



Supporting the Development and Retention of a World Class Workforce

Jeffrey S. Swartz, Executive Director

Robert Weil, Chair

**OPERATIONS COMMITTEE MEETING
MINUTES, AUGUST 13, 2020**

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

ATTENDANCE

Member	10-Jan-20	14-Feb-20	13-Mar-20	24-Apr-20	8-May-20	12-Jun-20	16-Jul-20	13-Aug-20
DeBaere, Gregg T., CHAIR	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Cirii, Frank	X	X		X		X	X	X
Connors, Kristi	X		X	X	X	X	X	X
Deitz, Jeff	X	X	X	X	X		X	X
Jones-Benjamin, Michaela			X					
Maguire, Laurie								
McFarland, Salama	X	X		X	X	X	X	X
Regensburger, Robert	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
Williams, Leslie J	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Varallo, Kathleen	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X

WELCOME

Gregg DeBaere, Chair, called the meeting to order at 9:12am. Committee members discussed some difficulty signing into the Zoom meeting. Leslie Williams, Comptroller, WDB guided some attendees through some glitches to connecting. Once all attendees were properly connected, Gregg asked for a sound check roll call and directed the committee to the agenda.

ONE – STOP & WDB CERTIFICATION

Gregg asked for confirmation that the status of the certification documents remains unchanged. Leslie Williams, Comptroller, WDB, confirmed there are no new updates or feedback regarding the Partner Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) and Infrastructure Funding Agreement (IFA) and One-Stop Certification Documents.

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

Frank Cirii, Local Area Operation Director, reported staff of the One-Stop has been on the job for one month and there have been no problems. The current challenge is the lack of referrals due to the ongoing state of emergency. Staff are continuing to work on digitizing and upgrading systems to provide virtual services. Nidia Sinclair, Director Resource Center, has been working with Frank Filipek, Director, County Events and Outreach, and is nearing the completion of a virtual training and career plan orientation. A list of virtual services and contacts has been completed and posted to the county's website.

Frank reported that Unemployment (UI) Division engagement is still an ongoing concern. His staff is doing the best they can to direct UI customers to the proper contact information. Frank

reported that the QLess scheduling system is still in the process of being implemented. The company is experiencing a big backlog for their product, although they are still within the six to ten-week projected completion of the program installation. All partner needs and input have been collected and forwarded to the company. There is a huge demand for the product. Frank said he will continue to keep the committee updated with progress. The need is not currently a concern because most customer engagement is being handled virtually at this time.

Frank reported that he completed a survey sent to the County Administrator (CA) regarding the Shuttle Service Pilot program. Frank completed the survey with some input from SJTA and sent it back to the County. The CA sent it to the state. He said the shuttle is still operating but he has not record of ridership. Gregg asked if Frank thought the service was worth continuing. Frank said it is still a good service to provide as long as customers will be served at this location.

Frank reported that the Leaning Link is set up and ready to take new customers although there have not been any recent referrals. This service can be provided virtually and by appointment for testing. Leslie asked if the CASAS test can be administered virtually. Frank said the test is too costly to provide virtually. Leaning Link staff felt it could be safely taken in-person and would be a better service to have personal interaction with the customer. The staff also had concerns about the validity of remote testing. Frank also noted the building is very safe and adheres to all social distancing protocols. The staff is aware and trained to see customers in a safe environment. Nidia said that the learning link can safely schedule five testing appointments per day given the amount of time it takes to administer the test.

- YOUTH ORIENTATION AND WORKSHOPS

Nidia reported that TD Bank is conducting Financial Literacy Workshops for the City of Camden. She forwarded that information to the youth counselors for review. She said right now that would be the population that would most need that kind of information. She asked the counselors to participate in the workshop to see if the information would be valuable to refer customers and take it from there.

