



**Workforce Development Board of Sullivan, Inc.**

**Robert Green, Chair**  
**Laura Quigley, Executive Director**

*Minutes June 9,, 2020 - Full Board Meeting*

**Members Attending:** Robert Green- Chairman, Jacob Lerner – Vice Chairman, Dory Alport – At Large, Judy Balaban- Secretary, Olga Campos, Freda Eisenberg, John Emminger, Christine Knickerbocker, Peggy Marchese, Angela Patella, Jaime Schmeiser, Susan Schmitt, Claire Taggart.

**Others Attending:** Laura Quigley- WDB/ Executive Director. Loreen Gebelein, CWD/ Director, Sharon Ferber, CWD/Administrative Assistant, Klu Padu- Sullivan County Community College.

This is a ZOOM meeting called to order at 8:03am.

**Board Business:**

1. Approval of February 2020 minutes.  
Motion: No Quorum – no motion

2. Director's Report – Laura Quigley  
Highlights:

Phase II of Covid-19 reopening plan starts today

Update on marketing: The Center for Workforce Development now has a logo. We are revamping the website for Center for Workforce Development which should be done within the next month. We do have a Board Logo. We are also looking at some professional print material.

The County has a reopening plan. Workforce Development and Department of Labor are on a delay. When the Career Center first closed to the public all of the DOL staff were working remotely. As the number of unemployment claims mounted the DOL staff have all been converted to processing unemployment claims remotely. The Career Center will remain closed to the public indefinitely. The vestibule to the building is set up to receive paperwork for CWD, DFS and DOL. Some CWD staff have been repurposed to the Emergency Community Assistance Center. The remaining staff are processing the paperwork deposited at the Career Center. The Career Center has to be reorganized to comply with social distancing guidelines before DOL staff can return to work and the public can be allowed to enter the building.

We did finally go in on the Regional Grant. This grant is based on milestone achievements with the county laying out the initial investment and getting reimbursed as the milestones are met. Due to the current economic state of the county, our portion of this has been reduced to \$11,000.00. We have the option to pull out of this grant depending on our success during Phase II.

Alana McGinnis, our Business Services Representative has been working remotely and continuing to reach out to the business community. She has outreached to 75 businesses, 30 of which are new. She is working on scripts for videos related to business services, most recently a video on OJT contracts. She is also working on a podcast which will be coming in the next few weeks.

Our Job Fair for this year had to be cancelled as well as other Job Fairs across the area. We have been looking into software to do virtual Job Fairs. This software is incredibly expensive, so the State has been looking into Job Fair Software that could be shared throughout the area.

We have been working on developing a menu of virtual services including such programs as Resume builder in conjunction with Crawford library, Essential Ed, moving Welfare to Work to online using Zoom, Med Cert, Ed2Go thru SUNY Sullivan as well as OSHA level trainings.

We have partnered with Sullivan County Childcare Council to issue a community survey to gauge the impact of childcare issues on the employee's ability to return to work as the county re-opens. The survey is on the County website.

Ms. Quigley has been invited by Westchester County Workforce Board to be part of a panel with NYATEP to discuss the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic and strategies in workforce from state, urban and rural perspectives on June 25<sup>th</sup> via ZOOM.

Labor market information from May 30<sup>th</sup> shows 7458 unemployment insurance claims in Sullivan County versus last year at this time period of 576.

The County did lay-off 77 positions and are proposing to reduce management salaries in an effort to help balance the budget.

3. Mr. Green opened the discussion of issues with reopening businesses. One issue is that some employees are afraid or refusing to come back to work. John Emminger -NYS DOL and Jaime Schmeiser, President of the Chamber of Commerce were asked to comment on these issues. Ms. Schmeiser informed the Board that currently the State of NY has a website called Forward NY. Also the Sullivan County Chamber has information on Catskill.com called Operation Forward COVID 19. These websites have current information the latest information to assist with opening businesses. The Governor also has a website called Forward NY with information and forms to help prepare mandatory reopening plans. Ms. Schmeiser invite all businesses owners with questions to call the Chamber. She also has a list of grants and loans available to assist businesses with reopening. All businesses and employees will be required to sign health affirmations when their businesses reopen. She also informed the Board of a new initiative to encourage business to reopen.
4. John Emminger- NYSDOL commented on the pitfalls of opening businesses when employees are refusing to return. He states that refusal to return to work will effect a person's eligibility for benefits. Unless a person is a high risk of catching the disease with documentation, refusing to come back to work for fear of COVID is not a valid reason to not return to work. Each case will be reviewed on a case by case basis. He also feels another issue will be childcare for employees that are returning to work.
5. A discussion then turned to the benefits and downfalls of working from home and the effects on the employees when they return to work.

Mr. Green adjourned the meeting at 9:00am. No motion was required as there was not a quorum.