



Workforce Development Board
County of Middlesex

Economic Development and Business Services Committee Minutes

April 6, 2017

Present: Poo Lin, Silvia Saa, Elayne McClaine, Kathy Shaw, Anthea Williams, Dan Frankel, Roseann Bucciarelli, Timothy Timberlake, Vin Samuel, and Brian Sant'Angelo
Staff/Guests: Kevin Kurdziel, Diane Seavers, Shamara Gatling-Davila, Barbara Heyward, and Mackenzie Moran.

1. Welcome and Introductions .....Kevin Kurdziel

a. Kevin opened the meeting by introducing himself and asking everyone to introduce themselves.

2. Approval of Minutes from April 15, 2016 & January 5, 2017 Meetings

a. Since the minutes from the April 15, 2016, were not previously approved, April 15, 2016 and January 5, 2017 minutes were approved at this meeting. Dan Frankel made the first motion to approve the set of minutes and Timothy Timberlake seconded the motion. No one opposed and no one abstained from voting.

3. February Labor Market Information. ....Kevin Kurdziel

- a. Middlesex County currently has a 3.5% unemployment rate. New Jersey currently has a 4.4% unemployment rate and the national unemployment rate is currently 4.7%. For Middlesex County the 3.5% is equivalent to around 15,000 people being unemployed. Kevin made a point to mention the 3.5% or 15,000 people are of those known to be unemployed. Those that have exhausted their unemployment or are not eligible for unemployment are not included in the numbers mentioned.
b. There are a lot of layoffs coming in the Retail Sector as a result of store closing and or bankruptcies filed.
c. According to the LMI report, the following areas are expecting a surge in employment: Manufacturing, construction, healthcare, government, and the finance sector.

4. State vs. Local LMI.....Kevin Kurdziel

- a. The first joint Business Services Team meeting took place yesterday, April 5, 2017. Instead of having two separate (State-side and County-side) business units, the two are joining forces.
b. There will be changes in the way people are sent to training and what type of training is being offered. Middlesex County driven data will be used to reflect the in-demand job fields in Middlesex County instead of NJ as a whole. What might be in-demand for other counties might not be in demand for Middlesex. Offering trainings geared to specific in-demand sectors will hopefully increase the amount of placements post training. If clients are interested in trainings that are not in-demand for Middlesex County, they will be given the option to work with a different One-Stop.
c. In an effort to stay ahead of the curve, Middlesex County is looking into a new software database through a company name EMSI. This software is able show the career trends, projected growth, etc. It can give more real time data for wages as well. The software is sometimes updated more frequently than each quarter.

5. **Local Area Wage Data**.....Shamara Gatling-Davila
- a. Research was completed in order to update the I.T.A Minimum Wages. Spreadsheets were given out detailing the revisions. The wages found on bls.org are closely aligned with the wages clients are receiving post training. Approved wages will be added to the new Master Agreement. The new information is expected to be effective July 1, 2017, for the new fiscal year.
6. **Recent Business Connections**.....Kevin Kurdziel
- a. Business Services Unit is now under Barbara Heyward (Vendor Administration and Business Services Manager).
  - b. Glopak is a Plastic Manufacturing Company located in South Plainfield. Glopak is a small, family owned business and want to give priority to hiring ex-offenders. They currently operate three shifts.
  - c. Transitional job wage reimbursement is a new incentive Middlesex County is looking into. A proposal will be submitted to the Workforce Development Board for approval of up to 10% of DW and Adult funding to be used to for the wages of ex-offenders with limited or no work experience.
  - d. PGS is another recent business connection. They are self-insured and looking to hire experienced CDL drivers. Middlesex County needs to identify ways to get more entry level CDL drivers
  - e. Collaboration with the City of Perth Amboy. A nationally known retail company is opening a new distribution center in Perth Amboy. The company is looking to employ hundreds of people. Within the next week or two, an announcement is expected to be made revealing the name of the company. The Middlesex County One-Stops will assist the company by proving about 15 laptops for applicants to use in order to complete their applications online. Prior to that, those that need to setup an email address or create a resume will be able to visit the One-Stop for help with those items.
  - f. There is a new high volume bakery expecting to open in Perth Amboy as well in the same area as the retail store. The new job opening will help the City of Perth Amboy which now has an 8% unemployment rate.
  - g. According to Kathy Shaw, NJTPA has a Workforce Transportation Initiative plan that has been adopted. They are working with Keep Middlesex Moving to think of ways public transportation can be improved. There are numerous opportunities for employment, but if public transportation is not available, it limits the amount of people able to get there for work. Together North Jersey and Rutgers Voorhees Transportation have started a focus group and intend to put together a plan to fix the transportation issues in parts of the county. Hopefully, funding will be available to aid in executing the plan. Ride Share is being considered as an option as well. This has to be a joint project between public and private entities so employers will also need to financially contribute to the cost of creating reliable public transportation.
7. **Incumbent Worker Training Update**..... Diane Seavers
- a. Diane updated everyone on the approved Incumbent Worker Training with Sunny Delight. The full staff, on-site, training is scheduled to begin on April 10, 2017. The training for Six Sigma Lean (white, yellow, green, black and true blue) will last for six months. Once the first six months is finished, there is an additional six month sustainability period to make sure everyone is moving forward with the new skills. Goal is to reduce the down time of a machine switching beverages from 45 minutes to 9 minutes. Two tours have taken place at the South Brunswick/Dayton location. In the future, the plant will need to hire Industrial Electro-Mechanical Technicians. Middlesex County College has already created a new training for Industrial Electro-Mechanical Technicians.
  - b. Middlesex County is the first county in New Jersey to kick off an Incumbent Worker Training. Details for the joint Press Conference/Release between Middlesex County and Sunny Delight are being worked on.