Nidia reported on the Youth Orientation Video. Jyi Peterson, Counselor, Youth One-Stop, has followed up with four past customers who completed services. The objective is to incorporate some success stories into a video. He has been in contact with three males and one female and is waiting for their contributions. The goal is to have the video drafted in time for the next Youth Investment Council Meeting in August. Gregg asked if the video would face any approval protocols. Nidia said it would probably be vetted through the Youth Committee. There has been some support from Camden County College and a sub-committee of the YIC is guiding the project. Jyi is following up to pull it together. Gregg said he is in favor of regularly updating the youth video as successful participants are identified and willing to contribute their story. Nidia said most successful youth are now working so it becomes a challenge to reconnect with them.

Gregg asked Leslie to report on the Summer Youth Employment Program. Leslie reported there are currently 17 youth participants enrolled in the program. Two dropped out of the program early. She reported out of the 17, there are 13 youth working under the direction of Carmen Rodriguez, CC Freeholder. Two youth have been placed with KIP Academy, Charter School and two youth have been placed with the Salvation Army, Camden Kroc Center. Virtual Work readiness workshops are conducted every Friday for the participants. Some workshops are

conducted by WDB Board Members, and others by Employment Services and Resource Center Staff. Subjects include resume writing, job networking, financial literacy, health and wellness, and customer service. Leslie said the program is going well. One of the few challenges is completing the files of all participants so they can be properly entered into the AOSOS system. Leslie will be attending a virtual meeting with the State to give further guidance on data entry into the system so they might be counted in performance measures. Gregg asked if any candidates have been identified for the Youth Work Experience Program. Leslie said youth counselors are working on it but as of now there are no youth entered into that program. Leslie also noted that youth participants of the summer employment program are being paid a stipend by the WDB. It was approved that work experience participants will be paid by a gift card.

- **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 all administrators will be meeting today, August 13th in the former County Surrogate office. That office will be the location of all client facing operations. The meeting is being conducted to finalize how the space will be used to service customers. Once the layout of space is determined, an order will be placed for protective equipment. The original plan was to have the space operational by Labor Day. Due to the five-week order turnaround time, it may be ready for customer engagement closer to October. She said customers are currently being seen using a telephone booth type set up. The case management staff calls the client from another area in the office. Customers who do not have the capability of interviewing from home are being seen at the office, in this manner. Customers needing emergency assistance are also being seen. Most of the engagement can be handled with safe distancing. There may a minimal contact period when it comes to signing documents.

Salama reported the Board is seeing an increase in the number of applications for assistance and that is statewide. Most counties are reporting an increase. The local area received 1256 applications in June and 1542 applications in July and so far for August, 493 applications are being processed.

SNAP is planning to go to pre-covid rules effective September 1st, so unless another waiver comes through, the recertification interviews and documents will be mailed out. Most WorkFirst NJ actions will not start back until the end of September and current waivers will continue until September 30th. The Board is continuing with additional assistance EBT funds for each eligible school age child that receives free or reduced lunch. Most families have received this allotment but there have been some glitches with matching information received from the school districts to in-house records. It has been a relatively smooth process but there are some families still awaiting that benefit. Gregg asked if eligibility of the child has been cleared up. He noted some confusion Salama expressed at the last meeting. Salama said the Board is receiving a spread sheet from the State listing the child, by county who is receiving the benefit. Only the

Administrators have access to this information. When a customer calls to ask about the benefit, their date of birth is usually asked as a first step. The child must be of school age and so the name and date of birth can be matched up with the spread sheet. For the most part it is going well.

Gregg asked how staff is adapting to online case management. Salama said that staff is adapting on a case by case basis so as requests for assistance come in, the staff reviews the eligibility process for that client need. Staff also determines if remote customer service can be accomplished without the issuance of transportation funds.

