



*Supporting the Development and Retention of a World Class Workforce*

Jeffrey S. Swartz, Executive Director

Matthew Verney, Board Chair

**OPERATIONS COMMITTEE MEETING  
MINUTES, NOVEMBER 12, 2021**

**WDB Office, 1111 Marlkrass Road, Cherry Hill (Zoom Conferencing)**

**ATTENDANCE**

MEMBERS		11-Jun-21	9-Jul-21	6-Aug-21	10-Sep-21	12-Oct-21	12-Nov-21
DeBaere, Gregg T., CHAIR	Atlantic Coast Communications	X	X	X	X	X	X
Cirii, Frank	Camden County One Stop	X			X	X	
Connors, Kristi	NJ Department of Labor, Business Services	X	X	X	X	X	X
Deitz, Jeff	NJDVRs		X	X		X	
Jones-Benjamin, Michaela	Camden County Board of Social Services			X			
Martin, Lauwana	Camden County Board of Social Services			X			
McFarland, Salama	Camden County Board of Social Services				X	X	X
Regensburger, Robert	Lockheed Martin	X	X	X	X	X	X
Ludizaca, Raul	NJ Dept. of Labor			X			X
Sinclair, Nidia	Camden County Resource Center						
Weil, Bob	WDB Chair	X	X		X		X
Swartz, Jeffrey S.	WDB	X	X	X	X	X	X
Williams, Leslie J	WDB	X	X	X	X	X	X
Varallo, Kathleen	WDB	X		X	X	X	X

**WELCOME**

Gregg DeBaere, Chair, called the meeting to order at 9:08am and welcomed attendees. He referred to the minutes October 12<sup>th</sup>, 2021 and asked for a motion to approve them subject to any grammatical changes. Bob Weil made the first motion; Leslie Williams made the second motion. By unanimous vote to the affirmative the motion was carried, and minutes October 12<sup>th</sup>, 2021, were approved.

• **ONE – STOP & WDB CERTIFICATION**

Gregg asked Leslie Williams, Comptroller, WDB, to report on any updates about regional and local planning. Leslie reported the State Employment and Training Commission (SETC) has not released any guidance yet. She said it was said to have been coming in November but nothing yet. Regional and local plans are typically due in December or January, so they will have to extend that deadline to give local areas time to complete them. Gregg said deadlines may be extended out to the spring of 2022. Jeffrey S. Swartz, Executive Director, said much will depend on the directives of the Feds. He had heard guidance might be released later in November or early December. Gregg asked and Jeff confirmed that the FED did approve the State's Combined Plan. The SETC is still in the process of reviewing and approving other local area WDB Certifications.

• **BOARD OF SOCIAL SERVICES UPDATE**

It is the mission of the Camden County Board of Social Services to provide timely, efficient, cost-effective delivery of social, medical, and economic programs in a compassionate and financially responsible manner. The Camden County Board of Social Services is accessible to disabled persons. (Follow the link for more information. <http://www.camdencounty.com/service/social-services/>).

Salama McFarland, Case Management Administrator, Board of Social Services (BSS) reported the Board is about to go back to required work activities for TANF and employable GA. She said statewide there are 6500 TANF Adults and 9000 GA that need to be placed in a work activity. There is no work or specifics right now about how this process will be rolled out. The Division did discuss the GA 28-day protocol which will start in January for new applicants only, so any GA recipient case opened during the pandemic will have to participate in an activity, but it does not have to be a whole protocol.

Salama reported the national ABAWD waiver expires at the end of January, but New Jersey got their own waiver that will expire at the end of 2023. They are still talking about making that program voluntary anyway. Gregg asked Salama what her thoughts were about the ABAWD program. She said the program has always been a challenge. It creates a lot of confusion about waivers, and eligibility is challenging as well. Salama said Emergency assistance will end in January also, but the division is trying to avoid more homelessness. Many cases were not closed out during the pandemic and while waivers are still in place. She said maximum benefits were allotted to many during the pandemic so many clients only know about receiving this amount of SNAP benefits, so they will be shocked by the reduction. Salama said clients now receiving \$192.00 per month, may get dropped down to \$16.00 per month. That is a huge drop if that is all they have known.

