



Supporting the Development and Retention of a World Class Workforce

Jeffrey S. Swartz, Executive Director

Matthew Verney, Board Chair

**OPERATIONS COMMITTEE MEETING
MINUTES, AUGUST 6, 2021**

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

ATTENDANCE

MEMBERS		12-Mar-21	9-Apr-21	14-May-21	11-Jun-21	9-Jul-21	6-Aug-21
DeBaere, Gregg T., CHAIR	Atlantic Coast Communications	X	X	X	X	X	X
Cirii, Frank	Camden County One Stop	X	X	X	X		
Connors, Kristi	NJ Department of Labor, Business Services	X	X	X	X	X	X
Deitz, Jeff	NJDVRs	X		X		X	X
Jones-Benjamin, Michaela	Camden County Board of Social Services						X
Martin, Lauwana	Camden County Board of Social Services						X
McFarland, Salama	Camden County Board of Social Services	X		X			
Regensburger, Robert	Lockheed Martin	X	X	X	X	X	X
Shump, Patricia	NJ Dept. of Labor						X
Sinclair, Nidia	Camden County Resource Center	X	X	X			
Weil, Bob	WDB Chair	X	X		X	X	
Swartz, Jeffrey S.	WDB	X	X	X	X	X	X
Williams, Leslie J	WDB	X	X	X	X	X	X
Varallo, Kathleen	WDB	X	X	X	X		X

WELCOME

Gregg DeBaere, Chair, called the meeting to order at 9:14am. Gregg welcomed attendees to the meeting. Gregg said he did a thorough review of the minutes with Kathleen Varallo, Administrative Assistant, WDB, and they were sent out to the committee with this morning's meeting materials. Gregg said the corrections were mostly grammatical. Gregg asked for a motion to approve the minutes, July 9th, 2021. Leslie Williams made the first motion; Kristi Connors made the second motion. By unanimous vote to the affirmative the motion was carried, and minutes July 9th, 2021, were approved.

ONE – STOP & WDB CERTIFICATION

Gregg asked Leslie Williams, Comptroller, WDB, to report on any of the latest updates from the State Employment and Training Commission (SETC) regarding the WDB Certification, local and regional plans. Leslie reported she has not heard anything other than it was mentioned at an SETC, WDB Directors Meeting, that some sort of guidance will be forthcoming regarding the regional and local plan. Jeffrey S. Swartz, Executive Director, said it was announced that guidance will be released in September. He said the Garden State Employment and Training (GSETA) Executive Committee met and will propose an alternative plan to the SETC. He said they will propose that instead of each local area writing a plan, the regional committees will work together to write a regional plan with local area insertions or highlights. He said the GSETA Executive Team felt it would be more beneficial to write one regional plan that would

include some of the best practice and initiatives in the local areas, rather than writing two separate plans. Gregg asked if both plans are required under the WIOA law. Jeff said the law requires a local and regional plan, but it does not say whether the local plan can be incorporated into the regional plan. Jeff will report back to the committee once a decision is made at the next SETC meeting in August.

He asked if there has been any state guidance released. Leslie reported there has been no further notification regarding the WDB Certification. The WDB will receive an official certification document, once approved. She said there has been no guidance released or notification of when the local or regional plan is due for submission.

- ONE-STOP CAREER CENTER UPDATES

Gregg asked Jeff to report on messaging and signage, discussed at the last Operations meeting. It was discussed that signage and messaging be placed outside the One-Stop offices that clearly stated the absence of Unemployment (UI). Jeff said the GSETA Executive Committee is taking on the task of procuring signage for each of the local areas. Each local area will receive six signs. He said the signs will basically state that UI assistance is not available at this office. The sign will direct customers to the proper phone number or online access. The signs will be sandwich board type which can be folded and brought in or out easily at the start or close of business. He viewed the drafts and noted that GSETA will be covering the cost of signs for the local areas. Leslie said the signs are portable and can be taken in and out, so there won't be any problem with the lessor of the facility. Jeff said the key thing is that the message will be consistent and that was the biggest concern for all the local areas. The Committee discussed the signage and agreed that a consistent message is important since no official messaging has been released by the State. Gregg asked and Jeff confirmed the State is aware and all protocols were followed. He said a letter was sent and the State seemed appreciative of the lead GSETA is taking to address the concern.

Gregg asked if there were any updates about the QLess scheduling system. Kristi Connors, Manager, Employment Services, DOL, told Gregg to touch base with Frank Cirii. Gregg said he will defer to partner reports about interface concerns.

