renewal of payrolling contracts with TES Staffing, RBA Staffing, and Career Start for a second renewal period beginning on October 1, 2020 and ending on September 30, 2021.

A motion to approve the resolution as presented was made by Joseph Leone and seconded by George Scharr. The motion was passed unanimously.

### **Youth Committee:**

Antwan Williams reported this year was touch and go, and with all things considered, everything went well, meaning that no one got sick during their Summer Youth Employment Program. This year they took in 1,996 applications, of which 531 Youth turned in new documentation, and 493 Youth were found to be eligible and complete. RochesterWorks! served 174 Youth and the City of Rochester served 158 Youth, totaling 332 Youth that were placed in Work Experience this summer. Antwan included that normally they would have received the guidelines around May 29<sup>th</sup> and this year the guidelines arrived on July 11<sup>th</sup>, which gave staff a week turn-around in order to get programs up and running on July 20<sup>th</sup>. Over 6 months ago, they had 10 programs slated for funding, but because of the pandemic, 4 of them dropped out due to either their building was not open and/or they felt they wouldn't be in compliance with social distancing for their location. All things considered, they were able to move forward and insert those Youth who applied.

Antwan also reported the Youth Services staff are in transition with moving to 57 St. Paul Street. Antwan recently met with the movers at the new location to get things finalized this week. They're hoping to be in the building towards the end of this month. He will also meet with Sarah Hooper, who will provide an orientation and tour of the building.

Peter Pecor commented that with the 33 Workforce Investment areas, there are many areas that due to Covid-19 had not even started a Summer Youth Employment Program. He thanked this group for being forward thinking, for starting in February/March as we usually do and for being able to provide the services. It should also be noted that school was let out in March and that also hurt us as far as the registrations for the Summer Youth Program. Peter reiterated the most important thing is that no one became ill, there was no sickness and that was a real risk that we were facing. Peter also included that the Youth Center is something we've been talking about doing for over 20 years and we're very excited about partnering with the City of Rochester and the other Youth related agencies. Once we get to some semblance of normalcy, it will be great to have a centralized Youth Center devoted for our community.

### **Workforce Innovation Committee:**

#### **Performance Activity Report**

Lee Koslow began his presentation with a little overview of the economic environment. The first table of information was for our 9 County Finger Lakes Region. It's a look at the Unemployment Rate and where we are in the economic recovery from the Covid-19 pandemic. The Unemployment Rate peaked in April at almost 15%, then it dropped in May as we began to reopen. There was an uptick in June and July and Lee discussed whether that is something we should worry about. He included his answer as yes and no. The answer would be no, because much of the increase in Unemployment wasn't due to decreasing Employment, but rather people coming back into or entering the labor force. There was actually an increase in Employment at the same time as an increase in Unemployment, so it's not a terrible thing to see the Unemployment rate go up a little bit as it has. On the other hand, the level of Employment isn't rising as quickly as you'd want, if you were to have a fast recovery. At the rate that we're going right now, it would take a full 2 years to recover all the jobs that were lost in the pandemic. Hopefully, at some point things will speed up a little bit.

Lee next reviewed Employment numbers in the Finger Lakes Region, which reflects a year over year change and there is no seasonality that would affect these numbers. The year over year loss peaked in April, at over 73,000 jobs lost in the Finger Lakes Region. There was an uptick in May, and it stayed relatively level through July, which is the latest month that we have our sub-state numbers from.

Lee continued to break it down by Industry. Of the 3 industries that contributed the most individually toward the loss in Employment year over year in July, by far is Food Services and Drinking Places. Second place is Local Government, including public education jobs. We'll see if those numbers come up in September. They might, as there's a little bit of a lag in the data. Some of this might be due to pressure on local units of government. The sales tax dollars are way down and the State money is coming in a lot slower than it normally would be. Third place is Non-Durable Goods and within Manufacturing we're talking all the soft goods and we're seeing a year over year loss. This is a change from early on in the pandemic. Early on in the pandemic, Construction was really suffering in terms of a loss of jobs year over year. Construction has made quite a recovery so far and Non-Durable Goods has seen kind of a late slump.

