

**Minutes of the regular meeting of the
UPSTATE NEW YORK REGIONAL ADVISORY BOARD**

10:30 a.m. – 2:00 p.m., Tuesday, March 20, 2015

Federal Reserve Bank of New York
33 Liberty St., New York, NY

Present:

Aminy I. Audi, President and CEO, L. & J.G. Stickley
Bal Dixit, Chairman, Newtexas Industries
Lynn Marie Finn, President and CEO, Superior Workforce Solutions
Kenneth Franasiak, Chairman, Calamar
William Gisel, President and CEO, Rich Products Corporation
Melanie Littlejohn, Regional Director of Community and Customer Management, National Grid
Linda MacFarlane, Executive Director, Community Loan Fund of the Capital Region
Martin Mucci, President and CEO, Paychex, Inc.
Carlos Unanue, President, Goya de Puerto Rico, Inc.

Federal Reserve Bank of New York attendees:

Jaison Abel
James Bergin
John Clark
Christine Cumming
Tony Davis
William Dudley
Jack Gutt
Anand Marri
David Parkinson
Richard Peach

Ms. Cumming called the meeting to order at approximately 10:30 a.m.

1. The National Economy

Mr. Peach gave a macroeconomic overview of the state of the U.S. economy during the first quarter of 2015.

2. Regional Update

Mr. Abel discussed current economic conditions in the Second Federal Reserve District.

3. International Update

Mr. Clark spoke about international developments in the euro area, Japan, and China.

4. Luncheon Discussion

Mr. Dudley joined the group for the luncheon discussion. Members were asked to comment on changes in demand in recent months, projected hiring and investment in plant and equipment in 2015, access to credit, and the effects of harsh winter weather.

Members reported varying rates of growth for the start of 2015. Several members remarked on the strength of the dollar and the drop in oil prices. Some reported that the strong dollar is having a dampening effect on exports, though in certain instances the drop in demand abroad is being made up for by increased domestic demand. Other members noted that severe winter weather had delayed some projects and sales, pushing them back until later in the year.

Some members reported making new capital investments, particularly in new technologies. A number of members reported plans to hire additional employees. Some members noted tightening in the labor market, though firms are experiencing varying levels of turnover based on business line. Members continued to note difficulty in filling information technology and cybersecurity applicants.

Although members generally reported favorable access to credit for their firms, some observed that first time homebuyers and small businesses are having more difficulty obtaining bank loans.

The meeting adjourned at approximately 2:00 p.m.