Gregg reviewed the agenda item regarding the approval process by the State Department of Education, to make the One-Stop, Learning Link, an official testing site for the HighSet and GED completion. As discussed in prior meetings, he said the One-Stop was informed the application will likely be approved later in the fall of this year

Gregg asked Jeff for updates about the County Business Action Plan and Incumbent Worker Training (IWT). Jeff said the committee is continuing to meet to work out the logistics and application process of IWT. The contracts have been reviewed by Theo Primas, Program Evaluator, WDB. The WDB will be assigning Camden County College as the liaison to employers. The College will meet with employers referred, who have interest in this type of training. The College will assess the needs of the employer, help them through the application process and provide the training. All applications will be approved by the WDB. Jeff is hoping the trainings will be geared toward warehouse and logistics as opposed to offering Microsoft Office computer classes. This was also expressed by the WDB Executive Committee and even some CDL training which is a very big demand area for employers. The Committee discussed

outreach to the employers. All agreed that once the documents and processes are organized, outreach to employers can begin. Gregg asked if the State BSR's could get involved with promoting the program. Jeff said BSR's can promote and refer employers to the program, but these IWT contracts will be funded by the County, so they will be driven by the College, WDB, and One-Stop. Gregg said it is good the program is moving forward.

- SUMMER YOUTH EMPLOYMENT PROGRAM (SYEP)

Gregg asked Leslie to report on the Summer Youth Employment Program (SYEP). Leslie reported the SYEP is moving along with 29-30 active participants. They are getting ready to move into their fourth, two-week segment. Most of the participants are putting in their time and attendance to the work-readiness training, and most of the employers are very happy with their interns. She said it is all going well, and every year provides a learning experience about how to improve the program. Many participants applied from the southern part of the county, so she will look next year to engage more employers from that area. Gregg asked if participant data entry into the AOSOS system was completed. Leslie said participants are all keyed into the system. She spoke with Laurie Maguire, Manager, MIS, to confirm that all participants have been entered and assigned MIS ID numbers.

- 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/>)

Ms. L Martin reported for Salama McFarland, Case Management Administrator, Board of Social Services (BSS). Gregg asked if the Board was able to implement the QLess scheduling system. Ms. Martin said they are working out minor glitches mostly due to clients not knowing which buttons to push. Staff is simply transferring over misdirected inquiries to the right department. Gregg asked if the interface issues were resolved. Ms. Martin said the system is being used. They are waiting for the Spanish translator to be activated.

Gregg asked if there were any new application numbers to report. Ms. Martin said she would follow-up with a request for that information. Gregg said he would be looking for two months of reporting, June, and July, for next month's meeting.

Gregg asked about the call team progress regarding voluntary work activities. Ms. Martin said the call team is continuing to outreach to clients, currently on GA, TANF or SNAP and make them aware of back-to-work training and volunteer work activity opportunities. She said many clients are refusing, but some are showing interest. They are being referred to Camden County College or OEO, a county training provider, and some are being referred for mental health or childcare assistance. Gregg asked her to follow-up with those call numbers.

Gregg asked if there were any updates on state waivers to mandatory work activity. Ms. Martin said the waivers will continue through the end of the year 2021. Letters will go out in January 2022, advising clients about mandatory work activity. Gregg asked, in light of continuing

waivers, if the voluntary call activity will also continue advising clients about the pending requirements. Ms. Martin said calls will likely continue. She reported for SNAP the total participating is 2, for TANF its 57, and for GA its 104. Gregg remarked the numbers were down and asked if they might change in September or January. Ms. Martin said they will likely change in January.

- **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, DOL, reported the State has not released any information about a re-opening plan. He was happy to announce that Jennifer Veneziani, Employer Outreach Coordinator, was back working in the division. His staff is still serving customers virtually and reporting to the office two days per week.

Jeff D. reported that both TD Bank and Kennedy/Jefferson have picked participants for the next training cohort. They are saying that participants will be training on-site, but it's hard to say what will happen because of the new COVID variant circulating. Gregg was surprised to hear that TD Bank will still be involved with the training. His son, who works with TD, told him there were interns running through the program this summer. Jeff D. reminded the committee that Lenape School bought the license and was also surprised to hear TD was still involved. His office will keep a close eye on outcomes going forward.

