



Supporting the Development and Retention of a World Class Workforce

Jeffrey S. Swartz, Executive Director

Robert Weil, Chair

**OPERATIONS COMMITTEE MEETING
MINUTES, MAY 8, 2020**

WDB Office, 1111 Marlkrass Road, Cherry Hill (Conference Call)

ATTENDANCE

Member	13-Jun-19	11-Jul-19	20-Sept-19	18-Oct-19	14-Nov-19	12-Dec-19	10-Jan-20	14-Feb-20	13-Mar-20	24-Apr-20	8-May-20
DeBaere, Gregg T., CHAIR											
Atlantic Coast Communications	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Austin, Keith						X			X		
Cirii, Frank		X	X	X	X		X	X		X	
Connors, Kristi	X	X	X	X	X	X	X		X	X	X
Deitz, Jeff	X		X	X	X		X	X	X	X	X
Jones-Benjamin, Michaela					X				X		
Maguire, Laurie					X						
McFarland, Salama		X	X	X		X	X	X		X	X
Regensburger, Robert		X	X		X	X	X	X		X	X
Sinclair, Nidia	X					X	X		X	X	X
Weil, Bob	X			X		X		X		X	X
Swartz, Jeffrey S.	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Williams, Leslie J	X	X	X		X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Varallo, Kathleen	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X

WELCOME

Gregg DeBaere, Chair, called the meeting to order at 9:05am. He welcomed attendees to the conference call. He asked for a roll call. The Committee discussed personal experiences with remote working and COVID 19 response efforts. He noted that the agenda is set up as usual to remind the committee about normal reporting and priorities. He said if there is nothing to report about certain agenda items it can be stated for the record that there are no new updates at this time.

ONE – STOP & WDB CERTIFICATION

Gregg asked for confirmation that there has been no feedback from the state regarding the One-Stop Certification or Local Plan Update documents. Leslie Williams, Comptroller, WDB, confirmed. Leslie reported the Partner Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) and Infrastructure Funding Agreement (IFA) were submitted on time with all the required signatures and she received confirmation of receipt from Joe Dombrowski, Division of Workforce Field Services, LWD. She said there have been no new updates on the State Combined Plan. Gregg asked Jeff if he heard of any feedback about the State Plan from the State Employment and Training Commission (SETC). Jeffrey S. Swartz, Executive Director, reported the SETC may be dealing with other issues during this state of emergency. He said once the SETC does receive official feedback from the federal Department of Labor, it will dictate the guidance for the regional and local plans.

• **ONE-STOP AND YOUTH ONE-STOP (YOS) UPDATES**

Nidia Sinclair, Director, Career Center, reported there is no exact date set for re-opening the One-Stop. A tentative date has been set for May 26th. Re-opening plans will be discussed with

the senior management team. Re-opening plans are highly dependent on the participation of Unemployment (UI) in the process. She reported there has been no official plan sent by UI but she did hear they were scheduled to meet today, May 8th. Estimates about how many customers could be seen by UI in a day have been discussed. These estimates can help us determine a plan for re-opening, knowing that most of the customers will be coming to the One-stop with concerns regarding their unemployment claims. Kristi Connors, Manager, Employment Services, said it also depends on how many customers can be in the public access area, at one time, according to CDC or OSHA protocols for social distancing. Nidia said this information is needed to make recommendations about how to serve customers. Customers might be seen by appointment only or by issuing a staggered schedule protocol. The Committee discussed possible ways to manage the flow of customers upon re-opening. Gregg asked Jeff if there has been any guidance received by the county health department regarding inspection of the facility. Jeff said that the health department may have some standard operating guidance when it comes to opening a county facility, but it has not been received. Nidia said the notice of a tentative re-opening was just received yesterday so there really has been no time to communicate with the county.

Gregg asked about the current cleaning schedule of the One-Stop facility. Nidia said there is daily cleaning completed in the evening. Nidia spoke with Brian Ferguson, Facilities Manager, about bringing back a person who was cleaning the facility on a more frequent basis and that this person becomes a part of the crew. Gregg said it will be important to clean the facility on a regular basis and that cleaning products recommended by the CDC are being used.

Gregg asked the committee for any data and discussion about UI engagement and the number of unresolved unemployment claims. He said the committee is receiving reports about how many claims have been filed in the county, but his question addressed the backlog of claims that have not been fully processed for one reason or another. Jeff said there is no exact number but based on daily conference calls with the state, the numbers are very high. He estimated the numbers to be in the 60% range. One major reason for unresolved claims is when a customer answers the weekly claim questions, one wrong answer will kick the claim out of the system and then it must be manually reset by a UI person. Other unresolved claim issues are those that would be covered under the federal coverage. These would be claims not normally covered by the state such as self-employed or gig workers.

