



Workforce Development Board
County of Middlesex

Quarterly Meeting October 27, 2020
(Held electronically through Zoom.)

Members Present:	Gloria Aftanski, Kyle Anderson, Marie Bonamassa, Roseann Bucciarelli, Carla Cefalo, Robert Davis, Dan Frankel, Paul Hiler, Thomas Iveson, Gabriel Lavigne, Melissa Lewis, Rich Liebler, Poo Lin, Elayne McLaine, Nicola Minott, Jose Montes, Loyce Riggans, Jill Schiff, Craig Schlosser, Marc Schweitzer, Thomas Sommers, Timothy Timberlake, Lourdes Valdes
Designees:	Roxane Teleck (for Angela Mackaronis)
Excused:	Ken Armwood, Amy Bellisano, Miriam Ruiz,
Absent:	Diane Veilleux, Joanne Vogel
Staff:	Claudia Dorsch, Shamara Gatling-Davila, Barbara Heyward, Kevin Kurdziel, Martin Schamberger, Diane Seavers, Melinda Walton
Guests:	Khalid Anjum, Amanda Bombino, Jessica Brigioni, Suvra Datta, Sherri Goldberg, Juan Gonzalez, Sabrina Sullivan, Gwen Wiggins, Anthea Williams

- **Call to Order** Gabriel Lavigne
 - (a) Pledge of Allegiance
 - (b) Roll Call Paul Hiler
 - (c) Open Meetings Public Record Act. *Notice of this meeting pursuant to the "Open Public Meetings Act" NJSA 10:4 has been complied with and shall be entered into the minutes of this meeting.*
 - (d) Statement of Decorum. *Although this meeting is being held virtually, the manner in which the meeting is conducted has not changed. The public will be given an opportunity to make comments toward the end of the meeting. We ask that all meeting participants mute themselves to minimize background noise. This meeting is being recorded.*
- **Approve of the Minutes from the July 28, 2020 Meeting** Paul Hiler

A motion to approve the minutes from the July 28th meeting was called for by Thomas Iveson and seconded by Carla Cefalo. The vote was called and was unanimous for approval as written.
- **Chairperson's Report** Gabriel Lavigne
 - Mr. Lavigne that although meeting virtually has increased attendance at the meetings, a downside is that it makes it more difficult to recruit new members. If anyone is aware of a potential member who would be a "good fit" for the Board, to please contact someone on the Executive Board or a staff member.
- **CEO Report** Kevin Kurdziel
 - Lourdes Valdes, a new Board member representing RWJ Barnabas Health was introduced.
 - The pandemic has presented many challenges, but has also created opportunities.
 - Office of Career Opportunity staff have made the transition seamlessly while maintaining services even though they must do so virtually.
 - Strategies developed during this time will serve as a blue print for how we will move forward in redefining the role of Workforce Development.
 - Labor statistic change enormously, but we see the unemployment rate starting to trend downward. Recovery will probably be faster than usual because of the extraordinary circumstances.
 - On October 15, in conjunction with three other counties, we held a "Drive-Thru" job fair which had 240 people come to the parking lot of the Grand Marquis in Old Bridge and receive packets containing information about our services and flyers from employers actively seeking to fill job openings.
- **Work-First New Jersey Funding** Kevin Kurdziel/Diane Seavers
 - The WDB approved our WIOA funding placement into the County budget, but the Notices of Award for the WFNJ funding were delayed. This year the WFNJ awards are for the period October 2020 through June 2021.
 - Because of the uncertainty, we did not contract with our usual providers, Middlesex County College and New Brunswick Public Schools. Since participation in the programs is suspended for now and we have seen a dramatic decline in clients being served, our staff will oversee any client who volunteers to work with us since we want to make sure the services are available.

