

**BERKS COUNTY WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT BOARD
(WDB)**

7:30 a.m.

June 21, 2019

PA CareerLink® Berks County, 1920 Kutztown Road, Suite F, Reading, PA 19604

Meeting Summary

Members Present

Ms. Debra Antol
Ms. Auria Bradley
Mr. John DeVere (via conference call)
Ms. Marianne Egolf
Mr. Michael Fischetti
Ms. Kristi Gage-Linderman
Mr. Robert Harrop
Ms. Carole Homolash
Ms. Joanne Judge
Ms. Peggy Kershner
Mr. Lewis McCoy
Mr. Thomas McKeon (via conference call)
Mr. John Morahan
Mr. James Nichols
Mr. Randolph Peers
Mr. Mark Pinkasavage
Mr. Michael Rowley
Mr. Mark Schlott
Mr. Russell Showers (via conference call)
Ms. Karyn Troxell
Dr. Anne Zayaitz (via conference call)

Members Absent

Mr. Thomas Brizek
Mr. Modesto Fiume
Mr. Pablo Tejada
Mr. Barry Unger
Ms. Tammy White

Staff and Guests Present

Mr. Daniel Fogarty	Berks County Workforce Development Board Staff
Mr. John Moser	Berks County Workforce Development Board Staff
Ms. Megan Noll	Berks County Workforce Development Board Staff
Mr. Rory Stevenson	Berks County Workforce Development Board Staff
Ms. Patricia Spencer	Berks County Workforce Development Board Staff
Ms. Patricia Adamczyk	PA CareerLink® Berks County Administrator
Ms. Helen Amole	PA CareerLink® Berks County
Ms. Amber Columbo	PA CareerLink® Berks County
Ms. Marybeth Ferguson	Bureau of Workforce Partnership and Operations
Ms. Kaitlin Hemphill	Inside Berks Business Internship Program – Wilson S.D.
Ms. Heather McFadden	Reading Area Community College

The meeting was called to order by Ms. Gage-Linderman at 7:35 a.m. A quorum was present. Mr. Fogarty commented that Mr. DeVere, Mr. McKeon, Mr. Showers and Dr. Zayaitz joined the meeting by phone. He added that Mr. McKeon has become a brand-new grandfather and offered the Board's congratulations.

Ms. Kaitlin Hemphill was introduced to the Board by Ms. Gage-Linderman. Ms. Hemphill is a Teacher in the Workplace intern from Shiloh Hills and will be shadowing Ms. Gage-Linderman at Gage Personnel.

Ms. Gage-Linderman asked for a motion to approve the consent agenda items:

- Approval of the minutes of the March 15, 2019 WDB meeting
- Approval of PY2019 CareerLink Contracts/Extensions (as recommended by Staff and Committees):
 - Business Services Team (BST) with EDSI (Educational Data Systems, Inc.)
 - Year-Round Youth/Young Adult Program with ResCare
 - Title I Adult and Dislocated Worker Contract with EDSI
 - CareerLink Operator with EDSI
 - EARN Program with EDSI

The motion was made by Ms. Judge and seconded by Mr. Rowley. All members voted their approval.

The Executive Committee report was introduced by Ms. Gage-Linderman. She commented that two meetings have been held thus far to explore the WDB's Strategic Employer Engagement on how to best engage local employers in further conversations surrounding best talent management practices. The second meeting was held with Board Member Randy Peers to make sure that any WDB initiatives in this area are consistent with but not duplicative of any Greater Reading Chamber Alliance (GRCA) initiatives. The Committee recommended the budgeting of up to \$50,000 in PY2019 WIOA Title I funds for a planning market study of existing local employer best practices and branding. The Committee anticipates developing the statement of work for a Request for Proposals (RFP) and requesting members to serve on the RFP review committee.

The Board of County Commissioners have approved two new appointments to the Board: Ms. Jenny Batista, HR Manager of L&H signs, representing Small Business and Mr. Thomas McNelis, President and CEO of Threshold Rehabilitation Services, Inc., representing Workforce Community Based Organizations (CBO), both for full three-year terms beginning July 1, 2019.

Six current WDB members have agreed to reappointment for new three-year terms effective July 1, 2019. They are Mr. Fischetti, Mr. Harrop, Ms. Homolash, Mr. McKeon, Mr. Rowley and Mr. Unger. Mr. Fogarty commented that we appreciate the members agreement to reappointment.

The United Labor Council of Reading and Berks Council will nominate a Labor replacement for Mr. Brian McMahon who resigned from the WDB in May having decided not to run for reelection as an officer with Steamfitter's Local #420.

Mr. Moser commented on the PY2018 Year-to-Date (YTD) Title Performance Results provided to the Board in a chart comparing Berks to Statewide performance. He noted that Berks is near or above all targets for the current year.

Ms. Gage-Linderman asked Ms. Noll to comment on the Finance Committee Report. Explaining the PY18 Budget vs. Actual report, Ms. Noll explained that expenditures for the year are within budget for all programs through the first eleven months of the program year. One "good news" exception is that since the final revised PY2019 budget was approved in December, 2018, additional discretionary grants have been received in excess of planned revenues for which some initial expenditures were incurred.

