



Middlesex County Workforce Investment Board Meeting

Tuesday, April 29, 2014, 9:00 AM

Present: Gloria Aftanski, Kenneth Armwood, Amy Bellisano, Manuel Biagas, Roseann Bucciarelli, Roberts Davis, Kevin Duncan, Janice Fishbein, Adrienne Keaton, Brian Loughlin, Maryann Lovas, Henrietta Wilson (as designee for Angela Mackaronis), Iris Moncion, Susan Pasternack, James Perry, Peter Reno, Robin Ritter-Ceriello, Senovia Robles, Ginny Romeo, Barbara C. Roos, Jill Schiff, Kathy Shaw, Bernice Proctor Venable, Joanne Vogel, Earl Wiggley, Jeff Shulman, Jane Brady, Nina Rios-Rivera, Melinda Walton

Guests Dan Frankel, Henry Plotkin, Carla Cefalo, Garret Gega, Felix Velez

Call to Order:

Jill Schiff, WIB Chair, called the meeting to order. Notice of this meeting was made pursuant to the Open Public meetings Act, NJS 10:4-10.

Ms. Schiff announced that two new members will be added to the Board and that she will introduce them if they are able to attend this meeting. They were not present yet.

1) MINUTES OF PRIOR MEETING:

The minutes of the last meeting held on January 28, 2014 were submitted for approval. Amy Bellisano made a motion that the minutes be approved as written: Kathy Shaw seconded and the motion carried.

2) INTRODUCTION OF GUEST SPEAKER:

Jane Brady opened the meeting by welcoming everyone and saying that it was a full agenda. She then introduced a guest speaker – Henry Plotkin. Mr. Plotkin is the former Executive Director of the SETC in New Jersey and he is here to share information about a new program (Pay for Success) that has begun in Jersey City and to give us the opportunity to possibly investigate and adopt it for use in Middlesex County.

Henry Plotkin started his presentation by explaining that although he is from Middlesex County and he helped invent “WIBs” this was the first time he was present at a meeting of the Middlesex County Workforce Investment Board. He praised Jane Brady and said we should listen and learn from her. He was retired for five years but was asked to chair the transition team for Steve Fulop when he became mayor of Jersey City last May and is currently a member of the Hudson County WIB and on the Board of the Jersey City One Stop. He sees as a big concern our economic meltdown without seeing any change in employment training. This aspect has been marginalized and the WIB infrastructure, and role it should play, has been narrowed. We are starting to look more like an extension of the Department of Labor rather than independent entities in charge of managing the WIA programs. He saw the Hudson County plan documents and feels that that WIB recertification process is cumbersome and staff time is

not well spent doing this. It looks more like a compliance document instead of a plan and is disappointed in what came out of the United States Department of Labor and the SETC.

Mr. Plotkin co-authored an article with Ray Marshall about how we are not coordinating the long term planning functions. This is where “Pay for Success” would come in. It is an exciting idea and he wishes the State had pursued it. It offers a new and better way to deliver resources. He said he showed the data from his article to Jane Brady and will send a copy of the article to her. It shows how weak the labor market really is and how the unemployment rate is a false indicator. The article talks about the types of jobs lost versus the types of jobs they are replaced with. Higher paying jobs were being replaced with lower paying ones and there is a large decline in public sector workers. It helps explain the situation of someone working full time at someplace like Wal-Mart but still needing food stamps. It is typical of a weak economy and there are few signs of it coming back.

It has been started in England and the United States but came from research from the Rockefeller Foundation six or seven years ago. It is a creative way to fund social services. There is probably a quarter of a million dollars available for this kind of use. Bonds are issued to investors in order to achieve a savings for government. Mr. Plotkin offered an example of a state offering bonds to outside investors with the goal of getting 1,000 clients out of the welfare system. The bond holders would get paid by how many get off welfare and how much they actually save. Calculated out it would bring a 12% - 14% return on the bonds. If the goal is not achieved, the bond holders lose but there is no risk for us. This works because private sector money is focused on the outcome not the process. In this example, while the government would measure success as a client getting a job for even six months at a minimum wage, a job with a career ladder for 30 months would be considered a success in the private sector. It can be used in almost any social program such as prisoner re-entry, pre-kindergarten reading levels, etc. It is a way of using market forces to achieve “liberal” ends. The WIB should form a sub-committee to look into how to apply this risk-free concept here. It has the potential to draw in badly needed capital to employment training programs that need it. He then opened the floor for any questions.

