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**Workforce Development Board of Oswego County
Business Development Committee Meeting Minutes
Wednesday, October 2, 2024
Oswego County Workforce New York Career Center**

“The Business Development Committee shall identify and monitor the business services provided through the system, oversee public relations about business services, convene focus groups and community roundtables for identifying future workforce needs as related to economic development, identify available funding and assist in grant writing for employer training needs, and produce the State of the Workforce Annual Report.”

“Creating pathways to better careers and economic growth.”

Present: Pamela Caraccioli, Jessica Barnes, Kelly Burkett, Tim McKernan, Zach Menter, Mark Southwick, Heather Vashaw, Austin Wheelock, Rachel Pierce, Terri Robbins, Kim Sizemore, Kelley Thurlow, Alexis Cummins

The meeting was called to order at 9:01 a.m.

1) Approval of Meeting Minutes from July 10, 2024

Pamela asked for a motion to approve the July 10, 2024 meeting minutes. Mark Southwick made a motion to approve, and Jessica Barnes seconded the motion. All in favor, the motion was carried.

2) Business News/Training Update (PY '24 Q1)- Terri Robbins

In PY '24 Q1 we served a total of 60 business in different ways. We had a total of 16 OJT placements (3 at Felix Schoeller, 2 at Pathfinder Bank, 9 at Oswego Ambulance and Hearse and 2 at Eastern Shore Insurance). So far we have 4 OJT's that were successful, none that were unsuccessful, and 12 that are still active. We are continuing to provide Metrix to all registered customers and have provided licenses to Pathfinder Bank and Oswego County Public Defender's Office for their employees to utilize. We hosted 3 Events for various businesses including our Fall Job Fair that was well attended and have attended 1 Community outreach events. We continue to provide prescreening assessments for First Choice Staffing (9 sessions) and Novelis (3 sessions and 1 interview sessions), and Oswego Ambulance & Hearse (5 sessions), and we shared 21 jobs for 13 employers on the NYS Job Bank and our Social Media sites. We completed outreach with 9 new businesses. We have replaced our Business Highlight with the Business Snapshot which is a 1-page flyer with the business information, current openings, quote from employee, and lists of benefits. The snapshot is sent out to partners/customers and shared on social media. All businesses that are featured in the snapshot are also invited to attend our Mini Job Fair. The next Mini Job Fair will be held on 10/16/24 from 11am-1pm at the Pulaski Welcome Center. We hosted a Fall Job Fair in September at the Fulton Ice Rink and had roughly 44 employers and 68 attendees. Overall feedback from businesses was that the turnout was good, and they enjoyed being more spread out from each other as it gave them a chance to have more personable conversations with potential applicants. Rachel provided and update to the spending obligations for OJT's as the report given to the committee was incorrect. For Adult OJT- we've obligated \$26,408. (We did receive an additional \$200,000 from the State that we were able to

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use for OJT's as well). We have not funded and OJT's with DW funding, and for Youth funding we have obligated just over \$33,000 for Paid Work Experience. Our OCWNY funding runs from January-December, and we have obligated about \$27,000 for OJT.

3) Customer Feedback- Businesses PY '23 Q4- Terri Robbins

115 surveys were sent out in Q4 and 7 were returned. Overall businesses were satisfied with the services provided to them. There was 1 response from an Employer that the OJT process took longer than they would have liked, and that the training portion was not long enough which was addressed by OCWNY. Heather stated that the OJT process is a lot of work but is very beneficial and gets easier each time you do it.

4) Director's Report– Rachel Pierce

The Oswego Build initiative is moving along as we have officially hired a Program Manager, Beverly Fry, to oversee the project. She comes to us with many years of experience in program management, training, and employment and training programs. Rachel has attended a workshop at the SUNY Oswego Syracuse campus to learn about the curriculum that will be utilized for pathways to apprenticeship programs. Rachel also spoke with Brian Heffron regarding the potential to restart the HVAC program at CiTi BOCES. They are still trying to determine where the class could be held and find an instructor but the curriculum is already there. NYS DOL has \$4 million available from NY Power Authority for upskilling and reskilling for those working in residential construction to transfer into green practices, or to support transferring from fossil fuel practices to clean energy. We would have to submit a proposal for this program by Friday and that is why we are trying to get the HVAC class up and running. We are still waiting to hear from DOL regarding the Reemployment Training grant that we applied for to continue our CDL scholarship program, and there is another grant application available for Work Readiness Training that is due by the end of the month. OCWNY is currently going through the RFP process for our Metrix Learning System. We received 6 responses and submitted NY Wired for approval. They were not the lowest costing program but they were the best for us based on what is needed and we have been working with them for many years already. The approval has gone through the Economic Development and Planning committee but will still need to be approved by the full Legislative to be renewed starting January 1st, 2025.

