

Recruiting and Retention Task Force  
Monday, March 7, 2022 - 11:00 AM

Joe Pete Wilson - Chairman

Chairman Wilson called this task force to order at 11:04 am with the following in attendance: Stephanie DeZalia, Ken Hughes, Steve McNally, Jim Monty, Joe Pete Wilson, Mark Wright, Mike Mascarenas, Dan Palmer and Wendy Sayward. Tom Scozzafava, Linda Beers, Jenn Mascarenas, Terri Morse and Chelsea Merrihew were absent

Also present: Dina Garvey, Jim Dougan and Alan Jones - ACAP

News Media present: Tim Rowland - Sun Community News

WILSON: Thank you everybody and thank you to our guy for joining us today. We're going to start off with a presentation from Alan Jones of ACAP about the childcare program that he's involved in and then maybe we can talk a little bit about the County's opportunity to get involved and then when Alan's through, if we've still got some time, I want to take a few minutes to revisit the big picture. What recommendations are we going to make, looking at the housing questions that we've got in front of us. There was a lot of concrete discussion at the last Housing Task Force meeting and then to follow up on some of the ideas that we started, we brought up at our last meeting. So, do you want to give a little introduction to the childcare?

MASCARENAS: Yeah, absolutely. Alan had come at a separate time and done a presentation to this group regarding the childcare opportunity that he would like to provide for us at the county level. I spoke about it a little bit at the last meeting, but really wanted Alan here to be able to answer specific questions that you have in regards to how the program would roll out. So, I asked Alan to come today, really to be able to answer questions, give a quick overview, I think everybody kind of knows what we're talking about at this time and then we'll get into the funding particulars, but I'll shoot it over to Alan to let him discuss the program.

JONES: So, you know I can answer questions, I did go over some detail at the last meeting when I came here.

MASCARENAS: We have some new folks here, Alan and I think that's why we wanted you to come back, we have a new chairman that wasn't here during that time.

JONES: Okay, so we're proposing a childcare pipeline project where we're asking for about \$100,000.00 for a year, at some point we would like to get funding for 3 years to sustain the project in the hopes of getting 10 new providers each year to be in-home childcare providers, giving the resources necessary to begin the process. Currently there is funding from the State, called Desert Funding, but it doesn't really target the needs for those that are becoming or want to become licensed. It is really targeted to those that are licensed or in the licensure process already. So, these funds would encourage, we would do promotional activities to get it out to the public, that we're looking to encourage people to become in-home childcare providers, this funding would obviously be part promotion, where we get people interested and then we would give them wrap around services to make sure they were successful in their process to become

small business owners, basically and work with them. I mean it details it in here, we give them training and technical assistance, we give them supports that most funding sources don't offer when it comes to physical structures, so if they need a fence for their property, most funding wouldn't pay for that. Small repairs on a house; when they go through the licensing process it can be pretty extensive, as far as the needs from the State to make sure it's safe for children. So, we could customize this funding to make sure that we met their needs and to become licensed and it would be, you know, somewhat fluid. We would target what their needs were, so money would be used for, like I said fencing, but there are other things that potentially can come up during the process. And the other piece, too, just to protect, obviously, taxpayer funding, is that we would own everything. So, as they would go through this process there would be an agreement with the provider that if they didn't say in the process for a certain period of time that we would try and recoup those and would we have the ability to recoup it all? Probably not, but we would go through a process of trying to encourage them to at least maybe for five years to be a provider. In that time period, if they didn't then we would recoup some of those things. Anything we purchased would be owned by ACAP and then we would at some point, probably after 5 years allow them to take ownership of that, if they were successful in the process of becoming a provider. That is kind of just a brief overview. Any questions for me?

MASCARENAS: I was going to go into just the County's part, quick and then you'll understand the others. So, Mr. Palmer and I have been talking for some time about this. Childcare's been an issue with this Committee from day one, Wendy did a survey, as many of you will recall, in terms of the childcare issues that we have in our County. You know one thought was providing it directly to our workforce, maybe through purchase of the school or that kind of thing, that's really a stalemate, right now there's no movement on that, but it doesn't change the need. So, from our County's perspective, you know, we're not the only employer that employees are struggling with daycare, every employer in Essex County is struggling with their employees being able to get daycare and to me this is more of a holistic approach that would look at countywide opportunity for that and correct me if I'm wrong, Mr. Palmer, but one thing, Alan did request, initially a 3-year, at approximately \$100,000.00 a year, from ARPA funding. I think were we would like to start and recommend to this Committee is that we approve it for one year and look at the metrics and be able to see is it working, is it not working, if there's problems, those types of things, you know what were some of those unforeseen circumstances that may have come up that didn't allow you to reach your goal with 10, whatever that maybe. So, I think that's what we would recommend in terms of that, is go year to year, so we cannot commit to \$300,000.00 and say, oh well, after year one we know it's not working, why would we continue to fund something like that, I think that we would look at the metrics through a contractual relationship with ACAP and be able to make those decisions next year around this same time frame.

PALMER: Yeah and I think that's what, at this point in talking with the auditors they would prefer that they suggested that rather than being a subrecipient agreement under that ARA, it would be a contract with us sending the money directly to you. That relieves you of the reporting requirements for the subrecipient agreement. But, yeah, I think if we could get started there.

MASCARENAS: The only thing that I would add, too, is that this isn't something that Alan created. This is something that he found that's working in other places, so I think he has a good template in front of him and good resources in other counties, people that do similar work to Alan in other

areas have done this work. It is working in those places and he's basically taking theirs and tweaking it for our needs. But, it is a proven, effective method in other areas.

