



**Workforce Development Board**  
County of Middlesex

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*Quarterly Meeting – April 25, 2017*

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**Present:** Gloria Aftanski, Lisa Alexander, Roseann Bucciarelli, Pedro Rodriguez (as Designee for Sergo Corvil,) Ingrid Coutinho, Luis De La Hoz, Alan Fialka, Dan Frankel, David Wright (as Designee for Jason Friedman,) Yasmin Hernandez-Manno, Gabriel Lavigne, Melyssa Lewis, Poo Lin, Brian Loughlin, Roxanne Teleck (as designee for Angela Mackaronis,) Miriam Ruiz, Brian Sant'Angelo, Jill Schiff, Kathy Shaw, Thomas Crane (as Designee for Tim Timberlake,) Joanne Vogel

**Staff:** Kevin Kurdziel, Shamara Gatling-Davila, John Ross, Diane Seavers, Melinda Walton

**Guests:** Baden Almonor, Preet Bhoga, Eileen Higgins, William Lim, Mackenzie Moran, Maximo Vazquez, Christine Youngblood,

**Call to Order with Pledge of Allegiance and Roll Call**

**Welcome and Introductions**

- The notice of this meeting, pursuant to the “Open Public Meetings Act” NJSA 10:4-10 has been complied with and shall be entered into the minutes of this meeting.
- A motion was made by Kathy Shaw to accept the minutes of the January 24, 2017 as written and forwarded to the members by email ahead of the meeting. It was seconded by Jill Schiff, a vote was taken, passed, and the minutes were accepted.
- Ms. Schiff informed that Board that two members were added recently. Janice Fishbein with DVR is temporarily returning and Bert Baron has been appointed to replace Dan Henrickson from WCTC/WMGQ.

**Presentation - New Jersey Reentry Corporation**

- Kevin Kurdziel introduced William Lim from New Jersey Reentry Corporation. An article about John Koufus is included in the meeting packet. They see approximately 40 – 60 potential clients at four sites but not all complete the program. While they do not give specific advice to the general public, they do offer some workshops on general issues to anyone who is not currently a client.
- Even though the Corporation does not have a presence yet in Middlesex County, both Mr. Lim and Mr. Koufus have roots here. Mr. Lim gave a brief presentation explaining how they feel about employment being a way to rehabilitate and having to remove the barriers to employment such as substance abuse, mental health, and legal issues. They demand a lot from the participants so they can do more for them and help clear up the “wreckage” of their lives including having workshops on financial concerns.
- They hope to develop relationships with the One Stops as well as connecting with the building trades.
- As unemployment goes down, employers will come to realize they need to look at some of the special populations for their workforce. They can partner with employers by helping “vet” participants and setting up federal liability bonding.

## Chairperson's Report

- We have established Incumbent Worker Training program with Sunny Delight. Middlesex County is the first local area in the state to do so.
- The Middlesex County Office of Workforce Development, by their training opportunities and job placements, has played a role in decreasing the unemployment rate in the County to 3.5%
- TANF and GA case-loads have decreased as more clients find full-time sustainable employment
- We have partnered with the City of Perth Amboy on a large project that will provide hundreds of entry-level jobs.
- Continue working with Amazon in opening up distribution centers leading to hundreds of new jobs.
- Awaiting approval from the SETC on the WDB local plan for the next several years.

## Director's Report

- Update on Perth Amboy collaboration: Target is opening a large distribution center in an industrial area in the City and we are working with them on hiring the employees they need. Preet Bhogal and Max Vazquez from the City were introduced and spoke about the partnership with the One Stop for all levels of employees
- Thanked Eileen Higgins, Executive Director of the Monmouth County WDB and the President of GSETA who has been a tremendous help.

**Local WDB Plan Approval** The plan has been received back with requests for some further detail in a few sections. We will respond by mid-June and hope to have approval in place by July.

## One Stop Operator Procurement

- The RFP is under review and is expected to be awarded in the next two weeks.
- The Office of Workforce Development worked with a consultant hired by GSETA but did not respond themselves.
- The position will begin on July 1. It will be for one year and then go to a two year cycle.
- The Operator will mostly be a "convener" and a bridge between the Workforce Development Board and the Office of Workforce Development and handle administrative items that are currently handled by the One Stop Manager and produce reports for the WDB. It will provide a different perspective.
- It was noted that if no bids were received, or if none met the minimum requirements, it could be put out for bid again. If still none were received, we could select an Operator.