5) Roundtable- All

Zach Menter- Staffing is stable at the moment for entry level positions. He shared that they would lose 2 of the current OJT's, but the remaining 7 are doing very well. Paramedics started their training and so far, it is going well, but they've found that giving extra support to them has been very beneficial.

Tim McKernan- Tim just returned from a Global Leadership Group held in Michigan and shared that the US facilities are doing great and have a great outlook, but their Europe facilities are facing some challenges. They do have current openings at the moment.

Kelly Burkett- Have experienced retirements lately. Oswego County has 2 FT counselors and 1 PT and they float to Onondaga County as needed. They will have 4 positions needing to be filled, and they no longer require the CRC Master's degree. They have expanded the requirements to a variety of different Master's Degrees. Kelly shared that October is Disability Employment Awareness Month and brought posters for the committee to take and hang up in their offices. They will be hosting their NDEAM (National Disability Employment Awareness Month) event on 10/16 at the Syracuse Zoo to highlight different businesses that were nominated. 3 of the businesses were in Oswego County (Home2 Suites, Oswego Industries, and SUNY Oswego Auxiliary Services).

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Jessica Barnes- Many of Connex Care's entry level positions have been filled or will be filled within the next 2 weeks, but they are still struggling with staffing at the LPN/RN level. They are working with Angelina Blank on starting an apprenticeship program for higher level LPN's. The construction on the Oswego Office is moving along and Dental Services will be offered in this office as well.

Pamela Caraccioli- Fulton Savings Bank is fully staffed at the moment, but Pam acknowledged that many businesses will be facing retirements soon as a lot of the workforce is at the retirement age, and that professional development is a good option to have available.

Mark Southwick- Huhtamaki is still hiring for entry level positions and engineers. They do anticipate starting to offer voluntary layoffs due to seasonal decline, but they don't expect those to last more than 60 days.

Austin Wheelock- Operation Oswego County has experienced about a 50% turnover rate in the past year, but they have been able to bring in some good candidates. He supported Pam's statement on working on professional development as we can't replace the years of service we lose when staff retire but we can work on building up the next generation of staff. Daldrop will be starting to build in the Industrial Park site this fall and will be hiring about 20 new people as part of the project. N.E.T & Die has closed on the K-Mart building in the City of Fulton, and they are assisting Connex Care on their current project. They are also working with Novelis on a Major Rail Investment Project onsite of their property. The Oswego County Industrial Park expansion has received federal funding to match and will work with NYS for funding to get that project moving forward. Market House will be opening in Oswego which will be a Brewery and Apartments. There is plenty of funding available through Restore NY, the deadline to apply is 12/15 and must be focused on a vacant property in collaboration with a Municipality. There is \$100 million available from ESD on the GreenCHIPS Community Investment Project that is open to any organization focusing on education, workforce, housing, etc. They are also bringing together partners to discuss Childcare Investment resources. ESD also has CFA grants available for manufacturers on a rolling basis with the next deadline being 11/29. If you have any potential project ideas, please reach out to Austin. He encouraged you to apply now if you have an early 2025 project you are interested in.

Rachel Pierce- OCWNY is partnering with MACNY and CCC on the Real Life Rosies program that started in mid-September. There are 13 participants in the program, and we have been helping coordinate transportation for many of them. MACNY is working on setting up tours with local manufacturers. We finished our 2024 SYEP program and were able to place about 120 youth at businesses across the county. We were also able to provide \$100 Walmart gift card incentives to 77 youth who attended at least 80% of their hours, and we would like to continue this incentive going forward. OCWNY staff met last week to determine how to move forward with the program to continue to make it better and one option that we will implement next year is changing the program to a 7-week program and making the 1st week consist of work readiness training for all participants. We partnered with CCC, and the City of Fulton pay for the cost for the city to send some of their laborers to a basic hand tool class "Nuts & Bolts" where they will earn a certificate of completion at the end of the course. We implemented a Mini SYEP program for a handful of PTech students who were unable to secure internships for various reasons. Zach mentioned that PTech may continue to face issues of getting a more diverse group of students as many students don't want to lose the "traditional" high school experience and extracurriculars that they may miss out on by being off campus. Rachel shared that the Early College High School program will be incorporating Advanced Manufacturing beginning next school year which may entice some of those students that PTech is missing out on.

Heather Vashaw- Pathfinder is experiencing turnover in their entry level positions, they continue to do exit interviews with staff as they leave but the reasons for leaving tend to be all over the place.

There were no other updates at this time. Pamela Caraccioli called for a motion to adjourn. Austin Wheelock made a motion to adjourn. Tim McKernan seconded the motion. The meeting was adjourned at 10:00 a.m.

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Next Meeting: January 8th, 2025, at 9:00 a.m.

Location: OCWNY, Conference Room 2A, 200 N. 2nd Street, Fulton, NY 13069.

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