MCNALLY: So, this would be open enrollment for any child, not just County employees?

HUGHES: That was my question, is this focused on County employees?

PALMER: Countywide.

MCNALLY: And you're looking at 10 new providers per year?

JONES: Correct, yes

MCNALLY: And then the providers, any revenue generated from the per child cost would be their money?

JONES: Correct, they would be independent businesses.

MCNALLY: Okay, do you have any data on what childcare costs in Essex County, now, per week? Or per hour?

PALMER: One kid \$500.00 a month, at least.

JONES: It's significant.

DEZALIA: \$150.00 a week, \$200.00 a week.

MCNALLY: I think that's even on the low end.

MONTY: I would say \$500.00 to \$750.00 a month for one kid would be a fair.

MCNALLY: I know if you get in the Glens Falls area it's around \$250.00 a kid.

MASCARENAS: When I had kids, it was about \$10,000.00 a year.

MCNALLY: Did you get rid of yours?

MASCARENAS: No, so that's just tells you and that was 10 years ago. So, I can tell you this with certainty, I think I said this at the last meeting. We have employees here in Essex County, that kids are school-aged, that are paying for a slot year around so that they can have a slot in the summer.

WILSON: And to add to part of that question, about is this just for County or is it, this group, childcare was topic, the discussion was about two strategies, direct, you know services just for County employees, as one approach and then a more regional approach. What can we do to develop more childcare capacity in the towns of Essex County? So, this would address some of that regional strategy and what Mike was talking about with the school would be a more Essex

County workforce strategy. So, it's important not to get those two strategies confused, because the steps are very different for each of those.

MCNALLY: Is the County thinking of a subsidy for County employees?

PALMER: Well, I don't know that we've specifically talked about that.

MCNALLY: Is it the lack of daycare or the cost of daycare?

PALMER: It's the lack of daycare. I mean the cost of obviously a problem.

JONES: I think it's both.

MONTY: And I think we're looking at it both as a focus toward retention, because we can't get people to come in to take these jobs because there's no adequate daycare. They've got children, they want to go back to work, but if I don't have someplace to put my children, in a safe environment, I'm not going to go to work. So, this is just one step in that ladder toward helping with recruitment and retention.

WILSON: Wendy, with the survey you did, do you just off the top of head remember some of the data about the need for, or how much childcare was a barrier to people? I don't have the data right in front me.

SAYWARD: I don't have my folder with me, I forgot it at the office.

WILSON: That's okay.

HUGHES: Can I ask a question, because what you said threw me off a little bit. I was on the tracks and then I just got derailed a little bit. My question is, I want to make sure that County employees have the opportunity to access childcare, because I feel like that's what, we're recruitment and retention for County employees, for the County. So, am I incorrect in saying, is there any way that County employees would have special dispensation towards a slot over somebody that is not a County employee?

MASCARENAS: No

HUGHES: So, how are we guaranteeing daycare for our County employees?

MASCARENAS: We're not guaranteeing it.

PALMER: Not in this round.

HUGHES: Not in this round?

PALMER: Right, I mean if we had the school and we could open something.

HUGHES: Okay and that's where I got derailed. If we had the school, then that's a different conversation.

PALMER: If we had the school, now we have a different conversation, then we would have an actual space for childcare services to take place.

MASCARENAS: I believe our people will benefit indirectly; right? So, the focus, I think and Alan's got a lot the statistics, I don't know if he included them today, where daycare is, where daycare isn't, where he would focus some of his strategies and like everything, you know, our people that work here, live in those communities where daycare's problematic, because that's where populations are; right? And I think if we open up daycares in some of those communities that our people will indirectly benefit from more slots open, but no, they won't be directly targeted. We wouldn't be looking at measuring that as a metric, per se. Our goal with this type of project is to open up slots around the County as a whole. Where 10 daycares open up how many slots, approximately?

JONES: It depends on the age of the child.

MASCARENAS: It does depend on the age, but somewhere?

JONES: Yeah, so probably 80 slots, maybe 120.

MASCARENAS: Right

HUGHES: Alan, why are these sponsors at the bottom of this, in the footer?

JONES; These are all people who helped with the process of developing this proposal, Glens Falls National Bank actually financially contributed to the process.

HUGHES: Are the willing to contribute more to the process?

JONES: It was a gift. So, the State is interested in potentially funding this as well, obviously if they do that, I will communicate with the County immediately, because obviously the State funding would take priority, if they decide to do it regionally, but the State is interested.

WILSON: And Billy Jones is working on this actively, at the State level.

JONES: Correct

WILSON: So, again what Mike's talking about, some of our strategies are directly benefiting County employees. This is more the regional development, that as we boost capacity in the region, it's bound to help employees, it's just not a direct. We can't say 10 slots are only for Essex County.

HUGHES: So, from a perception standpoint, how do we let out employees know that it is indirectly a benefit to them, even if they don't have the direct benefit? That is my concern.

MONTY: Sitting over in the corner, our Union.

PALMER: Yeah, really I think that's part of it, but again, I don't have children of school-age now, but if I did, if a daycare, you know, I'm not going to go home, get my kids and bring them back to Elizabethtown to daycare, afterschool. So, the idea was that we would open more throughout the County, so that people that are in that position where their child is in school, but doesn't have a place to go afterschool, that's really the focus of this drive.