Gregg referred to the minutes of the last meeting stating that the state would be doing a walk-through before a formal re-opening to make recommendations. Jeff referred to notes from his daily conference calls with Hugh Bailey, Assistant Commissioner, LWD. He read that a formal plan and protocol would be sent by the state before re-opening. There will be a document forthcoming from the state describing opening protocol.

Gregg asked about the shuttle service. Nidia reported she sent a notice to SJTA that the facility was closed until further notice. There are no further updates. She will send a notice to them when the One-Stop is open to public access. Nidia confirmed that the plan is to continue the shuttle service program when the One-Stop re-opens.

- LEARNING LINK UPDATE

Nidia reported that staff participated in a virtual CASAS training about incorporating an online package for testing. The program seemed costly and not worth purchasing for this temporary state emergency. Counselors also reported they had concerns about customer support and pre-testing. They did not see how it would change or improve the onboard testing. As it relates to the Learning Link, Nidia said the instructors are working with students on a daily basis. Some students have online access to the AZTEC learning software, and instructors can monitor their progress. Counselors are keeping in touch with customers who do not have online access. Patti Beach, Instructor, Learning Link, is entering activity, engagement, and progress in to the AOSOS system.

Nidia reported she sent an email to Stephanie Bitner from Clarify, a community organization that was conducting successful Financial Literacy Workshops at the One-Stop a few years back. She would like to see them return. She will provide more details once she hears back from them.

- YOUTH ORIENTATION AND WORKSHOPS

Nidia reported that all youth programs are on-hold due to the state of emergency. She did announce that YOS management and the WDB will be participating in a conference call about the Youth Work Experience Program on May 12th. Jeff and Leslie confirmed there has been no state guidance issued about that program and they have not heard any updates about the Summer Youth Employment Program Proposal.

- COOPER HOSPITAL – MEDICAL CODING INITIATIVE (CMCI)

A consortium including Cooper University Healthcare, Camden County College, Hopeworks, the Camden County One-Stop and the Camden County Workforce Development Board have organized to create a certificate program in Medical Coding offered by Camden County College and approved by the American Health Information Management Association as an appropriate training platform, with the addition of certain life skills training provided by Hopeworks. Hopeworks will qualify participants for the positions and the career ladders will be identified by Cooper. This will further enable the participants to advance academically towards securing associate and baccalaureate degrees.

Jeff reported Lou Bezich, Senior Vice President, Strategic Alliances, Cooper University Health Care, is remaining supportive of the Medical Coding Program and is actively encouraging the formation of a new program for Emergency Medical Technicians (EMT). Hopeworks designed and submitted a draft brochure and support materials. Camden County College will provide the EMT training at the Camden City Campus. Jeff said he and Frank Cirii are participating in conference calls to discuss the program.

- 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 agency is continuing to operate and staff are continuing to work in the office on an alternating basis. Most of the staff, working from home, has been provided with Go-to-My-PC access so they can continue to help with client interviews and processing.

Salama also reported the office is disinfected on a regular basis and gets a deep cleaning every Saturday. She discussed one COVID concern and how it was properly handled according to county Department of the Health safety regulations. She also reported the loss of one staff member to the COVID virus. He was not working at the office.

Salama reported both WSON and CWA Unions requested additional health measures be put into place including a rule that face masks will be mandatory for all staff and clients entering or working in the building. Temperature scans will be conducted at the main entrance before entering the building. A temperature of 100.0 degrees will be considered as high. If an employee has that degree of temp, they will have the option of waiting outside for a period of ten minutes before re-scanning to see if it changes. Clients will not have the same option. Kristi asked who is doing the scanning. Salama said temperature scanning is being done by security staff. The Committee discussed new customer, staff and office safety standards being implemented by the BSS and other best practices of offices in the county. Salama said she would share any written policies and procedures with the committee as they plan the re-opening of the One-Stop. Nidia said she attended a webinar hosted by Conner Strong & Buckelew Companies, Inc., Camden that discussed safety protocols and such best practices as remote temperature scanning. All agreed that it will be important to have clear safety guidelines for the nine partner agencies co-located at the One-Stop Career Center.

Salama reported that all SNAP and health benefits have been extended through the month of May. She said there is some backlog with new claims but now that staff are fully set up to work remotely, they are able to help catch up. Gregg asked if case management will be reviewing cases that were extended by the pandemic. Salama said the information system is showing the status of clients and she will get a report of those that will need recertification.

- **DVRS UPDATES & PROJECT SEARCH – JEFFERSON/KENNEDY HOSPITAL**

The Division of Vocational Rehabilitation Services provides counseling, training, education, transportation, job placement, assistive technology, and other support services to people with disabilities. (Follow the link for more information) <https://www.ncdhhs.gov/divisions/dvrs>

Jeff Dietz, Manager DVRS, reported his staff is working from home and reporting to the office on a limited alternating schedule. Some DVRS clients are still maintaining employment. Some employers want to hire DVRS clients but only until regular staff returns to work so staff are being very protective of that type of situation.

