



Workforce Development Board
County of Middlesex

Economic Development and Business Services Committee Minutes

July 6, 2017

Present: Barbara Heyward, Kathy Shaw, Anthea Williams, Dan Frankel, Roseann Bucciarelli, Thomas Crane, Joanne Vogel, and Brian Sant'Angelo.

Staff/Guests: Kevin Kurdziel, Diane Seavers, Shamara Gatling-Davila, and Craig Schlosser.

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 6, 2017 Meeting

a. Brian made the first motion to approve the set of minutes and Roseann seconded the motion. No one opposed.

3. Overview of Latest NJ DOLWD Labor Statistics .....Kevin Kurdziel

- a. Middlesex County currently has a 3.8% unemployment rate. New Jersey currently has a 4.3% unemployment rate and the national unemployment rate is currently 4.1%. For Middlesex County the 3.8% is equivalent to around 16,000 people being unemployed. Kevin made a point to mention the 3.8% or 16,000 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. Kevin may ask Joseph Dombrowski to send out an email blast to those unemployed and connected via email to remind them about the One Stop Career Center services.
c. The LMI stats for June may show a decrease in the unemployment rate due to the seasonal jobs.

4. Middlesex County Industry Cluster.....Kevin Kurdziel

- a. The Middlesex County Office of Workforce Development will present the six (6) identified industry sector clusters to the Middlesex County Workforce Development Board at the meeting on July 25, 2017. This list mirrors the Talent Network sectors with the exception of Bio Pharm. Bio Pharm is not considered in demand for Middlesex County.
b. The software, EMSI, has been approved for purchase and will be used to gather career trends, projected growth, projected retirement, current job openings, wages, and etc. in real time. For data not listed in real time, the software is updated more frequently than each quarter.
c. 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. Each Career Counselor will specialize in particular sectors and will work closely with the business department to identify job placements very early on in the client's process. It may take a few months to implement this procedure.
d. For Middlesex County, the primary customer is businesses. Job seekers are practically the supply chain in which jobs are filled. One cannot be done without the other. This new approach is expected to lead to more placement measurements being met in the future.
e. In addition to the regular recruitment events, Industry Cluster information sessions with employers is on the radar as well. The justification for having the employer present from the beginning is:

Immediate feedback for what the employer expects from an employee, the type of positions available and possibly an agreement from the beginning to hire clients after training is successfully completed.

5. **Amazon Hiring Events**.....Kevin Kurdziel
- a. In addition to the Carteret and Avenel locations, Amazon is adding two new locations in Middlesex County, Edison and Cranbury. They are hiring for full-time and part-time positions. Warehouse positions start at \$13.50 an hour. There is a \$1 shift differential for the night shift wage of \$14.50. The Edison facility is expected to open early Fall. Informational and recruitment sessions are being held every Friday through September for the Edison location. Currently, the One-Stop Career Center is helping Amazon research possible options for drug testing locations. The informational and application/assessment has not yet been determined for the Cranbury location. These facilities are expected to run 24 hours and have onsite training for the positions needed. During the information sessions, a video is played to show the type of work expected of those hired. Many people have chosen to leave after viewing it, but at least everyone is aware of the physical labor in advance. Transportation is challenging in this area. Keep Middlesex Moving and Meadow Link are trying to come up with transportation for employees to get from Rahway to Carteret.
  - b. Kathy stated transportation analytics has new features. GIS mapping, NJTPA, and Keep Middlesex Moving are useful tools for transportation ideas; new model for the current times. In the past the Middlesex, Ocean, Mercer and Monmouth County line was mentioned, but very controversial issue. Capital dollars would be needed to create this line. Far too often unlicensed and uninsured forms of transportation is used to transport workers to and from work while skimming off some of their wages for this unsafe traveling.
  - c. Rideshare isn't used as often. Maybe Uber and Lyft can be an option.
6. **TLD Jobs**.....Kevin Kurdziel
- a. A recruitment event was held in Perth Amboy on May 3, 2017, for the Target Distribution Center coming into that city. About 500 people were seen and around 40 were hired to be part of the start-up team. Eight (8) people were hired for supervisory roles. Target might hold another recruitment event in September.
  - b. Canon located in Cranbury is hiring immediately for temp to permanent positions at \$12 per hour.
  - c. Cascades, a printing company for boxes and packages out of Montreal, is moving into Piscataway. Since Gannett has had a huge layoff, Cascades would be an ideal place for those individuals with experience to look for employment. Gannett is expected to give a six month severance package when it closes in August. Hopefully, Cascades will open during that time and less people will have to receive unemployment due to lack of work.
  - d. According to Kathy, Cascades initially went to Union County, but things did not work out. This is Advance manufacturing that will require specialized training. Cascades is taking advantage of the NJ Grow Incentive. They intend to hire 150 people. They have been given a plethora of demographic data, education levels, residents, and developers to customize their facility. The Mayor is beyond ecstatic that this company will use green technology. The rail and trucks will be used to send out supplies. Kinkisharyo is located in Piscataway as well.
7. **September Business Summit** .....Kevin Kurdziel
- a. Rutgers Visitor Center will host the Middlesex County Economic Development Department Summit on September 8, 2017. The focus of the summit is Cyber Security.
8. **Update on Sunny Delight IWT**.....Diane Seavers
- a. Diane updated everyone on the approved Incumbent Worker Training with Sunny Delight. The full staff, on-site, training began on April 10, 2017. The training for Six Sigma Lean (white, yellow,

green, black and true blue) was expected to last for six months. After the last update from Sunny Delight, the training is going so well it may end late August or early September. Once the initial training 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.

