



**Workforce Development Board**  
County of Middlesex

*Quarterly Meeting April 23, 2019*

Members Present:	Gloria Aftanski, Amy Bellisano, Roseann Bucciarelli, Sergo Corvil, Luis De La Hoz, Alan Fialka, Dan Frankel, Paul Hiler, Thomas Iveson, Gabriel Lavigne, Melyssa Lewis, Rich Liebler, Elayne McLaine, Jose Montes, Miriam Ruiz, Brian Sant’Angelo, Marc Schweitzer. Joanne Vogel
Designees:	Roxane Teleck (for Angela Mackaronis)
Excused:	Kenneth Armwood, Kyle Anderson, Bert Baron, Anthony Capece, Poo Lin, Timothy Timberlake
Absent:	Tina Ahmadi, Lisa Alexander, Robert Davis, Nick DeMatteo, Justin Kolbenschlag, Poo Lin, Jill Schiff, Dianne Veilleux, Christina Youngblood
Staff:	Kevin Kurdziel, Diane Seavers, Claudia Dorsch, Barbara Heyward, Martin Schamberger, Shamara Gatling-Davila, Melinda Walton Elizabeth Acosta, Janice Alexander, Lizette Bazan, Mary Ann Bossio, Sandra Ciccone, Ysabel Jorgensen, Narvia Treadwell, Monica Van Pelt, Joanne Vas
Guests:	Hsien-Min Chen, Kanita Pandeep, Liana Volpe, Paul Grzellza, Aubrey Flannigan, Gwen Wiggins, Sabrina Sullivan

- **Call to Order** ..... Gabriel Lavigne
  - Pledge of Allegiance
  - Open Public Meetings Act. *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.*
  - Roll Call and Introduction of Members ..... Amy Bellisano
  - Swearing-In of New Members Rich Liebler and Nick DeMatteo ..... Kevin J. Kurdziel
- **Approve of the Minutes from the January 22, 2019 Meeting.** A vote was called for by Mark Schweitzer and seconded by Paul Hiler. The vote was unanimous for approval.
- **Chairperson’s Report** ..... Gabriel Lavigne
  - Board members should be recruited from HR representatives from in-demand occupations as they are what should drive our policies. We especially need representation form healthcare, and bio-pharma. Please let Gabe Lavigne or Kevin Kurdziel know of any prospects.
  - We need to gauge business’s needs and want from DOL and member input and this should be incorporated into the meetings. Surveys could be taken for this information.
  - The Board is a fiduciary but also must keep in mind what businesses need.
  - Many members and staff were interviewed by Mathematica concerning WIOA. Reporting issues were discussed and it was acknowledged that the numbers could be skewed, which is an issue because that is what dictates our funding.
  - Our certification was done and Christina Youngblood went to the ceremony and received our certificate.
- **Director’s Report**..... Kevin J. Kurdziel
  - We are winding down Program Year 2018 and gearing up for Program Year 2019. Our plans and certifications are being completed and we’re updating our agreement with vendors. A case management software is being investigated that would greatly improve our access to real-time data and tracking program outcomes
  - Woodbridge Township was awarded the Opioid Pathways to Recovery Grant from the NJ Dept. of Labor, and we will work in conjunction with them and other community partners. It is an 18-month, \$650,000 grant to

provide employment and support services for individuals who suffer from Opioid use disorder as well as anyone related to them who are also affected.

- Some of our staff will soon be going into our county correctional facility to present on the One Stop and our services.
- We continue to collaborate with the NJ Dept. of Labor concerning apprenticeship opportunities. Sansone Auto was recently awarded a GAINS apprenticeship grant to serve veterans, returning citizens, and others needing an opportunity to prepare for today's job market. We are glad to have Rich Liebler from Sansone on our Board to bring his expertise in this to our meetings.
- The WFNJ participation rate was at 30% which was up for the first time in four years.
- **Department of Business Development and Education Update** ..... Kevin J. Kurdziel
  - Kathy Shaw has retired and Kevin Kurdziel is the Interim Department Head and hopes to use this opportunity to bring Workforce Development to the forefront.
  - We are not certain yet, but some moves might be made within the department. One of the more visible ones will be moving Economic Development to the MCIA to oversee and finance programs with businesses coming into the County.
  - The Heldrich Workforce Study will influence some of the changes.
- **Destination 2040 Middlesex County Master Plan** ..... Kevin J. Kurdziel
  - The County Master Plan has not been updated since the mid-1970's
  - A Public Outreach Engagement Team has taken input from over 1,000 resident concerning transportation, open space, and education.
  - A closer link will be developed with municipalities.
- **PY 2018 and PY 2019 Funding** ..... Kevin J. Kurdziel, Claudia Dorsch
  - We are out of funds for this Program year but have requested more and have been told by High Bailey that it is in the pipeline. We will follow-up on this. We have also checked with near-by counties that still have funds to ask them to serve some of our priority clients.
  - Funding for PY 19 will probably be flat with a possible slight increase (15-17%) for Adult, Dislocated Worker, and Youth. We are using that information in planning for next year and will try to make some cuts in some areas.
  - A new strategy limiting the number of ITAs written per month will be implemented to even things out and we would like to start class-size contracts to stretch funds.
  - Incumbent Worker Training programs will be used again.
  - The funding received will be added to the County budget at a Freeholder meeting in July.
- **Labor Market Information/Business Engagement Outcomes** ..... Kevin J. Kurdziel, Barbara Heyward
  - Unemployment rates: County 4%, State 4%, U.S. 3.8% and we understand that many are not counted in these numbers.
  - In 2019 the Business Engagement Team has hosted 39 hiring events that 477 job seekers attended. Over 500 people were hired from events in the last quarter of 2018 and 55 customers who received ITAs were placed in employment.
- **WIOA Performance Matters**..... Diane Seavers
  - Right now the data is not favorable to us, but is showing the improvement we are making. Part of the problem is insufficient historical data. MIS is working on updating our information from 2017 and 2018 which will be used to set a baseline and we are focusing on bringing up the quality of the data. PY 2018 is considered a transitional year, so not "countable."
  - We are not the only county having some of these issues but are working on it and improvement can already be seen from the first quarter.
  - Standards are also increased; for example, under WIA in 1993 a goal was 80%, now it is 90% in order to pass. The State is aware of the issues with the reporting systems, but it is cost prohibitive to align them.