Ms. Brady thinks it is a fantastic concept and the WIB should look into it. Our Business Development Unit should try to find out how many companies and industries they have been meeting with would be interested because it has potential. Jill Schiff commented that it is a social investment and worth it and it should be put on the agenda to look into it and to have Mr. Plotkin talk about this again. Mr. Plotkin said he would be happy to return.

Henrietta Wilson thanked him for his information and said we need to get resources into the system. Mr. Plotkin explained that the most advanced things with “Pay for Success” are happening in Texas. Money is spent the way they see fit to help the person instead of having individual programs for specific reasons. Public welfare is designed to be short term and success is measured by how many are in the system not by how much they accomplish in the long term.

3) CHAIR’S REPORT – Jill Schiff

Ms. Schiff spoke about the recertification of the WIB. We worked with the SETC and Middlesex County hit all the bullet points. We received our Recertification for 2014 – 2016 and were in compliance with

everything they requested even though it was time consuming. Jane Brady and Jill Schiff attended the presentation to the full SETC Board. Only four counties still have some minor fixes to do.

4) SIX 30-SECOND RADIO SPOTS – Jane Brady

When Ms. Brady and Garret Gega were at WCTC, the idea of creating “public service announcements” talking about the various aspects of finding a job to be played at random times was discussed. Dan Hendrickson, who is on the WIB agreed. The scripts were developed and the appropriate approvals were received. Garret Gega from our Business Development Unit recorded them. There was some technical difficulty so the audio was not able to be played.

5) COUNTY PORTAL FOR ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT – Kathy Shaw

Jane Brady introduced the presentation by Kathy Shaw and Joe Peake from the County IT Department by saying that this new portal is a massive GIS system to showcase the County to investors. It is a way to find Real Estate properties in the County. Ms. Shaw explained that this is good for downtown revitalization and economic development and defines the County’s role in it. Jane Brady had conducted an Economic Development Study with independent consultant teams a few years ago. Ms. Shaw talked with 25 municipalities when she came on board two years ago and started working on this portal. Ms. Shaw then opened the page on line and gave a demonstration of how it works by using the property where the meeting was taking place on Fieldcrest Avenue as an example.

This County GIS Portal system with information on commercial properties in the County will be rolled out shortly. In addition to parcel location, ownership, and cost for purchase there are various other reports such as traffic Count, demographics/income profiles and retail market place profiles that will be available to investors. Information on distance to waterfront, passenger stations and commercial freight lines also will be a part of the system. Areas can be identified by warehousing/industrial, mom and pop stores up to Brownfield locations including municipal profiles with links directed to each municipality, incentives available per parcel by municipalities as well as other links. Up to five parcels can be compared and the results can be saved in order to share on a desktop or by email or print making it convenient for investors. The County will have a Co-Star subscription which will allow for data collection and updating of info on the various parcels. It will also link to various State sites such as Jobs4Jersey, Keep Middlesex Moving, etc.

A marketing plan is being worked on for roll out of the GIS Portal. Ads will be going into NJ Biz, Industry magazines and other marketing media and Constant Contact. And, they are working with the Business Action Center.

After the presentation, some discussion ensued:

Bernice Venable asked who has the information and how is it gotten to the people that need it. Ms. Venable said she thought that information on schools, day care and health care would be included but was told it was not. Perhaps it would be in the future or that it would have its own separate site. It was

noted that marketing is critical and Kathy Shaw responded that her office is responsible to develop a marketing plan.

Dan Frankel asked if information would be available by industry. This would be to coordinate with the WIB so the County could get known for certain industries and we could target them. Kathy Shaw said we can pull industrial sites and Jane Brady clarified the question by adding that we could add sector priority. Warehouses, Health Care and IT have been identified as being important to Middlesex County. How do we target our marketing to a specific industry in order to train workers? Some jobs, such as IT, go across all lines and some are more specific such as in health care.

Barbara Roos congratulated Kathy Shaw on this new tool and offered the suggestion that the Chambers of Commerce be used to help market it. Kathy Shaw said that Constant Contact would be used to market it. Carla Cefalo told everyone that instructions and video tutorials will be available when someone first registers and signs on and that there are advanced search options available to explore the information.

