



## ***Joint Newark & Essex County Business and Economic Development Committee***

Thursday, May 7, 2015

Essex County College-4<sup>th</sup> Floor Multipurpose Room B

9:00 am – 11:00 am

### Agenda

- I. Welcome and Introductions  
Dr. Joyce Wilson Harley, Vice President, Essex County College
- II. Approval of Minutes
- III. Presentations
  - a. Otis Rolley, Executive Director, Newark Economic Development Corporation
  - b. Adam Albanese, Senior Strategist, Workforce Innovation Fund; Yuemeng Zhang, Data Analyst, Workforce Innovation Fund
- IV. Mission Statement Review/Revision
- V. Open Discussion
- VI. Committee Member Updates/Events
  - a. WIB Retreat, May 27<sup>th</sup> at Robert Treat Hotel, 8:30-4pm
  - b. Newark Workforce Investment Board Fundraiser, June 9 2015, Location TBD
  - c. Employer's Forum
- VII. Next Steps



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### **Meeting Minutes**

#### **Attendees:**

Adam Albanese, Kelli Bell-Taylor, Amina Bey, Joyce Bryant, Ronice Bruce, Al Bundy, Mitch Cahn, Al-Qadr Camillo, Mitra Choudhury, Joe Epps, Lincoln Farquharson, Barbara George-Johnson, Joyce Wilson-Harley, Davetta Lane, Tolu Lanrewaju, Diana Longo, DawnMarie Montgomery-Otis, John Perry, Otis Rolley, Janine Schaeffer, Farag Seiam, Willie Tolbert, Anthea Williams, Joyce Wilson Harley, Yuemeng Zhang

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#### **Meeting Called to Order: Chairperson Dr. Joyce Wilson Harley**

Chairperson, Dr. Joyce Wilson-Harley called the meeting to order. A roundtable roll call was conducted to introduce all meeting attendees.

#### ***Motion, Approve Meeting Minutes***

Dr. Joyce Wilson-Harley asked if anyone had any objections, corrections or abstentions to the minutes from the last meeting. Minutes were uncontested by committee members. She called a motion to approve the minutes.

Minutes were approved.

#### **Chairperson's Greetings**

Dr. Wilson-Harley gave greetings and thanked everyone for their participation. She advised the committee that there would be two presentations; the first presentation was facilitated by Newark Innovation Fund Team Members, Adam Albanese and Yuemeng Zhang. The second presentation was conducted by Otis Rolley, Executive Director of the Newark Community Development Corporation (NCEDC).

#### **Presentations**

In a previous meeting, Davetta Lane (NWIB) advised that the WIF Team can assist the Business Identification Sub-Committee with identifying businesses in the Greater Newark area. Data collected by this sub-committee would help to identify the types and locations of businesses to be targeted and engaged. As a result, Mr. Albanese and Ms. Zhang presented

information on the labor market context, the market demand, occupations and sectors that are worth targeting and employer engagement.

The data presented showed a comparison between the demand, education level and salary of different professions. For example, the demand of registered nurses is higher demand with a high salary vs. the home health aides who are in high demand also with a lower salary. The nurses' salary fall above the mean salary, this is \$54,000, whereas the home health aides' salary falls below the mean.

Ms. Zhang discussed the heated discussion about whether employers should or shouldn't seek job candidates with bachelor's degrees. Data analyzed based on the Newark One Stop intake process has shown that only 7% of the population being serviced possess a bachelor's degree or higher. In light of this, a closer look was taken at the professions in which bachelor's degrees are not required. Some of these professions include positions such as construction managers, construction trades, mechanics, and manufacturing and production managers. It seems that the law of supply and demand helps to weed out individuals who do not have bachelor's degrees.

One committee member suggested that we need to start to have these conversations with employers so that we can help to identify what skills are associated with employees who have bachelor's degrees. This could also be used to help job seekers to be able to present an associate's degree paired with the required skillset to make themselves for marketable and attractive to employers.

Amina Bey (NWIB) suggested that the 7% who come in with degrees were able to go through training which enabled them to climb the ladder. Now if required to come to the table with a bachelor's degree, part of our large population is cut off and they aren't able to even crack the door of opportunity. Ms. Bey further expressed that there will always be a demand for minimum wage, simply because they get paid less and we must keep in mind that businesses are in the business of making a profit. Unfortunately, it seems that the system is designed to lock people out of higher paying jobs. A question was raised about whether a bachelor's degree could or should be used as a barometer for the level of professionalism of an employee. Ms. Bey exclaimed that this helps to make our case to the Department of Labor and like entities to justify our request for additional funding outside of WIA dollars. These additional funds will help us to present the most qualified work ready applicants who possess soft skills and a professional demeanor to a company to obtain and sustain employment. She added that businesses cannot and should not be able to invest in the city and not invest in the people who live here.

Adam Albanese (NWIB) suggested that there must be a deeper engagement with businesses and the Federal Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act has added a performance measure. The idea was to give a point system in which smaller point ideas would be more transformational whereas greater points would be more transactional. This means working first with employers who to transform the way that they hire on an individual level. An interesting model that he recommended that the committee should follow is to having employers assess their best workers and use the assessment as a tool to recruit future employees with like skillsets.

Dr. Harley introduces Mr. Otis Rolley, Director of NCEDC. She advised that the agency is

closely connected with the work of this committee. Mr. Rolley is originally from Jersey City, yet he relocated from Baltimore. He has worked in the public/private sector for his entire career and has been in the field of economic and community development as a Management Consultant around the country. He came to Newark to do consulting work and Mayor Baraka won him over.

Mr. Rolley explained the NCDEC is a catalyst for economic development for the City of Newark with its focus on the city as a whole. He expressed the importance of "community" being added to the name of the agency because the goal is for businesses to improve their bottom line while simultaneously investing in our community. NCDEC has been restructured to fill gaps and to identify what capacity needs to be grown for city government. It is partners with the Dept. of Economic Housing and Development and it will support economic development for current and future businesses in Newark. He bragged that the NCDEC has stolen businesses from other municipalities. He also highlighted the advantageous position that Newark is in due to many factors; it owns its ports; it owns its airport; and it has Fortune 100 companies that are housed here. "Newark has it going on". Mr. Rolley boasted of the \$1 billion that Newark currently has in development, with an additional \$2 billion in the pipeline. He mentioned some of the projects that are included in this pipeline. Among them are Panasonic, Hotel Indigo, Whole Foods and Shoprite.

Mr. Rolley expressed that one of the main focuses of the agency is to partner, support, serve, attract and expand businesses in such a way that it depends less on the city as its sole source of revenue. He further suggested that this could be done by partnering with businesses to develop projects within the city by splitting development fees. The NCDEC looks forward to working with the WIB and its committees.

Dr. Harley thanked the presenters and moved forward with committee business.

### **Committee Business**

Dr. Harley reminded everyone of the upcoming WIB Fundraiser on July 21st (now changed to September 1st). Ms. Bey expressed the importance of the fundraiser in securing funds needed for innovative services to help support our community. She asked the committee for support.

Dr. Harley announced her resignation as chairperson of the Business and Economic Development Committee. She expressed that she will continue to serve, however Mayor Baraka asked her to take over the Chairmanship of the NCDEC. On behalf of the committee, Ms. Bey thanked Dr. Harley for her commitment and service.

Dr. Harley thanked everyone for their willingness to serve and called a motion for adjournment. Meeting adjourned.