



Supporting the Development and Retention of a World Class Workforce

Jeffrey S. Swartz, Executive Director

Robert Weil, Chair

**OPERATIONS COMMITTEE MEETING
MINUTES, SEPTEMBER 18, 2020**

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

ATTENDANCE

Member	13-Mar-20	24-Apr-20	8-May-20	12-Jun-20	16-Jul-20	13-Aug-20	18-Sep-20
DeBaere, Gregg T., CHAIR	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Cirii, Frank		X		X	X	X	X
Connors, Kristi	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Deitz, Jeff	X	X	X		X	X	
Jones-Benjamin, Michaela	X						
Maguire, Laurie							X
McFarland, Salama		X	X	X	X	X	X
Regensburger, Robert		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
Williams, Leslie J	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Varallo, Kathleen	X	X	X	X	X	X	X

WELCOME

Gregg DeBaere, Chair, called the meeting to order at 9:10am. Leslie Williams, Comptroller, WDB, shared the agenda on the screen for ease of access. Gregg welcomed attendees and referred to the agenda now shown on the screen.

ONE – STOP & WDB CERTIFICATION

Gregg asked Leslie to confirm 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. She did say the State Combined plan was submitted to the Feds and is awaiting approval. Gregg said the plan had one minor change that was made, and it did receive approval. He also heard the WDB Certification process will be starting again but there are still issues regarding five counties not completed from two years ago.

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

Frank Cirii, Local Area Operation Director, reported staff of the One-Stop participated in a facility mandated fire drill last week and it went well. He said there is some extra space in the facility so they are hosting the Counties Will Clinics. They are being conducted by appointment only in one room of the facility. All customers are being met at the door for their appointments, temperature checked upon arrival and safety protocols are explained. Customers are even escorted to the restroom as needed. Appointments are scheduled for all counseling or testing, and virtual services are being conducted for everything possible. Customer service in this

manner has been successful thus far. Five customers were scheduled for testing in the Learning Link this week. Frank noted that is awesome progress compared to where conditions have been. Frank also reported that Unemployment (UI) claim concerns have somewhat subsided. Nidia Sinclair, Director Resource Center, is still addressing email concerns referred to her by the county but it has slowed down at least at the level of the One-Stop, which is not the primary point of contact.

Frank reported the QLess implementation is still not complete. He was disappointed by the lack of communication and obvious backlog from the company although it is not a critical situation at this point. He met with Kristi Connors, Manager, Employment Services DOL, yesterday and they agreed that workflow is manageable, and the onboarding and implementation process is still moving forward. Gregg asked if there is a date in mind or date range for the implementation of QLess. Frank said it was supposed to start on September 8th, but it has been stalled. He has been pushing the sales rep and others in the company to get a definitive date and is pressing them on their reputation Gregg asked if Frank or Jeff knew of any other counties that have implemented the QLess system.. Jeff said the program has been highly promoted among the WDB's but he was not aware of any county using it in the south, maybe up north but was not sure. Jeff agreed with Frank that there may be a huge backlog due to demands for the program. Kristi said she heard a local college had implemented the program. Frank said it may have been Burlington County. Frank wanted the committee to know that the delay was not caused by the One-Stop's follow-up. It will be important to track workflow. All agreed being able to track customer service is very important.

Frank reported that the Learning Link and CASAS testing is moving forward as mentioned earlier. Nidia said there will be a CASAS training scheduled on September 23rd and her staff will be participating.

Frank reported that virtual services are being promoted and staff is attending the Food Distribution sites being conducted around the county. They are handing out a Virtual Services Directory flyer. The website has been updated with the video summary of services, created by Kristi and her staff. Services are being promoted through the county newsletter and email blasts. Some additional edits have been made to the directory including additional links to Opioid Services and grant information. Frank the county will be taking the first big step to implement the "Camden County One-Stop, COVID-19 Labor Market Response Plan." They will be sending out an email to all the businesses that applied or received the support or COVID grant funding. The content of the letter will be similar to the letter sent out to WDB members and committees by Bob Weil, WDB Chair. Promotions are meant to provide continuity so that services can be provided in a manner that is safe and healthy for staff and the customer as well. Gregg asked if the One-Stop is fully staffed. Frank said the County, since the last meeting, implemented an alternating work schedule for staff with school aged children since school openings were delayed and students are on remote learning. It has been offered to all staff with the requirement of working at least two days in the office. Laptops have been purchased to enable staff to work remotely as needed. Five staff members have chosen this option. Staff must document their needs and submit a set schedule for approval and submit a daily activity report as well. The County Tech Department has created a special Microsoft group to monitor the program. There is a lot more improved accountability than there was at the beginning of COVID response efforts. Gregg asked if One-Stop IT is in good shape and if they implemented any new changes

