



Supporting the Development and Retention of a World Class Workforce

Jeffrey S. Swartz, Executive Director

Robert Weil, Chair

OPERATIONS COMMITTEE MEETING  
MINUTES, JULY 16, 2020

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

ATTENDANCE

Member	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	12-Jun-20	16-Jul-20
DeBaere, Gregg T., CHAIR											
Cirii, Frank	X	X	X	X	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	X
Regensburger, Robert	X		X	X	X	X		X	X	X	X
Sinclair, Nidia				X	X		X	X	X		X
Weil, Bob		X		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 9:10am. He welcomed attendees they shared personal updates about current working conditions.

ONE – STOP & WDB CERTIFICATION

Jeffrey S. Swartz, Executive Director, reported for Leslie Williams, Comptroller, WDB, there are no new updates or feedback regarding the Partner Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) and Infrastructure Funding Agreement (IFA) and One-Stop Certification Documents. These documents are required, on a rolling schedule basis, by the State Education and Training Commission (SETC) under the Workforce Innovation and Opportunities Act (WIOA-2014) More information can be found at <https://www.dol.gov/agencies/eta/wioa/>

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

Frank Cirii, Local Area Operation Director, reported the One-Stop is still officially closed to public access until further notice. Frank said much of his last meetings have revolved around writing and vetting the Covid Response, Local Area Re-Opening Plan. This was successfully accomplished with the help of the One-Stop Management Team and the WDB. The plan was reviewed by County Administration, the County Public Health Department and the WDB, then sent to Hugh Bailey, Assistant Commissioner, LWD. This is the plan the One-Stop has been following as we approach a phased re-opening. All county staff returned to work as of Monday, June 29<sup>th</sup>. All staff have been trained and are following the social distancing protocols spelled out in the plan. There is plenty of signage posted around the facility. The staff is currently going through work files to do a sort of self-imposed evaluation of each customer case past and present and reviewing it for processes and coding, especially around credentialing. The staff is also

working on getting services transferred to an online format. Frank noted as discussed at the last meeting, the One-Stop has purchase the “Qless” application and software package. As he described, “Qless” is a program that will organize appointment scheduling and digital onboard of customers. It can be used by phone or computer. Customers can schedule and check their appointment status all the way up to the actual appointment. The program also offers alerts and updates about any changes or delays to their appointments. It will also track workflow information as well as post the checklist of onboarding documents. It will boost productivity for staff as well. All One-Stop Partners have been doing great, meeting with Scott Stetzer, IT Manager, giving him input to address their departmental needs and schedules. He is gathering all the data that needs to be entered into the Qless operating system. Gregg asked if there was an implementation schedule. Frank said as soon as possible, there is no specific schedule. All are working diligently to prepare the system for full operation. We were originally told that the general process takes six to eight weeks and we are now two weeks in. The target is to have the system up and running by the state’s solid public access reopening date which is still to be determined. The back up plan is to use the google docs system, created by Kristi Connors, Manager, Employment Services, DOL, until the new system is tested and fully operational.

Frank reported that Nidia Sinclair, Director, Resource Center, is working with staff to transfer customer services to remote access. Her counselors continue to work with the current customers of the Learning Link, Adult Basic Skills, platform. Her staff is also in the process of creating a virtual One-Stop Services Orientation. That has been sent to the County for approval. Staff is also working on digitizing the Career Club. Career Club is usually the next step after Orientation. We have received approval from the State for counselors to document remotely and have been looking into other software application such as Verisign. This will streamline the training voucher and other documentation processes. The biggest current concern is getting a pipeline started for serving new customers. That will be the next step in the re-opening phase.

Frank discussed ongoing concerns with customers not getting phone assistance with Unemployment Concerns. He noted that 177 customers lined up outside the building on June 29<sup>th</sup> due to a false re-opening date being posted. He also said there are social media groups now formed to complain and or share information about UI claims. The State has sub-contracted call centers, but customers still cannot get through to a live person. Gregg asked if Frank was considering any additional strategies to address the UI situation. Frank said that officers have installed 3-foot-high barriers outside in front of the facility. The file department filled the barriers with water, so they are less hazardous in incidence of contact. All cones and markers have been marked and spaced outside the facility as well. Staff is also preparing handout messaging that directs customers to the best possible current information. Security will be stepped up as needed. Right now, the goal is to keep everyone safe and diffuse any possible disruptions with the best possible information available. He noted that UI’s lack of communication with customers is hurting the reputation and system of the entire One-Stop and structure of partner services. Management is not only stopped in the parking lot and blamed for the current situation; they are also tasked with answering lots of accusatory hate emails as well.