- We are meeting with the Board of Social Services and hope to have some things up and running in January 2021.
- **Dislocated Worker National Emergency Grant**..... Kevin Kurdziel
 - We partnered with other areas in order to apply for some of the grants that were made available in order to receive some emergency funding in this crisis. It helps to ease the strain of the reduced budget. We are awaiting the official notices and will insert the funds into the County Operating Budget.
 - With the Greater Raritan WDB we applied for and received a grant that will allow us to write 25 extra ITAs in selected sectors.
 - We are part of the Northern New Jersey Partners who also received funding and we will have money to fund training for 6 in the customer service/sales force field.
- **Grant Opportunities**..... Kevin Kurdziel
 - Once the 501(C)(3) status is in place, we will be able to pursue grant opportunities other than those available for government agencies. It will create revenue streams that will ease the strain of reduced funds. A separate Board will be set up for the non-profit with some members of the WDB on it.
 - Millennium Strategies works with us in finding and responding to grant opportunities. It helps with not just funds, but also aligns with the WDB strategies and those of the County through Destination 2040.
 - Rich Liebler noted that one excellent grant was the Gains grant which Sansone was using last year for an apprenticeship model program. Unfortunately, it had to be suspended because it needed three years sustainability and was not renewed. Of the 35 individuals in the program, only about half are still with Sansone. Mr. Kurdziel advised Mr. Liebler that there is a possibility the Office may be able to help continue the training of the individuals still employed through an Incumbent Worker Training program or customized training with a commitment to hire. They will meet further to discuss it. A pre-apprenticeship program through another grant also was closed down.
 - Lourdes Valdes, also noted that RWJ Barnabas was a recipient of a Gains grant and was extremely pleased with what they could accomplish through it.
 - We need to find out what the DOL plans on doing with these type grant and create an ad hoc committee concerning apprenticeship opportunities. Rich Liebler and Lourdes Valdes should be a part of this committee.
- **Upcoming Procurement**Diane Seavers
 - The One Stop Operator (OSO) contract for PY 19 was extended for 6 months through December 2020 and is now going out for bid for an 18-month contract through June 2022. Since our current OSO is Middlesex County College, but the information being discussed here is only very general, Roseann Bucciarelli will not have to recuse herself from the discussion.
 - We need Board members to act as reviewers of the bids received. Staff will need to remain neutral. Two people have already been identified to act in this capacity and we need at least one and possibly three more. Please let us know if you are able to volunteer to do this.
- **Resolution PY-20-05-R** * *Customer Code of Conduct Policy*.....Kevin Kurdziel/Diane Seavers
 - Probably due to the uncertainty and fear during this crisis, we are finding that some clients are behaving in an unprecedented way by harassing the threatening some of our staff and we want to have the backing of the WDB if we find it necessary to suspend or refuse service if this occurs.
 - It will establish a policy that delineates the expected behavior of customers seeking services through the One Stop Centers and its affiliates.
 - Customers will be informed of the expectations during orientation and will have to sign a form that they agree to behave in a professional manner.
 - **A motion to adopt the policy was made by Craig Schlosser, seconded by Marc Schweitzer and passed unanimously.**
- **By-Laws Revision** Kevin Kurdziel
 - As with any organization, the By-Laws are periodically reviewed and revised to make sure they are aligned with the goals and expectations. We usually do it on an annual basis and will be meeting during November and December so that notice can be sent to members for a vote on the revisions at the January 2021 meeting.
 - Some of the things that will be looked are how well ours align with WIOA policies and especially how they are affected by the COVID-19 emergency. How membership is defined will also be examined. We need to have 51% of membership from the private sector. Some non-profit organizations might be able to be defined as private sector because they also have employees and organizational structure as a business. We will look at having a possible

second Vice Chairperson for the WDB also. Melinda Walton coordinates a lot of the By-Law information and will work with the Executive Board on this project.

- **Old Business**..... Gabriel Lavigne
 - Kevin Kurdziel gave an update on the status of the letter sent to the County concerning the high level of Indirect Costs being charged to the WIOA Grant and asking for an explanation. The full 388-page report for the County was sent to us. Gabe Lavigne will write again explaining that the WDB is concerned because even though the organization used to calculate the amount is used by many other counties, Middlesex is charged the highest amount in the state. This letter could be addressed to Freeholder Director Rios with copies to Freeholder Deputy Director Ken Armwood and County Executive John Pulomena. Some counties have an arrangement that the full amount calculated is charged only if it is available after all other expenses are met. These charges have been questioned by the NJ Dept. of Labor and the US Dept. of Labor could consider some of them a disallowed cost and require repayment from the County. The large amount of \$300,000, of the approximately \$550,000 charged, allocated to support expenses of the County Department was especially questioned.
- **New Business**..... Gabriel Lavigne
 - By the end of 2021, the County expects to have moved our office to the former Ericson phone company training site in Piscataway. One concern is the lack of public transportation for our clients, but they are talking to the Dept. of Transportation about a solution. Satellite locations throughout the County would address some of the issues caused by the lack of public transportation.
 - Pathways to Recovery was renewed for a second round until the end of December with another possible renewal until November 2021. References should be through Woodbridge.
 - On November 4, a large number of non-violent ex-offenders will be released from prison in response to the COVID-19 health crisis. Middlesex County is in the top 5 in terms of the number being released. We are working with our community partners to serve them upon their return. Rich Liebler spoke about the mentoring program “Adopt a Returning Citizen” that aids veterans as well as the “Veteran Diversion Program.” The members were reminded that both practical and emotional support are needed – mentors are the key in re-entry and that this should be a WDB project. These types of programs should also be incorporated into the 501(c)(3) when it is in place.
- **Public Comment**
 - There are still funds available in the Small Business Relief Grant. So far 201 businesses have received grants totaling \$5,000,000 and averaging \$25,000.
 - Khalid Anjum, Department Head, Business Innovations, Education and Opportunity was introduced and spoke to the members thanking them and the office staff for maintaining services all during this period. The responsibilities of the WDB are especially relevant under current circumstances. He offered to help get some responses about the concerns of the Board on the Indirect Costs.
 - Suvra Datta from Kaizen told the members about programs offered by Kaizen.
 - Jessica Brigioni, Khalid’s assistant was introduced and spoke about her background with non-profits in New York City.
- **Adjournment** was motioned by Craig Schlosser, seconded by Elayne McClaine and the meeting was adjourned.

***Action Items – vote taken.**

Handouts:

- No physical meeting packet was prepared, all items were emailed ahead of the meeting:
 - Agenda
 - Minutes from July 28, 2020 meeting
 - Designee Form
 - Committee Reports
 - Proposed Resolution PY-20-05-R
 - Proposed Policy PY-2020-03
 - Performance Goals Operations Report
 - SkillUp™ Report
 - Welcome Home Reentry Flyer

The next meeting is tentatively scheduled for January 26, 2021 at 9:00 AM

More information will be sent before the meeting.