



Middlesex County Workforce Investment Board Meeting Tuesday, January 29, 2013 9:00 a.m.

PRESENT: I. Azeez (representing Gloria Aftanski), Roseann Bucciarelli, Carla Cefalo (representing Kathy Shaw), Robert Davis, Alan Fialka, Janice Fishbein, Lorrie Ginégaw, Maria Gonzalez, Alan Haveson, Dan Henrickson, Adrienne Keaton, Melyssa Lewis, Brian Loughlin, Maryann Lovas, William Nagy, Jim Perry, Joseph Picone, Robin Ritter-Ceriello, Senovia Robles, Barbara Roos, Jill Schiff, Richard Skorupski, Michelle Suskind, Bernice Proctor-Venable, Earl Wiggle and Henrietta Wilson (representing Angela Mackaronis)

STAFF: Jane Brady, Nina Rios-Rivera and Patti Seip

GUESTS: Anthony Campo, Transportation, Logistics and Distribution Talent Network Coordinator
Kirsten Giardi, NJ State Employment and Training Commission, Liaison to Middlesex County
Elayne McClaine, Small Business Development Corporation, Middlesex Office
Michele Horst, NJ State Employment and Training Commission, Executive Director

Call to Order:

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

ANNOUNCEMENTS/INTRODUCTIONS:

Jill Schiff announced that the presentation to be provided by Chris Murphy, Business Representative from the State of New Jersey, will be moved to the April meeting, as he was unable to attend the meeting due to being ill.

She then introduced and welcomed Michele Horst, Executive Director of the N.J. State Employment and Training Commission. Ms. Horst is attending the meeting to provide a brief overview of the NJ Unified State Plan.

NJ UNIFIED STATE PLAN:

Michele Horst informed members that the NJ State Employment and Training Commission (SETC) basically serves as the state workforce investment board for New Jersey. As the State WIB, the SETC provides policy guidance, oversight and technical assistance for the local WIBs.

She introduced Kirsten Giardi who will now serve as the SETC staff representative for Middlesex County. Kirsten will be replacing Kirk Lew, our previous SETC representative.

Ms. Horst stated her purpose in appearing before today's board meeting was to provide a quick overview of the State Unified Plan. She encouraged members to visit the SETC website when they had free time, to review the document, specifically Section A, Executive Summary of the Action Plan. The Executive Summary provides where we are going over the next five (5) years.

SETC had three (3) months to create a Five Year Plan. She provided a powerpoint presentation which highlighted what was included in the State Plan and its impact on local areas moving forward. The Plan was approved by the U.S. Department of Labor in December. She noted that for years, over fifty percent (50%) of funding has been

earmarked covering the cost of ITAs (Individual Training Accounts). This has not necessarily taken us where we need to go, as we need to place people in jobs where they are needed.

Kirsten Giardi will be reaching out to WIB Directors to see if there is a board member they would like to nominate to serve on one of the talent councils for the six (6) industry sectors chosen by the Governor. The six (6) sectors are: Health Care; Life Sciences; Financial Services; Advanced Manufacturing; Transportation Logistics and Distribution; Technology Entrepreneurship; and Hospitality. It is the SETC's job to get the right individuals around the table that are knowledgeable of the strategy plan and have valuable insight for that particular sector.

Within the next two (2) months, a local planning guidance will be released, as each WIB must now write a new local Five Year Plan. Ms. Horst remarked that the WIBs are not expected to create a 300+ page plan, but rather no more than 10-12 pages. It should be a Strategic Action Plan, articulating what we are doing. The SETC will compile all the local WIB plans and aggregate into one document. She noted that this will also provide SETC with the opportunity to create uniformity within the system.

She also stated that it is the SETC's goal to make sure that everyone is recommended for certification in 2014. The SETC Unified Plan is due in January to the Governance Committee and will be submitted to the Governor in March 2014. Local WIBs should be certified no later than July 2014.

Ms. Horst welcomed anyone's questions and comments. Dr. Venable expressed her concern over jobseekers being made aware of the current job trend in each of the six sectors, especially in health care where it appears that many health care positions, especially those in hospitals, are not being hired on a full-time basis, but rather per diem, with no benefits attached. Ms. Horst responded that one of the strategies of the Health Care Talent Network is how to help jobseekers within that sector, as there is definitely a bridge between the jobseeker and the job.