or improvements. Frank said IT has been good, the phone system is a concern. Phone glitches have been happening in the entire county phone system over the last week or so. It is something that has happened in the past and it being worked on to correct. The phone scripts and answering messages have been updated. Everything has been working over the last day and hopefully going forward.

- YOUTH ONE-STOP (YOS) UPDATES:

Nidia reported there may be an opportunity for a work experience candidate in the area of social work. One of the counselors will be attending a training and work in HR and will include this youth participant. She also reported that youth programs are continuing to be closely monitored by the state and we are waiting to hear the outcome of that process. The Counselors have been reviewing and updating files and cross referencing them with AOSOS data entry. She is also working on the approval process for the purchase of Chrome Books under supportive services.

Nidia reported that the Resource Center has received several names of inquiry for services from the website and Employment Services. The list of names has been distributed to staff so they can do a call back for follow-up to those customers with interest in virtual services. Staff is contacting each person to assess their needs and send out an onboarding package or materials as needed. Thirty packages were sent out this week. Six customers have been scheduled to see counselors over the next few weeks and as mentioned earlier five appointments have been scheduled for Learning Link testing. Gregg asked how youth orientation is being conducted. Nidia said counselors are scheduling appointments via Zoom Conferencing or in person as needed. Gregg asked if volume is still noticeably low. Nidia said yes but things are starting to move. She said there has been more response from the adult population than from youth. The Committee discussed safety and scheduling protocols as well as partner coordination of customer engagement in the facility.

The Committee discussed concerns about meeting the credentialing benchmark noted in the performance reports. Ideas were discussed about pressing the training providers to follow up on state required testing for certain credentials such as CDL or CMA. Participants receiving training grants who complete training are getting the training providers certificate of completion, however, they are not going on the complete the required credentialing testing. Nidia said the counselors are reviewing the credentialing process with customers. Jeff said some stronger language can be put into vendor contracts to hold back a certain amount of funding until testing is completed but many vendors will walk away from that small reserve. This has been an ongoing concern in other counties as well. Kristi said some customers get a job based on the certificate of completion. It is when they lose the job and try and go on to another employer, that requires the credential, that they return for assistance in obtaining it. All agreed that efforts are being implemented to correct the gaps to customers obtaining proper state required credentialing. Jeff said WDB's Directors across the state are sharing ideas and best practices to help improve outcomes. Nidia noted that state testing sites have moved north and it is a little more complicated. There are more issues regarding the credentialing process than was originally thought. One suggestion was made to include an explanation of the credential the grant is funding and the testing process in the customer's letter of acceptance. The Counselors will be moving toward using a different approach or language to guide customers through the process toward receiving a training grant. Gregg said the focus on removing the barriers to credentialing is a good step toward improving outcomes and encouraged the committee to make

it a priority of research and discussion.

Gregg asked Leslie to report on the Summer Youth Employment Program. Leslie reported the program is now completed: it started with 17 participants and ended with about 13, because some left early to return to college. Most participants were from the City of Camden with the help of Carmen Rodriguez, CC Freeholder. She incorporated participants in the work of the Census. The WDB is finishing up with reimbursement and follow-up. She said overall the program was successful considering it had to be planned within two weeks. Leslie thanked One-Stop staff for their help in conducting the orientation and a few of the Friday work-readiness workshops. It was challenging but successful. Jeff also noted thanks to WDB members who volunteered their staff and time to the workshops including Ken Brahl, Literacy Chari and Matt Verney, Youth Chair. Gregg asked if there will be any anticipated feedback from the state. Leslie said the WDB submitted a follow-up report last year but has not yet received a template for this year's follow up report. She will probably use last year's template just to get it in but said once the report is submitted, we do not typically hear back from the state.

