



**Full Board Meeting
March 20, 2016
Essex County College- Training Inc. - 4th floor
Newark, NJ 07102
9:00 a.m. - 11:00 a.m.**

Meeting Minutes

Meeting Attendees: Dhiren Amin, Kelli Bell-Taylor, Amina Bey, Scott Blow, Marsha Brown, Andrae Bynum, Mitch Cahn, Al-Qadr Camillo, Mitra Choudhury, Vesta Godwin Clark, Adriana Crawford, Jerrah Crowder, Susan Croce, Elizabeth Davis, Joseph Epps, Barbara George Johnson, Danny-Denise Gonzalez, Norma Gonzalez, Ralph T. Grant, Chip Hallock, Dexter Hendricks, Jonathan Kobza, Davetta Lane (NWIB), Tolu Lanrewaju (NWIB), Lin Poo (Newark-One Stop), Charles Rosen, Julius Montford, Kareen Motley, Fred Murphy, Morris Murray, Samuel Okparaeke, William Parrish, Rigoberto Salas, Al-Tariq Shabazz, Safanya Searcy, Nicole Vazquez-Wise, Sonja Williams, Shanequa Wilson

Introductions- All

All meeting attendees and staff introduced themselves and articulated what businesses and/or organizations they represented.

Welcome & Opening Remarks- Amina Bey

Amina Bey, Executive Director of the Newark Workforce Development Board (NWDB), welcomed all board members, meeting attendees and staff to the meeting. The meeting was held at Essex County College, Training Inc. in Newark, NJ. She presented a motion to approve the minutes. The motion was moved by Dr. Ralph T. Grant and seconded by Sam Okparaeke; minutes were approved.

Co-Chairperson's Remarks- Vesta Godwin Clark announced the resignation of Penny Joseph (NWDB Board Chairperson) who retired after twenty-five years of service at Panasonic and in the community. Mrs. Godwin-Clark also announced the resignation of DawnMarie Otis Montgomery of TD Bank (NWDB Secretary). She presented a motion to accept the resignations and proposed that a letters be sent on behalf of the board thanking her for her service; the motions are moved and approved.

She further communicated that Mitch Cahn has agreed to serve as Interim Board Chairperson until the position is filled. She presented the motion to accept. The motion is moved and approved. The group welcomes Mitch as chairperson. Because one of the board's main focuses is employer engagement, Mr. Cahn recommended that the next chairperson should work in HR for one of Newark's larger corporations and have hiring power to employ Newarkers.

Welcome of New Board Members

John Kobza- has worked in Newark for over two years; started at Branch Manager for Labor Ready and shifted into sales. The company is heavily involved with the Newark Regional Business Partnership.

Charles Rosen- started Newark Farms with a mission to prove that a for-profit company can work with, train and hire the re-entry population. Their workforce is primarily made up of formerly incarcerated men and women. The focus is on rural and urban agriculture and environmental repair in Newark and in Hunterdon County. Also, Mr. Rosen would serve as an asset to the Board as well as to the Partners of One-Stop system because we found that after reviewing our reports, we noticed a lot of our customers are previously incarcerated men and women. We have to be able to have employers who are willing and able to hire ex-offenders. Mr. Rosen has experience working with ex-offenders and would be able to assist with employment opportunities for our residents, link us to employers who hire ex-offenders, and provide insight on how to market our residents to employers. We look forward to having Mr. Rosen on our Board, and working with him.

NWDB Update - Amina Bey

Ms. Bey informed the group that thank you letters were sent out to former board members who were unable to continue to serve and be reappointed. They were encouraged to contact her if circumstances change, enabling them to work with the board again.

NWDB Rebranding Ceremony- New regulations in the Workforce Innovation Opportunity Act required that every Workforce Investment Board change its name to Workforce Development Board. The NWDB is in the process of making the required changes to the WIB website, materials, logo and letterhead. To no avail, funding was requested from the Department of Labor. Save the Dates will be sent out for the official relaunch event scheduled for May 12, 2016. The hope is that this event will help to strengthen employer engagement and participation with the private sector, Newark businesses and community members. The event will reveal the NWDB's Strategic Plan, provide detailed information on what the NWDB does and promote the progress of its committees and how they are working together. Ms. Bey also mentioned that the Joint Newark and Essex County Workforce Development Boards would be hosting the WDB Retreat one week after the rebranding ceremony.

One Stop Relocation- The agency is in the process of looking for commercial space to bring all entities of workforce development and training under one roof. An upcoming walk thru is coming up soon with hopes to move before the end of the summer.

The NWDB is working on several grant opportunities.

NJ Build Grant-The NWDB was recently approved for this construction trades grant. She thanked Turner Construction and Essex County College for their assistance and partnership to primarily train Newark residents, the re-entry and out-of-school youth populations and women. The training will include construction trade training, work readiness, basic skills and hands on work at construction sites. The proposed start date for this initiative is May 2016.

