

*Quarterly Meeting April 26, 2022  
(Held electronically on Zoom.)*

Members Present:	Marie Bonamassa, Sandy Castor, Robert Davis, Dan Frankel, Paul Hiler, Melyssa Lewis, Rich Liebler, Poo Lin, Elayne McClaine, Jose Montes, Wes Petteway, Miriam Ruiz, Marc Schweitzer, Thomas Sommers, Lourdes Valdes,
Designees:	June Launay (for Gloria Aftanski), Laura Veron (for Angela Mackaronis), Tracey Montani (for Joanne Coffaro), Jennifer Pena (for Sherri Goldberg)
Excused:	Kyle Anderson, Jill Schiff, Chanelle Scott McCullum, Timothy Timberlake
Absent:	Thomas Iveson, Gabriel Lavigne,
Staff:	Jasmina Dizdarevic, Claudia Dorsch, Shamara Gatling-Davila, Kevin Kurdziel, Dennis McPartlan, ,Gueros Saintilma, Martin Schamberger, Diane Seavers, Melinda Walton
Guests:	Amy Banko, Savannah Barnett, Elizabeth Conte, Liana Volpe, Anthea Williams

**1) Call to Order**

- a) Pledge of Allegiance..... Lourdes Valdes
- b) Roll Call..... Paul Hiler

**2) Welcome and Introductions**

- a) Open Meetings Public Record Act ..... Lourdes Valdes
  - i) *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. Please be advised that this meeting is being recorded for the purposes of accurately recording the minutes of this meeting.*
- b) Approve of the Minutes from the January 25, 2022 Meeting..... Paul Hiler
  - i) A motion to approve the minutes from the January 25, 2022 meeting was called for by Marie Bonamassa and seconded by Marc Schweitzer. The vote was called and was unanimous for approval as written.

**3) Introduction of New Member** ..... Lourdes Valdes

Wes Petteway of Pettaway Financial was introduced to all as a newly appointed member of the WDB. He met Kevin Kurdziel at a function of the Middlesex Regional Chamber of Commerce and was invited to attend a meeting and consider becoming a member. His experience will able us to impact the help we are able to bring to the community

**4) Presentation: Rutgers University CTE Research Project**.....Amy Banko

- a) Ms. Banko shared a flyer with recruitment information for the project and went on to explain their goal.
- b) CTE (Career and Technical Education) Research project has a goal of providing individual tools and help to students in post-secondary education programs who struggle with mental health issues. They work with 8-10 participants from educational coaching to employment coaching.
- c) Students receive services for 18 months and a \$125 stipend and will continue to receive individualized mobile outreach services when they start employment.
- d) Ms. Banko was given a referral to our Vo-Tech and Elizabeth Conte from DVRS offered to meet and work with her. Coincidentally, this also fits in with the Transitional Job Policy we will discuss later in this meeting.

**5) Vice Chair Vacancy**..... Kevin Kurdziel

- a) Amy Bellisano, who has been a member of the WDB since 2007, has informed us that she has retired and will no longer be a member of the WDB. Since she was also the Vice Chair, a new person for that office must be chosen to fill her unexpired term until June 30, 2023.

