



Joint Newark & Essex County Workforce Development Board Meeting

Thursday, December 14, 2017

Nanina's in The Park

540 Mill Street, Belleville, NJ

Meeting Minutes

Attendees:

Anibal Ramos, Angelique Morrison, Aleksandra Adamczyk, Allyson Carvajal, Al Bundy, Amanze Okere, Amina Bey, Apryl Caldwell, Bhavna Tailor, Betty Mirda, Camille Warren, Carmen Pichardo, Danny Denise Gonzalez, Davetta Lane, David Weiner, Dawn Morris, Delores Wallace, Dhiren Amin, Donna McKnight, Dr. Diane Hill, Elena Martinez, Elizabeth A. McLiliy, Elvy Vieira, Ethel Gilbert, Fatima Cole, Howard Weiss, Ida Chimbay, Jackie Johnson, Janine Schaeffer, Jasmyne Beckford, Jean Carter, Joe Barr, Jonathan Kobza, Joseph Epps, Josette VanDyke, Joyce Bryant, Judith Celestin, Julius Montford, Keisha Flemming, Kelli Bell-Taylor, Lauren Agnew, Lisa Simmons, Lori Hill, Lynn Sternstein, Mahesh Shah, Maureen Clifford, Margaret Tyson, Melissa Dorleen, Meron Solomon, Mignon Glenn, Mitch Cahn, Mitra Choudhury, Monique Collin-Brooks, Morris Murray, Nela Blanco, Nereida Lombardi, Pam Ross, Rebecca Shulman, Robert Diehl, Robert Clark, Russ Zimmerman, Safanya Searcy, Sam Okparaekke, Shelton Thurman, Sonja Williams, Tanya Wright, Vann Holland, Vesta Godwin-Clark and Willie Tolbert.

Welcome & Opening Remarks:

Sam Okparaekke – Executive Director, Essex County Workforce Development Board

Mr. Okparaekke brought greetings and welcomed everyone to the Joint Newark & Essex County Workforce Development Board Meeting.

Anibal Ramos - Director of Essex County Department of Economic Development

Mr. Ramos brought greetings and commended both Newark and Essex County Workforce Development Boards for their dedication, service and achievements. He also commended both Workforce Development Boards for targeting demand occupations and proper investments in adult training programs. He expressed his gratitude to the County Executive, Joe DiVincenzo for his vision in human services, economic training and unemployment.

M. Teresa Ruiz - New Jersey State Senator

Ms. Ruiz thanked everyone for being present and reminded everyone that they are part of a goal which is to help families and individuals with employment, training and benefit assistance but, most importantly creating pipelines for future generations. She then, introduced County Executive, Joe DiVincenzo.

Joe DiVincenzo - Essex County Executive

County Executive DiVincenzo brought greetings and wished everyone Happy Holidays. He thanked Director of Essex County, Anibal Ramos and his team for their outstanding job in Newark and throughout Essex County. He commended both Executive Directors of the Workforce Development Boards and Honorable Mayor Ras J. Baraka. He urged that we must continue to work together and keep moving forward.

Sam Okparaeké – Executive Director, Essex County Workforce Development Board

Sam Okparaeké expressed complete satisfaction with his partnership with Newark and introduced Executive Director, Amina Bey.

Amina Bey- Executive Director, Newark Workforce Development Board

Ms. Bey thanked everyone for their time, dedication and hard work. She brought greetings and gratitude from Mayor Ras J. Baraka who could not attend. Ms. Bey continued with her appreciation to the boards and committee members, Newark and Essex County's staff, chief elected officials and everyone who contributes to the effort. Ms. Bey introduced Chairperson, Mitch Cahn and Vice Chairperson, Vesta Godwin-Clark.

Mitch Cahn, Chairperson & Vesta Godwin-Clark, Vice Chairperson – Newark WDB

Mr. Cahn requested a motion for approval of the minutes from the previous NWDB Board Meeting. Minutes were approved by Bhavna Tailor and seconded by Angelique Morrison. Mr. Cahn advised it was a successful year for NWDB as unemployment rate went down. He advised the NWDB will work closely with *Newark 2020* and their support of Mayor Ras J. Baraka's initiative, *Hire-Buy-Live*.

Ms. Vesta-Clark thanked everyone for their time and efforts and wished everyone Happy Holidays.

Committee Reports:

Business & Economic Development Committee - Mitch Cahn, Chairperson & Willie Tolbert, Co-Chairperson

Mr. Cahn advised the committee created a website with all grants, incentives and training/placement programs geared towards employers. He advised manufacturing jobs are in high demand, however, lack of training programs and little to no exposure to the public have lead the Manufacturing Talent Networks to create an Ambassador Program whose mission is to go to middle schools and expose and spark interest in students. The committee is trying to do the same with vocational technical schools and influence their curriculum to have more manufacturing training available. Mr. Cahn advised that employers have agreed to donate equipment, money and trainers to vocational training schools. Payroll Tax Incentives was approved this year which was an idea that the committee launched a year and a half ago.

Disability Committee - Rebecca Shulman, Chairperson & Elizabeth Davis, Co-Chairperson

Ms. Shulman thanked each and every committee member for their time and dedication. She advised the committee held its second Employer Recognition Event and will have another event in October. She also stated that the committee will partner with the Targeted Communities Technical Assistance Center which is a National Program governed by the Federal Rehabilitation Services Administration by George Washington University which will increase job opportunities to individuals with substance abuse and mental issues. The committee is also looking into providing additional disability resource training to One-Stop's staff in 2018 and creating some form of presentation for employers about recruiting and retaining individuals with disabilities at their worksite.

Literacy Committee-Lynn Sternstein, Chairperson & Tanya Wright, Co-Chairperson

Ms. Wright advised the committee strives to work with adult education issues on a state and local level. Ms. Wright stated the issues the committee addressed were how to work with employers and talent networks to ensure literacy programs and job readiness skills. The committee advised clients about immigrant rights and legal assistance to their clients. She advised the committee will continue on addressing the most pertinent issues facing adult education including potential budget cuts, immigration and refugee concerns.

One-Stop Partners Committee- Howard Weiss

Mr. Weiss requested a motion for approval of the minutes from the previous ECWDB Board Meeting. Minutes were approved by Willie Tolbert and seconded by Executive Director, Sam Okparaeké. He requested a motion for approval of the minutes from the previous One-Stop Committee Meeting. Minutes were approved by Russ Zimmerman and seconded by Executive Director, Sam Okparaeké.

Youth Investment Council - Apryl Caldwell, Chairperson & Sonja Williams, Co-Chairperson

Ms. Caldwell thanked Ms. Williams for her hard work as she was out since September. Ms. Caldwell advised the committee had three major goals which were the YIC closet, mentorship and business engagement. Ms. Williams advised the closet has serviced a few clients and is ready for a grand opening. She did urge men to donate any clothes, shoes and accessories for the closet. Their 2018 goals involve recruiting new members, partner with other committees to work on the Work Readiness Credential and invite members from different mentorship programs to their meeting.

Closing Remarks:

Executive Director, Sam Okparaeke- ECWDB

Mr. Okparaeke stated how extremely proud he is of Newark and Essex county WDB Staff for all their hard work. He also thanked all the board and committee members for their time and dedication. He thanked Howard Weiss, Keisha Flemming, Janine Schaeffer and Davetta Lane for making this meeting a success. He thanked Essex county DTE Staff, Julius Montford, Deputy Director of Essex County Division of Training and Employment, and Executive Director, Amina Bey. He wished everyone Happy Holidays.

All business for the Joint Newark and Essex County Workforce Development Board was concluded. Meeting adjourned.