JONES: And this is not a new issue, so even though we're struggling with employment issues, I have 12 vacancies in my agency right now. So, we're dealing with it more than we've ever dealt with it. Childcare has been a struggle in Essex County for a long time and I think long term, quality, affordable childcare is still going to be a struggle. I think this is a way for us to get a seed, start with some small providers, get moving in the right direction. I don't think it's an answer long-term. I think it's going to help us, here and now.

HUGHES: Okay

MONTY: And I also know with school-age children there are afterschool programs which Alan has been on top of for many years, trying to get those funded in different communities. I think, right now, we have two we fund and two that are privately funded, am I right, Alan?

JONES: Well, yes, there are two that are run privately. We actually operate two that partially funded from the State of Office Children and Family Services.

MONTY: That we operate and there's two that are privately funded, themselves. If we could get more involvement from the State on those afterschool programs, because that's a lot of the issues for school-aged children is that at 3:00 they have no place for these kids and like you said, Mike, unless you paid for a slot for the entire year, those kids still don't and a lot of those daycares want them picked up by 4:00 in some instances.

JONES: And not to interrupt, but the funding that we get from the State is somewhat minimal for those programs. So, we're actually charging on top of.

MASCARENAS: Those programs were free when they first started. They were well funded.

JONES: And now we have a fee that we charge over and above what we receive from the State to keep the program whole.

DEZALIA: Yes, so it says 60-80 spaces for the 10 participants. So, 6 to 8 possible new openings per place, so scattered around the County?

JONES: Correct

DEZALIA: Are they going to, it's their business to run as they chose, so are they going, are there going to be regulations where they might have to save 4 slots for afterschool kids or if they can take all under 5s, or you know?

JONES: So, it's all based on the regulations from the State. So, the State highly regulates any childcare provider and the ratios on the number of children are clearly dependent on the age of the children and their ability to run that business. So, for example; they may not be able to charge as much for an afterschool slot, as they would for a full time child. So, they're probably going to put weight on and accept people that are going to be there full time. It's a business model, long term that has struggled and part of that is getting start up and getting them going. Other pieces are them learning how to become an entrepreneur and a business owner. So, part of our process is helping them with that, because very often people who will get into the childcare industry don't necessarily have a background in business. So, they don't know how to successfully run a business. Our focus would be to give them that foundation and get outside training resources for them, so they are successful when it comes to that piece of the business.

MASCARENAS: Short of us going out to bid, really would prevent us from doing that. So, if we said, we wanted to go out to bid and we wanted to secure daycare places throughout the County, we could do that. But, we would then have to subsidize it to get them to keep those slots available; whether those slots were filled or not wouldn't matter. We would have to pay that individual a certain amount of money monthly to make sure those slots were available. So, that's, you know the difficulty. If we say, well, you've got to keep this many slots open for us, that person's not going get any income, unless we're subsidizing that income; right? And then their business, likely is going to be unsuccessful, because of it and they'll be out of business pretty quickly. I mean there's mechanisms.

DEZALIA: So, you have wages and fringe, it looks like .5 full time employee, childcare business specialist, is that somebody that's already on staff at your location?

JONES: Correct

DEZALIA: So, they'll spend, so they'll no longer being doing whatever they do for you now? Is this an additional?

JONES: There's some flexibility because of the work that they're doing right now is going to be coming to an end.

DEZALIA: Okay, so they'll just be able to focus on these 10 new businesses?

JONES: They will be able to do ½ of their time focusing on these 10 and I have other staff. So, we're the childcare resource referral agency for Essex County, so I have other staff in that department who will support this process, as well. Even though this person is going to be fully committed, there are other people that can help support.

WILSON: And other questions for Alan?

HUGHES: Do you know which communities are the deserts for childcare?

JONES: Yes, so if you go online. I don't have it in front of me, right now, it's based on addresses, so if you pull in an address in the system on the State level, it tells you whether there's a desert.

HUGHES: Oh

WILSON: There's a good interactive map.

HUGHES: Oh great.

WILSON: It's really good. I know in Keene we have less than 6 spots in the whole town. That's it.

MONTY: You have more than that in your communities, but some of them aren't licensed.

JONES: Correct.

MONTY: And then you're taking a chance with your kids. I'm not saying they're bad, I'm just saying for a licensed daycare.

MASCARENAS: Well, and you're not able to take advantage of the tax benefit and those types of stuff things, either.

MONTY: Correct

JONES: Or subsidizes.

MASCARENAS: Right, the subsidy that we could provide, because we do have daycare subsidizes for those individuals that struggle in Social Services, but being licensed is key to being able to obtain that subsidy.

MONTY: And it's a tedious process and difficult at times because of the hoops that you have to jump through, this will provide them with the ability to have people that have been doing this for a long time help them hold the hoops to jump through and stuff. Instead of an individual going out themselves and trying to get licensed.

WILSON: Any other thoughts or questions?

HUGHES: What's the next step?

WILSON: Well, so that's why I was just waiting, make sure everybody had their...

MASCARENAS: We would take it to committee at the Board level or Ways and Means, however, you guys you prefer.

PALMER: Alan, do you have some idea of contract language that we know?

JONES: I can think about it, work on it? Something along the lines of this, but none of the things that we talked about or brought up, as far as holding, you know the provider accountable for a number of years, those things would we can work on.

PALMER: Okay

MCNALLY: Do you think there's 30 interested parties?

JONES: I don't know that.

MASCARENAS: That's why we're going to go one year at a time.

MCNALLY: Even 10, I'm just thinking that you know with the shortage everywhere.

JONES: I don't know the answer, I'm hopeful.

MONTY: But, you find the families that have young children themselves and want to earn some extra money and might be willing to step up. I know of a couple in Lewis that did that. That they had young children, they couldn't afford to pay for daycare themselves, so they got licensed and brought in some kids to help subsidize, they made a little money and they're staying at home.