- b) The process for this, since a quorum is present, will be to take nominations and present all of them to the members for a vote. Jill Schiff has already agreed to accept a nomination and the floor was opened for any other nominations of members from the private sector.
  - c) A motion was made by Robert Davis and seconded by Paul Hiler to nominate Jill Schiff to fill Amy Bellisano's unexpired term as Vice Chair. Chair, Lourdes Valdes called for any other nominations to be made. None were received and a motion to close the nominations and vote was made by Marc Schweitzer and seconded by Dan Frankel.
  - d) A clarification was asked for by Jose Montes concerning the procedure since not all members were present and therefore were not aware of their eligibility. Further discussion ensued and it was informally decided that since this position did need to be filled and should not wait until the July meeting, that we would proceed. If there were any objections, they would be addressed and it was offered that Ms. Schiff would be willing to step down if other nominees stepped up and were voted into office.
  - e) The standing motion to close the nominations was voted on and passed.
  - f) A motion to vote for Jill Schiff to replace Amy Bellisano as the Vice Chair had been called for by Marc Schweitzer, seconded by Dan Frankel, the vote was taken and passed unanimously. Jill Schiff will be the Vice Chair, replacing Amy Bellisano, until Ms. Bellisano's term would have expired on June 30, 2023.
- 6) **Quarterly Meeting Agenda Realignment** ..... Kevin Kurdziel
- a) Some slight adjustments to our meeting structure will be made starting in July.
  - b) The most visible one will be that the public comment section will be moved to the beginning of the meeting. Sometimes the items on the agenda take longer than expected and this will ensure that the public has a chance to speak in case the meeting has to close.
  - c) We will start to have the WDB accept the reports from the Committees and our office departments/programs by consent agenda.
  - d) Members will be encouraged to present/speak at the quarterly meetings and to let Mr. Kurdziel know if there is anything else they would like to see on the agenda.
- 7) **Creation of Ad-Hoc Committee for Private Sector WDB Members** ..... Kevin Kurdziel
- a) We are currently below the required percentage for private sector members and need to identify local business leaders and invite them to become involved. Other WDBs, including the SETC, are having the same issue.
  - b) The Chair will appoint 3-5 members to an Ad-Hoc committee in the near future to work on this.
  - c) Hopefully our new subscription to LinkedIn Recruiter will be approved and will help us achieve this.
  - d) We should follow-up with members who leave to see if they have suggestions for their replacement.
  - e) Neighboring counties have many common employers, so maybe a member of one WDB would be able to suggest a colleague for membership on another county's WDB so that the labor sectors of local areas are represented.
  - f) Elayne McClaine and Sandy Castor volunteered to be part of this committee and would like to have it up and running by the end of May.
  - g) Tracey Montani asked if we were looking for representatives from particular sectors? Mr. Kurdziel said some of our largest employers are in Transportation and Logistics and Health and that we would ideally like them to be in line with the County's Destination 2040. We would also like to increase small business representation on the Board. In keeping with requirements of WIOA reauthorization, we will also be looking closer at diversity, equality, and inclusion in WDB membership.
- 8) **Work Based Learning Strategies** ..... Kevin Kurdziel, Diane Seavers, Shamara Gatling-Davila
- a) Work Base Learning Strategies are the latest trend in Workforce Development and we are a little bit behind other states. But there is a new State initiative of \$150M that we received. We need to obligate it by June 30 which is almost impossible, but we have been assured that there will be a new allocation on July 1. This will assure more consistency across the state and maximizes our funding.
  - b) EDSI and GSETA Institute are working together on staff training in modules.

