

**Monmouth County Workforce Development Board
Minutes of June 3, 2021**

Members Present

Robert Connolly, Chair
Roseann Isasi, Vice-Chair
Patricia Carlesimo, Trustee
Brian Wallace, Trustee
John Brown
John Ciufu
Paul Dement
Wyatt Earp
Chris Femiano
Charles Ford
John Gagliano
Kay Harris
Dallas Hlatky
Rene Kurowski
Violeta Peters
Susan Rakoci-Anderson
William Salcedo
Robert Shimko
David Stout
Judy Van Brunt

Members Absent

Joseph Robinson
Lorraine Scheibener
Ben Waldron
Cyndie Williams

Staff Present

Larry Sternbach
Yolanda Taylor
Lucy Rivera

Guests

Sabrina Sullivan-NJLWD Monitor
Raul Ludizaca-NJLWD E&T Specialist
Patricia Shrum-NJLWD E&T Specialist

CALL TO ORDER & READING OF PUBLIC MEETING LAW:

- Robert Connolly, Chair of the WDB, called the meeting to order at 10:05 a.m. via a Zoom Meeting.
- N.J. Provisions of the Public Meeting Law, Chapter 231, P.L. 1975, and its revisions, were satisfied by publication of a Public Notice in the Star Ledger newspaper.

ROLL CALL:

- Attendance was taken with sufficient number of WDB members present to constitute a quorum.

APPROVAL MINUTES:

- Mr. Connolly entertained a motion to approve the minutes of the December 3, 2020 WDB meeting. ***Patricia Carlesimo made a motion, which was seconded by Violeta Peters to approve the minutes of the March 4, 2021 WDB meeting as written and distributed. No corrections or changes were offered, and the motion was unanimously approved.***

WELCOME AND INTRODUCTIONS:

- Robert Connolly, Chair of the Workforce Development Board announced that Geoff Perselay, Director of the Monmouth County Health & Human Services Department was appointed to the WDB to fill the unexpired term of Jeff Schwartz who retired in March.
- A Conflict of Interest Form will be emailed to all WDB members for signature. Once signed, forms are to be emailed back to Lucy Rivera.

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR'S REPORT:

- **Unemployment Overview:**
 - As of March, the unemployment rate for Monmouth County is 6.8% – more than doubled pre-pandemic.
 - Good news is that initial Monmouth County UI claims are down.
- **WDB Updates:**
 - Summer Youth Employment Program
 - The Monmouth County Division of Workforce Development (MCDWD) was awarded funding in the amount of \$316,250 by the New Jersey Department of Labor for a Summer Youth Employment Program to serve 115 youth.
 - Pathways to Recovery III
 - The MCDWD requested funding in the amount of \$325,00 for the continuation of the Pathways to Recovery program for the period of May through September 2021. Awaiting to hear.
 - New DWD Website
 - The MCDWD's website is now live. <http://www.WorkinMonmouth.com>
 - Co-Location 2022 Update:
 - Monmouth County Buildings & Grounds is exploring several commercial space options that are accessible to public transportation and will meet our needs going forward.
 - NJDOL Update:
 - The reopening of NJDOL offices is in the planning stage.
 - The Unemployment Office will not open in the foreseeable future. Will continue business on-line by via phone.

DASHBOARD:

- **Performance Measures**
 - The Executive Director announced that the MCDWD has exceeded eight and met five of their performance measures. He complimented the Board and the DWD staff on accomplishing the Think Green initiative.
 - Because of the Covid-19 pandemic, the employment rate and credentials attainment has been a challenge.
 - PY'20 MIS Overview – only 3% decrease in total served during pandemic
 - Despite the pandemic, MCDWD maintained training enrollment and performed at or above NJ WDB's.
- **Spending:**
 - Currently close to spending PY'19 Youth and Adult monies.

- Approximately \$80,000 in TANF monies will be returned to the State – Workfirst money is a challenge to spend due to no activity requirements.
- Received a 27% increase in funding for PY'21 and are now looking into how to aggressively spend the funding.

BUILDING CAPACITY:

- The current projection is that September/October will present a watershed moment due to:
 - \$300 Federal Unemployment Supplement ends
 - Schools will reopen
 - Widespread vaccinations will reduce return-to-work concerns
- To address the increase in funding, the MCDWD is looking at additional programs by:
 - Going out for RFPs for services
 - Reaching out to the hardest-to-serve populations
 - Delivery of Community-based programs

POWERPOINT PRESENTATION

- Larry Sternbach, Executive Director of the WDB gave a powerpoint presentation titled, “The Future of Workforce is a Disappearing Workforce”. The U.S. unemployment rate is currently at 6.0%, with 9.7 million people looking for work, yet businesses cannot find workers. The reason is beyond the pandemic, it’s the “Sansdemic”, which means without people. The population is declining and is already impacting businesses, colleges and the global economy creating a bubble of older workers that are not being replaced. The implications are:
 - Recruitment will be harder
 - Employers can no longer expect to find the exact qualifications they seek
 - Replacing employees will be harder
 - Employers must retain and retrain their employees.
- The MCDWD is proactive and is launching a “**Business First**” initiative, which would include:
 - Realignment of staff
 - Expanding the Business Services Team from 2 to 4½
 - Adding dedicated counselors for the Hardest-to-Serve, Youth, Employment Track, Job Placement and On-the-Job Training
 - Marketing Campaign
 - Posting of Hot Jobs
 - Distribution of the new MCDWD Newsletter, “Workforce Connections
 - New MCDWD website: <http://workinmonmouth.com>
 - Expand the following business programs:
 - Incumbent Worker Training
 - On-the-Job Training – can bridge the skills gap
 - Job Fair – Fall 2021
 - Recruitment

COMMITTEE ACTIVITIES:

- One-Stop Operations:
 - **Supporting Businesses**
- **Basic Skills & Literacy:**
 - Focus on Employment
- **Services to People with Disabilities:**
 - Build awareness through “Success Stories Initiative”
- **Youth Council:**
 - Develop a Youth Advisory Committee
- **Awards Committee:**
 - Partnership Awards Dinner has been scheduled for September 29, 2021.

COMMENTS FROM THE PUBLIC: None

UPCOMING EVENTS:

- WDB General Board Meeting – September 2, 2021 – 10:00 AM – via Zoom

ADJOURNMENT:

- *There being no further business to come before the WDB, the meeting was adjourned at 11:01 AM upon a motion from Judy Van Brunt. The motion was seconded by John Gagliano and unanimously approved.*