Salama reported the Board will be able to continue with electronic signatures to process documents. Federal law says that electronic signatures are to be recorded, so staff will be adding this additional step. The State will be looking to create a statewide system in case there are transfers of paperwork from one county to another. Gregg asked Salama if she knew what vendor will be used to complete this process. She was not sure. Gregg asked if there has been thought about a phased approach to SNAP recipients to ease the shock of such a reduction in allotments. Salama said she is hoping that messaging will help. She said it would be nice if allotments were reduced gradually, but that will not happen. Salama also noted there is not going to be a monitoring requirement for face-to-face interviews with customers. This will be a challenge, because many of the ways staff services customers is by appointment in the offices. Salama said there are certain protocols in place to ensure the customer will show up before we provide full support. She will be speaking with other state partner agencies to see if they will be bringing customers in or how it can be accomplished virtually. Gregg asked if customers have computers or will they be connecting by phone. Salama said it is hard to say. She said some folks may not own any technology. She said many procedures will have to be looked at so we can serve customers safely and without sanctions. Kristi Connors, Manager, Employment Services, DOL, said she cannot imagine gathering in groups even when it all comes back. The Board could send employment services a list and those customers could be contacted by phone. There will be some sort of protocol that establishes the criteria for sanction if the customer does not respond to individualized contact and reporting virtually. The Committee discussed some ideas and agreed to continue planning for what might come once waivers are lifted. Leslie said texting

seems to be the greatest reach to most people or get the best response. Kristi said her division will be getting DocuSign and fillable forms can be adapted. She said as long as customers are willing to participate, we can figure out a way to help them.

Salama reported, for the month of October, the Board was able to reach out to 1004 SNAP recipients, 424 TANF, and 501 GA. The amounts that were referred to a voluntary work activity, was 34 SNAP, 9 TANF, and 10 GA. The amount shown to be currently participating is 1 SNAP, 52 TANF, and 98 GA. Salama reported 22 clients started employment, 18 of those were TANF, 3 were SNAP, and one was GA. Transportation vouchers were issued to 5 TANF, 10 GA, and childcare to 3 TANF recipients. The Committee discussed their hope that customers will begin looking for help to get back to work. All agreed that the lack of referrals has had a significant impact on performance, and this is Jeff noted this is the case for all local areas across the State. Gregg said the good news is that when waivers are gone, this local area will be ready to go and not be blind-sided by the influx. Gregg said he appreciated Salama's reporting and staying on top of updates. He asked if there were any further questions for Salama. Jeff asked if her staff was all back in the office and vaccinated or following safety protocols. Salama said mandatory vaccination has not been put in place yet. Staff must fill out a daily survey. Temperature scanning has been discontinued. She said the waiting area will be re-opening. The Department of Health has given the ok to do so with expanded seating. She said the front desk will be eliminated, because it is causing a line, but we don't want customers waiting outside in the cold weather. Leslie asked and Salama confirmed that mask requirements are still in place for those unvaccinated. All staff must wear a mask when interacting with customers.

- EMPLOYMENT SERVICES, DOL, UPDATE

Employment Services provides Camden County with Career and Employer services including Temporary Disability Benefits, Family Leave Insurance, Maternity Leave, Unemployment Insurance, Social Security Disability and Workers Compensation. Services for employers included job candidate screening and recruitment. (Follow the link for more information) <https://www.nj.gov/labor/career-services/>

Kristi Connors, Manager, Employment Services, DOL, reported a temperature scanner has been placed at the customer entrance, there was one already placed at the employee entrance. Employees scanned with a higher temperature must sit in their car for ten minutes, wait, and try again. If their temp is still high, they are asked to go and work from home. They must contact their supervisor and human capital strategy office. Customers scanning with a high temp are asked to leave the facility and contact their doctor or health professional. She also reported that staff participated in training for testing. She explained the self-testing process for unvaccinated staff. Kristi said she was thankful because all her staff has been vaccinated. She said other partner offices may have the challenge of testing. She and Jeff Dietz, Manager, DVRS, will be the lead on testing as needed. She said an outside vendor will process the test mailed to them by the employee, via UPS. The Committee discussed the challenges of employee self-testing.