HUGHES: Yup

DEZALIA: And those that are getting ready to retire that really can't retire fully and are looking for something.

WILSON: So, what I am proposing for the next step for this committee, is that when Mike and Dan and Alan have some contract language established, you're comfortable with it, but that our group, if you're so in favor that we would endorse this.

PALMER: Move a resolution out of here to go to?

WILSON: Yeah, that is a recommendation endorsed by this Committee, if people feel comfortable with that? You know if you're, and do you want to wait to see the contract language or can we agree to an endorsement now without that? I mean you're talked about some of the principals of that contract.

MASCARENAS: I would prefer it not to have it get bogged down. We can certainly do whatever you want, you know, we've been looking at this now for the last 4 or 5 months, in terms of this, Alan's been here twice. I think we can trust the individuals to work out contracts.

HUGHES: As long as it's in this vein.

MASCARENAS: Yeah and it's a year type commitment on our behalf, on our behalf of the County. We're going to work in some quarterly reporting that he's going to have to report that we'll then share with this Committee to see what work they've done, you know how's that going to shake out? We'll reimburse them based on similar process in the contract language and then we'll see, because, you know, because I don't know what else we can do to deal with the issue. So, this is something that we've been looking at as a committee now for almost two years, a daycare issue and this is the best option that has come before us, so short of being able to provide you with a better solution, I think that we would act sooner rather than later in my opinion.

MCNALLY: This will be a good pilot to see what supply and demand is going to be.

MASCARENAS: Yeah

WILSON: So, are all members of the Committee who are in favor of endorsing this proposal?

DEZALIA: I did have one more question.

WILSON: Yup

DEZALIA: On program promotion, say, right off the bat we have 6 coming out of North Elba or you know and we need it more spread out, how are we going to handle a situation like that? We got 6 providers that want to...

JONES: I'm hoping that we get 6 and I don't know where they're going to come from. I don't know if I have a failsafe way of fixing that.

DEZALIA: Right

JONES: If we have providers who want to get started up and have that interest and that drive, I am going to encourage it. Now, I am going to be logical to them that 6 new in North Elba, the demand may not be there for all 6.

DEZALIA: Right

JONES: I think there is a need, but I don't know, I would love to give you an answer. I don't know where all the interest will be. I'm hoping there is interest and we'll do promotion. It will be word of mouth, too. I think promotion will help, but you know we've got to get it out there and have a conversation with people that really might be interested, because I want the passion behind it. I want someone who's really going to do this and follow through. I'm worried about people coming out of the woodwork and thinking that this is going to be something, just won't take it seriously and I am going to try and prevent that. So, it's going to be an individual conversation. So, if someone comes to us with interest, it's not going to be, we're going to just open the door and start the process. We've got to have a conversation with them and figure out whether or not they're really going to be able to sustain this long term.

HUGHES: And ACAP reserves the right to say no?

JONES: Absolutely.

HUGHES: Okay

JONES: As long as the County's okay with that, we can put that maybe in the language? I don't know.

MASCARENAS: Yeah, absolutely

HUGHES: Because, somebody's got to say no to an unqualified individual.

PALMER: Right

JONES: And it's going to get to the point, too, where it comes out of our hands and goes to the State, as they go through the licensing process.

HUGHES: Okay, fair.

JONES: They'll stop it, too.

HUGHES: Fair

JONES: And we won't continue to put resources in something that we don't think is going to work.

MONTY: Right

MASCARENAS: And I can tell you that that contract will be up to the amount, not to exceed that amount. If we don't get 10, we're obviously not going to spend that.

HUGHES: Right

MASCARENAS: Right, because I think there's \$50,000.00 in there in mini grants, off the top of my head, \$5,000.00 maximum for each eligible individual?

JONES: Yes, correct.

MASCARENAS: If they don't spend \$5,000.00, if they spend \$3,000.00; right? So, exposure really is Alan's time for that year and if they got nobody, we would spend \$50,000.00, if they got the full ten and spent \$5,000.00 and then we would be \$100,000.00.

HUGHES: And just to confirm financials, it's not ARPA funding?

PALMER: It is ARPA funding.

HUGHES: We would use APRA funding for this first year?

PALMER: Yeah, absolutely.

HUGHES: I apologize.

MONTY: And then relook at it if it is successful then for a second round.

HUGHES: Okay, thank you. It would be ARPA funding for the first year.

PALMER: It would be ARPA funding, but it would be our ARPA funding, it wouldn't be a sub recipient agreement.

HUGHES: Right, understood.

MONTY: But, like Alan said, if the State comes through with their \$100,000.00, that \$100,000.00 might not be needed.

JONES: Correct

MASCARENAS: Correct, which is another reason to just do it a year. If the State starts taking this problem seriously and they are with some of their grants that are coming out again, they missed the targeted, but that's not unusual.

MONTY: Is the window still open, Alan, for letters to Mr. Huessi?

JONES: No, Friday. I mean it doesn't hurt to make that connection, because the decisions haven't been made, but we were told Friday was the deadline.

MONTY: So, I would recommend that the Board of Supervisors to get out a letter of support of this, to Assemblyman Jones' proposal to Speaker Carl Huessi, Assembly Speaker.

WILSON: Yeah and I have already done that. I sent a letter on behalf of the Town.

MONTY: I did mine on Friday.

WILSON: So, is anybody against this proposal? Okay, so you guys will proceed with the contract. We'll bring it up at the next...