Jeff D. said that DVRS is having other issues with the special services schools. It will be difficult to process senior students with special abilities for continued education or career development. The colleges are closed, and this is creating a transitional problem.

Gregg asked for an update about PPE for staff, discussed at the last meeting. He read from the last minutes that Jeff D. would be driving to the Trenton to pick up the personal protective equipment. Jeff said that Kristi was able to take care of delivery challenges.

- **EMPLOYMENT SERVICES, LWD**

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/aboutlwd/>

Kristi Connors, Manager, Employment Services, LWD, reported she cleared up delivery issues and PPE has been delivered for all state agencies located in the One-Stop Career Center facility. She said her staff is working remotely. They have been categorized as non-essential since March 17th. The State considers all department of labor as essential but there is nothing in writing, so she is keeping a daily log of all activity for her department.

Kristi asked for input from the committee about customer check-in once the One-Stop re-opens. She turned over the computer tablets to RIT, offered by the WDB, to see if they could be re-programmed for use of the check-in survey, she developed for the One-Stop. If they cannot be used, she said it will be more important than ever to track the customer flow in the building once it is re-opened. Gregg said the use of clip boards was discussed at the last meeting. The Committee discussed possible alternatives with regard to how the One-Stop will socially distance and control the influx of customers that will be coming in about UI claims. Kristi said there may be a WIOA allowance for purchasing some system upgrades that will improve efficiency and safety measures. She suggested less staff at the front desk, with maybe one or more staff members serving as navigators to take down customer information and direct them properly with appointment and or safety instructions. The State UI is talking about opening with no public access phones. There is still a backlog of claims and the One-Stop cannot open without the presence of UI. All agreed that some system of appointments and check-in will have to include the possible scenarios addressing angry customers still waiting for UI claims to be processed. Jeff said he will set up an additional conference call to discuss a solid re-opening plan. In the meantime, the committee agreed to forward all policy drafts, best practices, and suggested procedures to the WDB. Once a plan for re-opening is written, it will be vetted by the county and then sent to the state. The Committee also discussed a soft opening, giving staff a chance to get into the office and be trained on the new safety protocol before opening to public access.

- **REGIONAL ACTIVITIES**

Jeff reported the Atlantic City Electric (ACE) Training Initiative is in its second year of offering. All local participants completed the Worker In Sustainable Energy (WISE) class before Camden County College closed to public access. The second phase of training Get Into Energy (GIE) math is on hold. The class will commence some time later this summer. An additional online program, endorsed by the Center for Energy and Workforce Development (CEWD), is being offered to all participants while they await further training. This program is being paid for by additional ACE

grant funds. The online program is not related specifically to the electrical industry, but more to interpersonal and work-readiness skills. The third phase of training will be the Line Training. This training is going to be conducted at the Anthony Canale Training Center in Egg Harbor Township, NJ. Jeff reported that the contracts, equipment orders and instructor agreements are still in the process of being finalized. He also said the southern counties, working on this program, will be joining ACE to offer a virtual information session for employers explaining the benefits of hiring participants of the program.

- **CONSORTIUM & INDUSTRY PARTNERSHIP UPDATES**

Jeff reported the Health Care Consortium meetings have been cancelled until further notice due to the demands on the healthcare industry in response to COVID – 19 response efforts.

Jeff reported the South Jersey Industry Regional Partnership, aimed at growing and strengthening the manufacturing sector, is continuing follow-up discussions that resulted from their initial launch in February 2020. The State is hoping to reconvene with the employers that attended the launch. The plan is to convene a virtual meeting sometime in June.

- **BUSINESS SERVICES (BSR)**

Jeff reported the Business Service Team continues to meet virtually and is receiving weekly updates from Jeanne Page-Soncrant, BSR serving Camden County. He said BSR teams are being considered essential during the state of emergency. They are applying resources to employers requesting help with staff layoffs, personal unemployment claims and direction to state and federal loan contacts. The BSR team has been working remotely from home on a number of projects and is crossing over a little bit more to the career coaching side in terms what they are call “Job Matching”. The BSR’s are being asked to search on a minimum of 15 jobs per week, especially essential jobs and businesses that are still up and running. They may assist an employer to post the job to the state labor exchange system. Then they send email blasts to job seekers in the system and keep track of applicants as much as possible. It is a good way of helping the employer achieve some recruitment results. He reported in terms of the Census, the county is seeing a good response rate, although census takers are on hold. The deadline for filing the census has been extended to October.

QUARTERLY BOARD MEETING

The next WDB Quarterly Board of Trustees meeting is scheduled for Wednesday, June 24 via Zoom conferencing.

NEXT MEETING

The next Operations Committee meeting will be scheduled for Friday, June 12, via Zoom conferencing. The Committee discussed changing to a summer schedule of meetings once the One-Stop is re-opened and settled.

Submitted by:

Kathleen Varallo

Administrative Assistant