## Incumbent Worker Training (IWT)

- In October the Board approved use of 20% of our Adult/Dislocated worker funds for Incumbent Worker training. We are the first county to offer IWT.
- In April, a six month IWT program was started with Sunny Delight. It will use Six Sigma Lean Management to train 93 employees, avoiding layoffs and providing advancement & salary increases for the employees. Sunny Delight will provide 25% of the costs with our contribution coming to \$157,000.
- Please let us know if you know of any companies or businesses that would benefit from such a program.
- This type program also creates jobs as employees move up in the company and vacate current positions.
- Dan Frankel mentioned that this is probably a "best kept secret" and that we should do more to promote these programs. He suggested that we have a Marketing Committee to get the word out. Mr. Kurdziel said he would be getting out a press release and have an event featuring the program at Sunny Delight. We will also be adding podcasts to our website about our programs.

## Local Labor Market Information

- Unemployment in Middlesex County is down to 3.5%, the lowest in years, but it still represents 15,000 people. However, many have fallen out of the system and we still reach out to them.
- We will be identifying local labor market demand occupations as opposed to statewide with a software program called “emsi.” This will help us place our customers in training related to what is needed locally as well as allowing us to produce relevant reports for the Board.
- Brian Loughlin spoke about working with the Talent Networks and Talent Development Centers (TDC) with recruitments, training for employees, and developing curriculum. New TDC sectors will be Building Trades and Hospitality. There is work going on to bridge the gap between Workforce Development and Economic Development. Technology will play a big role in advance planning for new businesses and their training needs.
- Mr. Kurdziel explained how IWT is aligned with the WIOA directives of career pathways and stackable credentials and how they are linked with apprenticeships.
- Roseann Bucciarelli gave some details about the Advanced Manufacturing Talent Development Center program that Middlesex County College is part of. It uses incumbent worker and dislocated worker funds and, as required by the Department of Labor, is the beginning of career pathways with industry valued credentials for participants. It has been successful in getting people employed and giving them the knowledge they need to succeed.

**Functional Realignment One-Stop** Should be in place by September 2018. State Employment Services will work mostly in group activities and providing labor exchange information to customers. The Office of Workforce Development will still handle the Learning Links, WFNJ, and will take over case management of GA. Planning will continue but there is still an outstanding issue of how it will be funded. Middlesex County will not assume responsibility for anything if we are not receiving the funding for it.

**July Meeting – “WIOA 101”** Part/most of the July meeting will focus on making sure members have the information they need to understand the Workforce Development Board and their responsibilities. We will be presenting the information and will have new membership binders for everyone.

**Committee Restructuring** We are in the process of looking at the committees and their structure, agendas and strategies as well as the membership.

## Board Committee Reports

### *Youth Advisory Committee (Gabriel Lavigne)*

- As of March 31 there are 131 enrolled in the ELITE Program
- Three Industry Tours were done: Healthcare Talent Network at Rutgers, NJ Carpenters Union and Apprenticeship Training facility, and Sunny Delight plant.
- Financial Literacy workshops are being held.
- Work-based learning activities have been set up with several businesses in Perth Amboy. We would like to set up more of these programs with other businesses and municipalities in Middlesex County.
- The HSE graduation is being planned for mid-August.

### *Literacy (Gloria Aftanski)*

- In the process of updating the Literacy Plan to align with WIOA regulations
- Seeking feedback from other literacy committees to see what works in their areas, and what does not.
- Would like to add more members from local libraries or literacy based agencies.

## *Economic and Business Development (Kevin Kurdziel/Kathy Shaw)*

- Marketing will focus on how to better serve the business community. Business Services will contact the municipalities to promote what we do because we feel there is a gap in communication and they do not know what services we offer.
- The County has undergone a “rebranding” with a public launch on June 10. It will enhance the existing website and functions as well as increase our social media presence.

