



County of Mercer Workforce Development Board

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Virgen Velez
Acting Director

DAN BENSON
County Executive

Keith Secrest
Chairperson

WDB General Board Meeting ♦ Chairperson: Keith Secrest

April 30, 2024 ♦ 12:00 pm (Zoom) ♦ Meeting Minutes

Attendance:

Members: Keith Secrest (Kinetics Industries), Melissa Tenzer (Dress For Success of Central Jersey), Scott Needham (Princeton Air), Kathy Fiery (Health Care Association of NJ; Scott Elliott (PCIL); Matt Carey (MCTS/MCSSSD; Latoya Wilson (WCR Consultancy); Dawn Paquette (NJM); Anthony Carabelli (Mercer County Office of Economic Development); Joseph Claffey (MCCC); Peter Tindall (Homasote),

Guests: Carmen Gates (African American Chamber of Commerce); Umesh Patel (NJDOL OJT); Dr. Gonzalo Perez (MCCC)

Staff: Virgen Velez

Welcome & Introductions

Keith Secrest opened the meeting at approximately 12:04 and welcomed the group. Introductions were made.

Approval of February 6, 2024 Meeting Minutes

Latoya Wilson made the motion to approve, Scott Needham seconded the motion. There was no opposition and the motion to approve the minutes was approved.

Presentations/Updates

Mercer County Technical School (MCTS) - Superintendent Matt Carey

- ❖ New director of post-secondary services - Al Munford
- ❖ Seeking to expand & add instructors - blueprint reading, plumbing, HVAC, carpentry, etc.
- ❖ Currently approximately 300 enrollments in the Adult Evening School & seeking to increase
- ❖ Strategic plan for Adult Evening School
- ❖ Participated in Skills USA State awards - won 5 gold, 6 silver, & 7 bronze medals
- ❖ Added another CIE coordinator
- ❖ Both CIE coordinators have been recognized for their work - have added Career Days/ Fairs, guest speakers, going out to organizations; will provide CIE services to the Adult Evening students connecting them to employment
- ❖ OJT need to connect to LMI
- ❖ Competed in Pro Start - Culinary Team was 1st in the State enabling them to compete on the national level - Mercer Team finished 23rd in the Nation - celebrity chefs attended

- ❖ Budget - plan to invest in 3majorg projects
 - \$1.5M in STEM
 - Converting old culinary/baking dining programs & build a restaurant/classroom - which will eventually open to the public
 - \$1.5m CTE programs - new equipment for automotive
 - Plan to add welding - updated curriculum
- ❖ Articulation agreement with MCCC will include additional programs; students can earn up to 48 credits & looking to include credits for Adult Evening students & students in general courses

Comment/Question: Scott Needham commented that that was much good news. Q: Has there been any thought to loosening credential requirements for teachers? A: For Adult School only need those interested in working with next generation & teaching at level mastery in their field of expertise

Q: Current enrollment of 300 in Adult Evening School - can you double that & receive funding for increase? A: The County Executive has clear expectation of what things should be - they want program to grow; there are 1,000 students during the day that could grow into 600, 700 & 800 for the Evening School. Tuition is kept extremely low - program is subsidized by County Commissioners.

Q: Is there an updated brochure available? Do you accept students who disclose their disability? The Technical School is looking for support for adult learnings with special needs & also bilingual aides. Looking to provide programming for job readiness targeting students over 21 who have gone through 18 -21 programs and to provide connection with employers. Dr. Perez mentioned that MCCC has a new program for Transition services for those 18-24 at the Kerney Campus

Mercer County Community College - Joseph Claffey & Dr. Gonzalo Perez

- ❖ Open enrollment programs - many in the medical space providing short term credentials
- ❖ Mercer Institute - works with employers to provide both soft & hard skills for incumbent workers
- ❖ New program
 - ❖ Title II program exploding - ESL classes day & evening - added success coach - seen much growth in GED program
 - ❖ Continuing Studies- working to bring back CDL in WW campus, supply chain management, property maintenance working with nationally accredited program to provide credential
 - ❖ Culinary courses at JKC
 - ❖ “Beijing” biomanufacturing plant in Hopewell - looking for workers with computer science, biology, chemistry backgrounds; \$900m investment - start production this Fall; providing credential to work in their Clean rooms - developing that with input from Beijing
 - ❖ Trenton Neighborhood Initiative - partnership with Capital Health - \$80,000 provided by Bristol Myers-Squibb; certification in Allied Health programs successful in recruiting students from Trenton
- ❖ Endowment - \$1m geared for scholarships for students who may need assistance paying for testing, uniforms, equipment, sometimes forgive their debt, etc.
- ❖ Volvo donated electric vehicles (EV) - Foundation invested in EV tools allowing program to expand

Q: any update on Adv. Mfg.? A: MCCC has placed that on the front burner - should be moving along quickly with new instructor.

Health Care - Kathy Fiery

Did not have meeting but do have highlight - MCCC has hired a CNA instructor & seeking an evaluator.

County Department Economic Development - Anthony Carabelli

- ❖ Introduced 2nd phase of funding for 0% Small Business Loan program - can serve 26 businesses with an average loan of \$20,000 for a five-year repayment
- ❖ Received funding for CDBG specifically for Hightstown - offers grants for non-profits
- ❖ New Division of Tourism - anticipation of Count's 200th anniversary & World Cup in 2026
- ❖ Workshop on "How to bid on State & Local contracts" - collaboration of State, County Purchasing, & Eco. Dev.