MASCARENAS: We'll get Board approval. Yeah, the 21<sup>st</sup> is the Human Services Committee of March, which would mean if we got full approval it would be that first Monday in April, whenever that is and then we can go from there.

WILSON: Thanks so much, Alan.

JONES: Well, you have my commitment from our agency. We pride ourselves on the work that we do. We hope that this is successful, if it's not, we will think of something else and keep plugging along.

HUGHES: Right, you learn from it.

JONES: That's right, absolutely.

MONTY: You never lose, you learn.

JONES: So, I appreciate the support.

WILSON: You're welcome to stay, we're going to talk about some about our other strategies, if you want to listen in or if you want to excuse yourself, we'll understand.

JONES: Whatever you prefer, if you want me to stick around for the other strategies, I will.

MASCARENAS: I don't want you to steal any of our ideas. (laughter)

WILSON: So, the second item on our agenda, develop the next round of recommendations. So, this would be one that we just talked about, but I also tried to list the items, the concrete things we've really identified here, so we don't lose track of them and see who else we might partner with and how these recommendations are going to tie together.

In the housing meeting last week, there was strong push to move ahead with the land bank and that seems like something that would make sense for this Committee to endorse, as well. You know, I know it's symbolic, but at least, you know it's tied, directly ties into addressing housing and again, it's a small step, you know, it's going out in individual towns, but that seems like it's something that we should endorse and help in any way that we can, if that makes sense to people.

HUGHES: Yeah, a land bank would end up being a countywide program, ultimately and it would serve needs in individual towns based on the inventory that comes up for taking care of our property. So, and ultimately if a County employee could avail itself to that, much to the same way that they could avail themselves to childcare.

WILSON: And what do you think the timeline is for having this be up for any kind of an approval, a resolution for the Full Board?

MASCARENAS: Jim's the Chairman, so I don't know.

MONTY: Our thought, in our discussion is we're talking about putting stuff together by June to make a presentation, hopefully. I've sent out to everybody the application from New York State, the guidelines from New York State. I forwarded that out, all the information that you would need to establish a land bank. So, we're kind of reviewing that and generating that discussion at the end of the month on how to proceed with that information. I know there was going to be a housing study, was it by Lake George...

WILSON: The Lake Champlain...

MONTY: The Lake Champlain Basin, they got some grant funding for a housing study, that's moving forward. Little steps, you know, we don't want to confuse it with us taking land and building homes for people, because that's not going to be the situation. Initially, a lot of this is going to be taking care of zombie properties and if you talk to any land bank, Ken's been in discussion with most of them in New York State, that is primarily what they do is clean up properties. The ones that they can sell, they do and stuff, there has been some, there's been partnerships with contractors, one in North Elba is working on getting a piece of property and build an affordable home, so to speak. There's those avenues that we can look at. We're really trying to explore everything and gather all down to one document.

HUGHES: I agree, absolutely.

MASCARENAS: I do think in terms of the blight and zombie properties that you speak to, in terms of a starting period, while we won't have full implementation of a land bank, we're going to hopefully start that process, as soon as our next auction.

MONTY: Yeah, yeah

MASCARENAS: And that would be my goal to be able to get some of those short term goals achieved and see how that plays out, because it's only going to help our discussion making process as we move forward.

HUGHES: And similar to what Alan presented, a nice slow start, you know land bank endeavors to do that as well, a nice slow start and gain success.

MONTY: And I think, initially the thought is we control it ourselves to begin with as a governmental entity, until we can find that not-for-profit willing to take it over with governmental oversight.

WILSON: So, you brought up another, the market study, but when Larry Reagan talked to us about the development in Lake Placid on West Valley Road, we in that conversation with him, we flagged Ticonderoga has the one possible town that hit all the requirements and I was wondering if, and Mark, I've talked to him a little bit, I don't know if you have, he's interested in following up on that and maybe that's something that we could do, you know, you and Dan and Mike and I could get Larry some information and then maybe have a time for you and Larry to look, because he wanted to look on the ground down there and see, just get the lay of the land a little bit. So, if that seems like a good next step, we'll follow up with Larry and give him a call. Do you still have his contact?

PALMER: I do.

WILSON: Yeah, so we could maybe see what information he needs, connect him with Mark and get him to take sort of a screening visit to Ti, so we can keep that piece moving.

PALMER: Mark, do you see a piece of property down there?

WRIGHT: I have the staff looking at one of our vacant properties to see what we have on the books.

MASCARENAS: Do you think it's something that Ti would be interested in?

WRIGHT: Oh, yeah, yeah, if we can find a spot.

MASCARENAS: Okay

WRIGHT: I think it was something like 2 acres or something.

MASCARENAS: Yeah

WILSON: Yeah, they don't need a big footprint there. So, that's great, so, you're moving ahead with that, we'll reach out to Larry again to keep that possibility moving.

The housing market analysis that Lake Champlain Basin Program is doing, it's going to be broad, it's not just Essex County, it's going to be a pretty broad one. So, in that housing discussion and I can't remember if it was Dan who said this, or it was you, Mike, maybe it was Mike, that maybe what we could recommend it, that Essex County contract with the people, the firm that Lake Champlain Basin Program is hiring and piggyback on that.

MONTY: Carol was looking into that.

WILSON: Yeah, to get some more detail.

MASCARENAS: We do have a housing study that's separate from this housing study that we're going to be doing for a small amount, that maybe where you're confusing things, but Carol was.

MONTY: Carol Calabrese.