Kristi reported she created a couple of power point presentations for the new state scheduling system and shared them with Scott Stetzer, Manager, Tech Support. She will be sending him a video, so he can get more informed about implementation. She said very few people, when contacted, are interested in scheduling an appointment, because we can help them over the phone or they are more advance, we can help them via a Microsoft Teams call. There have not

been a lot of customers insisting on coming in the building. The virtual system is working, so the scheduling system has been a non-issue for her division. Kristi noted the staff has been returned to in-office schedules since October 18<sup>th</sup> and they have not seen an uptick in customers coming to the building. Kristi said staff is keeping track of customers, and a fear of an influx of customers has not happened, so word of mouth has worked in our favor even without mass messaging from the State. She said the average is about 8 people a day being turned away, which is very low.

Kristi reported year-to-date check-ins, as of today's meeting, were 2723 customers. Virtual service requests forms 2128, and of those, 521 were referred to the county for training. The average is about 30 per week, and those customer contacts are sent weekly to MIS. MIS sends a blast email follow-up to those customers expressing interest in training. Kristi reported 50 customers were referred to ES from training counselors. These are those that are getting ready to obtain a voucher for training. She said 50 were referred and we have been able to assist 24 customers, with services, and help them with their resume. She is assuming those who staff was not able to reach are already in training.

Kristi reported on the Board's voluntary call campaign referred 60 customers, and we were able place them in work activity.

- **REGIONAL ACTIVITIES**

Jeff reported WDB staff has been attending some outreach efforts to promote the ACE program for 2022. The next cohort of WISE and GIE math classes will be start in January. He said the outreach produced about 50-60 candidates registered for the information sessions that will be hosted virtually sometime in December. Camden County College will conduct the training for these courses.

Jeff reported the Line School Training, at the Anthony Canale Training Center in Egg Harbor Township, will likely run in the early spring of 2022. Sherwood Taylor, Atlantic Cape Community College, who oversees the program, is still waiting on delivery of important pieces of training yard equipment. Participants have been given some safety equipment such as boots and work hats. They have been notified and are receiving more online training; however, they cannot start the pole climbing and bucket truck training until every piece of safety equipment is present on the site.

Jeff reported Camden Works is going well. He regularly attends those calls and at last reporting there were 5 new entries to the database, which brings the total number of job candidates up to 712 registered in the system. Of those registered, 587 are Camden City residents, 125 are residents in the County. There were 2 new placements for employment, so all total, Camden Works has place 361 residents in employment. The CW Advisory Committee continues to engage both Camden City, and regional employers to make them aware of the candidates and the program.

Jeff reported GSETA is hosting its employment and training conference scheduled on November 15<sup>th</sup> & 16<sup>th</sup>, 2021. Jeff reminded the committee there are some outstanding presenters who are committed to speak. More information can be found on the newly launched website; [www.gseta.org](http://www.gseta.org). Kristi confirmed the registration information with Jeff. Jeff said the response has been very good.

- CONSORTIUM & INDUSTRY PARTNERSHIP UPDATES

Jeff reported he participated in a meeting to launch a second Industry Partnership consortium in the energy sector. There were representatives from ACE, PSEG, and others on the call. He said connections with PSEG have been good and they are very interested in the ACE training program. Jeff said the WDB has been focused on some state monitoring. Gregg asked who was running the audit side of the State. Jeff named Patricia Robertson. Jeff welcomed Raul Ludizaca, Technical Assistance Liaison, WIOA Program Oversight and Development, DOL who was attending today's Operations meeting. Raul confirmed that Patricia Robertson is the lead of the monitoring team. He said there are two parts to the team. One half of the team is focused on monitoring. The other half of the team is focusing on technical assistance.