Henry Plotkin commented that a weakness of a lot of Economic Development Agencies is that they don't worry about the work force, but a potential investor does need information on how to get workers. There should be reference to places like our One Stops and the County Colleges on the site. Kathy Shaw responded to this by saying that this information is on it as part of our County Department Structure which is unique and the hope is that it will all work together.

Jill Schiff then thanked Kathy Shaw for the presentation and Jane Brady mentioned a marketing plan and that the study authorized to start work on the Portal included a marketing plan.

Some new Policies were next on the Agenda. All of them were sent to members ahead of time, but copies were offered in case anyone wanted to see one before the voting took place.

6) NEW POLICY ON TRAINING A PARTICIPANT MORE THAN ONE TIME

Jane Brady explained that this policy was needed because some industries change so quickly that training from only a year or two ago can easily be outdated. A decision will be made on a case by case basis and it is mostly for an individual to keep up with their industry, not to change careers.

A vote was called for by Amy Bellisano, seconded by Kathy Shaw and it passed unanimously.

7) NEW POLICY ON TRANSPORTATION PAYMENTS FOR YOUTH ATTENDING TRAINING

It was explained that the legality was checked and that we are able to make such payments. It is a supplement to the usual \$20 a day travel allowance for travel that exceeds 20 miles one way. There are students in some interesting occupations right now that will be able to benefit by this new policy. For

example, we have a student in Bucks County, Pennsylvania studying to be a Railroad Technician and a few in Eatontown, New Jersey in a broad IT program at Avtech.

A vote was called to pass this policy to pay the extra money for youth traveling to training over 20 miles one way by Henrietta Wilson, seconded by Roseann Bucciarelli and passed unanimously.

8) NEW POLICY ON ON-LINE ITA PAYMENT POLICY

It was explained that this is an extremely successful new way of offering training. Rutgers offers two programs that have an almost complete success rate for students finding jobs after the training. But some changes need to be made in how payment is calculated. There have been some issues with schools because of the number of hours required as benchmarks when not all students need the same amount of time online to complete the training and this Policy would fix that problem. They will bill at the end of the course using a range of hours with a minimum of 40. There is also a requirement that the school meets with the client face to face at least twice which eliminates only on-line schools such as Phoenix University. Susan Pasternack asked if there is some sort of required post-test and Jane Brady assured her that the course must be graded and the grades given to us.

A vote was called to pass the policy changing how we calculate payment for on-line training completed by clients by Kathy Shaw, seconded by Barbara Roos and passed unanimously.

9) YOUTH RFP RECOMMENDATIONS

Jane Brady explained the RFP process to the Board. The Program Year starts in July and in February we put out a Request for Proposal by advertising and mailing to potential suppliers for our youth programs. Currently we have three programs run by Middlesex County College (MCC.) We received two proposals: one from Middlesex County College substantially the same as they provide now and another from the Jewish Renaissance Foundation (JRF). Both proposals were evaluated by a team of five and they recommended that we stay with the MCC programs. The proposal from the JRF was found to be somewhat confusing and duplicated existing programs so it was not recommended for approval. Before anything is solid though, we have to receive the Notice of Obligation from the state telling us what our funding allocation will be for next program year. But, we are certain that we will have enough funding to operate these programs. The Youth Investment Council would usually have voted on this first, but since their meeting is not until next week, it was brought before the entire Board first in order to approve in time for the program year start.

A vote was called to approve the proposal from Middlesex County College for the Youth Programs by Amy Bellisano and seconded by Kathy Shaw. It passed with no opposing votes and one abstention by Roseann Bucciarella.

10) **SETC EVALUATION REPORT FOR 2013 – 2014** – Jane Brady

At the April 2013 WIB meeting, a vote was taken to conduct a study on how we serve clients who have post-secondary education versus those who have high school or less. The study was done and sent to the Board ahead of this meeting. We need to vote to accept that the study was done and to send it to the SETC. No action is being taken at this time. We hope in the future to be able to act on the findings but the state probably will not. The New Brunswick Employment Service office has started but it is upsetting to see how little is done to help some of our clients and make certain they take advantage of all the services available to them. Nina Rios-Rivera confirmed that OSOS (the reporting database) has not been accurate lately and that is causing some of the problems.

A vote was called to acknowledge that the report was done and to send it to the SETC by Bernice Venable, seconded by Kathy Shaw and it passed unanimously.