- **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 staff have been back to work on a rotating basis as of September 8th. Due to CDC restrictions on building capacity, rotation will continue but staff is being asked to report to the office at least two days per week. Flexible work schedules are being worked out. Phone interviews and onboarding may take work schedules into no later than 7pm to accommodate customer needs. Board management had a meeting last Wednesday with the QLess team and began assessing what computer process is needed to implement the program at the One-Stop. It is still not known if the program can be interfaced with the Board's POS system. Salama said the POS system is used for scheduling so if they cannot interface, we may not be using some of their appointment features. Gregg asked if the Board system is off the shelf or customized, Salama said the system is very customized.

Salama reported September will be the last month for the pandemic EBT issuance. That was the additional stipend issued for each school aged child that were receiving free or reduced lunch. The Board will still be able to issue EBT funds, but it will be the last month for the automatic issuance. Last week, the Board had their DFD call. Client's probability of participation in work activities and what their potential barriers will be was discussed on the call. The State requested ideas as to how client access to technology can be addressed which is the biggest barrier to participation in virtual work activities. Figuring out how many clients do or do not have a phone, internet, PC or laptop is a challenge. One county worked with their local One-Stop to send out a survey to all their clients requesting feedback about what type of access or systems they possess as well as their level of interest in participating in work activities. There was also some discussion about including the survey on the client online application for assistance. Salama said she will be participating in a 10am call that will hopefully provide more feedback

about what will be happening going forward with work activities. It was said that the requirement for participation will be handled on a staggered basis. Not everyone will be required to participate in a work activity at the same time so as not to overwhelm One-Stop partners. Conversations are ongoing with partner agencies, the state and the CDC about how to safely engage clients in virtual services. The State is planning to move forward as soon as a successful plan for implementation can be worked out. Jeff confirmed the discussions. The WDB Directors have been expressing concerns about low referrals on weekly calls with Huge Bailey, Assistant Commissioner, LWD. Hugh felt the infrastructure was not yet in place for the One-Stops to handle customers returning to a mandate of work activity. Jeff noted general concerns that low numbers of referrals from the Board will affect the numbers and performance metrics in WorkFirst funding, so this workflow needs to be opened up as soon as possible. Gregg asked Salama if there were figures reported about the number of August applications for initial Board claims. Salama did not receive August reports yet. He asked about the move to the old Surrogate Office. Salama said lay out and space logistics have been discussed but she was not sure if equipment orders have been placed yet. She said it will take at least five weeks for product delivery and then more time to fit out and set up the office. She estimated a November opening. Jeff asked if the office in Stratford was still slated to open. Salama said nothing has been mentioned about that office.

- **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 office is in the process of hiring two new Counselors. They just completed the interview process and will hire two during this round and two in the next round of approval. He said the office is still seeing clients virtually, opening some cases and doing the best we can with the schools.

Jeff D. reported that the Project Search participants are still completing their training remotely from home which he has been fighting because the quality of the internship is most beneficial in-person. It's difficult for these young individuals to gain the skills they need without real hands-on experiences. Leslie asked what type of online experiences they are getting. Some might benefit from doing data entry. Jeff D. said he is not aware of exactly what they are learning online. He expressed concerns that they need to learn how to interact with people on the jobs they might obtain. This cannot happen with remote work. The most important thing is to have these young people get experience in a work environment. They are not going to get it sitting in front of the computer screen. He is not sure what the outcomes are going to be. Gregg asked how the College closure is affecting his office. Jeff D. said it has been difficult in the past to process paperwork and now it is even worse since the closures. He said the office is working things out, but it is very frustrating. Gregg asked if administrative offices at the college are open. Jeff D. said they might be working from home. Leslie said they may be working on an alternating schedule. She said the college staff that the WDB is working with have forwarded their office phones to their cell phones. Jeff D. said his office is leaving messages on answering machines and

waiting for follow-up return contact. Gregg asked how DVRS staff is conducting remote work and connecting with participants. Jeff D. said they are working with Microsoft teams and Zoom Conferencing.