Gregg also asked if the Board saw an increase in applications due to the Cares Act \$600 Benefit running out at the end of July. Salama said there was an increase in July. Kristi Connors asked if the job search and work activities requirements have been pushed to the end of the year. Salama said the Board wanted to hear from the Vendors and the Providers as to what activities they can provide before addressing that requirement with clients. The conversation is continuing based on the pandemic and data. The schools are still planning for virtual learning, at least in the beginning of the school year, so it will be hard to require clients with school age children to participate in a work activity. The Committee discussed waivers for work activities and agreed it may be awhile before they are required to resume especially in Camden County where jobless rates are higher.

- **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 Deitz, Manager, DVRS, reported his staff is still working on a staggered schedule. Staff is engaging clients via phones and computers. DVRS services are currently at the mercy of school closings. We are trying to keep clients engaged with the college. They are limited in that they are conducting only online learning with part time instructors. This is presenting a challenge for most of DVRS clients with maintaining organization etc.

Jeff D. reported that Project Search team is going back and forth about offering remote learning for the participants. He is not sure how participants can get the best out of an online experience when learning has always been based on hands-on training experiences.

Jeff also reported DVRS is interviewing for new counselors. New hires are anticipated by the end of August to be active by September. Jeff Swartz, Executive Director, WDB, asked how many positions are open to be filled. Jeff D. said there are four counselor positions currently posted. Positions require candidates to have a master's degree. Jeff S. asked Jeff D. to share the job postings and their descriptions with the committee and he would send them around to some possible good candidates. Jeff D. said there is a need for bilingual counselors. Gregg asked for an update on graduating Project Search students. Jeff D. said some cohort participants were placed but got laid off during the pandemic and need to be placed in new positions. He said some have

been placed into new positions, but not the same job. Leslie said the state website is posting many retail positions that might be a good fit for these candidates. Jeff D. said jobs opportunities are increasing for individuals with disabilities and we are having some success with placing individuals back into jobs.

- **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, DOL, reported staff is moving into trying to get the word out about virtual services. Her staff created a video orientation of services that has been vetted up the chain of her command and forwarded to other WDB Directors around the State. There have been requests to edit the content and adapt it to other local areas. She said she was fine with that. The video is generic so it can be used by other counties just as it is. Some areas do not have all the services featured on the video. All employment services will be conducted virtually for the foreseeable future. The video has been well received.

Kristi said her staff is still using the check in system for customers using RESA and for any customer requesting job matching or job search help. She is tracking all service to show that the hybrid system of service delivery is working. Some staff are still operating from home. Staff tracked 495 customers serviced since July 1st. We want to show effectiveness of service even though customers are not entering the facility. Kristi said she is working with the county to post the video on the Camden County website. The One-Stop link is in the process of being re-developed with a good portion of information to direct customers to the right contact for each of the different employment services offered by the One-Stop. The goal is to make it as easy as possible for the customer to get direct contacts to each of the partner services including youth services, Veteran, DVRS, Learning Link etc. (The Virtual Services are listed below)

Kristi encouraged the committee to share the directory on all social media sites and with WDB Committees. She also discussed email blasts to One-Stop customers already in the system.

The Committee complimented Kristi on the video. All agreed it was very well done. Kristi said customers need a simple framework of easy access contacts. They simply need to know where they can get help and that is the idea behind the directory. (See video link below)

https://www.youtube.com/watch?time_continue=70&v=wWPlc1EJFO8&feature=emb_logo&fbclid=IwAR39bIVYNW5JLWAo3gnWxShvg9SFHYEa5OgkTItg6HEYemculFcxEuQmI



Camden County One-Stop Virtual Services Directory

Training Services

Improve Skills and Abilities through
Training for Demand Occupations

OneStop@camdencounty.com
856-549-0626

Career Services and Labor Market Information

Individual Employment Plan,
Job Search, Resume, Interviewing,
Networking, and LMI Assistance

Camden_1Stop@dol.nj.gov
856-549-0560

Division of Vocational Rehabilitation

Assistance for Clients with Physical or
Cognitive Barriers to Employment

DVR.camden@dol.nj.gov
856-549-0500

Veterans Services

Job Search Assistance and Supportive Services
Referrals for Veterans with
Significant Barriers to Employment

