

YOUTH INVESTMENT COUNCIL
MEETING MINUTES
WEDNESDAY, APRIL 26, 2023, 9:00AM – ZOOM MEETING

ATTENDANCE

Name	COMMITTEE INFORMATION AND ATTENDANCE			26-Jan-22	23-Feb-22	24-Aug-22	26-Oct-22	25-Jan-23	22-Feb-23
	Organization	Trustee Member							
Verney, Matthew CHAIR	Truist Bank	X			X				
Arroyo, Rosy	Camden County Youth Services Commission		X					X	
Banks, Evangeline	Juvenile Justice Commission		X	X	X				X
Barbella, Sarah	Camden Probation Division		X		X				
Boucher, Shaneka	City of Camden		X	X	X	X	X	X	
Cirii, Frank	Camden County One-Stop	X	X		X	X	X	X	X
Crowe, Gary	Winslow Township High School						X	X	X
Godorov, Lori	The Work Group	X	x			X	X		X
Gorman, Ginger	Winslow Township High School		X	X			X	X	
Hill, Lauren	Camden County College		X	X			X	X	X
Ludizaca, Raul	NJDOL							X	
Lofton, Vance	Respond, Inc.		X	X			X	X	X
Maguire, Laurie	Camden County One-Stop		X	X	X		X	X	X
McGough, Jake	YMCA						X	X	X
Pasiglaio, Marion	NJ Youth ChalleNge Academy		X						
Peterson, Jyi	Camden County One-Stop		X	X	X		X	X	X
Roth-Gutman, Jill	Gutman Law							X	X
Selby, Andrew	CPAC		X	X	X		X	X	X
Sinclair, Nidia	Camden County One-Stop			X	X			X	X
Waller, Darchelle	Winslow Township High School				X				
Wardlow Hurley, Rhonda	HACC Youth Build		X	X	X		X	X	X
Wemple, Anita	CPAC							X	X
Swartz, Jeffrey S.	WDB		X	X	X		X		X
Henderson, Bridget	WDB						X	X	X
Levitt, Alex	WDB		X	X	X		X	X	X
Vaughn, Debra	WDB		X	X	X		X	X	X
Williams, Leslie	WDB		X	X	X				

Welcome

In Matt Verney’s absence, the meeting was led by WDB Administrative Assistant Alex Levitt. He welcomed attendees and called the meeting to order at 9:00 am.

After roll call, Alex asked for a motion to approve the minutes from the February 22, 2023 meeting. Motion was made by Dr. Lauren Hill, seconded by Lori Godorov. By majority vote to the affirmative, the motion carried and the minutes for February 22, 2023, were approved.

Committee Goals

- Alex noted that Jill Roth-Gutman expressed interest in being the Youth Committee’s Vice Chair.
 - Jill introduced herself and thanked everyone for welcoming her to the committee at the previous meetings.

Youth Sub-Committee Focus Group

- The purpose of the focus group is to have an ongoing, authentic youth voice represented in the Youth Committee’s planning process. Lori Godorov commented that the assistance of WDB staff was needed to support and to coordinate the dates, creating a flyer for the focus group and assist with promoting the project.

- The focus group plan previously discussed was for the program to begin at 5:30 pm at the Work Group location, with a meal provided. The questions have been selected and stipend resources for 10-15 youth participants have been identified.
- Alex provided an update on the Summer Youth Employment Program 2023.
 - The goal is to fill 50 slots of work-learn experience for youth ages 16 to 24 years old. The program is 8-weeks, including 1 week of work-readiness training at the Rohrer Center at Camden County College in Cherry Hill. The total tax-free stipend for the summer will be \$3000. The participants can be in or out of school but they must be Camden County residents. They are guaranteed 25 working hours per week. The application deadline is April 28th. To date, 14 completed applications have been submitted with 5 under review. The program application is uploaded to the WDB website. The application and flyer will be emailed to Jill Roth-Gutman and Gary Crowe.

Camden County One-Stop Career Center

Frank Cirii, Local Area Director

- There is a slow but steady uptick in the foot traffic at the One-Stop for adults and youth customers.
- Per the State, HiSET testing will end at the One-Stop on May 31st. GED testing will be available when the remaining inspections and technology issues are resolved, including the creation of a separate network for the testing process in order to maintain the security of the County network.
- The Learning Link has seen an increase in the numbers of people being served, virtually and in person.
- A job fair was held on March 3rd in the atrium at the Cherry Hill Mall from 10:00 am to 2:00 pm. Another job fair is planned at the same location on September 15th.

