

WOLFEBORO ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE MEETING
October 19, 1994

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PRESENT: Chairman Shirley Ganem, Barbara Jackson, Bob Garland, Pamela Berg, John Pernokas

Chairman Shirley Ganem called the meeting to order at 7:37 a.m. in the First NH Bank Conference Room, and asked Barbara Jackson to report on her inquiries about the Vocational Education curriculum.

B. Jackson reported that she had met with Steven Geyer, the student coordinator at the Voc Ed Center. They have six programs, and a board for each program. They are usually informal representatives from the Chamber of Commerce. For new programs, you deal with Carl Contois, the Director. The school administrators had been quite surprised when EDC members told them (at a luncheon meeting there two years or so ago) that students lacked a good work ethic and simple math skills to figure out bills.

In the discussion of Vocational Education which followed, EDC members brought up the following problems, and suggested a number of possible solutions:

- * Many young people are unable to understand the concept of working regularly from 9-5. They are operating on "manana time."

- * students must have completed basic reading and math before starting in the Voc Ed program.

- * Accountability needs to be a basic part of the program. They used to spend half time working for an employer, and half in school studies. This had seemed to work well.

- * They need a class titled is a "an introduction to work."

- * The Voc Ed areas are construction and trades, farming and landscaping, culinary arts, business, and small engine mechanics.

- * The training of the teachers, and their attitudes, is very important. We need to find out what the school has now, and how it functions. How flexible can their training be to help a new business. Basic skills need to be taught in the curriculum.

- * The young people need to spend time on how they present themselves to an employer: dress, appearance, interviewing techniques, filling out an application, role playing, etc. Do they do this at the Voc Ed Center?

- * "How can the business community help you" needs to be our approach. Perhaps a seminar with business people and Contois, and the Superintendent of Schools.

- * If needed, we could provide internships, or talk with students about specific subjects. An employers has to be careful that an intern doesn't just become as a free employee.

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* A Dale Carnegie type program to motivate prospective employees might be good. Selling oneself is the main point.

* Our aim is to provide qualified workers to area businesses.

* Perhaps we can offer an incentive to the students outside of the curriculum to make the transition from school to business easier. Maybe some kind of lecture course with business people talking directly with the students.

* These are the skills we want to develop: basic responsibility, work ethic, being on time for work, developing a "contract" between worker and employer.

* We should meet with the educators to find out what the kids are learning. However, if we talking about teaching methods then we will be perceived as critiquing. We need to involve the high school principal, among others. Interviewing recent vocational graduates to find out what they think about their preparation might be useful.

* The EDC should coordinate this effort with business people, not do the work. Tony Triolo would be an appropriate employer to tell the educators what is needed.

* A Work Fair with students, business people and educators was suggested. People in different booths could explain how their businesses work. But we'd have to have a lot of businesses participating.

* Career days - talk about different professions. We need to expand students' ideas about what they can do. This needs to be started in the early high school years and followed through at each grade level. A Band Aid approach won't succeed.

* Talking with people from other Vocational Education programs that are more successful could be helpful. Concord and Exeter are particularly successful, according to Shirley Ganem. Perhaps they see the same problems with work ethic that we do.

Shirley Ganem and Pamela Berg will work together in planning where to go from here and will bring their proposals to the next meeting.

This discussion was ended at 8:50 and the Chairman handed out copies of a memo about DESIGN REVIEW which Joyce Davis had prepared for the Planning Board Meeting the evening before. It emphasizes education, rather than ordinances, to encourage good design. Members were very impressed with her work, and will discuss it further at the next meeting.

The meeting was adjourned at 9:05. Next meeting will be November 2.

Respectfully submitted,

Erik H. Arctander