



Workforce Development Board
County of Middlesex

Quarterly Meeting October 23, 2018

Members Present:	Gloria Aftanski, Bert Baron, Amy Bellisano, Roseann Bucciarelli, Robert Davis, Luis DeLaHoz, Dan Frankel, Paul Hiler, Thomas Iveson, Gabriel Lavigne, José Montes, Jill Schiff, Marc Schweitzer, Kathy Shaw, Joanne Vogel, Christina Youngblood
Designees:	Thomas Crane (for Timothy Timberlake,) Pedro Rodriguez (for Sergo Corvil,) Roxanne Teleck (for Angela Mackaronis)
Excused:	Kenneth Armwood, Melissa Lewis, Joseph Picone
Absent:	Tina Ahmadi, Lisa Alexander, Kyle Anderson, Anthony Capece, Alan Fialka, Brenda Jenifer, Justin Kolbensschlag, Melyssa Lewis, Poo Lin, Elayne McLaine, Joseph Picone, Brian Sant'Angelo, Diane Veilleux
Staff:	Kevin Kurdziel, Diane Seavers, Claudia Dorsch, Barbara Heyward, Martin Chamberger, Melinda Walton
Guests:	Robert Asaro-Angelo, Hsien-Min Chen, Jazmine Reyoste, Kavita Rardey, Sabrina Sullivan, Liana Volpe, Gwen Wiggins, Anthea Williams

- **Call to Order**

- Pledge of Allegiance
- Member Introductions
- Open Public Meetings Act. *The notice of this meeting, pursuant to the "Open Public Meetings Act" NJSIA 10:4-10 has been complied with and shall be entered into the minutes of this meeting.*

- **Approve of the Minutes from the July 24, 2018 meeting.** A vote was called for by Amy Bellisano and seconded by Kathy Shaw. The vote was unanimous for approval.

- **Chairperson's Report**

Mr. Lavigne spoke about the GSETA Conference and was pleased with the speakers and leadership and their plan to be direction driven in helping the Board in accomplishing our goals. Performance Indicators have not been up and running since 2014, but will be used to measure us again. Until 2021 though, no sanctions will be issued for not meeting the goals. We should be working toward the goals, not the performance indicator. The data that staff collects will be used to analyze what the workforce office is actually able to do and will be used as a baseline to set performance goals. Board meetings should focus on meeting these goals as noted in the Strategic Plans. They have been making more use of efficient technology such as SkillUp™ as a pre-qualifier for services. We have reason to believe that our budget will not be cut next year. WDB membership is at the required ratio, but we are looking to increase the membership in the demand occupation sectors.

Mr. Lavigne also gave some information about the Youth Advisory Committee as the Chair for that also and told members that at the November meeting, information on Homeless Youth Awareness Month would be presented. We have approximately 49 homeless youth in the County, but only limited housing which needs to be remedied.

- **Director's Report**

The economy continues to thrive and we are experiencing historically low unemployment in Middlesex County. This is a positive, but we know some people still need employment opportunities. Companies are looking for qualified employees. We need to make the public aware of what we do and how we can help them. Social media is a good way to get the word out. SkillUp™ is being used by more and more county residents each month.

- **Special Guest**

Robert Asaro-Angelo, Commissioner of Labor was introduced and spoke to the members about his background from Middlesex County and the organizations here that had an impact on his life. He is proud to be the only Commissioner from Middlesex County. He and Governor Murphy believe that workforce development and economic development are the same thing.

Unemployment has systems in place to help now when unemployment is low and that will be fuller when needed. New Jersey is in a great location between New York and Philadelphia and Middlesex County is in the center of the northeast economic system and we should work with them, not compete with them. The Talent Networks have been successful in bringing industries together. There is a need for the integration of the workforce system in New Jersey in bringing in middle skills.

As Commissioner, he is open to criticism and suggestions. During the transition he felt there was a “Disinvesting in NJ” which he plans to remedy by hiring the needed staff and develop the talent of our own staff to better serve the public. Middlesex County is off to a great start and he welcomed all, especially new members.

