

**Orange County Workforce Development Board Meeting
Friday, September 16, 2022 – 8:00 a.m.
Zoom Meeting**

MISSION STATEMENT:

MISSION: To create effective strategic alliances that supports the development of talent to meet the workforce needs of job seekers and regional businesses.

PRESENT: Heather Bell-Meyer, Olga Campos, Mark Casey, Amanda Dana, Susan Dean, Mary DeFreitas, William Edwards, John Emminger, Cedric Glasper, Elizabeth Holbrook, Dr. Kunwar Nagpal, Cathy Parlapiano, Angela Patella, Scott Perry, Michelle Price, Charles Quinn

CALL TO ORDER/OPENING REMARKS: Mr. Knob welcomed everyone to the meeting and thanked them for being present.

Mr. Knob asked for a motion to approve the minutes as presented from the May 20, 2022 WDB meeting. Ms. Holbrook made the motion and Ms. Patella seconded. Vote taken and passed unanimously.

SUMMER YOUTH EMPLOYMENT PROGRAM REPORT: Mr. Raymond gave an overview of the 2022 Summer Youth Employment Program, which ran for seven weeks from July through August. This year had the most participants, 284, since before the pandemic started. The program is for youth from the age of 14 to 20 years old. They made minimum wage, \$13.20 per hour and could work up to 30 hours per week. There were 54 worksites, including city, county and state municipalities, camp facilities, healthcare facilities and not-for-profit agencies.

DIRECTOR'S REPORT: Mr. Knob reported that on June 1st ETA held the first in person Job Fair at the Middletown Galleria since before the pandemic. He said that 87 employers were present and there were an estimated 450 job seekers, as determined by the number of Employer Maps distributed. ETA received positive feedback from the employers.

The Fall Job Fair that is held in the Newburgh Mall is scheduled for October 19th. The hours of the job fair, usually held from 10:00-3:00 are being changed to 2:00-7:00, to accommodate people who are employed but may be looking for new jobs.

The Career Centers in Middletown and Newburgh are now open and operations are starting to get back to normal. Small job fairs are once again being held.

Mr. Knob attended a Healthcare Cluster meeting that was held on September 7th in the Newburgh Career Center to address critical staff shortages in area healthcare facilities from food service workers to RNs. Ideas to recruit and retain employees were discussed. Representatives from Garnet Hospital, Valley View, Park Manor, Crystal Run Healthcare, Hospice, and several home healthcare agencies attended. Ms. Susan Hansen is the contact person and can be reached at 845-568-5114.

Mr. Knob reported that people are not collecting unemployment insurance, welfare numbers are down and there are not a lot of people on public assistance, yet every employer seems to be struggling. Ms. Bell-Meyer, President and CEO of the Orange County Chamber of Commerce said that she speaks to members on a weekly basis, and employers are still having difficulty in either finding qualified staff or retaining staff members that want to stay in their jobs. She stated that 95% of the employers in the Chamber are still experiencing staff shortages.

Ms. DeFreitas reported that there is a critical shortage of ultrasound technicians in the area. She said that in some areas, salaries have been raised from \$5-\$7.00 an hour and no one is applying. There don't appear to be local programs that are supplying ultrasound techs. There are institutions in Westchester and Pennsylvania. Mr. Knob asked if OCCC was contacted about including diagnostic imaging in their curriculum.

Ms. DeFreitas said that for entry level positions, more flexibility in hours is being looked into in terms of employees with children and daycare/school needs. Mr. Knob added that the baby boomers are now retiring and moving on. Ms. Patella suggested Hohokus for ultrasound training. Ms. DeFreitas stated that the courses must be accredited.

Ms. Dana complimented Mr. Raymond on the success of the Summer Youth Program. She asked about Legoland and providing transportation. ETA partnered with Legoland to provide transportation for 30 employees this summer who live in Newburgh and Middletown. ETA also provided transportation for Legoland's hiring events. There were two vans operating daily, seven days a week. Legoland hired 110 Newburgh Free Academy students to work there for the summer and partnered with OCCC to provide transportation back and forth. Since Legoland is seasonal, the employees will be looking for jobs. Ms. Dana mentioned that maybe some of the NFA seniors who worked at Legoland for the summer and who may not be attending college, might be interested in pursuing a career or full-time employment after graduating. Ms. Bell-Meyer said that the upper portion of Legoland would remain open until December 31st.

Mr. Knob stated that surveys taken throughout the city of Newburgh show that over 60% of families do not own a vehicle. ETA receives funding through the JARC Grant (Job Access Reverse Commutation) through the Planning Department which funds a large portion of ETA's van transportation. There is a new por ETA may be looking to purchase some larger vans if routes can be set up from the City of Newburgh and Middletown to major employers along Neelytown Road to the distribution companies or along Route 17K or Route 300. The funds are set up to be a 50/50 max so the employer would have to pay half the cost of transportation. This would help employers get workers that they need and would help he unemployed overcome the transportation barrier. Area employers will be contacted to find out if they'd be interested. The Planning Department will be assisting.

ADJOURNMENT: There being no further business to discuss, the meeting was adjourned at 8:37.

NEXT MEETING: FRIDAY, NOVEMBER 18, 2022