- **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 continuing to use the customer check-in system established by her division before the shutdown. Since July 1st, her division checked in 708 people for services. Basically, the numbers are coming from RESEA. Customers can also go online and fill out a Virtual Services Customer Request Form. The names are sorted by county and sent to her by way of spreadsheet on Microsoft Teams. Employment Services (ES) referred 97 customers over to the Resource Center for training. Her staff is using the spread sheet to track and record outcomes as well. She asked if anyone on the committee has heard anything about the NJ website transferring from Career Connections to a new platform. Career Connections is not preferred but it's still there and for ES purposes its working until the new site is rolled out. No one else on the committee has heard about a new date.

Kristi Connors reported a Spanish version of the video orientation of services was created. She would also like to see that video posted to the Camden County website. Kristi is also working on an email one-page message that can be sent out to all customers registered in the AOSOS system. An email blast can be arranged with staff in Trenton, but she does not want to overwhelm the One-Stop with thousands of inquiries. She spoke to Laurie Maguire, Manager MIS, about sending it out locally in increments of 100 customers at a time. In this way, responses can be measured. Laurie said she will be able to crystalize the names and blind copy them, so the email is going directly to the customer. Kristi said she will finish creating the page and then send it around for feedback. Gregg asked if Kristi had a track record for this type of email. Kristi said she has used it for job recruitments but never for information or promotion. She has no historical data on a percentage of response, and she has heard of no other county that is tying this method of promotion. Camden County would be the first to try it. All agreed to send out 100 emails at a time to keep it manageable and be able to measure the response rate.

Kristi also reported ES has a new hire starting on September 28.th She is bilingual and will serve as an interviewer. She also reported on a surprise monitoring by the state. Her staff was asked to pull five files from RESA and five Veteran files. The files were strong, and the request was filled outside of two dated files that had already been sent to Trenton for file retention.

Gregg asked what percentage of her workforce is working from home or remotely. Kristi said her staff is still alternating. She is using a sign-in and sign-out document. She is erring on the side of less staff in the building at one time and has established many measures to keep staff productive. Staff members document their work every day and it is being spot checked in AOSOS to verify the work. Gregg asked if Kristi would get a follow up letter from the

monitoring. Kristi said she usually receives a letter prior to a visit from the state. The gentleman was easy to work with and she still retains the files that were reviewed. Nidia confirmed that the monitor was making the rounds and was now in Burlington County. She will let Gregg know if she receives a letter.

Kristi encouraged the committee to share the directory of virtual services on all social media sites and with WDB Committees...

https://www.youtube.com/watch?time_continue=70&v=wWPlc1EJFO8&feature=emb_logo&fbclid=IwAR39blVYNW5JLWAO3gnWxShvg9SFHYEa5OgvkTItg6HEYemculFcxEuQmI

- **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 there have been no new developments on the EMT training initiative. HopeWorks is still working closely with Cooper to implement the program. Once things open again, the WDB will resume meetings with that regard.

- **REGIONAL ACTIVITIES**

Jeff reported, the Atlantic City Electric (ACE) Training Initiative, will be hosting its first Employer Information Session on Thursday, September 23rd, via Zoom Conferencing. He said Gary Stockbridge, CEO, will be giving welcoming remarks. Jeff and some of the course instructors will be speaking about the value of the program for participants and employers. There are about 25 employers signed up to participate on the call, which has been planning this event for some time now. Some classes will be starting up again to complete the GIE math and CAST Test Prep. ACE will be scheduling the testing team. Leslie said the Line Training will be conducted in mid-March of 2021. Three to four cohorts of 12 are expected to pass the CAST and will be waiting for that training.

Jeff reported on the Camden Works Initiative. He sent the first annual report around to WDB Board members. The program is been overwhelmingly successful and is employing residents in Camden City and from around the County as well. They started out with a goal of employing 100 residents and in less than a year they have achieved 145 job placements. Currently, there are 388 people registered in the data base, of that number, 152 are Camden City residents. Gregg asked if the One-Stop is getting any referrals. Jeff said he is pushing for referrals and co-enrollment in the AOSOS system. Referrals would come from the Center for Family Services.