EMPLOYMENT SERVICES, DOL

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/career-services/>

Kristi Connors, Manager, Employment Services, DOL, reported her division checked in 658 customers and provided services for them. There were 417 filled out virtual services requests that came from the website and training referrals since July 1st was 132, with the average being about 24 per week. She said each week the referrals are sent to MIS for data entry into the AOSOS system and checked, so it has been very consistent. Staff works with MIS to make sure customers are matched in the system and it's working very well. MIS is sending a training email to weekly requesters, and they are also addressing the backlog of 1000 customers at a rate of 100 per week. She imagines this system will get more customers into training. Kristi said she finished the fillable form, MIS checked it and the career packet is now posted the county website making it easy for customers to access. Customers can now fill out all forms online. They do not have to print them out and deliver the package in person. All eligibility documents and the check list can now be accessed and filled out online.

Gregg asked if DocuSign is being used to expedite this process. Kristi said the County is using it

for vendors and training counselors are beginning to use the service, but it is not being used online. She said it may be incorporated somewhere down the line, but for now, it makes more sense to use the fee-free word document since there is a charge for each use with DocuSign. If customers don't follow through with training it might be wasted. DocuSign becomes more valuable to the customer when they are approved for training, because it saves them a trip back and forth to the training provider to sign the training voucher.

Kristi reported Hugh Bailey, Assistant Commissioner, DOL, convened a manager's meeting on Thursday, August 5th to talk about procurement of the State's scheduling system. He reportedly said the target date for implementation would be August 16th to all local counties. He is encouraging all partners to use the system and understands that Camden County has its own QLess system. He is leaving it up to each county to use their preferred system but would like scheduling to be consistent. Kristi said that all counties are not set up the same as Camden in that the move to the new location caused all partners to be housed under one roof. It may be difficult to coordinate one system that works for all partners. She said the State was talking about using the same scheduling system as the Department of Motor Vehicles. She is not exactly sure about which system they will implement. She said there was a target date, September 7th, discussed for a staggered return to work for staff with services continuing virtually for some weeks after, but again, this may be a rolling date.

Kristi also reported the State gave statistics that 13,700 Camden County customers would be falling off their unemployment benefits by the September 4th date of announced expiration. She said Burlington County was at 8600 and about 5-6000 for Gloucester County. She is glad to hear WDB Directors are addressing messaging. An email blast will be sent to all UI recipients. She said messaging cannot be done enough and we should look for every way to get the message out that UI will not be seeing customers in the One-Stops. It should be visibly noted on the County website. Jeff said he already advised all concerned at the county level. Kristi said the more proactive we can be the better because people do not know.

Kristi reported the State conducted a facilities walk-through with security, treasury, and safety, which she and Jeff Dietz attended. Keith Austin, Manager, UI, also attended. There was some discussion about using some empty workspace in the facility to spread out more and socially distance. She and Jeff D. asked for more Plexiglas shielding and messaging. There was discussion about sending out a message from the State. The holdup seems to be in the content of the message so it does not sound negative and that customers should be encouraged to access all the other employment services outside of unemployment. Jeff said the WDB Directors came up with a message that is direct and to the point. He said many of the other local areas are concerned about security. Kristi said an extra security officer will be assigned for the first few weeks in all the local areas. They will also be implementing metal detector wands. It may send a negative message but better safe than sorry. The Committee discussed safety and security concerns. All agreed it is better to be prepared for an influx of customers especially in the first few weeks of state partner re-opening. Jeff also expressed concerns about having a central loudspeaker system installed so that in case of an emergency evacuation, all in the facility can be notified safely. He said one other county expressed this same concern and the State was going to install such a loudspeaker system. He has heard stories from other local areas about the frustrations of UI customers and incidences of explosive behavior. He said we need to be concerned about the safety of the staff as well as other participants that are in the building. The WDB Director's

message to the State was that safety should be addressed before any type of scheduling system. Kristi said another concern addressed was the policy of mask wearing. County staffs are following one policy and the State has another policy. It will be up to each local area to coordinate a consistent policy. She noted the DOL is following the Governor's orders. They are not making decisions independently.

Kristi reported she created a QR code to add to the virtual services directory and on the County website so customers can point their smart phone on the code to get directly to One-Stop services contacts.

Kristi reported on tracking customers from December 2, 2019-December 2, 2020, and into 2021. She estimated an average of 32% of customers checked from Camden zip codes, 17% were from Lindenwold and Sicklerville. One statistic she discovered was that ES served two thirds more customers one-on-one, virtually, than when offices were still open back in December 2019. She said there were more group presentations when the One-Stop was open, so the transition to virtual services provided customers with more one-on-one service.