WILSON: Okay, because I think, you know, we're looking in Ti, you know if we can identify some property, but then start to also identify the need, you know what are the housing needs? Like what income housing level do we need in each community and then what are the resources there? What are the properties the County owns or could own quickly? You know, are there some properties we could seek a donor for? Like North Elba, Lake Placid did. You know, so, I hope that we can coordinate that and try to get that level of detail, so that we can really and then towns could use it, too. You know Keene is doing stuff already, but if we've got more data it helps us with every town with grant writing, with knowing what they should go after. So, again, that would be a recommendation to come out of here.

MASCARENAS: Yeah, Anna Reynolds is going to do that other one, it was \$2,000.00, I think.

MONTY: The thing to keep in mind with all of these is the logistics and demographics of each community. What works in Keene, North Elba, Wilmington, isn't going to work in Elizabethtown, Lewis, Willsboro.

WILSON: And you're exactly right.

MONTY: It's just not going to work.

WILSON: I think that's why the higher level work that Lake Champlain Basin, Planning Board, it's such a high level that it's not going to allow us to focus our efforts, you know based on the, you know...

HUGHES: Maybe, you don't know, maybe.

MONTY: You're got to look at it.

WILSON: Yeah

MASCARENAS: But, I think fairness is it's going to be a ways out.

WILSON: Yes

MASCARENAS: The completion of that. The one thing that Anna's doing is going to be a little quicker and I think we can work with that contractor on throwing in anything that we find is a shortfall for us, so we have a, so in our area, hopefully we can dig into the minutia a little bit more and get some more of that detail you're looking for.

WILSON: Yeah, exactly, because I think that will help this group, the housing group and then individual towns and draw on that for the efforts they're making and that's one thing, as we were doing some CDBG stuff for a housing project in Keene, I realized that the data that they were asking for, we don't have. You know it's just not there and so this would help every town and the County. So, I want to keep these housing things moving, because even though it's a longer timeline, if we don't start, it's just going to get harder to do anything, to have any impact. One other wild card to throw in here. I spoke with Donna Wooten from Ticonderoga on Friday and she and Mark do you know, I forgot to write down the name of the group, is it the Ticonderoga...

WRIGHT: Revitalization

WILSON: They're doing tremendous stuff on workforce development with high school students. They're starting to look at childcare and housing, as well. I think it would be a good idea for us to invite Donna to talk to this group and see how we can align our strategies with hers to help them to develop more and to get some assistance, because I think what we're finding is as group, we're not going to be able to go out and you know build a house or start a childcare, but we amplify the work that's going on we're going to have a pretty broad impact, so, I'll see about getting Donna in here at our next couple of meetings to talk and I think, and also what she's doing, ties in with what North Country Community College is doing around workforce development, so I think that our group can serve as a connecting point for these efforts and maybe find ways to directly support them. I'll get Donna scheduled to come see us.

Any lose ends that I'm missing from this list here that people can think of?

MASCARENAS: If you're done, the one thing I would recommend is that we had talked about last meeting, extensively, doing a job fair, an Essex County job fair and Mr. Hughes so kindly said he would do it. I would like to put together a group that can work on it. I know, like I've got Tracy Briggs in my department that would love to do that. She goes all over the place now and does job fairs for me in other places, she our staff development.

MONTY: We should be getting somebody from every department.

MASCARENAS: Well, and that leads to that other item that's on your list and I'm actually glad Jim's here today, you know.

DOUGAN: Most people don't say that.

MASCARENAS: I for one appreciate you, Jim. But, one thing that we talked about and our department heads are amazing at what they do, but they've never had to be involved in

recruitment and retention. We literally filled out a form and you'd get a list and that list had 30 people on it and it wasn't an issue and I can tell you from a personal standpoint dealing with it, in a department that had like 15 vacancies last year, my time commitment into recruiting people has at least doubled since I took this job and it was work that you never had to do before; right? So, now you're trying to have these meetings and you're using a lot of time focused on this. So, I think we need to get our department heads involved more, because they're our greatest asset.

MONTY: They know their department.

MASCARENAS: And if they're going to some of these job fairs and promoting what they do and their frontline workers are there talking about what they do and you know they have that excitement about and are likely to start attracting some of these people, but I think that's a great thing.

WILSON: And I think this is where the work of this Committee is going to be really important. This is a new task, as Mike is describing. Nobody took their job as department head thinking they're going to have to go, actually out and shake hands and spend time recruiting, but if we're going to compete. So, how do we as the Board of Supervisors reset the expectation of department heads, support them in that, so that they can do it, because I know you guys don't have a lot of free extra time floating around and I suspect for most department heads it's the same thing. So, this is going to be a new chunk of responsibility, so we're really going to have to think, we can't just tell them, go do this. We're going to have to figure out exactly what we're doing, what are the resources that we can provide, you know the training, whatever and provide that or they're not going to be able to do it. So, am I missing anything, as department heads, you know?