### **One Stop-WorkFirst New Jersey**

- In a comparison with 3<sup>rd</sup> Quarter PY 15 and PY 16 results were as expected: TANF was down, GA was flat and SNAP increased. This is in part due to clients benefiting from the improved economic climate in the county and moving from TANF and GA to SNAP which has higher qualifying income levels. The SNAP placement rate is higher at 19% but still needs to improve.
- The New Brunswick Adult Learning Center and Middlesex County College programs were substantially in compliance at the reviews and the contracts will be extended for a second year.
- The Transportation Block grant has some administrative changes in dates. They are moving to a calendar year funding schedule to align with the Fiscal year of receiving body, the County. In order to accomplish this, they are extending the current contract for six months until December 31, 2017 and will then start using a calendar year (January 1 – December 31) going forward.
- We are working with Employment Services (ES) in New Brunswick and Perth Amboy on protocols for bringing homeless from area shelters to the One Stops to offer information and services. And, we will continue to work with ES while we work out the funding issues with the state for functional alignment.

**Youth/Additional Assistance (MCWDB 2017-02) \* ACTION ITEM** The policy was sent to members ahead of the meeting as well as being provided in the packet. There was a change to a section concerning gang activity to read “is or has been” involved. It was confirmed that a person must be a citizen or legally permitted to work in the United States in order to participate in the program. The Chair called for a motion to vote with Jose Montes making the motion and seconded by Ingrid Coutinho. The vote was taken and the motion passed unanimously. **The MCWDB 2017-02 Policy was adopted with the additional language.**

**ETPL Payment Schedule (MCWDB 2017-04) \* ACTION ITEM** A payment schedule to vendors for students in ITAs was revised this year to be more in line with other local agencies and presented as MCWDB 2017-04. The motion to vote was made by Kathy Shaw and seconded by Brian Loughlin. **The vote to accept was unanimous, with one abstention by Brian Sant’Angelo, and MCWDB 2017-04 was adopted.**

### **New Business**

- Mr. Kurdziel announced that Brian Loughlin was retiring in June and that this would be his last WDB meeting and thanked him for his service. Mr. Loughlin stated that the future for training needs should be driven by workforce demand and that high quality partnerships are critical. Apprenticeship and pre-apprenticeship programs should be more accessible in preparing for the jobs of the future.
- Eileen Higgins, Director, Monmouth County Workforce Development Board thanked Mr. Kurdziel and the Middlesex County WDB for being great partners and being on the cutting edge with programs such as the IWT with Sunny Delight. She also reminded everyone of the GSETA conference on October 4 -6 and that the speakers will be national presenters.
- Mr. Kurdziel complimented John Ross on stepping up as the One Stop Manager and keeping things moving.
- Ms. Schiff reminded everyone that Construction Industry Career Days are on May 30 and 31 and that May 31 is open to the general public and will highlight union apprenticeships in the building trades. The Office of Workforce Development will have a table at the event. The Sisters in the Brotherhood are holding an Open House on May 3 at 10:30 in Kenilworth.
- Ingrid Couthino told everyone about the Edison Job Corps. Community Relations Luncheon on June 1.

## Public Comment

- There were no public comments.

## Non-Agenda Items

- Mr. Kurdziel reported on a meeting that was held at the County jail with the Warden and staff a program with a small number of inmates who have substance abuse issues and setting up training them for agricultural/landscaping jobs while they are incarcerated. We need to obtain funding and some participants could be funded through our Youth program. Judge Hoffman is involved in obtaining some of the needed funds.
- Mr. Kurdziel mentioned that the meeting packet would no longer contain the detailed usual reports. A consolidate report highlighting pertinent information would be distributed but mMore details would be available if requested.

## Adjournment

- A motion to adjourn was called for, made by Kathy Shaw and the Chair closed the meeting.

## Handouts:

- Emailed ahead of the meeting:
  - Minutes from the January 24, 2017 meeting
  - Designee Form
  - Economy Overview – Middlesex County
  - Occupation Table
- Emailed ahead of the meeting and in the meeting packets:
  - Agenda
  - Policy Proposal MCOWD 2017-02
  - Policy Proposal MCOWD 2017-04
- In Meeting packet:
  - WDB Consolidated Report
  - Business Brochures
  - “Redemption Road”

**The next meeting will be July 25, 2017 at 9:00 AM.**