Kristi reported the resume writing presentation was completed with a voiceover by Annie Santiago, Interviewer, ES, and she conducted a workshop for the SYEP on Friday, July 16th. Youth gave good feedback. Kristi said Kathleen Varallo, WDB, told her the youth were engaged for a good 45 minutes which was unusual, because they show up to the call but do not always actively participate.

- **REGIONAL ACTIVITIES**

Jeff reported the WDB Directors in the southern counties are discussing the regional plan. Michelle Shirey, WDB Director, Gloucester County, is taking the lead on this effort.

Jeff reported Camden and Atlantic County *did* start the Line School Training with some online courses covering OSHA 10 and CPR. The in-person training will be conducted at the Anthony Canale Training Center in Egg Harbor Township, NJ. Sherwood Taylor, Atlantic Cape Community College, who oversees the program, is still waiting for some of the yard equipment and safety gear to be delivered to the training site. Sherwood is communicating with the equipment vendor about supply chain issues. All students in the cohort of 28 are being kept updated about progress. Jeff said the ACE team is continuing to meet virtually. There have been more participants completing the CAST test from Atlantic County. He said Camden County is beginning to promote their next training by joining the Literacy Committee in outreach at the areas National Nights Outs. The next local cohort will begin in January 2022.

Jeff reported he regularly attends the Camden Works calls and that program has been very successful. They are continuing to add more participants each week with over 470 participants register in their data base. Brian Brule, Camden City Partnership (CCP) is running that program and is doing a great job.

Jeff reported the State Employment and Training Commission (SETC), and the Garden State Employment and Training Association (GSETA) are continuing to meet regularly. GSETA launched a new website and is in the process of planning a virtual employment and training

conference scheduled for November 15th & 16th, 2021. Jeff said they are lining up some outstanding presenters who are committed to speak. More information can be found on the newly launched website; www.gseta.org

- **CONSORTIUM & INDUSTRY PARTNERSHIP UPDATES**

Jeff reported there have been no meetings scheduled by the Eds and Meds Consortium. That group has transitioned into the Camden Works Initiative. There was another Industry Partnership meeting convened last week, but Jeff was unable to attend due to another state meeting. He said he'll get an update as to the results of that meeting.

Jeff reported the NJ SkillUp program seems to be going well. The WDB is continuing to promote the program and it has been incorporated into the SYEP. He said there is data being collected by the State to measure participation in each county. Gregg said it is a good addition to customer service, and he hoped it will be studied by administration to work out any program glitches that could improve outcomes.

- **BUSINESS SERVICES & OUTREACH TEAM (BSOT)**

Jeff reported Jeanne Page-Soncrant, BSR, and Ricky O'Hara, Veterans Rep. are continuing the job matching initiative and sending weekly reports of employer engagement. Jeanne is on partial leave, but is continuing to work and her state supervisor, Amanda Modale, is sending us weekly reports of employer engagement as assigned to other BSR's on her behalf. Jeff said business is picking up and more employers are turning to the State for help with hiring. BSR's are organizing more state and WDB-sponsored virtual recruitments. He appreciated that Amanda is communicating with him, and he is also sending reports and updates to Bob Weil, Chair, BSOT. Kristi said Amanda is very organized.

Gregg asked the committee to take some time to discuss an idea brought forth at the last meeting by Bob Regensburger, Project Principal, Economic Development Programs, Lockheed Martin. Bob R. suggested the committee put together a white paper that documented some of the process changes, transition to virtual services, and response efforts during the pandemic. The document would include lessons learned and suggestions of processes that might help going forward. He asked the committee to think about how to approach and format the document.

Gregg suggested one approach would be to lay out the challenges presented by the pandemic, and as Bob had mentioned at the last meeting, the challenges with a move to a new facility that also forced change. He said these were challenges that may have been out of our control, but they did spur on process improvements. The process of overcoming the challenges might be documented and addressed side-by-side as they occurred within a span of six months. He further explained another idea of listing the challenges by partner or by the group as a whole. He said we could talk about what we did to overcome some of those challenges, while at the same time acknowledging what challenges remain going forward. He said these were his ideas in terms of an outline for format to start with.