SMALL BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT CORPORATION:

Jane Brady was pleased to introduce Elayne McClaine from the Small Business Development Corporation (SBDC). SBDC recently opened an office on the Livingston campus of Rutgers University. Ms. Brady stated how pleased she was about the opening of this office, which is more accessible for our county business owners.

SBDC will be providing an Intro to Entrepreneurship Q & A workshop on February 20th, from 10 am to 12 pm at the One-Stop Center located at 550 Jersey Avenue in New Brunswick.

Going forward, we would like to help each other and market each other's programs. With their new office opening within our county, it is expected that most of the workshops will be held at their location.

MINUTES:

James Perry made a motion that the minutes of the November 13th, 2013 meeting be approved as written; Bernice Venable seconded the motion, and the motion carried.

WIB ANNUAL REPORT FOR PY 2011-2012:

Members were provided a copy of the WIB Annual Report for Program Year 2011. Jane Brady noted that the report looks the same as last year's report, but information has changed. She reminded members that last year's report was a three (3) year report. This report now brings the WIB up to date. She asked members to take the time to look through the report as all information and data is new for the past program year.

Page 10 of the report provides a list of the top ten (10) training providers as well as top ten (10) training programs. She noted that for the first time, Rutgers University now appears on the training providers list. Clients that have enrolled in Rutgers Mini-MBA program have been very successful in obtaining employment at a high salary.

She mentioned that CDM has always been one of our top ten (10) training providers, but that has recently changed, as we were just notified that they closed their doors a few days ago without any prior notification to staff or students.

WIA staff are now trying to figure out what to do with those students, many of whom were near the end of their training cycle. Most of the programs they provide are medical assistant programs. Fortunately, other training provider schools with those types of programs are willing to help students affected by the closing. Brian Loughlin offered whatever assistance the Vo-Tech can provide, on a short-term basis, as they have teachers that are certified. Jane Brady was appreciative of his offer of support.

WIB CHAIR REPORT ON CHAIRS' MEETING:

Jill Schiff reported that the SETC WIB Chairs' meeting she recently attended was her first meeting as WIB Chair, and she found it very interesting. There was discussion on the various Talent Networks. Hurricane Sandy was also a topic. Dennis Bone and Aaron Fichtner were both present. She found it interesting that concerns expressed at our board meetings are also felt by other WIB boards across the state.

FINANCIALS AS OF DECEMBER 31, 2012:

Members were provided a copy of the Department Budget for Program Year 2012, covering the period July 1, 2012 to June 30, 2013. The yearly budget was approved by the board at the July meeting. The breakdown of this chart shows how the money is being spent in each of the categories.

Ms. Brady noted that a new lease for the New Brunswick offices has still not been received from the state. The state signed the lease with the landlord but forgot to forward a sub-lease to our office for execution by the Middlesex County Board of Chosen Freeholders. Ms. Brady stated that the rent will drop significantly with the new lease. We are still paying the state the rent from 2011. They have indicated they will issue us a credit eventually. She has asked them to push this along. She has also asked her financial person to stop paying in January, until we receive the right lease. As part of the new lease agreement, the landlord agreed to replace windows in the building, the parking lot will be re-paved, and new carpeting will be installed. The landlord is making improvements to the building, which were greatly needed.

Ms. Brady asked that anyone with questions on the budget should contact her directly.

LEARNING LINKS – ADDITIONAL FUNDS/IMPACT/RECISSION:

Jane Brady reminded board members that the Community Learning Center (CLC) at Roosevelt Care Center was closed in July due to a 60% funding reduction in the Learning Link allocation. The state has now provided additional money in the amount of \$72,000. We are still unable to re-open the CLC with that amount of money, however, the two (2) Learning Link programs currently in operation (one in New Brunswick and one in Perth Amboy) have now extended their hours of operation.