The floor was opened for questions and the following topics were addressed:

- Would some of the firms hiring large numbers now eventually be replacing these employees with computers within 10 years? Was any training being done, especially for veterans, to allow them to advance? This could all be addressed with funding initiatives that would go up if unemployment increased to help “upskill” these workers so they have a future, not just a job. For example, Amazon has a program “Amazon Career Choice” which offers on-site training, not just in skills needed by Amazon, but other areas of interest to current employees which acknowledges that they may not spend their entire working lives at Amazon. They are investing in the workers and maybe some will return at higher levels.
- DVOP handles training for veterans, but it is sometimes difficult to find the ones who could benefit from the training. The government hires more veterans than anyone else.
- He is working to eliminate some of the past bureaucratic barriers so his staff can get out more frequently.
- He was thanked for working “with” us and responded by saying that we have to “break down silos” and promised to respond to inquiries so we can improve each other’s services and to work better with County officials.
- Christina Youngblood brought a topic discussed at the GSETA Conference concerning the issue that the “real” unemployment rate is really 7%, not the 3.5% and the thought that those now unemployed are “unemployable” and wondered what could be done about it. While it starts with youth, something must also be done to fill the mid-career gaps facing people now. Money for apprenticeship grants should be coming soon and that would help. It must be emphasized that apprenticeship IS a job, not simply training.
- Marc Schweitzer, from the Division of Rehabilitation, brought up the topic of discrimination in certain fields such as finance and health. Mr. Asaro-Angelo said we must change the mind-set of employers to address this issue. Some things that could help is to work on bonding and other programs and that the state needs to take the lead.
- José Montes brought up the issues of poor transportation, paying a living wage, and not offering health benefits. Transportation is a challenge in this area. More transportation lines need to be developed and the use of workforce money in the interim could be considered. Paying a living wage is being addressed with an increase in the minimum wage which could increase buying power, but also could mean less hours.
- **WDB Certification** is done every two years. We are slightly behind, but should be able to get everything in by mid-December for Freeholder approval.
- **2017 Annual Report** is almost finished and is needed for the certification process.
- **Strategic Plan** is not part of the certification process but we are working on updating it for 2019-2022. It will be based on five pillars: Business and Community Engagement (including transportation), Customer Centered Design, Funding and Resources, Policy and System Alignment, and System Management. A committee is being formulated to work on the plan, which will be kept short. Roseann Bucciarelli will be working on the committee. We hope to include becoming a 501(c) 3 so that we can pursue some private funding for projects.

- **2019 Meeting Location** will be changing to Middlesex County College.
- **Committee Structure and Meeting Format Changes** will be implemented in 2019. Some committees will be merged and some will change focus. The chair for each committee must be a Board member and every Board member will be required to sit on at least one committee. The Business committee will probably include a representative from each of the Talent Networks and it was suggested that the Chambers of Commerce should be part of this one also.
- **Proposed Policy** Resolution MCWDB 2018-03 adds three sectors to the Demand Occupation Labor Sectors List (Life Sciences/Biopharmaceuticals, Food Sciences, and Construction/Utilities. Resolution MCWDB 2018-04 requires that customers seeking training through WIOA demonstrate that their work experience is no longer relevant for the current Demand Occupation Labor sectors. Discussion followed concerning the need to still help those who need the help. It is not about denying training, but making sure we have the ability to deny if needed. It will be on a case by case basis when there are any doubts.

A “consent agenda” vote was called for by Kathy Shaw, seconded by Luis DeLaHoz and both Proposed Policy Resolutions were passed.

- **Old Business.** There was no old business to review.
- **New Business** a number of members had upcoming events they wanted to share, including:
 - The Office of Workforce Development is again hosting a veteran focused Job Fair on November 1 at the Woodbridge Community Center.
 - Commissioner Asaro-Angelo, Gave Lavigne, and Kevin Kurdziel will be featured on WCTCs morning show on November 13.
 - The Middlesex County Regional Chamber of Commerce is holding a networking event tomorrow.
- **Public Comment** None
- **Adjournment** A motion to adjourn the meeting was called for by Amy Bellisano, seconded by Bert Baron, a vote was called and the meeting was adjourned.

Handouts:

- Emailed ahead of the meeting:
 - Agenda
 - Minutes from July24, 2018 meeting
 - Designee Form
 - Committee reports
 - Policy Resolutions 2018-03 and 2018-04
- In Meeting packet:
 - Agenda
 - Member List
 - ELITE Youth Report
 - Business Unit report
 - Policy Resolutions 2018-03 and 2018-04
 - Operations Report/SkillUp™ Report
 - 2019 Meeting Schedule

**The next meeting will be January 22, 2019 at 9:00 AM in
The Brunswick Room, Crabel Hall, Middlesex County College.**