Gregg asked Bob R. his thoughts about how to reach an outline or starting point, what do we want to include and what don't we want to miss. Bob said much will be predicated by the inputs of the team in terms of where the inputs are focused. For example, it might be in process

improvement, or it might be in areas of better uses of current technology. He also said it may be in the area of relaxation of certain requirements, as it may have been appropriate to do so, in order to move processes and performance forward. Bob said at this point it's hard to say what the format might look like, but the overarching all of this; he felt the team did an outstanding job in meeting the demand of an extreme set of circumstances. He felt it was important to express concerns about the risk of reverting back to old processes and practices that were not an effective way of doing business. It may be good to highlight the progress made and under what conditions, how it empowered staff and leaders to make more decisions at the local level.

Bob felt it would be good to document and good to demonstrate the creativity and dedication of the team that looked at processes, and how to improve them, and how to do better. While he wasn't sure how to approach format, he felt once the challenges and accomplishments are laid out, it can be analyzed and expounded upon with a better sense of how the document will be constructed once input can be contributed to a draft. He is thinking of a document that includes an Executive Summary that lays out the overarching conditions, and it could be broken down into certain component parts or functional areas. It also could be broken out by category of the facility itself. It could address the objectives of the move that set out to create an integration of functions and services. He noted a lot of work was done to make that happen and the results were good, He offered, as he said at the last meeting, he would be more than happy to take all inputs and help shape it in whatever way it needs to flow well to the reader.

Gregg thanked Bob for his input and appreciated this offer to help. He said he wants to give the paper (document) purpose. Gregg asked how we can create a document that goes beyond simply stating the challenges and actions and is useful going forward. Jeff suggested the document can be formatted along the same lines as the local strategic plan or it could be approached as a process improvement plan. Gregg said it could be a type of a springboard for the local plan. Gregg suggested the document be summarized, at the end, with some recommendations going forward, then the document becomes, number one, useful and number two, can become a springboard for the plan. The white paper could be addressed in the plan and included as an attachment to the plan. The Committee discussed more ideas about how to coordinate the writing of the white paper document with the writing of the local plan.

Kristi said there may be a problem addressing the success of tracking because the moved caused all partners to use that system for 15 months and were able to prove services improved participation by residents outside of Camden City proper. The shutdown broke down the collective process, so that only ES was using the system during the last fiscal year. She also said one thing discovered was the digital divide; question being, could we serve customers virtually and we found that we could. The move caused the partners to work in tandem; the shutdown caused the partners to work remotely, but solutions to service created coordination. She said the overall theme can be the local area adapted a "let's just get it done" philosophy, which was eventually supported by the State, outside of UI, and it's that which produced better results for customers and the digital divide. It also empowered the local partner leaders to try new processes such as the Board's Voluntary Call team, the Resource Center's follow-up file review and outreach team. Kristi will share the tracking data from her check-in and workflow reported, and it can be adapted to the document using the process evaluation completed for the WDB Certification. She also noted the fact that service increased from one-third to two-thirds just by calling customers by phone. It was found to be very effective, and it is not going backward, but

moving forward giving customers what they need. There are many customers who were never unemployed before the pandemic. There are customer resigning to a career change and need help and direction. She suggested themes such as more individualized customer attention, local decision making it easier to create solutions, knowing that each population, in each local area, may have different needs. Gregg said our advantage, in the local area, is that we have the data and can state it confidently, because we measured, thanks to Kristi's check-in and workflow reports. Bob R. thanked Kristi for stating the outcomes especially pushing decision making to the local level. He commended her persistence in getting permission from her state supervisors to do so. He said local decision making can be more effective because of the understanding and customer interactions we face on a day-to-day basis. He said this can be the overarching theme we are looking for. The Committee discussed more elements of the document and agreed to contribute input to Gregg. He will create a summary and get it Bob for review before the next meeting. He thanked the committee for their service and said it was appreciated not only by the WDB, but everyone in Camden County.

QUARTERLY BOARD MEETING

The next WDB Quarterly Board of Trustees meeting is scheduled for Wednesday, September 22nd, @8:30am via Zoom Conferencing. The annual report will be presented, and the annual master budget will be approved at that meeting.

NEXT MEETING

Hearing no further questions, Gregg thanked the committee. The next meeting will be held on Friday, September 10th 9:00am via Zoom Conferencing. Gregg asked for a motion to adjourn the meeting. Leslie Williams made the first motion; Jeff made the second motion; by unanimous vote to the affirmative the motion was carried, and meeting adjourned at 10:15am.

Submitted by:

Kathleen Varallo

Administrative Assistant