Tech Hire Grant -The NWDB is in the process of applying for this grant to expand on the current Art of Code Program, which is collaboration between the NWDB, the City of Newark IT Department, NJIT and Newark Alliance.

Second Chance Grants- These grants are based on technology and mentoring through community partnerships (4 million dollars for each grant) and will be a collaboration between the NWDB, NewarkWORKS and the Office of Re-Entry for the City of Newark. This will be a great opportunity because workforce funding does not include itemization for re-entry. Since Newark has such a large re-entry population, these grants would be a major win.

Newark Education Training Fund- Last year the NWDB received this grant in the amount of 200,000 from L&M Development Partners. Through Essex County College, Basic Skills and HSE training services are being provided. Once participants complete HSE training, they are enrolled into vocational training with employment focus. Students receive an incentive gift of \$250 for participation for as long as funding is available.

Art of Code- Adriana Crawford advised that this pilot program consisted of 15 students exclusively Newark residents to gain training in web development. Upon completion of the program, students would have the skills needed to manage website for smaller based companies. The group meets three times weekly and will complete the program on March 26th.

SETC Board Certification-The NWDB is in the process of being recertified as a local WDB Board in the local area. Required documentation is being gathered for submission.

Financial Update- Susan Croce

Magone & Company has completed the audit report and does not expect any findings. At the last meeting, there was a shortfall in the budget of \$160,000. Progress has been made since then. The Deputy Mayor has secured an \$85,000 corporate donation; TD Bank has committed to contribute \$10,000 to go towards training expenses for workforce development. The NWDB was recently approved for a \$300,000 grant of which \$30,000 will be used administrative purposes. She said that the strategy is to try to secure other sources of funding through corporate organizations to supplement programs. Mr. Epps suggested that the NWDB might be able to get funds from Bloomberg Philanthropies to go towards jobs, training and re-entry. They recently contributed about two million dollars to Jersey City.

Joint Workforce Development Board Retreat- The retreat will be held on May 17, 2016 at the Robert Treat Hotel. This event is the board's opportunity to move the strategic plans forward for each committee. Mr. Cahn suggested that the next committee meeting be used to finalize and agree on the strategic plan.

Essex County Workforce Development Board (ECWDB) Update - Sam Okparaeke

Mr. Okparaeke regretfully informed the group that the ECWDB had recently made the tough decision to terminate some of its former board members and had appointed new members. He viewed the upcoming retreat as a great opportunity for the committees to work together to ultimately improve employer engagement to increase job opportunities.

The Essex County Workforce Investment Board was officially changed to the Essex County Workforce Development Board by resolution from Essex County Freeholders and Essex County Executive. Eleven members from the private sector were approved as board members by the Board of Freeholders.

Project Homeless Connect (Julius Montford)

On March 16th, the Office of Community Action will be hosting this event starting at 9 a.m. at Branch Brook Park Skating Rink. It is aimed to count the number of homeless individuals in Essex County which is tied to federal dollars being awarded to Essex County. Transportation and an array of services, information and resources will be available at the event.

Essex County Job Fair- On May 26th the job fair will be hosted at Essex County College in the gym. Employers, training agencies, state service offices and workshops. Jackie Johnson will be sending out information if anyone is interested in participating as a vendor. Mr. Montford expressed that sponsors are needed for the event.

Samuel Okparaeké- Essex County Update

The Essex County Workforce Investment Board was changed to the Essex County Workforce Development Board by resolution of the Board of Freeholders and County Executive.

Food Stamp Program- The State of New Jersey failed to apply for the waiver which affects 7, 100 Newark/Essex County food stamp recipients who are required to be in a 20 hours per week (10 hours of job search and 10 hours of classroom) activity. The state threatened to revoke benefits for anyone who had not signed up for a work activity by April 1st. Additional resources are needed to filter this information to the population that it affects. Orientation sessions are being conducted to inform as many recipients as possible that if they don't comply by participating in a required activity, they will lose their benefits and won't be able to reapply for 36 months. Mr. Okparaeké solicited the help of board members to help spread the word before the extension period for participants to enroll in activities of August 2016.

Welfare to Work (Julius Montford)

Essex County has been focused on getting its population engaged in training programs. The participation rate is currently at 23%, which is below the federal mandated requirement. For the first time in six years, Newark and Essex County has a full slate of activities for participants, yet the sanction rate is elevating. Restructuring is being done to address why the welfare population that should be engaged isn't. Structural changes are also being made as some employees retire. Mr. Montford also relayed that at the next Operation Meeting with the State of New Jersey, he was going to recommend that the sanctioning process be revisited because some clients have made a habit of manipulating the system.