- Two years of failing numbers in a row could affect our funding, but we don't think that will happen. As chair of the Performance Committee, Diane Seavers assures us they are looking at this.
- **Board Member Attendance Policy** ..... Gabriel Lavigne
  - There is an attendance requirement for Board members that has not been enforced, however we will be contacting members this would apply to and find out why they are not coming and if anything could be done to fix the situation and if they want to continue on the Board. Our goal is to have an engaged Board.
  - Members have to remember to respond to notices and to keep contact information updated. If a member leaves relevant employment, they may no longer be a suitable as a Board Member.
- **Board Member Committee Assignments**..... Gabriel Lavigne
  - Each Board member needs to sign up as a member of at least one committee. There is conference call availability for many committee meetings if in-person attendance is not always possible.
  - There are two items in the packet: a description of the committees with logistical informant and a selection form. Please hand in the form today if possible.
  - Each Committee will be given an assignment to focus on and report to the Board.
  - A "Special Populations" Committee was formed that combines the focus of some of the former committees.
- **Conducting Dynamic Board Meetings**..... Kevin J. Kurdziel, Gabriel Lavigne
  - We want the Board meetings to be interesting and engaging.
  - Departmental and Committee will continue to be sent ahead of time to minimize "reading" out loud at the meetings. However, the Board is responsible for oversight of a large budget from a government agency, so much be kept informed.
  - The WDB is made up of members of the community and should advise the Board what they need and how we can serve those needs. We strive for open communication.
- **Old Business.** There was no old business to review.
  - Mr. Liebler spoke about some of the programs he has worked with for "at risk" populations and why they succeed. We need to find employers to work with us and focus on one individual at a time. Employers like a job shadow, mentoring type of set up as well as advice on unpaid internships leading to paid internships. Keep in mind that mental health issues may come into play. Advice on interviewing technique is important.
  - Gloria Aftanski suggested that we develop closer ties with social service non-profits to help individuals who face challenges. Our Special Populations Committee can address that and Mr. Kurdziel noted the relationship between the Board and the HSAC and that we are beginning to bring services out into the community. We don't always know what resources are available or who to contact and are trying to develop/add to the listing we do have for our staff, remembering that referring a client somewhere else is not always enough. Guidance is needed. On-site resources work best. One source of help could be colleges and their mental health interns who are looking for experience.
  - The GSETA Training Institute is starting up again for staff professional development.
  - Diane Seavers spoke about our staff starting to go "behind the wall" to develop a single point of entry for returning citizens.
  - Jose Montes spoke about the reports and information the package and having 10-15 minute conversations on the issues. Mr. Kurdziel wants to build dynamic through committees and presence at meetings and including more success stories from both employer and employee point of view. Ms. Aftanski requested that the Business Report always be added to the agenda.
  - Amy Bellisano suggested that some time be allocated to let members share with other members some of the challenges they face in their companies and industries. Many strategies transfer among sectors.
  - Roseann Bucciarelli suggested that we have a "featured committee" at each meeting to update us in person on what they are doing.
- **New Business.** Mr. Kurdziel opened the floor for comment/news from members.

- Middlesex County College named Mark McCormick as the new President. We hope to continue to work closely with the college on many things, including relocating to the campus to create a state-of-the-art One Stop. Downtown New Brunswick has a number of drawbacks, so this is a very viable option.
- The Board has its own website up and running: [www.mcwdb.org](http://www.mcwdb.org). Please check it out. The Local Plan is posted there for a d 30-day public comment period.
- The next meeting will be held at the Fire Academy in Sayreville. More specific information will be in the notices sent prior to the meeting.
- Members informed everyone of some of the upcoming programs and events from their organizations.
- **Public Comment.** None
- **Adjournment** A motion to adjourn the meeting was called for by Amy Bellisano, seconded by Paul Hiler, a vote was called and the meeting was adjourned.

**Handouts:**

- Emailed ahead of the meeting:
  - Agenda
  - Parking Permit
  - Minutes from January 23, 2019 meeting
  - Designee Form
  - Committee Reports
- In Meeting packet:
  - Agenda
  - Operations Report
  - Business Engagement Team report
  - Committee Sign-Up Form
  - 2017 Annual Report
  - NJBiz article on unemployment taxes
  - “A Pathway Forward” – NAWB
  - Edison Press Release on Work Resource Day
  - Advertising Flyers for Work Resource Days

**The next meeting will be July 23, 2019 at 9:00 AM**

**at the Fire Academy in Sayreville.**

**More information will be sent before the meeting.**