Frank reported that the Covid Plan is working well so far, with some partner agencies coordinating rolling staff schedules. He stated that the next biggest concern is to begin getting referrals or customers into the pipeline and into training so we can use the funding before the end of the extended fiscal year. Kristi told Frank she has been sending some referrals from

Employment Services, to Debra Sutherland, Paraprofessional, Resource Center so customers are starting to enter the system. Gregg asked for updates regarding Financial Literacy. Frank reported that Nidia did make favorable contact with Stephanie Bitner about resuming Financial Literacy Workshops for youth at the YOS but no schedule has been set up yet.

- YOUTH ORIENTATION AND WORKSHOPS

Nidia Sinclair, Director Resource Center, reported that she has had staff contacting all youth that were in the pipeline or had open files and staying in contact with them to help them along. Youth counselors are doing their usual with the few current youth customers. They are also doing some work with the Summer Youth Employment Program. Jyi Peterson, conducted a virtual onboarding orientation for some youth entering that program. Counselors are also involved with the file review to find any missed benchmark achievements including credentialing. Gregg asked if there were any youth participating in work experience. Nidia said there are no youth currently assigned to work experience. She said the reason is that most of the youth participating in services such as the Leaning Link have part time jobs or are not interested. Its not for lack of trying. Once we can get more youth into the system, and assigned to activities, we can offer that option. There were not further updates.

- 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 are requiring temperature screening before staff or customers enter the building in Camden City. She asked Frank is there is a plan in place for this type of screening at the One-Stop location. Frank said he will defer to the county's policy on temperature screening. If necessary, they will implement the requirement at the One-Stop. Bob W. noted that he sent Frank a tear sheet about a temperature screening device. Frank thanked Bob for the information. The Committee discussed the benefits of screening going into the flu season. All agreed there may a benefit to this type of requirement. Frank said he will work out the logistics of screening once the county provides guidance. He said all new safety protocols including the scheduling app will serve to improve productivity and customer service going forward.

Salama also reported all staff will be returning to work in July for 35 hours per week. All staff that have been out for school closings will be returning. All staff that are out for medical reasons will have to provide clearer documentation as to why they would have to stay home. More safety measures have been put into place and current funding levels to not allow for the purchase of remote work tools. The office has been very busy and there is a lot of work that needs to be completed. Most workspaces will be reserved for staff only. The first-floor Surrogate area will be open for seeing clients. There is some discussion about setting up special plexiglass screened interview booths but for right now there are telephones set up for communicating with clients. The Case Managers remain at their desk and they dial in to the phone on the desk where the

customer is seated. The full-service interview takes place by phone and then paperwork is delivered for them to sign at a safe distance. So far, the state has approved this system of interview. As long as waivers continue, we don't have a mandatory face to face component for any of the programs, WorkFirst NJ or SNAP. The waiver will likely continue until the end of the year. Work Activities are still in the discussion stage, there are many factors to consider before the Board requires work activities again. There is no rush to set up the office differently and we will want to see how much of the activities can be done virtually. The Board is considering best practices. Some virtual contact has been set up in other offices including Catholic Charities. There are more concerns about some social services such as housing and case management. A lot of those services need to be handled in person. All in all, the Board is trying to balance safety measures with providing adequate service to customers. Gregg asked if everyone is still required to wear facemasks. Salama said yes, they are, and she lifted her face covering to the camera. The rule is to wear masks only when social distancing is not possible but most of the staff are wearing masks all the time.

Gregg said it was mentioned at the last meeting that the Board was experiencing a back log of claims. He asked if this was still the case. Salama said staff is still catching up with some staff working only three days a week. Once they return to full time work in July, there will likely be some overtime hours. The number of intake applications has gone down but there is still a backlog. The re-certifications will be coming due soon so we will have to get those going as well.