Staff Development WIOA Process (Julius Montford)

Workshops are being conducted at ECC to develop Newark and Essex staff on WIOA changes.

Sub-Committee Reports

Business & Economic Development Committee (Mitchell Cahn)

The committee has been working on two major projects.

-Content Library

-Work Readiness Certification.

Disability Issues Committee (Elizabeth Davis)

The committee has been working on an Employer Recognition Event to be held early June at Turtle Back Zoo. The committee will be working on a plan to build disability awareness at the One-Stop Centers.

Youth Investment Council (Sonja Williams)

The committee has been working on improving business engagement and increasing youth input and participation. One major project that falls under the Work Readiness Sub-Committee is “The Closet”, which will be housed at 50 S. Clinton Street and run by the youth.

Welfare to Work (Danny Denise Gonzalez)

The committee is working on performance goals. One of the committee members was elected to sit on the panel for RFP Review to better understand the process. For the next few meetings, Essex County contracted vendors will be presenting at meetings discussing their program, mission, challenges, limitations and success stories.

NewarkWORKS Report- Norma Gonzalez

The agency received a \$600,000 reduction in the Department of Labor. The programs that assist NewarkWORKS have helped to supplement training at no cost. As of Feb 29, 2016, the agency has had 898 placements. 948 clients have been referred to training. The agency is looking for vendors that provide training in high occupational demand fields, locally and regionally. Most of the training is related to businesses that are coming to the City of Newark. This helps to create clients who are qualified and work ready.

GA and SNAP funding is no longer available. With SNAP Laws changing, the agency has been working with the NWDB, Essex County and the State of New Jersey to assist SNAP clients. NewarkWORKS has also been recruiting for TANF, Workforce Learning Link, WIA Adult and WIA Dislocated Workers.

Special Projects-

Lead Abatement Program- 21 Newark residents were trained as Lead Abatement Workers. The training was funded by the Newark Department of Health & Well Being. The participants will be hired by local vendors that have been granted contracts throughout the city.

The Summer Youth Program has started early to provide paid internships year-round. The pilot program targets out-of-school youth that have an HSE/ high school diploma. They will be placed in government or non-profit offices and they will receive special work-readiness training on Fridays. The goal of this pilot program is for the youth to obtain full-time permanent employment or to go into higher education/ vocational training. They will be paid \$8.38 hourly from WIOA funding. Ms. Gonzalez advised that the agency is in the process of restructuring the website and Facebook page as a result of the name change which will be used to filter information to the business community.

Laundry Co-Op (Al-Tariq Shabazz)

This 16 week co-op training initiative is an attempt of Mayor Baraka and NCEDC to provide an alternative method of creating entrepreneurial opportunity for 35 re-entry clients who will be trained to run a commercial laundry business. It is a worker/owner laundry co-op where the worker owns about 80% of the company. The city will leverage its resources, partnerships and reputation to secure contracts for the co-op.

Job Development

NewarkWORKS has been conducting pre-screening and skill matching for companies who are interested in hiring Newark residents. They prepare clients by performing mock interviews and have targeted sector specific job development. The agency has also been adamant about ensuring that workforce development is at the table when talking to businesses to help secure jobs coming to the city.

An example of this method in action is Hello Fresh, an international German based company, who is opening a flagship location in Newark in June 2016. The company has committed to hiring over 400 residents at their call and distribution centers. Charles Rosen of Newark Farms suggested that ancillary activity be examined which may help create many opportunities for other businesses. He detailed how Newark Farms partnered with the Jersey City based company, Blue Apron. This relationship was established because Newark Farms used Blue Apron's overabundance of cardboard to help grow mushrooms which were then sold back to Blue Apron at a mass profit.

Marcia Brown of Rutgers-Newark, mentioned a professor in the Department of Urban Economic Development who has been creating jobs and wealth on a national level through business development. She recommended that it might be beneficial to have him come speak to the group.

Mr. Shabazz informed the board members of the "Jobs Campaign" Partnership with the Institute of Social Justice. First a study of unemployment is conducted which informs how we move forward in workforce development. Ms. Brown suggested that a report from the Newark City of Learning (NCLC) projected that by 2025; more than 50,000 Newark residents will have post-secondary degrees and work

in the city. She elaborated that this report was a collaborative of about sixteen agencies, including the NWDB. She commended the Newark Workforce Development Board for the progress.

Final Thoughts

Mr. Cahn mentioned how Newark's Master Plan and its manufacturing initiatives fell in line with Hello Fresh's interests in processing foods. By having them to recognize potential by looking at our strengths, we now have an opportunity before us where over 400 jobs are being created four years later.

Dr. Ralph T. Grant went on the record, affirming the leadership, effectiveness and efficiency of Executive Director, Amina Bey.

Meeting Adjourned

A motion to adjourn the meeting was presented and moved. Meeting adjourned.