She asked board members to authorize returning \$35,000 of the Learning Link funds to the state. She explained that this money can only be used for Learning Link programs and if we keep this money, we would be required to serve additional clients, which has proven to be a real issue, as both programs are under-enrolled.

A question was raised as to whether or not the program could be offered on Saturdays. Ms. Brady responded that the cost of staff and security would prevent this as an option. Alan Haveson questioned if we return the money to the state, could we request additional money at a later date, if necessary. Ms. Brady responded that we could request additional money, but it would depend on whether the state has any money remaining that would be available.

Henrietta Wilson made a motion that \$35,000 of the Learning Link funds be returned to the state; Dr. Bernice Venable seconded, and the motion carried.

PLACEMENT RATE POLICY:

The Middlesex County WIB previously adopted a policy that any training school on the approved list for our customers must maintain a placement rate of 70% as long as the unemployment rate in NJ is over 5%. Due to the prolonged time that unemployment has been over 9% in New Jersey, most of our training providers are finding it

difficult to achieve the 70% placement rate. If we were to strictly adhere to that percentage, our customers would have very few schools to choose from for their preferred training.

Members were provided a chart listing the top ten (10) schools by placements for program year 2011-2012. As noted on the chart, some training providers were below the 70%. Ms. Brady asked members to be mindful of the fact that some schools only serve ten (10) clients while others may serve over 187, which is a big difference in terms of number served and placements.

Given the above information, staff would like to recommend that the board consider relaxing the current placement policy and allow staff to continue working with the schools to improve their placements. If we find that a school is not willing to work with us, we will come back to the board for further guidance. Earl Wiggley suggested that the schools be required to provide a written response indicating what their plan of improvement will be.

A discussion was held regarding a client refusing to take a job, which then affects the school's placement rate. Ms. Brady stated that if the schools can provide us with this information, it can be forwarded to the state, and if the client is collecting UI benefits, their benefits can be jeopardized by refusing a job.

Michele Horst stated that depending on the industry, there is a significant challenge when it comes to placements. People are expecting to be paid a certain wage which may or may not happen. It is staff's responsibility to add this to the educational component. Nina Rios-Rivera agreed and indicated that one of the Jersey Job Club roles is to get people more acclimated to the new world of work. Jobseekers are being told to take a lesser pay position, just to get their feet in the door.

Dr. Venable stated that this change has to begin in high school or middle school. Youth need to understand that they are going to be competing with older people who are keeping their jobs, rather than retiring. Jane Brady responded that she and Abner Garcia, WIA Youth Programs Manager, attended a Career Awareness Day recently at Woodbridge High School. It was interesting as well as disappointing for her and Mr. Garcia to notice that unless you are talking about a job that pays \$40-\$50,000 per year, the students were not interested – and certainly not in any entry level jobs. She and Mr. Garcia emphasized the importance of staying in school and choosing a career path. They hope to be able to appear at more high schools in the future.

Jim Perry made a motion that the placement policy recommended by staff be approved with the addition that the training provider will be required to submit a correction action plan; Dr. Venable seconded and the motion carried. Abstentions: Roseann Bucciarelli and Brian Loughlin.

SUPERSTORM SANDY NEG:

Jane Brady reported that the federal government awarded \$15 million for temporary workers to be hired now through the end of April to assist municipalities and non-profits to clean up from the effects of the storm. Letters were mailed to all municipalities and non-profits of the availability of funds for this project. The only responses received were from Carteret, Woodbridge and the United Way of Central Jersey. Woodbridge will be hiring ten (10) workers and Carteret would like to hire ten (10) also. The United Way will be hiring six (6) individuals.

She expressed her surprise that so few people were interested in this opportunity --- less than fifty (50) from Middlesex County. In order to be eligible, an individual cannot be receiving UI and must pass a criminal background check. The pay is \$15 per hour, and they can work no more than a total of 1,040 hours. All work performed must be as a result of the storm.

Woodbridge, Carteret and the United Way are the hiring entities and will be reimbursed for all related employee expenses. Ms. Brady indicated that unused funds will most likely be returned to the State for this project as well. Middlesex County is not alone with this issue, as other counties have expressed recruitment problems. It appears that most of the work needing to be done at this point requires skilled workers, not just for clean-up, which may have been the issue in municipalities not responding to the NEG.