A question was raised if the people that come into RochesterWorks! for assistance follow this chart? Are they from this area and is there a correlation between the statistics and what we see? Lee replied that just before the pandemic started to hit, we lost access to a lot of our data systems that we get through New York State Department of Labor. Lee included this was a little bit unrelated with what we call our management reports. There was a big firewall issue at the State level, and it hasn't been resolved yet. They've been working on it and we hear they're close to a solution on that, so we haven't been able to really pull reliable numbers on who we've been serving. Lee suspects that the individuals we've been serving don't necessarily reflect the sector breakdown in decline. One of those reasons being because some of the displacements were temporary in nature. During this time that you had the Federal Pandemic Unemployment Compensation, the extra \$600.00 per week, many were just expecting to go back to work were getting compensated fairly well through Unemployment while they were out of work and weren't in searching for jobs. The other thing is that our numbers that we've served have dropped a whole lot, so there's a feeling that those coming in, because they knew to come in/engage with us virtually, might not necessarily reflect the same distribution of industries. At this point, until we get our data tools back, we aren't going to know for sure.

Lee next reviewed how the pandemic has impacted services while the Career Centers were shut down and while people that are receiving Unemployment haven't been mandated to come into the Career Centers as they were during the great recession. During the great recession, we saw our numbers climb over 30,000 participants per year because everybody who was receiving Unemployment was required to come into the Career Center. Now that hasn't happened, and that requirement has not been reinstated. The Career Centers have not been open to foot traffic, and so everybody that has been served are people that have come in voluntarily using our virtual services. This has caused a dramatic decline in the numbers served at the end of our program year, April, May and June, the last quarter for which we have any data on this. You will notice for our Non-Dislocated Worker Adults, for a 3-month period ending Program Year 2019-2020, the numbers served were about 1/3 to 1/4 of what we served during the same period of 2019. There is a similar pattern for Dislocated Workers. The numbers served have been about 1/4 to 1/5 of what we saw during the same period of 2019. The monthly numbers don't add up because if somebody was Active during multiple months, they are double counted in the total.

Peter Pecor added that in what we've done from a virtual standpoint, many of those numbers are not counted since many people haven't been registered, so we know that we've been providing some e-learning and many remote workshops, but unfortunately, they're not reflected in these numbers. At some point in time, when we reorganize with the Department of Labor, there will be some ways of being able to count the type of services we've been offering.

The question was raised asking when did the virtual phone services begin and when do we anticipate Career Centers to re-open? Viatta Carter replied that virtual phone services began on March 29<sup>th</sup>. Peter stated that we partner with Department of Labor, and all 33 Workforce Investment areas are operating a little differently. We will be looking at, at this point probably by appointments only, until Department of Labor is able to get back into full operation and we're able to share the download. Randy Andre, Department of Labor, added that there are so many variables that will impact the opening of a Center and it really is just focusing on the services that they can deliver at this point with the resources that they have. They are doing remote services, virtual services by appointment. Staff are reaching out to

individuals from the download and setting up appointments. He included they're not going to see anywhere near the numbers that they did in 2019 for obvious reasons, but it's steadily trickling in and as more of the specific UI projects that staff have been deployed to start to close up, then they'll start to see some of these increase virtually. As far as the physical occupation of the Center and at what capacity, that remains to be seen.

A follow-up question was raised asking that if we're not certain on when we're going to open, how are we helping those affected by a digital divide? Lee Koslow responded that it is a big concern of ours and bears some further discussion, because obviously if we're not able to accept any foot traffic, we have to help individuals over the phone and internet. In terms of a community discussion of bridging that digital divide, there really needs to be some more help for individuals who may need either a computing device, broadband internet access or digital literacy skills and that is something that perhaps the community as a whole, we hope, could come together to work on.

### **Career Center Report**

Viatta Carter reported on what they've been doing in the Career Center during Covid-19. Staff continue to provide resume development and job search services to customers over the phone and through Zoom. They've had the opportunity of making calls and have received calls back. In addition to making those calls, they've been setting up Zoom appointments with those having internet connection to serve them remotely. So far, this is going well, and they've set up a job search phone line for those who are unable to reach us via the internet. Staff are set up on a rotating basis to answer these phone lines and continue to assist with job search and job placement. The Career Center has been doing a tremendous job with their E-Learning and Zoom workshops. So far, they've offered 28 Zoom workshops which include 659 individuals that have registered and 539 individuals that have attended the zoom workshops. They've offered 16 job search and job campaign workshops which include 343 individuals that have registered and 326 individuals that have attended these workshops. In addition, they currently have 31 E-Learning courses on their website and have had over 1,000 attendees, of which 840 certificates have been obtained from this. They also offer "Motivational Moments" every Tuesday at 9:00am and have offered 12 live sessions on Facebook. There have been 131 live views on Tuesday mornings and out of their recorded view there have been over 1,000 who've watched it recorded.