DOUGAN: From my standpoint, you know, we at DPW, I've had to get creative the last few years. You know I've heard stories that we're always people lined up at the door to take our truck driver positions, out entry level 1 for years, and you know in the 6 years I've been here, it's not always the case and the Federal Government just made that harder with the requirements to get your Class B license, which is really why Mr. Monty asked me to show up today, because some things that I'm learning, but we've been creative. We've created lower level entry jobs where we train them to get to that point to even have our normal entry level truck driver positions. So, I think we're going to have to continue to do that. I'll give you a little story on me, Mike called me one day after having worked with me for quite a long time and said, hey, the Deputy Superintendent just left are you interested at all and I said I would come down and see him and one of the things that, it was a big cut in a pay for me, but the benefits were a lot more and made up for an awful lot of what I was losing in cut in pay and I think we need to promote some of that and it's hard to do that with some workers, but it's easier to do with others and so I worked with one of Dan's IT staff and I wouldn't say we're ready to launch it yet, but just doing a comparison of the Tier 6 retirement, right now, as compared to what a typical 401K is and talking about someone that puts enough years in here and how that is the rest of your life that you're getting that versus maybe you've got \$300,000.00 that you set aside in a 401K that you have to guess how long you're going to live and figure out how you're going to manage that. Some of those kind of tools, not that we want to promote ourselves as career planners or licensed financial planner, but to get some people to come here, because it's not as good a benefit as it once was, but it's still a pretty good benefit to have and so I would be glad to talk about, there's other things, a lot of those were more about recruitment, that's recruitment. Retention, there's not very many steps for somebody that

wants to work here for 30 years, there's not very many steps, in my side, where they can go from an entry level truck driver, not all them are going to be my general foreman. There's only 4 steps to get there and there's not much, yet. I think we need to find, if we want to keep them, I think a lot of my people, it's not just about lots of more money. I think they want to grow in the position and we need to find a way to promote some of that. I'm struggling to find the people that want to be a full supervisor, because there's connotations with having a supervisor role, it means you got to be the bad guy sometimes, but there's other steps that we don't offer them that wouldn't, I don't think we have to offer a lot of money, but when somebody says, yes, we could put somethings in place that give them other things and I think that would be repeatable across more departments than not.

MASCARENAS: Yeah, you're not wrong, every department is similar in that in terms of having that pecking order and how you get from an entry level spot to maybe some type of supervisory, there might be 2-3 slots, in some of the smaller departments you might never move, right? You get a good staffing level and there's 6 people in that department, you might be what you were hired day one, depending on the age of everyone around you, right? Sometimes you get lucky and everyone's ready to retire, other times you're at the bottom of the totem pole and you could remain there your own career, based on your age; right?

SAYWARD: Or department.

MASCARENAS: Or department, right.

DOUGAN: I'd like to use Hugh Hardwood, who many of you have worked with as an example. Hugh, when I first got here, every engineering position at DPW was an assistant civil engineer; okay? You had to have a certain number of years of experience and everything else. This Board, the previous Board allowed me to have some engineering interns for the summer and he being local, applied. We got him he, he wouldn't qualify right off the bat, as an assistant civil engineer, so I reclassified a position down to a senior engineering technician and he was able to apply and stay and now he's grown in a couple of years, he has enough experience to be an assistant civil engineer and those of you who've worked with him, know it's the future of our organization. So, there needs to be a few steps in there and those of you, and some of this is about professionalism, but those of you that have visited the additional that we built ourselves up there, have realized that I am trying to make a space that is, it's not a Taj Mahal, but it's decent for those career minded professionals to work in. You know, Mike's got some people in the basement of Social Services who are career minded professionals that, umm and I get that's a whole different thing, but I am just telling you that sometimes that comes down to recruitment and retention, as much as anything else.

WILSON: And I think one of the things, as we look as pathways, we might explore, I know you've talked about how Probation and Social Services isn't that the right, where employees leave one to go to the other?

MASCARENAS: Yea

WILSON: We might look at the big picture and say maybe that's okay, as long as they're still saying in our workforce and identify some ways where if somebody's getting burned out in one

department there's a path to another department that at least keeps in our workforce. I think we're going to have to be creative, like Jim's saying and like you've done, but yeah, if you want to explore more of the job fair idea. I'll get Donna Wooten in here, because what she's working on really could be a feeder for DPW, some of the workforce development she talked about.

DOUGAN: And I wanted to add one thing to that, in my part of the New York State County Highway Superintendent Association, so they're all struggling with the same issues, too, but Warren County just responded regarding, how are dealing with training. Because, having to have this entry level driver training, well, actually Warren, Saratoga and Washington County have a workplace development and training group, that's actually paid with Federal funds and they're, at least ½ of the fee to send a new entry level driver to training, at say a CV Tech of one of those places, is being paid for at that program. So, at what intrigued me about it was, I said, it's 100% federal funds, they had to develop this Board to....

MASCARENAS: Is it under county WDI or...

DOUGAN: I have not done any research on it yet, Mike.

MASCARENAS: Because ours is out of Clinton County.

DOUGAN: Is it?

MASCARENAS: It's supposed to support us.

MONTY: Right

DOUGAN: But, I just found that interesting and that's how they're getting entry level drivers, which you know is obviously pretty important to highway, where pretty much everybody starts.

MASCARENAS: Yeah, it is.

DEZALIA: I think the job fair also, not just department heads, but I think the employees, existing employees, like a Hugh Harwood would be perfect to be sitting at that job fair or an employee that's been at the Clerk's office for a long period of time.

DOUGAN: Yup

DEZALIA: I feel like talking to another employee, rather than the department head.

MASCARENAS: That's exactly what I do. I get a volunteer who wants to go.

DEZALIA: They're going to want to hear from them. Someone who works there, not who's in charge.

HUGHES: Well, I was going to say out of respect to the departments, the department heads should be contacted and we let them have their sovereignty to pursue who they want to be at that table.

DEZALIA: Yes

HUGHES: Jim's looking at the 50,000-foot view, but maybe Hugh's a great person, as a former student there to come in and say, hey, I graduated from this program, how I work at the County and I love this job and here's why.

DEZALIA: Right

HUGHES: Boom, here's a pamphlet, here's a number, here's this.

DOUGAN: He's going to bring a lot more people than I would.