Significant changes of interest for the WDB's proposed PY2019 budget include:

- PY2019 TANF Youth Funding = \$577,680 (*5.2% decrease and no carryover*)
- \$50,000 for Planning/Employer Best Practices Study
- \$100,000 for Incumbent Worker Training (IWT) in Mfg./Registered Apprenticeship in Key Industry Sectors
- \$5,000 for 2nd Annual Employer Symposium on Sept. 11, 2019 at the Crowne Plaza
- Increase Cost (~11%) for the CareerLink Operating Budget

Mr. Moser commented that in past years, the Board used TANF allocations to partially support the salary of a supervisor who oversees delinquent youth working at the Earthrise Snack Shop administered by the Juvenile Probation Office (JPO) and located in the County Services Center. As part of the Youth Committee's discussion, it was recommended that priority be given to continued funding of our primary low-income youth programs and that funding for the JPO/Earthrise end on December 31, 2019. The County of Berks can assume Earthrise funding beginning January 1, 2020. It was proposed and recommended by the Youth Committee that this funding be subsidized only through December 31, 2019 in the PY2019 WDB budget.

Mr. Peers moved to adopt the PY2019 Budget. Mr. Rowley seconded the motion and all members voted their approval.

The Training and Industry Partnership Committee Report was reviewed by Mr. Fogarty on behalf of Mr. DeVere who participated in the meeting by conference call.

The Committee reviewed a draft of the 2019-2023 Berks WDB Industry Sector Priorities. Mr. Fogarty said that the workforce data and sector economic updates will continue to be reviewed biannually by the Committee with the aim of recommending renewal or realignment of

priorities to the full Board. The Committee will finalize its recommendations at their August Committee meeting and recommend approval to the full Board at its September Board meeting.

A proposal for a budget allocation of \$100,000 for PY2019 was approved for Incumbent Worker Training (IWT) in Manufacturing/Registered Apprenticeships in Key Industry Sectors and was approved by the full Board earlier in this June 21 meeting.

Two qualified proposals were received and reviewed by a WDB-designated Committee for award of a Community Based Organization Grant. The review committee was unanimously impressed by the Berks Connection/Pretrial Services proposal and recommended that BCPS be awarded a \$225,000 grant to continue services offered to reentrants through their innovative Re-building, Reentrants and Reading (R3) construction skills registered pre-apprenticeship program.

Members discussed the R3 reentry program and BCPS's best practices. Ms. Gage-Linderman expressed appreciation to BCPS for the achievements of the graduates in this program. Ms. Bradley inquired about follow up policies on graduates. Ms. Kershner replied that 100 returning citizens have graduated from the program thus far and their progress is tracked for one year. She said 74% are stably employed and 92% have not recidivated.

Mr. DeVere moved to approve the award to BCPS. Mr. Peers seconded the motion. Ms. Kershner abstained from voting. All remaining members voted their approval of the contract award.

Mr. Moser commented on the Youth Committee report. A report on the summer program included in the handouts listed a placement of 105 TANF youth placed in 35 hosted worksites. In addition, 20 youth were placed into sponsored internships with a 25-30-hour work week over an eight-week period and a wage of \$10.35/hour through the State/Local Internship Program (SLIP). Participants chosen must show commitment to a career pathway as a focus for their work-based learning experience.

Mr. Fogarty referred to the summary of the United Way of Berks County's new initiative—Childhood Development Associate (CDA) program—developed in conjunction with its "*Ready.Set.READ!*" early grade reading program. Ms. White had briefed the Committee at its May 30 meeting about this new program commenting that UWBC considers this as a pre-apprenticeship program with pathways leading toward Associates and Bachelor's degrees.

Progress reports were provided by Mr. Stevenson on the business/education partnership grants as discussed at the Youth Committee's meeting:

- The WDB has requested grant fund extensions for the Business Education Partnership (BEP) through December 30, 2019 and Teacher in the Workplace (TIW) through September 30, 2019.
- A 2019 Business Education Partnership proposal has been approved by L&I for an award of \$130,000 through June 30, 2020. BEP grant project partners include the Berks and Reading/Muhlenberg CTCs, Berks County Intermediate Unit,

Greater Reading Chamber Alliance, and the Manufacturers Resource Center. BCTC and RMTTC have scheduled their 2019 grant-supported middle school/junior high school Career Camps for June.

- A Teacher in the Workplace (TIW) award was approved by L&I for the continuation of Berks TIW initiatives in 2019 and 2020. Funding in the amount of \$47,105 will support the BCIU school year one-day TIW experience and the “inside Berks business” summer five-day internship programs through June 30, 2020.

Mr. Fogarty commented that Mr. Stevenson is managing four open grants related to education and business and will be moving into the management of two additional grants for the coming year.

Mr. Fogarty introduced the One Stop Oversight Committee Report by stating, “Our long-serving, best-in-the-State CareerLink Administrator will be retiring on June 26 having given 2-1/2 years notice. On behalf of the Board, thanks for creating a model in the state and a common CareerLink brand. Pat (Adamczyk) embarked on this challenge 20 years ago.”