NON-AGENDA ITEM: At this point, Jane Brady mentioned that two weeks ago we received word that the 2009 Federal Monitoring issues were finally all resolved. The State Of New Jersey, Essex County and Newark were done at the same time as us and they still have some open issues. We can be audited at any time again.

11) **NEW PERFORMANCE MEASURES AND OUR STATUS** – Jane Brady

- a) The Performance Matters Chart was referenced and Ms. Brady noted that we meet all the performance measures required by the state and offered kudos to the staff. The year ends in June so this is ongoing.
- b) The list of schools we use was referenced as being in the packet but difficult to see. It shows what training each school offers. We have to make sure they are training for jobs that are really available.
- c) The pie chart showing the types of training we are referring students to was also spoken about. It shows that our goal is 560 and we are at 488 so at the current rate, we will meet our goal. A reminder was given that a job must be on the “In Demand” list in order for us to send someone to training for it by Federal regulation.

12) **STRATEGIC PLAN IMPLEMENTATION UPDATE** – Jane Brady

Status of Strategic Plan at SETC for 2014-2017: The plan was submitted to the SETC in December but we do not know if it was approved. We will be starting on the recommendations anyway. The purpose of the Strategic Plan was to list all the items we felt we needed to do in the next three years. The items shown in red are the ones we are working on currently. The State is expected to work on many of the items on it so we do not know if they will be done or not. Our liaison with the SETC, Maureen O’Brien-Murphy, complimented us on this and said that no one else in the state offered such a plan. It is a good way to keep track of where we are headed.

13) **IT SECTOR STUDY UPDATE** – Jane Brady

Jane Brady said that we don't see updated curriculums from many of the schools/trainers. We keep looking for new programs but they change frequently. The state "In Demand" list does NOT keep up with current jobs in the workforce and we cannot send students unless the school is on this list. We are trying to get some IT companies on the WIB also so we can receive their input.

14) **MASTER AGREEMENT CHANGES** – Jane Brady

- a) **Work readiness addition:** We are adding a requirement to the Master Agreement that "Work Readiness" must be included in a trainer's program. The responsibility will not lie with the One Stop office. We will require that a certificate for this aspect of the program be issued to the student. Some companies that have excellent programs in place are Lincoln Tech and Advantage Career Center in Monmouth.
- b) The Youth and TANF RFPs also now include a **writing component** in all programs. A recent trip to Wegman's and the follow up essays written by the youth, while enthusiastic and observant, showed a lack of mature writing skills and support the need for this requirement. Jill Schiff mentioned that work readiness is being addressed by the SETC and they have committed to study this through NJBIA.

At this point, Bernice Venable said there was an issue to address concerning transportation in winter and how difficult it was. It also affects the economics of the employment situation and that we need suggestions and help from NJ Transit. Emphasis must be placed on transportation within New Jersey and not just on getting to New York. Perhaps we should try to get them on the WIB. Ginny Romeo supported this by saying that near exit 8A on the Turnpike there are a lot of warehouses with jobs but workers can't get there using public transportation.

15) **ETPL: CONSUMER REPORT CARD LEGISLATION AND IMPACT** – Jane Brady

Jane Brady told the Board that the state has passed legislation requiring training schools to post their placement rates online on the State Report Card by April 18 or they will be taken off the ETPL which means we would no longer be able to send clients to them. The placement rates include all enrolled students, not just WIA clients. There is a process to go through to request they remain on the list and what can be done to remedy the situation if we have a relationship with a school and want to make sure they stay on the ETPL. Currently enrolled students would be allowed to finish their course. It is a time consuming process for many schools. We have a lot of schools to choose from but other areas do not so this might turn out to be a double edged sword. The hope is that the State will be more aggressive in monitoring what is offered and what is actually taught by each school. We have not heard anything yet even though it is past April 18.

Meeting state contract goals for Learning Link, Dislocated Worker and Adult: We are fortunate to have two Learning Link locations in New Brunswick and Perth Amboy but the state funding will not be known until June so not sure if they will continue. But we are hopeful that we can maintain both centers. We are on target for the number of people served for the Program Year 13 with 155 as our goal and 127 served as of the end of March. Learning Link is intended as a short term program, four to eight weeks, so reading and math levels can be raised so the clients can go into a training program. If more time is needed, a client would be referred to either the Perth Amboy or New Brunswick Adult Learning Center. Basic Computer Skills are important for the 55 + group especially. Those skills are needed even for applications for jobs and emailing resumes. Offering this basic training is a valuable service.