Jyi Peterson, Youth Counselor

- The Youth Work Experience is preparing a new cohort cycle, which should begin by the beginning of May. There are currently 2 students in training, one of which obtained his high school diploma since he came in for services in January. Two additional students will begin training next month.
- Jyi stated that he currently has 3 disabled (2 mental, 1 physical) clients who are receiving services in the Learning Link. Dr. Lauren Hill noted the Title II graduation will be on June 1st and if there were any Learning Link graduates who may be eligible to be included, they should discuss them. Nidia responded that she would check and follow up with her.

UPDATES/DISCUSSION

Roth-Gutman Law – *Jill Roth-Gutman*

- Jill commented that she is sponsoring Foster the Family’s “5k Family Run Day” on May 6th. The event will have free food, ice cream, face-painting, and balloon artists. The event starts at 8:00 am. Registration is open for the 5k run, which starts at 9:00 am at Challenge Grove Hill Park (Jake’s Place) at 101 Borton Mills Road in Cherry Hill. “Foster the Family,” is based in Cherry Hill and hosts a monthly support group for resource parents as well as kinship homes. Jill noted that she believes the meetings take place in Mt. Laurel, but she could provide a flyer. Andrew Selby expressed his interest in making contact with the organization to Jill, which she offered to assist with.

The WorkGroup – Lori Godorov

- The Work Group has two job openings:
 - Received \$7500 funding for training or paid internship for graduates of their youth work program (25 slots over 2 years). They are looking for someone to work 20 hours per week for \$25 per hour to help manage the program. The new hire will work with the students with tours and with employers or trade school to facilitate the internships or paid training opportunities.
 - Store Manager for the clothing thrift store to work Tuesday through Saturday for the hours of 10:00 am to 6:00 pm. The pay rate is \$18 per hour for 40 hours per week. They are seeking a candidate who is great with kids, teaching, motivating and counseling, social media, marketing/promotion, and has passion for fashion, etc. A flyer will be shared for posting on the WDB website.

Housing Authority of the City of Camden (HACC) – Rhonda Wardlow Hurley

- A youth resource fair will be held on May 4th at the Ablett Village Community Center from 3:00 pm to 6:00 pm. The contact person is Tywine Smalls. He can be reached at 856-882-8934. A flyer will be shared for posting on the WDB website.
- In partnership with the Michaels Organization, HACC is offering a carpentry pre-apprenticeship program for people aged 17 to 27. A high school diploma is not required. The program is free, provides free bus passes and lunch. Participants will receive a weekly \$50 stipend. Lunch is provided. Applications are now being accepted for the next class starting in July. The contact person is Judy Garcia, who can be reached at 609-922-2404. A flyer will be shared for posting on the WDB website. Nidia stated that she and Jyi will be participating in the program.

Camden City YMCA – Jake McGough

- Free camps will be hosted in Palmyra over approximately 5 to 6 weeks. Through funding from William Penn, the YMCA will offer watershed activities for a cycle and science camp. A traditional adventure camp will also be offered. There are slots for 60-70 kids. Registration information will be shared when the details are finalized in the next week or so.
- The YMCA will offer its Safe Places to Play program this summer at Camden's Dudley Grange, Alberta Woods and Cornelius Parks. The program offers a safe place for the youth to participate in arts and crafts, structured activities, and snacks will be provided. The day camps in the parks are not custodial, so children are free to come and go as they please. The YWCA is still seeking counselors to work in the programs he mentioned.

Camden County College/Adult Basic Studies – Dr. Lauren Hill

- Dr. Hill expressed a concern with the abbreviated timeline for the transition from HiSET to GED testing and whether the GED system will be ready in time. She commented that delays in testing availability are a disservice to the students who worked hard to be prepared to take the test to earn their diploma. In addition, she commented there were additional technological requirements and expense of GED and the application process is cumbersome.
 - Frank Cirii commented that the Department of Education's decision to eliminate HiSET was based on issues surrounding the vendor's change in ownership that were either resolved or have significantly improved since the ownership transition took place, and that not having the flexibility of using 2 vendors is a potentially serious problem. In addition, he stated that HiSET testing was preferred over GED by customers.

- Lori Godorov said efforts continue to be made to have the Department of Education's mandate to eliminate HiSET reversed, including advocacy from the Department of Labor.