HUGHES: He'll kill it.

DEZALIA: That's what I'm saying.

HUGHES: Yeah, but we leave that up to the department heads.

DEZALIA: But, I just feel like perspective employees also want to hear from someone that works hear from someone who works there, not the bosses.

DOUGAN: Yup, yup, exactly.

MASCARENAS: Well, that's why our conduit to the outside world is our Personnel Department, and they know the big picture, right? They know what the pamphlet says in terms of what the job is or what it entails, but they don't do the work, those individual people. We need to get them involved with the people that are doing the work. I think you had a great idea last time, they're our biggest advocates; right? And it gives them something different to do in their job. It gives them more responsibility. It gives them a chance to perform on a project that might not be their normal everyday job and they get excited about it.

MCNALLY: But, then you tie in little compensation into it.

MASCARENAS: Well, that was your idea.

DEZALIA: Well, that is the last thing, the next thing that Joe Pete has is the recruitment bonus and stuff like that for the employees. So, some kind of program.

MCNALLY: They're everywhere now. Your employees are your best...

WILSON: So, we'll keep working on it. I think between the childcare, housing, job fair, getting Donna Wooten in here and you should come when she's here, I'll let you know, because they're in CV Tech and BOCES doing, supporting students with cash dollars for training and work experience stuff. So, it sounded really interesting.

DOUGAN: I have identified somethings in DPW that, if I could incentivize a little bit, not a whole grade change or things like that, but this would be more about retention then recruitment, but if I could incentivize a little bit. There are things that we might pay a contractor to do right now, the buildings and grounds, we have air conditioning units and you have to be certified to remove the refrigerant that's in those things, it's a pretty simple job, even the certification is not much. We probably pay a couple of thousand dollars a year in doing that. If we can incentivize somebody, one of our employees to do that and then gave them, not a full grade change, but some kind of a...

DEZALIA: And they got certified to do it.

DOUGAN: Some kind of an annual thing, I probably saved the same amount of money for paying a contractor that I might pay somebody and now I have more workers that want to say yes to me.

WILSON: And we could hire, our town could hire them. At our transfer station we struggle to get someone to come and drain Freon from the air conditioners, refrigerators, dehumidifiers that we pick up.

DOUGAN: Yeah, there's just a few things like that that I think we could do and really wouldn't end up beginning a long term cost. I mean there's, obviously there's legacy costs that go along with being a County Employee versus hiring a contractor, but if I could get a few more people that what to say yes and they think that they're, ever if they aren't ever going to be that general foreman, but they have a few other things that they could control their own destiny and their wage and rather it be in the give me program, but then I think I have more people that want to say yes. I call it reward for responsibility.

HUGHES: Two questions about the job fair, I am ready to put a plan together. I mean we just kind of glossed over that, but I am ready to put, is there anybody else in the room that wants to be involved in that process? I know you said you were, Jim. I am going to start an email chain and we're going to get going on that. Is there anybody else that wants to be on that chain?

SAYWARD: You can put me on that, as well.

HUGHES: All department chairs get the right of first refusal.

DEZALIA: I'll be on it, also.

HUGHES: Okay, great.

MASCARENAS: I don't know how many you want?

HUGHES: I just want to keep it...

MASCARENAS: Like I said, Tracy's somebody I had do it for probably two years now, she's been running all over the County and other counties, physically doing it and she's had some experience and I think she'd be good.

WILSON: And I think you should talk to Jen and see, have somebody in Personnel in this organizing group.

HUGHES: Okay, right

MONTY: And I a primary email out to department heads.

PALMER: I have a meeting, Wednesday, I'll bring it up.

MONTY: And it's not a can you send somebody, it will be, you will send somebody that will be involved and stuff, that way if they feel that they don't have the time or the wherewithal to do it, then we know that we got somebody that can do it.

One thing to add with the job fair, I've been thinking about this, should we invite, when we do it, an organization like New York State Deferred Compensation? Some kind of financial planner that might be able to talk to prospective employees.

PALMER: We have a rep here for that.

HUGHES: You talked about NYSEG, you talked about a lot of local utilities, I mean you know.

MONTY: Yeah, those groups, that you know, yeah, we want to promote, are we strictly promoting the County jobs?

HUGHES: How many departments are there in the County?

PALMER: 20something.

HUGHES: If we just did the County there would be 20 tables in the, potentially in the gym of the school.

MASCARENAS: If we required every department to participate you would have...

HUGHES: But, I would like to fill the gym up, so I mean if we gave 20 departments primo spots, but we added these other insurance companies or other, NYSEG or whatever and make it a real big party in there.

MONTY: How many did you have in there that year?

HUGHES: We had like 45 people, 45 different organizations in there.

MONTY: EMS and fire departments were outside, the military had people there.

HUGHES: All the recruiters were there.

GILLILLAND: And get it out to the schools.

HUGHES: I am willing to move on it, I just want to know who to involve and the planning and just get going. Who was the other one? You said somebody from your department?

MASCARENAS: Tracy Briggs, I'll let her know.

HUGHES: Okay, great.

WILSON: Well, alright, any other thoughts? I'll setup Donna for our next meeting. You're going to work on the contract. Anybody got any other thoughts? It's good to see we're doing some concrete, taking some concrete steps, so thank you everybody.

**AS THERE WAS NO FURTHER BUSINESS TO COME BEFORE THIS RETENTION AND RECRUITING TASK FORCE, IT WAS ADJOURNED AT 12:01 PM.**

Respectively Submitted,

Dina L. Garvey, Deputy  
Clerk of the Board