Geoffrey.Taylor@dol.nj.gov
856-549-0561
Abner.Marcellus@dol.nj.gov
856-549-0559

Business Services

Provides Assistance to Employers
for All Their Hiring Needs

JeannePage-Soncrant@dol.nj.gov
856-549-0570

Jersey Job Club

Virtual Workshops to Improve
Your Job Search Skills

Sandra.Green@dol.nj.gov
856-549-0557

Learning Link

Improve Basic Skills and Literacy
Levels

Mikala.Allen@camdencounty.com
856-549-0601

Youth One-Stop

Empower Out-of-School Youth (Ages 16-24)
through Assessment, Training and Supportive Services

Diana.Plaza@camdencounty.com
856-549-0621

Workforce 55+:

“Earn While You Learn” Program
For Mature Workers

Gerald.Davis@dol.nj.gov
856-549-0564

RESEA PROGRAM:

Reemployment Services Eligibility
and Assessment

Dominic.Lorusso@dol.nj.gov
856-549-0558
Patricia.McGowan@dol.nj.gov
856-549-0553



Kristi also reported the staff have participated in ethics training and cyber security training offered online by the Civil Service Commission. Kristi said her staff is checking in in the morning and checking out in the afternoon by way of a sign-in sheet. She also asks them to fill out a daily progress report. She also ordered a sign in sheet to keep track of staff in the building that does not have a swipe card, in the event it is needed for contact tracing.

Kathleen Varallo, Administrative Assistant, WDB asked if her staff was involved in the State BSR Job Matching Program. Kristi said they are participating on certain days of the week and noted job matches are tracked to staff so they are not doing double matching. Kathleen asked if she thought the program is showing success. Kristi said the last time she reviewed the numbers and the time involved it was at .002 % of effective job matches. She said the effectiveness of it is not so great, but word is getting out and it is keeping staff busy. Outcomes may improve by getting more job seekers registered into the system. The rate of referral and the rate of placement are currently very low.

Gregg asked if Employers seem to be back in action. Kristi said not so much. Many employers are not sure how to bring staff back safely or which way to go with re-opening. Some employers are at the financial decision breaking point of whether to re-open at all. Even though the \$600 Cares Act funding is ending, businesses are not clamoring for those employees. Many concerns are hanging in the balance. Gregg asked if any particular employment sectors seem more active or inactive. Obviously, retail and restaurants have been devastated. He asked if any employers on the positive side are humming along. Kristi said the Amazons and Instacart's and online retailers are doing better. Gregg asked about healthcare which is such a big sector in the Camden County. He said early on in the pandemic we were surprised by the number of layoffs on the health care side. Kristi said now that elective surgeries are coming back, some general practitioners are bringing staff back but not to the level it was.

Jeff S. thanked Kristi and her staff again for the video. He sent it around to all the WDB Directors in the State. His email and phones were filled with praise for the presentation. Every local area will be using the video and tailoring it to their particular offering of services. The video gave the Camden team a shining star.

- **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 still planning to move ahead with Emergency Medical Technicians (EMT) training. The team had a meeting regarding this program and Dan Rhoton, Hopeworks, Camden, is providing students for the first cohort.

- **REGIONAL ACTIVITIES**

Jeff reported, the Atlantic City Electric (ACE) Training Initiative, has been curtailed for this year due to the college closing during the state of emergency. Covid conditions will not allow for the running of the line school so we have asked ACE to give the program another year on the back end. The WDB's are waiting for written confirmation to that end from ACE Council. The WDB continues to reach out to the participants and let them know what's going on with the program. Leslie and Kathleen have been working with the Center for Energy and Workforce Development (CEWD) to provide additional online training, paid by grant funds. We offer that to keep them engaged and help them stay practiced in the concepts of the program and fundamentals of the industry.