9. **Metrix**.....Diane Seavers

- a. Metrix is an online program that offers about 5,000 courses and about 150 of those courses can lead to credentials. There are no prerequisites to take the online courses. Intermediate computer skills and high speed internet is needed to fully take advantage of Metrix. Those interested will have to complete a two page application, so they can be added into our database system. The approval of Metrix is pending for the July Middlesex County Freeholders meeting. If approved, September 1, 2017, is an expected start date for the program. Each license is valid for six (6) months. Each person will have a total of six (6) months to complete an online course that has been started. The cost of this program is \$36,000, which is equivalent to about six (6) full expense ITAs. The details on where testing will be held for the Nationally Recognized Credentials from the particular online trainings is still being worked out. Two current options are a computer room inside the One Stop Career Center or using Certiport. The way in which credentials will be paid for has not yet been determined.
- b. Last program year about 7,800 people came into the Middlesex County One Stop Career Centers (New Brunswick & Perth Amboy). Approximately 500 received an ITA. Metrix will allow more people to be served remotely. Metrix will not replace ITAs, but when used correctly it will enhance.
- c. A good idea to ask Ken Ryan to attend the next Economic & Business Services Committee Meeting in order to do a Metrix demonstration.
- d. Kathy would like to applaud the Vo-Techs for the remarkable job being done for occupational trainings. East Brunswick Vo-Tech has a noteworthy Advanced Manufacturing program. Cascades was impressed with the schools in the area and the possible people coming to work for their company as a result of what the schools are teaching. The track in which people attend secondary education is changing.

10. **Job Fair**

- a. A job fair is scheduled for September 14, 2017, at the Old Bridge Municipal Complex, Old Bridge, NJ.

11. **Misc./New Business**

- a. Craig Schlosser, from the Middlesex County Regional Chamber of Commerce, is the One Stop Operator. He will serve as the liaison between the Workforce Development Board and the One Stop Manager. He will be onsite 16 hours per week.
- b. Craig, Barbara, Kathy and possibly a few other members will conduct the Sector Strategies Organizational Self- Assessment. The five (5) broad capability areas to focus on are: 1) Data-Informed Decision Making, 2) Industry Engagement, 3) Sector-Based Service Delivery, 4) Sustainability & Continuous Improvement and 5) Organizational Capacity & Alignment.
- c. Engagement with businesses is also a focus of the Department of Labor. Next year more business representatives are expected to be part of this committee and the Workforce Development Board.
- d. On Friday, June 30, 2017, the Notice of Allocations were received. There has been a 15%-20% reduction of funding. The Learning Link funding doubled from the amount received the previous year.
- e. Reminder for everyone to use and spread the word about the Guide by Cell feature.
- f. Brian inquired about the reduction in funding and how Incumbent Worker Training will be impacted. According to Kevin, the amount of funding used for IWT may be reduced to 10% and reviewed mid-year to increase, if possible.
- g. The Proposed Transitional Job Policy Resolution to use up to 10% of Adult and Dislocated Worker funding is pending approval at the July Workforce Development Board Meeting.
- h. Kevin has had numerous meetings with the Middlesex County Jail warden in regards to the Agriculture Pre-Apprenticeship. This Pre-Apprenticeship Pilot Program will start by serving 18-24 year olds in the

county jail through the ASAP population. As a result, Youth funding will be used. In brainstorming a way to execute the training, equipment/supplies needed and spacing it was clear additional funding would be needed. About two weeks ago the committee working on this had a meeting with Assistant Commissioner of Department of Labor, Patricia Moran. A request for \$75,000 was made to help assist with the cost of this pre-apprenticeship program including a Hoop House. According to the last update received on the request, the Commissioner of the Department of Labor, Aaron Fichtner, conditionally approved the request and now it is waiting with the fiscal officer for review. If approved, the funding may come from the Commissioner's Discretionary funding. Having this program will be a great foundation to use if applying for grants in the future to serve the ex-offender population.

- i. As of July 1, 2017, One Stop Career Centers are locally driven.

## 12. Adjournment

Barbara made the motion to adjourn the meeting and Joanne seconded the motion.

**The next meeting of the Economic Development and Business Services Committee is scheduled for  
Thursday, October 12, 2017 at 9 AM in WIOA Conference Room G at  
550 Jersey Avenue, New Brunswick.**