ONE-STOP OPERATOR REPORT:

One –Stop Manager, Adrienne Keaton, provided a summary of the level of service for WIA adults and dislocated workers. She stated there are four (4) counselors in New Brunswick and four (4) in Perth Amboy – two (2) WIA counselors and two (2) Work First NJ counselors at each site. It is hoped that we can serve 500 clients this program year, an increase from last year's 390. However, that number may change depending on the actual cost of training. The maximum cost of training is \$4,000. Some training may cost less, which will mean we may serve additional clients.

Members were provided a copy of a chart reflecting data on numbers served last program year, by municipality. It was interesting to note that Perth Amboy, Edison and Piscataway were the top three (3) municipalities whose residents were served at the One-Stop. Ms. Brady expressed her surprise that the One-Stop located in New Brunswick served so few New Brunswick residents.

Ms. Keaton informed members of the difficulty staff have recently been experiencing in recruiting clients for training programs. Since the Re-Employment Orientation session is no longer offered at the One-Stop, there has been less traffic, which means fewer clients. To get the word out about our services and increase enrollment in our programs, flyers have been distributed to all our One-Stop Partners, training institutions, and county facilities that provide social services. Ads will also be placed on the Middlesex County Areawide Transportation buses. Employment Services has also been asked to announce training opportunities at their workshops. Ms. Brady stated there are large television monitors at each of the One-Stops. Training opportunity information will be placed on these monitors for clients inside the facility.

Ms. Brady stated that training program opportunity information is mentioned in the state's on-line Reemployment Orientation (RO). However, taking the RO is not mandatory, nor is there anything in place to ensure that the individual completes the RO presentation. Roseann Bucciarelli suggested a link be included on the state's website where an individual could access our department website and take our Career Beacon workshop on-line. Ms. Brady responded that the RO is a statewide system, but she would check to see if the state could possibly set it to link to each county.

YIC REPORT/UPDATE:

YIC Chair, Earl Wiggle, provided a summary of the Youth Investment Council (YIC) goals for program year 2012-2013. He reported that the goals are basically the same as the previous year's goals, with minor revisions.

He expressed his disappointment with regard to the state's decision that the YIC cannot continue to fund the NCADD's Anti-Dropout Play at Middlesex County high schools. Ms. Brady announced that she appealed to the federal government about the state's decision, as she and YIC committee members felt very strongly about continuing this production. The federal government agreed with the state, indicating the play was being provided to all students, not just WIA eligible youth, and therefore, the cost is not allowed. A federal representative contacted her about this to ask specific questions, but due to the way the legislation was written, they determined that the cost for funding the play is prohibited.

Earl Wiggle commented that the committee will be looking to secure other ways to fund this play, due to the value of the program. Alan Haveson questioned if corporate contributions can be made, as he was sure there would be a number of companies that would be willing to contribute to such a worthwhile cause. Jill Schiff stated that technically the WIB cannot secure funding for the play, but the NCADD can because they are a private non-profit. They can also pursue grant opportunities to fund this program. Jane Brady indicated that the United Way of Central Jersey provided the initial funding two (2) years ago in the amount of \$10,000.

Dr. Benice Venable made a motion to approve the YIC goals for program year 2012-2013, Brian Loughlin seconded, and the motion carried.

LITERACY COMMITTEE/UPDATE:

In the absence of Literacy Committee Chair, Gloria Aftanski, Jane Brady reported that the Literacy Committee goals for program year 2012-2013 basically mirror the goals from last year, with minor changes. She noted that the Montclair Study Report is a new goal that was added, and the committee will work to implement the recommendations of that study.

She stated that the Literacy Committee is an extremely active committee. Members of the committee were blown away by the number of seats in remediation classes at Middlesex County College each semester. She finds it incredible that the state is claiming adult literacy is a priority, yet last year they cut 60% from the budget. She doesn't have a lot of hope that this program year will be any different. Brian Loughlin remarked that the state also discontinued funding for adult high schools. This has had a tremendous impact on literacy for adults.