- c. In addition to the rack card for Guide by Cell and the Jobseeker, Employer brochure, some type of marketing tool should be created for Incumbent Worker Training.
- d. There has been a decrease in the amount of I.T.As written because not as many people want training. People are looking to get back to work. As a result, new ways to serve the community and our clients are being considered.
- e. The training provider for Incumbent worker training does not need to be on the ETPL. The entity can be public or private.
- f. Brian from Lincoln tech has been in contact with three companies (Coach USA, Berry Plastics and Church and Dwight) possible interested in Incumbent worker training. The interest is for an electro Mechanical Training program. Kevin is interested in meeting with the companies to review their needs.
- g. Would like to partner employers and training providers. This link is necessary to set up true apprenticeships and even OJTs. This will aid the Career Pathways initiative.
- h. Employers can use the Business Portal to identify what public transportation runs near all commercial properties and the waterfront. This is also a dynamic tool for information about commercial properties available, business incentives, owners, and business comparisons. The appropriate contacts for each municipality is listed along with all the important business related agencies and One-Stops. The portal is linked with social media as well. More resources will be added in the near future.

**8. Middlesex County Rebranding.....Kathy Shaw**

- a. The first joint Business Services Team meeting happened on April 5, 2017. From the outside, it will seem as one unit in an effort to reduce duplicated services. Trying to serve the business customer and the job seekers because you cannot truly serve one without the other.
- b. LBI and Top Right a marketing was awarded the contract to rebrand Middlesex County. Demographic findings for an overview of the growth in Middlesex County is based on projections. May 1, 2017 will be the internal roll-out for the new branding for all departments under Business Development and Education. All the offices are brand ambassadors of Middlesex County. June 10, 2017, the public unveiling will take place at the Roosevelt Park in Edison, during the Pancreatic Cancer Walk. There will be billboards, television ads, advertisements to promote Middlesex County and all it has to offer. Linkages to show where History Meets Innovation and Where Art and History Collide.
- c. Old Middlesex County taglines will be eliminated.

**9. New Business.....Kevin Kurdziel**

- a. Residents of Middlesex County are not aware of the One-Stop and what we do. In an effort to get the information to the public, a One Stop “Road Show” is in the future. Staff will visit municipalities within Middlesex County to market how we are able to help employers and jobseekers.
- b. Middlesex County will start forums/Pod Cast sessions titled “Workforce Round Table” as another form of marketing.
- c. Elayne would love for Kevin to do a webinar for the Small Business Development Center.
- d. MacKenzie gave a brief overview of the Health Care Talent Network and the Talent Development Center. She works to identify and fill in the gaps for the employers.

**10. Adjournment**

Kathy made the motion to adjourn the meeting and Roseann seconded the motion.

**The next meeting of the Economic Development and Business Services Committee is scheduled for Thursday, July 6, 2017 at 9 AM in WIOA Conference Room G at 550 Jersey Avenue, New Brunswick.**