Gregg asked Leslie if the accounts for the grant have been reconciled. Leslie said the account is reconciled outside of one invoice from the college. Since they have not completed service, it is still being reconciled to what is billable. Leslie said the grant does cover the cost of the CSM learn online training program that Jeff spoke about. Ten participants have opted in and the office is waiting for others to sign up for the training.

Jeff reported in the Camden Works Initiative. He participates in a call every other week. As of the last call, there were 351 in the data base of which 245 were Camden City residents and have had close to 130 total placements. Center for Family Services is the point agency of the initiative. It's been a very good program so far. The challenge is to get some of these participants referred to the One-Stop and counted in our system.

Jeff reported the GSETA conference has been canceled and luckily the hotel has waived any cancellation fees. In the interim, GSETA is offering a whole host of member training webinars for frontline staff and managers of the One-Stops and Career Centers around the State.

- **CONSORTIUM & INDUSTRY PARTNERSHIP UPDATES**

Jeff reported the Health Care Consortium will be transitioning to another platform. He received a very nice email message from Lou Bezich, Senior Vice President, Strategic Alliances, Cooper University Health Care, and Chair, closing out the Consortium. He is not sure if another healthcare organization will take the lead. Gregg asked Jeff what organization might take it over. Jeff was not sure; he named the Camden Health Coalition as a possibility but whoever takes it on, the WDB will support and attend the meetings.

Jeff also reported the South Jersey Industry Partnerships, aimed at the manufacturing sector, is continuing follow-up discussions. There is no new progress to report at this time.

- **BUSINESS SERVICES (BSR)**

Jeff reported the Business Service Team will meet virtually today August 13th, at 2pm. He is receiving weekly activity reports from Jeanne Page-Soncrant, BSR and Ricky O'Hara, Veterans BSR, serving Camden County. Jeanne has been very busy with some Rapid Response efforts. Many have heard that Menu Foods in Pennsauken will be closing with about 130 employees being let go. Jeff said he also received a warn notice that the Cheesecake Factory will be closing

their Cherry Hill location with close to 120 employees being let go. Steinmart will be closing several locations as well. So the County will have its hands full with many jobseekers, making it more important to pursue this marketing effort to promote access to employment services. Jeff also reported on a meeting he attended with Frank Cirii and County Administration. The County is interested in seeing how the WDB and One-Stop are promoting services with a particular focus on serving local employers. Jeff and Frank will be writing a plan that includes service descriptions with WDB input and services as well. Frank said he received Jeff's input. He will be finishing the plan and sending it to Jeff and Nidia for review before sending it to the County Administration office. Gregg asked if there is any particular focus the County is looking for. Jeff said he sends the weekly unemployment characteristics reports to the County. It was Holly Cass that read and noticed many aspects of the report and called to discuss them with Jeff for clarification. Those conversations got the ball rolling to start further discussion about the action plan that Frank and Jeff are writing for implementation. Jeff said promotion is a top priority. The second priority is to get residents aware of training funds and get them into training. The message is all about letting residents know the One -Stop is open with dollars to serve. Frank said the County also wants a comprehensive plan as to how the One-Stop can provide support especially to businesses that are in dire need and those that have benefited from the Cares Act small business loans. The County Board of Freeholders and Administration want to use this Care Act List to proactively follow up on both the business and matching employees with services. The Committee discussed the plan and agreed to support the plan in anyway it can to reduce unemployment rates and get businesses up and running again.

Gregg thanked the committee for attending. The September meeting will go back to its regular Friday schedule.

QUARTERLY BOARD MEETING

The next WDB Quarterly Board of Trustees meeting is scheduled for Wednesday, September 23rd via Zoom Conferencing.

NEXT MEETING

The next Operations Committee meeting will be scheduled for Friday, September 11th, at 9:00am via Zoom conferencing.

Submitted by:

Kathleen Varallo

Administrative Assistant