Looking ahead and not knowing exactly when they'll re-open to the Public, Viatta indicated they're looking to have individualized appointments for their customers. They're looking at a couple of software programs to assist with that in order to follow all the Covid-19 guidelines, processes and procedures. More information to follow on that as they get closer to re-opening, whenever that may be. They will continue to serve their customers effectively but depending on what happens between now and when they re-open, the number of individuals that come into the Career Center most likely will decrease. They're looking at different ways on how to effectively serve the community and will also make sure that Staff are safe on their end.

### **Business Services Update**

John Premo reported on one of the marketing and communications opportunities we've had during the pandemic, which is really looking at different ways to get our message out to connect with our constituents during these different times. The most popular way this has been done is through social media. We also have newsletters that we send out to the various groups that we serve, which includes newsletters focused to job seekers, business and Youth.

John reviewed information comprising the E-Newsletter that goes out to job seekers on a weekly basis. It's always up to date and includes new information, whether it's jobs, workshops, community services, support, etc. John explained that we remind folks of how we're providing services during this pandemic, which include:

- Staff are available to meet with customers by telephone, e-mail, or video conference and continue to provide services at this time.
- E-Newsletter, with this they work on putting in motivational, inspirational, educational and informational type information. They list their job postings each day and their approach to the job postings is to keep them up for a 2-week period of time and they do notify the companies of this. A posting may be left up longer if a company requests to do so.

- Workshops, with these they've had an uptick in these events. The analytics of their material they've put out, whether it's social media or the website, the workshops and events have seen a lot of attention during these times. There have been 28 different workshops being offered throughout the month and that is in addition to the E-Learning. The E-Learning is unique in that it's self-paced, so people can go on the E-Learning, take the courses at their own time and they get certification, which demonstrates their competency and completion of the work.
- Civil Service, with this they include a section reminding folks of this and it's kind of a push that we do for our local area, as there are a lot of good jobs and we encourage folks to consider those as well.
- Community Resources, this is a dedicated section and changes from week to week. They recognize the range of folks that seek our services and include information that will be a benefit to them, while keeping it relevant to workforce development.
- Motivational Moments, the feedback and comments they've received on this have been really positive. It's a very brief and kind of a live event that is presented weekly. It helps to uplift folks and give them the encouragement and support that's necessary and remind them that they're not in this alone and that there are opportunities.
- E-Learning, in this area we've increased the offerings for E-Learning. We started out with only 1 or 2 and now have over a dozen offerings. What's nice about these is that the job seekers can choose the ones they want that will be most beneficial for them and can take them at their own pace.

John concluded that he wanted to give the Board Members an understanding that this is one way that we're trying to keep active and spread the word that we have a lot of great offerings that are available in the community. We see one of our roles is that with all these different activities and opportunities out there, if we can help spread the word, we have that connection with a significant number of job seekers and businesses, and if we can do our best to bring them all together, then we're accomplishing at least a part of who we are and what we're supposed to do.

### **St. Paul Street Career Center Report**

Kathy Ziegler reported on what they've been doing in the time since they've been gone. The Employability Assessments for the County have started and are done primarily by phone. Individuals' paperwork will be sent to them ahead of time. They fill it out and then send it back. Staff will call and will complete the whole Employability Assessment by phone. This process is going well, and the numbers are not as high as they were before because people at this time are not required to do activities for the County.

Kathy also reported the Work Experience Program in whole has been placed on hold. Some interns have continued to volunteer in spite of not being mandated to continue. These are individuals they hope to find work for because they're actually showing right now what type of a work ethic they have.

Regarding the Career Center itself, Kathy reported they're helping a lot of customers by phone and by email. Resumes are their biggest part and they've been doing them a little differently, as a lot of their customers do not have computers. They're doing the resumes for them over the phone. Then they'll set up email and send the resumes back to the customers, so they'll still be able to apply for jobs. Because the Department of Human Services building is open, they're hoping by next week that they can open their Career Center for the people in the building that are very limited, so if there is somebody here that needs a resume, they can come back and work on it right in the Career Center. They also have all of their safety procedures in place at this time.