William Nagy made a motion to approve the Literacy Committee goals for program year 2012-2013; Roseann Bucciarelli seconded, and the motion carried.

RESPONSE FROM STATE ON CDL ISSUE:

Members were provided a copy of a letter from the NJ State Division of Insurance regarding the CDL issue. The letter basically indicates that the state cannot do anything about trucking companies requiring two (2) years of driving experience before obtaining employment. A company can hire an individual with less than two (2) years' experience, but the company will have to pay a higher insurance premium. Therefore, it is up to the company as to whether or not they are willing to pay the higher premium. There is insurance available for this purpose. The state cannot be of any assistance on this matter.

STATUS OF WIB CERTIFICATION FOR THE SETC:

Ms. Brady reported that by February 15th, we are required to submit approximately 15 documents to SETC, including copies of every set of minutes for all board and committee meetings for program years 2011 and 2012. Staff are in the process of compiling all the information but will have submitted by the due date.

One area of difficulty is recruiting board members. Ms. Brady stated that we will be required to add a fifth educational partner (representing K-12 schools) and a representative from a community action program. Unfortunately, every time we add a non-business member, it increases our percentage of private sector members required, which must be at 51%. She asked that anyone with suggestions on individuals she can contact regarding serving on the board is appreciated. Senovia Robles informed Ms. Brady that she could serve as the 5th educational partner, as she is also involved in the K-12 school district.

The NJ SETC is requiring that each WIB place a list of their WIB member names, title and affiliation on their department website. Members were provided a copy of the membership list as it would appear on the website. They were asked to notify Patti Seip if their information is incorrect or needs editing.

WORKFIRST NEW JERSEY UPDATE:

WFNJ Director, John Ross, reported that a snapshot of enrollments to the WFNJ program's portal activity for the first six (6) months of the current program year indicates a reduction of clients compared with the prior program year. In the current program year, there was a reduction of 28% of TANF clients enrolled in the Job Search Assistance Program as compared to the same period in the previous program year. There was a reduction of 7% of General Assistance clients enrolled thus far in the current program year compared to the previous program year.

The reduction of TANF clients can be attributed to a revision of procedures by the Middlesex County Board of Social Services. In July, the Board ceased referring clients who had applied for services but had not completed the application process. Since that process could take as much as 4-6 weeks, clients were enrolled in WFNJ activities but ultimately may have eventually been denied services. The revised procedure is that TANF clients are enrolled after their TANF eligibility has been established.

The reduction in General Assistance clients is more than likely due to a slight reduction in need. The State's guidelines for General Assistance eligibility has been revised and may be a factor in this decrease. A review of the enrollment dates during the next quarter will serve as a benchmark for the development of contract for Program Year 2013. Members will be provided an update at the April board meeting.

ANNOUNCEMENTS:

Jane Brady asked that if anyone has any questions on the remaining items included in their meeting packet to contact her.

ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned.

ITEMS INCLUDED IN MEETING PACKET

- WIB Annual Report for Program Year 2011
- Learning Link Funds
- Placement Rate Policy Change
- Youth Investment Council Goals for 2013
- Literacy Committee Goals for 2013
- Department Budget for PY 2012 (7/1/12 – 6/30/13)
- Letter from State Department of Banking & Insurance Regarding CDL Issue
- WIB Report (covering July 2012 to December 2012)
- Top Ten Schools' Placements for PY 2011-2012
- Characteristics of NJ's Insured Unemployed by County – 4th Qtr 2012
- Key Industries in Middlesex County (Data for Decision Making Series, October 2012 from NJ Bureau of Labor Market Information)
- Middlesex WIA Adults and Dislocated Workers PY 2011
- Results – MC WIB – Wagner Peyser PY 11 Ending 6/30/12
- WIA Customer Satisfaction Survey – Exit Interview
- MC WIB Membership List for Website
- WIA Grievance Procedures
- Copy of Rutgers Business School Flyer – (how Rutgers Business School students can help businesses)
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ITEMS PROVIDED PRIOR TO MEETING

- Agenda
- Minutes of Prior Meeting
- Announcements

NEXT MEETING DATE: TUESDAY, APRIL 30, 2013