Executive Committee - Keith Secrest - Committees' Reports

Committee Reports

Advanced Manufacturing - Scott Needham

- ❖ Focus on WARN - rapid response team to get high alert to get employees working - trying to compose a "rapid response team" for teacher shortages

Disabilities - Scott Elliott

The minutes were distributed via email. Highlights include the following:

- ❖ Project Search
- ❖ PCIL working closely with DVR - Drivability Program - for those who struggled with written test & driver's test - provide behind the wheel training
- ❖ Reports from community partners
- ❖ CBVI (Commission for the Blind & Visually Impaired) joined the committee

Literacy - Acting Chair Keith Secrest

The minutes were distributed via email. Highlights include the following:

- ❖ Still need chair
- ❖ EMR tabled for this year - publishers reluctant to allow virtual readings & day care centers were not enthusiastic
- ❖ Will revisit next Spring

YIC - Latoya Wilson

The minutes were distributed via email. Highlights include the following:

- ❖ Training to create young people to additional programs
- ❖ SYWEP plans to serve 120 youth
- ❖ Discussed OSY services - opportunity for youth to earn HSE & job readiness
- ❖ Need to use newsletters to showcase successes
- ❖ Career Pathways Organization - summit being held in June
- ❖ See much opportunity - importance to incorporate climate change- need to upgrade curricula

WDB Updates - overview of these issues

- ❖ WDB Certification every 3-4 years SETC reviews to show we are meeting requirements - currently being generated
- ❖ Local plan submitted - pending comments & approval

- ❖ Career Services & OSO Procurement - committee will be assembled to review proposals
 - RFP was released
 - Past amount was \$40,000 for minimal services - now it is \$1.1 m as it includes the provision of career services
 - Meeting on May 15th to review proposals
 - Special meeting for Board vote - suggestion that Board authorize the Committee to review and recommend provider & at June meeting Board can ratify the awarding of the contract. Matt Carey made the motion to authorize the Review Committee to recommend a provider to the County Administration and for the entire Board to ratify that action at the June meeting. The motion was seconded by Dawn Paquette. There was no opposition and the motion carried as presented.

- ❖ OS Partners MOU/IFA
 - Revisions recommended by NJDOL were incorporated targeting June for submission

- ❖ USDOL Comprehensive Site Visit
 - Completed review - details included in Update
 - Conducted customer & employer reviews - very positive comments
 - Visited Isles- great reviews
 - Observations will be turned into findings, areas of concern or deletion
 - WDB membership not in compliance
 - WDB policies have must include procedures
 - Website needs updating - some already in progress
 - Lack of connection to Pathways - some of the discussion today will address that
 - Center is not welcoming
 - Youth RFP recommendations - recommendations were incorporated into the new RFP
 - Unable to conduct file review - will do offsite
 - Major issue - unable to access County fiscal records - WDB office has documentation for all reports files but they at is not considered the official records - only the County records. One of the problems is that the county system was being revised at the time of their visit
 - The letter will go to NJDOL - then they will send us our findings. It is our goal to have most if not all issues addressed by the receipt of the letter

- ❖ SYEP
 - Received an award of \$475,000 to serve a minimum of 120 - derived from formula - we believe we will serve 130 or even 140. We have established a partnership in Hightstown. Flyers are out in the community - to date 29 employers

- ❖ RFP's - currently in RFP for
 - OSY Youth Services
 - WFNJ TANF -
 - Funding expect to receive reduction - last year received \$1.3 for 9 months; we cannot apply for more than \$1.3m for 12 months. We had released the RFP prior to finding out about the lesser money
 - WFNJ GA - received \$ 862,000 486 for the 9-month period -we cannot apply for more than \$486,000 - for a 12-month period. The majority of funds are released into the community for direct services. Not sure of the impact it will have.

Expenditures Summary PY 2022 & PY 2023 - 3rd Quarter

- ❖ Funding not expended will be rescinded by the NJDOL
- ❖ PY 23 balances - have until June 2025 to spend - with other partnerships & coordinating with MCCC & MCTS we should be able to expend all funds

Common Measures Performance - PY 2023 3rd Quarter

Of the required 14 measures - we have Exceeded 10, Met 1, Not Met 2 & no data 1. Low WIOA numbers based on exits not current individuals. Actual numbers are small. At this point there are no areas of major concern.

OS Services Report -included in the emailed packet - any questions or additional areas of reporting please contact WDB Director. The report includes:

- ❖ customer flow
- ❖ job seekers services,
- ❖ business services,
- ❖ Occupational training,
- ❖ Youth Services
- ❖ Summer Programs
- ❖ Job fairs

NJ Audits -

- ❖ PY 19 & PY 20 are completed
- ❖ PY 21 - questioned cost of \$18,000 still trying to provide satisfactory documentation
- ❖ PY 22 - not completed due primarily to the USDOL review

OSO Update - Continue to have monthly meetings to address operational concerns; status quo; partners continue to share best practices

Announcements: none

Adjournment Motion to adjourn was made by Scott Needham, seconded by Melissa Tenzer. Motion passed and meeting was adjourned at approximately 1:40 p.m.

Next Meeting: Tuesday, July 30, 2024 12:00 - 1:30 p.m.