Peter related that we are probably 1 of 6 areas in the State that actually have a Career Center embedded within the Department of Human Services. Our Career Center Resource Room is larger in size than the Career Center on College Avenue and it's a great facility. When individuals will be mandated to come back, hopefully the volume will be picking up. It's good to see that there are some people who are volunteering to come in. It's very important for us to maintain this Career Center, as there are other areas in the State that have possibly closed their facilities. Peter added that we are very proud of that fact that we've had our Career Center within the Department of Human Services for over 12 years now and we want to maintain that. This is a very welcoming center and is not typical of what you would see in a Department of Human Services type office.

## **Director's Report:**

### **Nomination Committee Announcement**

Sergio Esteban began with an announcement including that they've had this discussion for quite some time. As you know, George Scharr and Sergio have been on this board for a number of years and they both have a passion for what they do and are very committed. He included there's always time to have new people and he thinks it's time to have a transition to a new group of officers. This has been talked about for the last couple of years and Sergio and George feel that through a transition, especially having a great partner with Monroe County, with the changes in their administration that took place last year, it would be prudent to remain in place for 1 more year, to provide for a smooth transition. Sergio added that it would be prudent for us to make room for new officers and that is why we'll be establishing a nominating committee to have new officers in place at the end of this year and will be effective in 2021. Sergio also stated that between now and the end of the year, there is plenty of time to do this right and our interest is to do what's best for RochesterWorks! and the Workforce Investment Board.

Peter Pecor extended a thank you to Sergio Esteban and George Scharr for their many years of service and added that we're asking members to contact Peter if they want to nominate themselves from the floor. We do have 3 individuals that have shown an interest in the positions that we have available, which include Chairman, Vice-Chairman and Treasurer. Peter welcomes anyone interested in these positions to contact him prior to our December meeting, where we can report those who are interested in nominations and possibly have the election. Sergio and George agree with this plan.

George Scharr seconded what Sergio Esteban said earlier that they've put in a lot of years here and have been very committed to it and they will be committed to it as whatever is necessary. George added that he sees that what's happening now during this pandemic, it's really amazing progress in the timespan and he's very impressed with what's been going on, where people have really gone above and beyond what normally would be expected. It's great performance and he thinks it's a perfect time to have this type of meeting for our nominating committee and it's a perfect time for a transition and both he and Sergio will support and do whatever is necessary to help with this.

Peter added to communicate with him via email if you have an interest in running for office or if there are any nominations you may have of other members and he will follow up with those members to make sure there is an interest. In December, if possible, we'll present this slate and have an election.

Peter added the slate of nominations will be announced via email prior to the December meeting and noted the Officers must come from the Business Sector/Private Sector.

### **Membership Update**

Peter Pecor shared that we've been working with the County, with the Economic Development Unit, and have had some potential candidates. At the present time, we have 2 Private Sector members who have shown an interest in becoming members. With the Private Sector members, the nomination has to come through The Chamber of Commerce, of which Peter has received, and is now in the process of communicating with the Mayor and the County Executive for the appointment of these 2 individuals. He's heard from the Mayor, and she's agreed to these appointments, and is now waiting to hear from the County Executive. In addition, Peter is asking for the appointment of Angelica (Angie) Perez-Delgado, President & CEO, Ibero-American Action League, Inc. She is also on that slate awaiting approval from the Mayor and the County Executive.

**Other:**

**Members Sharing & Feedback**

George Scharr raised a question concerning the meaning of a statement from 'the Governor's daily message' yesterday which included the following: New York State is providing funding for Workforce Development across the state. 66 Businesses, schools and community-based organizations have been awarded nearly \$9M to support job training. Lee Koslow was asked to respond and stated, that Workforce Development Initiative, that was that \$150M pot of money that was announced a couple of years ago. It's issued through a competitive process through the Regional Economic Development Councils. Businesses can apply for it because there are different components to the funding. It's a little bit like the Consolidated Funding Application (CFA) that's been around for years, only it's a separate, larger pot of money, so businesses can apply for it as can employment and training organizations. Peter Pecor added that unfortunately, the dollars are not for us.

**Adjournment 9:09AM**

A motion to adjourn the meeting was made by George Scharr and seconded by Richard Turner. The motion was passed unanimously.

**Meeting Schedule:**

December 15, 2020  
March 16, 2021  
June 15, 2021

Approved



---

Peter C. Pecor

12/15/2020

---

Date

Submitted by: Mary McKeown

Reviewed by:

Peter Pecor 09/30/2020  
Michael DeBole (absent from meeting)  
Antwan Williams 9/28/20  
Lee Koslow 9/24/2020  
Viatta Carter 09/30/2020  
John Premo 9/23/2020  
Kathy Ziegler 9/28/2020