- BUSINESS SERVICES & OUTREACH TEAM (BSOT)UPDATES

Bob Weil, Chair BSOT, asked Jeff to help give the update as he did not receive the minutes for that meeting yet. Jeff reported Jeanne Page-Soncrant, BSR, and Ricky O'Hara, Veterans Rep. are continuing the job matching initiative. Amanda Modale, Supervisor, BSR, DOL, is continuing to send weekly reports of employer engagement while Jeanne is on partial leave. He said the One-Stop, WDB and County participated in a Job Fair at the Cherry Hill Mall on Friday, September 17<sup>th</sup>. Mike Leonetti, Paraprofessional was also in attendance connecting with employers. The BSR's are working together on lots of regional job recruitments both virtual and in-person. Jeff said they have been sending us recruitment flyers and we are posting these job opportunities on our social media outlets. Gregg asked if employers are still saying they are having a hard time filling their open job positions. Jeff said they are, and jobseekers are being very picky about the type of work they wish to pursue. He said there are still a lot of positions open and there are still a lot of people looking for work. The BSR team is trying to help employers find qualified candidates that want to work.

Kristi gave an update about the Unemployment (UI) Division at the One-Stop. They will not be returning to the facility, so the additional desk workspace for new hires they were requesting will not be needed. There is at least one manager reporting to the office daily. There was a small staff reporting to the office, but they have returned to remote work. She also announced that John Martin, Assistant Manager, UI, retired as of today, November 12<sup>th</sup>.

- BEST PRACTICES DOCUMENTATION

Gregg thanked the committee for their writing contributions to the best practices white paper. He said all submissions were very helpful. He liked Jeff's title of Best Practices Documentation. He asked the committee to comment on the progress of the document. Gregg said he wanted to take the approach of viewing the departments as a whole partnership and look for the common threads taking the reader to consideration. Gregg said as he reviewed the eight points of an effective white paper, it was noted that companies use this type of paper for a targeted audience who knows about the subject material, and it is usually used to sell them on a product or solution. When he thought about the audience for this document, it became clear that we must take a deeper dive into the details of processes and changes. In other words, board members may not be as highly educated on processes as members of this committee. Bob Regensburger, Project Principal, Economic Development Programs, Lockheed Martin, said his original concept of the document was to be suitable to go up the chain of leadership in the Department of Labor. The

paper will demonstrate the innovative ways the management team adapted to challenge and change. Jeff said it was important to position the document as a local area best processes report. Bob Weil said it should reflect the cohesiveness and flexibility of the management team. The Committee discussed more details, common themes, and the overarching outcomes of the white paper. Kristi and Salama will work on more details about the referral processes and internal ways they worked together to serve customers during pandemic closures. Gregg said he appreciated the discussion. He will look forward to more input from the committee and he will keep writing the summary and conclusion. He will also review the executive summary again to see if he can weave in more of the leadership flexibility, and cohabitating themes. Bob R. agreed the executive summary could set the stage for its purpose, and layout the themes that can be further expounded upon later in the document. Gregg said he will re-do the ES and adjust the table of contents. Jeff referred to the score card the committee created in 2015. He suggested that Gregg look at the score card to incorporate some positive outcomes, and improvements measured in that document. Gregg asked Jeff to send a copy to Bob R. and himself. Bob R. said it sets the stage for a legacy of innovation by the team. He said based on what he is hearing about the score card, the team may have considered conceptually how things might evolve and that is a point that can be mentioned in the document.

- QUARTERLY BOARD MEETING

The next WDB Quarterly Board of Trustees meeting is scheduled for Wednesday, December 15<sup>th</sup>. @8:30am via Zoom Conferencing. Karen Carroll, State Director, DVRS, is confirmed to speak at that meeting.

#### NEXT MEETING

Hearing no further questions, Gregg thanked the committee; they discussed moving up the date of the next meeting. The next Operations meeting will be held on Friday, December 3rd. 9:00am via Zoom Conferencing. Gregg asked for a motion to adjourn the meeting. Bob Weil made the first motion; Jeff Swartz made the second motion; by unanimous vote to the affirmative the motion was carried, and meeting adjourned at 10:32am.

Submitted by:

*Kathleen Varallo*

Administrative Assistant