We are also on target to meet our goals for the WIA programs. As of March we were at 77% (433 out of 560.) To be considered successful we are required to be at 80% which we feel we will meet with a possibility of 100%. However, there was a concern with finding people to enroll in the training programs. Unemployment has been reduced back to 26 weeks. We do have money available to help those who can't finish a training program because they have exhausted their 26 week claim.

16) WORK FIRST NEW JERSEY REPORT – Jane Brady

John Ross was not able to be present at the meeting so Jane Brady gave some updates on this program. The RFPs from Middlesex County College and New Brunswick Board of Education are due back on Thursday of this week. They have been running the programs but this year has the addition of the writing component. We do not know how much money we will have available for July 1st, but anticipate the County helping us bridge the month until the funds are available as has been done in the past. All is moving along as usual.

17) YOUTH INVESTMENT COUNCIL REPORT – Earl Wigglely

Mr. Wigglely noted that the Committee will not be meeting until next week on Tuesday, May 6.

- a) **Drop Out List:** We receive data from the schools so that we can pull in these drop outs and offer to help them. We have 214 so far this year but still have two months to go. Jane Brady announced that we had received information from Perth Amboy High School for the first time! Now all the schools in the county are reporting. Jill Schiff noted that we need to check the percentages of total student body versus the actual numbers in order to compare districts. Brian Loughlin told the Board that the definition of “dropout” has been changed by the state and the school report card gives the data also. Earl Wigglely said that our reports include the names of the students who drop out so that we can help them individually. Henry Plotkin added that the numbers are off and the problem is much larger than the state reports show. One disturbing fact is that most of the names we get are of sophomores. We only get reports on students who do not enroll in other high school programs.
- b) **Meeting State Goal:** From July 1 to April 15, we have 91 youth enrolled in programs with 45 carried over from last year bringing us 136. And we currently have 27 in ITAs.
- c) **Industry tours:** We have been going on tours of the Wakefern warehouse.
- d) **Writing requirement:** This is being added to our Master Agreement.

18) LITERACY COMMITTEE

- a) **New High School Equivalency Test (HSE) – initial issues:** The start- up problems were noted in the announcements that were sent ahead of time.
- b) **Conversational ESL at MCC:** This trial program consisted of 20 hours at Middlesex County College but since only three people have taken advantage of it, we will be dropping the program. There is a need for it, but people don't have the time to take it if they are in need of a job. Ms. Brady thanked MCC for helping us offer this.

19) BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT UNIT

The report from this committee was emailed ahead to everyone. It was mentioned that they have had a number of positive recruitments recently.

Jane Brady asked everyone to please be sure that they read the announcements and handouts in the packet, including the Placement Report. There are three schools we need to work with on their placement rate.

Jill Schiff asked if there were any questions.

It was then announced that Earl Wiggley would be leaving New Jersey for a position in Massachusetts with Sunny Delight and offered him the thanks of the Board. She also thanked Jane Brady for her years on the WIB and her leadership, tenacity and integrity. A gift was presented from the Board and Ms. Brady was given a standing ovation. She thanked the Board saying they were the most outstanding WIB in the state and she thanked the members for wanting to get it right and said she had enjoyed the meetings. It was a tremendous opportunity and a fantastic journey.

Dan Frankel said he had been a member of the WIB in the past and talked about when Ms. Brady took the position and the energy levels she brought to it and how she worked with both government and bringing non-government agencies into the WIB. He has known Ms. Brady a long time and says that both past and present Middlesex County thanks her!

Bernice Venable mentioned that she was a former Vice-Chair of the WIB and she was proud to have worked with Jane Brady and how she was a stellar leader. She was the wind under the wings, they were spread wide and that it will be very hard to fill her shoes. She was the voice for a lot of people who cannot speak. Everyone listened because she had so much to say and we will all miss her.

The meeting was concluded and a small celebration took place.

Handouts

Emailed ahead of time:

- Agenda
- Announcements
- Minutes of January WIB meeting
- New Policies: Additional Training
 - Youth Mileage
 - On-Line ITA Payments
- IT Study Update on Implementation
- Business Development Unit Report
- SETC Evaluation Report and Response

In packet:

- Agenda
- Performance Matters Chart
- Strategic Plan Recommendations Update
- School CIP Matrix
- MC Placements Report
- Workforce Development Data
- MCOWD WIA-WFNI contracts written
- Drop Out List