



**Essex County**  
**Workforce Development Board**  
Zoom 9AM

**Minutes from Meeting: June 23, 2022**

**Attendees:** Aleksandra Adamczyk, Augustine Boakye\*, Apryl Caldwell, Mitra Choudhury, Evanthia Corrado, Bob Diehl\*, Keisha Flemming, Alice Frazier\*, Amir Hashemi\*, Ethel Gilbert, Vann Holland\*, Jason Martinez, Elizabeth McLilly\*, Wendy Melendez\*, Hilary McCarron\*, Jobi Odeneye, Anibal Ramos\*, Janine Schaeffer, Lynn Sternstein, Sabrina Sullivan, Carla Tension, Willie Tolbert\*, Edwin Vallejo, Amy Vazquez\*, Howard Weiss, David Weiner\*,

**\*WDB members**

**Welcome and Introduction**

Willie Tolbert welcomed everyone to the meeting. He thanked everyone for their participation and made introductions.

**Minutes from the last meeting in March were approved.**

**Director's Report**

Howard stated that the Disability Committee is looking to do an in-person Employer Recognition Event in October. He also stated that the State of NJ put out a new policy in regards to governance and we are currently going through it to see what the options are for Essex County and we will have further discussions at a later point. Howard added that we are in the process of putting out an RFP for the One-Stop Operator.

**Industry Partnerships**

There is a new survey that was sent out to two hundred five (205) manufacturing businesses about the skills and competencies needed by manufacturers, unfortunately only fourteen (14) have responded to date. Reminders will be sent out as they are trying to reach a thirty (30) percent response rate. There is a goal to collect information about pre-engineering and advanced technologies subjects from career technical education and high schools but unfortunately there is a lack of participation from the CT schools and high schools. There is an ongoing plan for community colleges to host career days for high school students to expose them to manufacturing industries and available machinery that they can familiarize themselves with

**Director DEDTE Report**

Director Ramos stated that the department is undergoing a transition and he thanked the leadership team for their assistance during this transition period. The focus has been to reopen operations at 50 South Clinton Street and doing everything we can to reengage both the TANF and GA populations and get them into activities. From a physical standpoint the building is ready to start taking in customers again and have already seen an increase in the number of walk-ins. He added that the welfare staff in this building have also been actively engaging customers as well. He stated that there will be an RFP released in the fall to engage the TANF, GA and SNAP customers and also for training and adult education. He stated that he anticipates working closely with the WDB in order to

release the RFP and have the Board oversee the review process. He thanked the staff that was able to transition to help customers in a variety of ways get the services that they need.

This summer the Summer Youth Employment Program was one of the largest initiatives that the county has spearheaded in the last eighteen (18) or so years that he has been here. He thanked Apryl and her team for putting the logistics together for that.

Apryl Caldwell stated that July 11<sup>th</sup> is the official start date for all work sites. They expect to have two hundred fifty (250) young people at twenty-five (25) work sites. They will be hosting an orientation at the Vo-tech School next Thursday. They will be working with Essex County College and Coach on Call to provide the work readiness sessions on a weekly basis. The kids will be paid \$15/ hr and will be working twenty-five (25) hours a week. The kids are aged between 16 -24 years old. 16 – 17 year olds require working papers. Working papers and Selective Service registration is proving difficult to finalize in a lot of kids who had an interest in participating.

Aleksandra Adamczyk stated that the building is open no appointment necessary but many clients are still being contacted by phone. They have seen an influx of Haitian refugees. They are doing Best testing and making sure everyone is CASAS tested and referred into appropriate activities. The ITA Unit is being restructured to make sure that they are appropriately utilizing those funds and helping clients to make good choices for training. They are waiting for the extensions to come through and are looking to have in-house activities as well. They are also waiting for the vouchers for TANF clients to come through. She believes that as of July 1<sup>st</sup> the sanctioning process will be back in place.

### **Committee Reports:**

#### **Business Committee**

Bob Diehl stated that the committee is going well and they are very enthusiastic but the committee needs a central purpose. The event that the committee was working on was postponed because of the transition in the department. He would like to focus on education of small businesses on basic things like insurance, book keeping, bidding etc.

#### **Disability Committee**

Elizabeth McLilly stated that there are plans to have an in person Employer Recognition Event in October that the committee is working on.

#### **Literacy Committee**

Lynn Sterstein stated that the committee last met on June 13<sup>th</sup> and the big news is that they received the grant allocation from the DOL for the Title II Literacy Programs for next year starting July 1<sup>st</sup>. The Essex County Consortium received an allocation that will serve one thousand, one hundred sixteen (1,116) people in ESL, ABE and high school equivalency along with IELCE (combination of ESL and vocational training). The amount received included a state match. There will be a mix of classes offered both in person and virtual and hybrids but all agencies are open. The next scheduled Literacy Committee meeting is scheduled for August 8<sup>th</sup>,

#### **Welfare to Work Committee**

David stated that they are still awaiting the RFP information as they ran into some issues with the loss of Julius. The next meeting is August 30<sup>th</sup>.

#### **Youth Investment Council (YIC)**

No Report

### **One Stop Committee**

Howard stated that the One Stop Committee has been meeting every month. The building is open to walk-ins however, customers still need appointments for Unemployment Insurance. The state workers will be piloting a program where they will follow a hybrid work schedule where they will be allowed to work from home up to two (2) days a week.

**The meeting was adjourned and then the vote for officers was commenced electronically by Zoom. Willie Tolbert won for Chair and Amy Vazquez won for Vice Chair.**

### **Adjournment**

There being no further business the meeting was adjourned.

*Respectfully submitted by*

*Janine Schaeffer*

**NEXT MEETING DATE: December 15, 2022 9am**