Respond, Inc. – Vance Lofton

- Respond continues to promote its Camden Cookie with billboards going up. The cookies can be purchased through CamdenCookie.com. In addition, Respond's summer programming is being planned in partnership with other organizations.

Camden County Youth Services Commission (CCYSC) – Rosy Arroyo

- The RFP for the Restorative Justice Hub will be released next week. A lead agency is sought for the hub, which will be located at the Wiggins School.
- Rosy is seeking to hire someone to work with her on youth justice and criminal justice reform specifically. She will provide additional information to anyone who requests it.
- Another RFP for summer expansion programs to continue through the rest of the year for \$100,000 and is seeking an agency to provide those services.
- The CCYSC is in the middle of its third year of the Comprehensive Plan, which involves data analysis. There will be several meetings held on the state of youth in Camden County.
- Rosy has received numerous calls from law enforcement and school districts regarding young people (youngest is 11, oldest is 17) who have missed 75-83 days of school. Calls to Rosy have reached 15 every 2 weeks, coming from multiple school districts. There are various scenarios to explain the missed days, but resources are available to support youth and families and for older youth who need assistance. The mental health of the students is being prioritized over the attendance issue. The school systems are reaching out for support. Collingswood is doing a complete overhaul and Rosy will be there Friday to help build community within the students and then the following week, doing the same work with teachers. The CCYSC is implementing restorative justice work and has partnered with the State Bar Association (SBA) for assistance with the Collingswood School District. The SBA offers some restorative justice training just for education components and has a network of consultants. Jill Roth-Gutman expressed her concern with the Cherry Hill School District, and the need for outreach. Rosy commented the issue with some people saying that they're implementing restorative justice is that school districts are not implementing restorative justice to the full potential. She stated, in reality, they haven't tried the full modality of the model to its fidelity, which includes changing code of conduct, changing the way that teachers, teachers, administration engages with teachers, and students engage with teachers. CCYSC will be working with Cherry Hill School District in the next year or two to implement restorative justice.
- Nidia commented that she feels that consideration should be made to have a mental health person (other than a child study team) within the school structure, to provide mental health support before a student's situation gets to the extreme and a justice-involved situation occurs. The service could be available twice a week a week to assist youth with the mental health issues that are affecting them at all grade levels. Rosy responded that one of the saving graces for this coming year is that the State of New Jersey is implementing mental health hubs, where each of the school districts will have access to somebody that will be supporting the mental health service for the students. A lot will depend on the school districts, to understand what the work is going to be and then the willingness of the community to be a partner in this work so that young people and their families can access mental health resources before it gets extreme. Rosy notated

school-based youth services are needed in both Winslow and Camden, regardless of what this mental health hub is going to do.

- Rosy commented there will be a meeting with the Commissioner in May to discuss how the partnership is going to look with the restorative justice hub, the mental health hub and the work that Rosy does with school districts to try to coordinate effort to best provide outreach. She is hoping there will be a detailed list of opportunities and services that schools and programs can tap into.

Community Planning and Advocacy Council (CPAC) – Andrew Selby

- Andrew is working on his Prevention Plan for the next two years and will be reaching out to some agencies for some data. CPAC is currently working through its mini grant process, RFP process for July to December and its regular Prevention grant process will start next month.
- CPAC is currently applying for the Youth Homeless Demonstration Program Grant. The grant is available through HUD to help end youth homelessness within CPAC’s continuum of care. CPAC is a 4-county partnership with Camden, Gloucester, Cumberland and Salem counties.
- Andrew created a program to help families within Camden County apply for DD eligibility and also to offer education around those services because students who are DD eligible are still entering the system. The program should roll out soon.
- In collaboration with different agencies, CPAC will host its two-night, three-day Passport to Adulthood Retreat at Rowan University, June 15th through the 17th. The retreat for is offered to youth ages 16 through 18, especially those involved DCP&P and youth that are aging out of systems, to assist them with life planning and transition into adulthood.

Adjournment

Alex asked for a motion to adjourn. Motion was made by Frank Cirii and seconded by Evangeline Banks. By a majority vote to the affirmative, the meeting adjourned 10:06 am.

Next Meeting

The next Youth Committee meeting is scheduled for Wednesday, June 28, 2023, at 9:00 am via Zoom. The Quarterly Board Meeting is Wednesday, June 21, 2023.

Submitted by:

Debra Vaughn
Administrative Assistant to the Executive Director