- c) Rich Liebler says he set this up with Job Corps 13 years ago and it has been very successful and he asked members to contact him for information and to share the experience he has had with it.
- 9) **Update SkillUp™ Connection Sites** ..... Diane Seavers
- a) In addition to expanding to many other Middlesex libraries, we would also like to utilize space at Community organizations by the fall.
- b) A workshop will be presented on April 28 regarding the latest New Jersey cottage food laws.
- 10) **Procurement Monitoring**..... Diane Seavers
- a) We have passed our PY monitoring and have received a draft copy of the final report after we addressed, with the assistance of Purchasing, any areas of concern. We will share the final version when it is received.
- 11) **American Recovery Act Funding Request Update**..... Kevin Kurdziel
- a) Our Office requested \$3 million to be used to expand our reach and services. We hope to receive word during May. These funds would be available to us through 2026.
- b) We would like to open a satellite office in Jamesburg to help both business and residents by being more accessible to that area of the County. A Small Business Academy could be started there. We would also like to use some of the money for marketing since we cannot use WIOA funds for that purpose.
- 12) **Unemployment Insurance Update** .....Kevin Kurdziel, Diane Seavers
- a) Limited in-person appointments are being offered to people with long-standing issues and no problems were encountered at any of the One Stops.
- b) The current administration was faced with outdated technology but the Commissioner and his staff worked with local areas to resolve issues as best they could.
- 13) **WIOA Reauthorization**..... Kevin Kurdziel
- a) This is technically overdue by two years, but was delayed.
- b) The House bill could be voted on in May and would then go to the Senate who could make changes.
- c) We do not expect sweeping changes as in 2014, some minor changes might happen and could be influenced by the results of mid-term elections. A Democratic majority would favor job seekers, while a Republican one would favor businesses.
- d) Other changes might expand Labor participation of the WDBs from 20% to 30%, which could be a challenge to counties that do not have a strong labor union presence. The infrastructure funding agreement section, which was becoming irrelevant, might also be removed.
- e) As information becomes available, we will send it to members.
- 14) **Review of Policy Resolutions \*** .....Lourdes Valdes, Kevin Kurdziel
- a) Mr. Kurdziel gave a brief review of each policy resolution that was sent ahead of time on the following topics:
- i) Letters of Support PY-21-01-R
- ii) Transitional Jobs PY-21-02-R
- iii) Procurement PY-21-03-R
- b) A motion to vote on the three policy resolutions as a consent agenda was made by Wes Pettaway, seconded by Paul Hiler and passed unanimously.
- 15) **Unfinished Business**..... Lourdes Valdes
- a) Mr. Kurdziel gave some information about LinkedIn programs “Talent Insights” and “Recruiter” which will help us identify both employer contacts and job seekers. It will allow us to establish a presence on LinkedIn with our own page. The cost to us will be \$123,480 for a one-year subscription with the 50% government discount.
- b) Lourdes Valdes expressed the opinion that this was a very good price and will help us recruit employers.
- c) The state is looking at using this state-wide next year so we would not have to keep our own subscription.
- 16) **New Business** ..... Lourdes Valdes
- a) Mr. Kurdziel brought up that we need to meet with the County Administration to get help with outreach. While their branding initiatives include us, it is not enough.
- i) We need to ability to work with social media directly, not always through their marketing and communications areas. Other WDBs can, why can't we?

- ii) We are not just an advisory board, we do have some governance responsibilities such as approval of the budget and setting policy. Mr. Frankel suggested that perhaps all the Administrators and Commissioners are not aware of what we do and that we should present at a Board of Commissioners meeting. Ms. Valdez and Mr. Frankel will try to set up a meeting with the County Administrator to discuss this.
  - iii) Some felt that County Administration was impeding what we do and that we should show them expert proof that other WDBs do their own marketing. Mr. Kurdziel advised that we should not appear be adversarial, but rather try to present as working in collaboration with them. Since there has really been no meeting such as is proposed in a very long time, it is overdue.
  - b) The NJ DOL posted a Notice of Funding of \$6 million state-wide for the purchase of technology for Public Assistance customers. We applied, and hope to receive funding for the purchase of 25 laptops for WFNJ and TANF customers. The program includes insurance on the equipment and aligns with the County's Destination 2040.
- 17) Adjournment.** A motion to adjourn was made by Dan Frankel, seconded by Jose Montes, and the meeting was adjourned.

**\* Action Item**

**Handouts:**

No physical meeting packet was prepared, all items were emailed ahead of the meeting:

- Agenda
- Minutes from January 25, 2022 meeting
- Designee Form
- Abilities, YAC, and Literacy Committee Reports
- SkillUp™ Report
- Business Solutions Report
- Resolutions and Policies:  
*Letters of Support PY-21-01-R*  
*Transitional Jobs PY-21-02-R*  
*Procurement PY-21-R*

**The next meeting is scheduled for July 26, 2022 at 9:00 AM**

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