Mr. Fogarty introduced Ms. Helen Amole as the new CareerLink Administrator. He added that Ms. Amole has managed all EDSI contracts at the CareerLink over the past 15 years.

Ms. Adamczyk reviewed the By the Numbers report for the July 2018 through March 2019 period:

- Foot Traffic Total 25,206
 - Orientation 1,418
- UC Claimants
 - Phone: 2,234
 - RESEA: 863 (Reemployment Services and Eligibility Assessment)
- New Training Accounts
 - 35 WIOA \$5,208 Average
- 10 New Work-Based Training Contracts \$4,617
- 590 Individual Businesses Served
 - 164 Manufacturing Sector
 - 143 Health Care Sector
- 66 Employer Recruitments
 - 1,440 Job Seekers
- 1 Job Fair (Fall)
 - 687 Job Seekers

Members discussed the outstanding Spring 2019 Job Fair attendance of 1,179 job seekers. Ms. Adamczyk had provided a chart showing job seekers and employers participation in the Job Fairs held since 2006. A customer satisfaction survey was completed by 26 of 94 employers and 419 job seekers with very positive feedback.

Ms. Homolash commented that perhaps social media could be used more extensively to reach out of school youth. Ms. Troxell commented that perhaps opening a virtual job fair may increase future employer interaction.

Ms. Homolash commented on the Committee on Increasing Opportunities for Individuals with Disabilities report. Mr. McKeon participated by phone.

A “Save the Date” brochure for the Second Annual Employer Symposium to be held on September 11, 2019 at the Crowne Plaza was included in the handouts. “Hiring People with Disabilities: Employment Models for Success” is the focus of this year’s Symposium. Mr. Chris Kaag, Founder/Executive Director at IM ABLE Foundation and inspiring Marine Corps veteran, is the keynote speaker.

Ms. Homolash referred to a talent academy model that OVR and Goodwill have utilized successfully elsewhere. The program involves hard skill training and training in the classroom, offering different pathways, and this program has been very successful. Hershey, Penn State Health Downtown Campus and BCIU have had success with another successful program known as “Project Search”.

Ms. Troxell encouraged Board members to attend the Symposium.

Mr. Fogarty, referring to the COO Report, stated that many records have been set in the labor market for the past year (May 2018 through April 2019).

The *Reading Eagle* has been faithful in reporting local statistics in the labor market and the sale of the newspaper leaves some speculation as to the depth of future local reporting. Mr. Fogarty commended the “top notch” reporting of local news which everyone has become accustomed to from the *Eagle* reporters. He anticipated that approximately 80 staff people of the newspaper would be losing positions.

Twilight Broadcasting has purchased the WEEU radio station and 13 employees will keep their jobs which were in jeopardy.

Mr. Peers said that Ms. Lisa Scheid, formerly a *Reading Eagle* employee, has accepted a position with GRCA as Communication Director effective July 1, 2019.

Mr. Fogarty complimented our local Rapid Response team for coordinating on-site meetings with impacted employers at both the *Reading Eagle* and also at Schneider Electric over the past two months.

Congratulations to GRCA and Ms. Pam Shupp for attracting CarbonLITE Industries, LLC to Berks County. It is expected that the plastic bottle recycling plant will create over 100 new jobs. Hollywood Casino, another new business scheduled to open in 2020 in Morgantown, is expected to provide about 250 new permanent jobs as well as significant tax benefits to Caernarvon Township and the Twin Valley School District.

Mr. Fogarty and Mr. Moser have completed a “white paper” outlining the history of EARN as well as their concerns about the local implications of DHS’s announced decision to eliminate the EARN program across the Commonwealth. The paper has been reviewed by both the Executive Committee and One Stop Oversight Committee members. An attached article from the *Altoona Mirror* outlining concerns voiced by Cambria County Commissioners and by Ms. Susan Whisler, Executive Director of Southern Alleghenies WDB, related how the changes to well-established local procurement of such services might impact their region.

Members of the One Stop Oversight Committee and Mr. Fogarty will meet with Senator Judy Schwank at the PA CareerLink® Berks County office on July 3, 2019 to discuss the EARN/TANF program redesign. EARN staff will conduct a tour for Senator Schwank.

Ms. Gage-Linderman opened the meeting for Market Intelligence discussion.

Mr. Peers commented that groundbreaking for the new Berks Career and Technology Center’s welding instruction facility at the west campus was held on June 3. The Center has received a \$200,000 grant from DCED in support of its welding program expansion to fund a second welding instructor as well as a \$25,000 grant from the American Welding Society to purchase welding equipment. He said the new construction clearly indicates that this Board appropriately identifies specific industry sectors needing to expand.

There was no public comment

Ms. Gage-Linderman adjourned the meeting at 9:00 a.m.

The next quarterly meeting of the Board will be held at 7:30 a.m. on Friday, September 20, 2019 in Room 100 of the PA CareerLink® Berks County, 1920 Kutztown Road, Reading, PA 19604.