- **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, was not on the call so there were no new updates reported. Gregg noted that much of DVRS supportive services are dependent on Camden County College being open. He asked if anyone on the committee has received information about a re-opening date. Leslie said colleges could open in July, but she has not heard any definitive dates for CCC.

Kathleen reported that Karen Marks, Jewish Family and Children Services (JFCS) attended the Abilities Committee call and she reported that the Project Search cohort is nearing completion of their internship with TD Bank and Jefferson/Kennedy Hospital. JFCS is the contracted training provider for the program. There are 10 participants in the cohort, and they are receiving remote access to some levels of training.

- **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 she attended a virtual meeting on Wednesday, June 10<sup>th</sup> with Hugh Bailey, Assistant Commissioner, and other managers from

around the state. It looks like UI will not be in the building upon re-opening the One-Stop, they are still working on a plan and messaging. Other managers on the call were sharing stories of irate customers in the parking lots of their offices, demanding service and help with unemployment claims. They were talking about having extra security placed outside the offices. They were also talking about bringing staff in before the end of the month, however, there has been nothing in writing from Human Capital Strategies. Without a written directive, its hard to bring non-essential staff back to work. Gregg asked if staff coding as non-essential was still up in the air. Kristi said some staff can be given projects to complete at home. Some managers have directed staff to call labor relations. Kristi said her staff is working well and taking part in online training opportunities. Many of the onboarding to employment services is being set up to be done remotely. The State is using the Career Connections Website to post links to some online services. The State is relying heavily on Microsoft Teams for communication among staff. Kristi said, while there are not concrete updates, the State is aware of the concerns and is working on a plan. She also noted that locally, the team at the One-Stop works well together and they are being pro-active about re-opening preparation and new protocols. Other counties do not have this kind of corporation. Kristi said she is working on a system of tracking service at least until the new QLess system is fully implemented.

Kristi asked if some summer youth could be assigned remotely to help with training on online work programs. There may be some 18-24-year-old youth that may have this type of online computer experience. They might be able to work 20 hours per week on developing some trainings for staff at the One-Stop. Gregg said it is a great time for training and development in general. Leslie said any program changes will have to be discussed. The youth will still need supervision.

- **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 on moving ahead with Emergency Medical Technicians (EMT). Hopeworks designed a brochure and support materials. There are no further updates at this time.

- **REGIONAL ACTIVITIES**

Leslie reported for Jeff, the Atlantic City Electric (ACE) Training Initiative, now in its second year of training 2020, is currently on hold due to college closures. Participants have been offered opportunities to take online training from CEWD. ACE has confirmed that there is no contractual breach of agreement due to unforeseen circumstances. All other counties have reported the same holding status.

Lernard S. Thornton, Jr., Senior Workforce Development Specialist, Delmarva, Pepco Holdings, has been newly assigned as the Liaison to the WDB's. He has recommended holding off on conducting an employer information session until he can organize more engagement by ACE Contractors. A Virtual Information Session is being planned for early September with ACE as the host. He also recommended postponing the Line Training until spring of 2021. This action may produce better outcomes for the participants. Conference calls are continuing with ACE, College Instructors involved with the program and WDB Directors.

- CONSORTIUM & INDUSTRY PARTNERSHIP UPDATES

Kathleen reported the Health Care Consortium meetings are usually suspended during the summer months. They hope to resume in the fall.

Kathleen reported for Jeff, the South Jersey Industry Partnerships, aimed at the manufacturing sector, is continuing follow-up discussions. She said that Jeff relayed there was some talk about going on to a new employment sector launch, however, he firmly expressed concerns about achieving good outcomes for the current manufacturing sector before starting any new partnerships.

- BUSINESS SERVICES (BSR)

Kathleen reported the Business Service Team continues to meet virtually and is receiving weekly updates from Jeanne Page-Soncrant, BSR serving Camden County. Jeanne is having some success with the BSR "Job Matching" initiative. Jeanne reported to the team that she is sending an average of 2500-3000 emails per week to jobseekers. The process is time consuming. Kathleen said that Jeanne is also working with Wawa, ShopRite and other employer referrals the WDB has received for help with hiring. The Trades Initiative is on hold due to school closings.

#### 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 Thursday, July 16, at 9:00am via Zoom conferencing. The Committee moved to a summer schedule of meetings.

Submitted by:

*Kathleen Varallo*

Administrative Assistant