Jeff reported GSETA is offering a whole host of member training webinars, in place of the annual conference, for frontline staff and managers of the One-Stops and Career Centers around the State. Jeff reported that WorkFirst NJ funding has been announced. The State based allocations

on the last three years of activity, subtracted that total from last year's allocation and will issue 75% of that equation because the program year will start October 1, 2020. The good news for the local area is that fiscal will have the opportunity to cost allocate where the funds would be best spent. In years past, the State made those type of designations. Yesterday, through the efforts of Leslie and Barbara Pape, they filled out the spread sheet offered by the state to allocate funding and sent it back by the close of business. Hopefully, the WDB will be able to process the Notice of Obligation within the next few weeks and send it for approval, by the Freeholders, at their next meeting. As mentioned earlier, we did get an extension through the end of September so these funds will start on October 1st.

- **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, closed out the Consortium and will looking for another healthcare organization to take the lead. There are no new updates at this time.

Jeff also reported the South Jersey Industry Partnerships, have been slow moving. He attended a call with Arron Fictner, SETC, to discuss a consortium development with the colleges to institute employer driven training. This would reconstitute the Talent Development Networks that successfully drove businesses to work with the colleges to create apprenticeship and training programs. It has been mentioned that college enrollments are very low so the program would create a way to funnel customers toward college-based credentialing.

- **BUSINESS SERVICES (BSR)**

Jeff reported the Business Service Team met virtually on Thursday, September 10th, at 2pm. Jeanne Page-Soncrant, BSR and Ricky O'Hara, Veterans BSR, serving Camden County have been working and turning in reports of healthy employer engagement. Jeanne has been working with employers as referred and the job matching program is continuing to produce some job placements. Jeanne has also been working with Nidia to provide information about some of the employer needs around the county. This information will be used to make closer matches to training needs. Both Jeanne and Ricky are working with some company closings and rapid response efforts. Fortunately, they are also making connections with other employers willing to take some of the employees that are being let go of current jobs.

Kristi announced a new On the Job Training (OJT) Initiative like the one introduced during super storm "Sandy." The program is slated to begin on October 1st. This initiative will involve the BSR team. There are two different stories floating that funds must be committed by December 31st or spent by then. The funds will allow employers to hire jobseekers in new positions within their company. Wage reimbursement is a component of the program.

Gregg asked Jeff how the WDB office is operating. Jeff said the staff is working on a rotating basis so that there is always at least two staff members in the office every day. Alex Levitt, Administrative Assistant, is the constant in the office to answer phones. Gregg asked Bob Regensburger, Lockheed Martin, how his staff is working. Bob said a large percentage of his staff are still telecommuting. He said staff in the manufacturing and test areas are working with safe standards and security measures in place. The company has advanced payments to suppliers in

New Jersey to help keep them afloat during the crisis. Overall, the company is operationally safe considering the conditions presented. Right now, there is no plan to bring staff back to the workplace. Many companies have been struggling with the same concerns about workplace density and capacity of space so there is a lot that will need to be worked through in these areas.

Bob commented that as he listens to the Operation Committee reports, each member should be congratulated on a job well done under these very difficult conditions. The mission of being forward facing to the public and using the mechanisms forwarded by state and local governments is very hard to accomplish. It is difficult to accomplish those types of missions when people are in and out or dispersed, its hard to get in contact, and then again dealing with the primary goal of serving your customers. He took the opportunity to say, "Job Well Done!" He said this team should be very proud of its result and the continued efforts it is making to do the best that can be done for the local area and for the region. Gregg asked if Lockheed Martin is using Microsoft Teams. Bob said the program is being used but its difficult for lots of companies to adjust. The Committee discussed training options for virtual office applications such as the college and other training for these programs. They compared notes and concerns about many of the different office platforms.

Hearing no further questions, Gregg thanked the committee for attending and expressed his appreciation for the work of the committee.

QUARTERLY BOARD MEETING

The next WDB Quarterly Board of Trustees meeting is scheduled for Wednesday, September 23rd @8:30am via Zoom Conferencing. The new master budget will be approved at the December Quarterly Meeting.

NEXT MEETING

The next Operations Committee meeting will be scheduled for Friday, October 16th, at 9:00am via Zoom conferencing.

Submitted by:

Kathleen Varallo

Administrative Assistant