

County of Union
Workforce Development Board of Director's Meeting
Holiday Inn Clark, 36 Valley Road, Clark, NJ 07066
9:00 AM February 13, 2019

Board Members Present:

Juan Carlos Dominguez, J.J.J. Distributors **(Chair)**
Gwen Ryan, Union County Vocational Technical Schools
Edward Faver, NJ Div. of Vocational Rehabilitation Services (Leila Molaire)
Tina Early, Elizabethtown Gas
Dr. Margaret McMenamin, Union County College (Dr. Lisa Hiscano)
Glenn Nacion, Trinitas Regional Medical Center
Stan Robinson Jr., SHR Marketing, LLC
Edwin Gomez, Barcode Elizabeth
Tony Patti, Two Tony's Pizzeria
Teresa Soto-Vega, PROCEED
Paul Belardo, KML Carpenters
James R. Brady, The Savor Group, LLC
Krystal Canady, Gateway Family YMCA

Board Members Absent:

Gloria Durham, Qunnection Management **(Vice Chair)**
Gary Pfarr, IBEW **(Secretary)**
Richard Capac, Crowne Property Management
Erick Peter, Union County Economic Development Corp
Donna Dadinski, Wakefern Food Corporation
David Moskowitz, NJLWD, Employment Services, One Stop
Mark Bocchieri, Verizon New Jersey
Dr. Kamran Tasharofi, Union County Healthcare Associates
Matthew Caruso, Kean University
Charles Gillon, Division of Social Services
Richard Malcolm, Ironworkers Local #11
Danny Robertozzi, Linden School System
Salvador Garcia, MAS Development Group

Guests:

James Horne, Jr., United Way of Greater Union County
Isaias Rivera, Union County College
Gisela Bernal-Castro, American Job Center
Meredith Barracato, American Job Center
Raji Ramachandra, New Jersey Department of Labor
Scott Kuchinsky, Plainfield Public Library
Julio Sabater, Workforce Advantage
Melissa Lespinasse, Union County Division of Human Services
Angelica Prendez, Barcode Elizabeth
Juanita Vargas, United Way of Greater Union County

County of Union:

Edward Oatman, County Manager
Amy Wagner, Deputy County Manager, Director, Department of Economic Development
Debbie-Ann Anderson, Director, Department of Human Services
Antonio Rivera, Director, Workforce Development Board
Lisa Bonanno, Deputy Director, Workforce Development Board
Elizabeth Paskewich, Workforce Development Board
Sergio Granados, Freeholder
Elton Armady, American Job Center
Jeffrey Jackson, One Stop Manager

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I. CALL TO ORDER & WELCOME

- a. The meeting was called to order by Workforce Development Board (WDB) Chair, Mr. Juan Carlos Dominguez at 9:10 AM. He welcomed the new board members.

II. FLAG SALUTE

III. OPEN PUBLIC MEETINGS ACT

- a. Ms. Lisa Bonanno read the Open Public Meetings Act Statement

IV. ROLL CALL

Ms. Lisa Bonanno conducted the Roll Call.

V. Approval of the November 2, 2018 Minutes

A motion was made by Glenn Nacion and seconded by Stan Robinson, Jr. The motion carried.

Subsequent to the approval of minutes, Freeholder Granados apologized for being unable to remain for the entire meeting. He wished the board members a Happy New Year. He added that he wished to thank every single member of the board for their commitment to Union County and its residents. He thanked the Chairman. He stated that the board continues to be at the forefront of the State of New Jersey with regards to the fifteen dollar minimum wage. He stated how Union County put youth to work as well as for youth's need to provide for themselves, and often their families. He complimented the board, in particular Director Rivera for judicious use of funding. He reiterated that the county continues to use all funds available and not being in the position of having to return funds to the state. He then added the importance of outreach to the residents of Union County. He wished the board continued success in being at the forefront of putting youth to work. On behalf of the Freeholder Board he thanked the WDB board members for maintaining their commitment.

Chairman Dominguez thanked Freeholder Granados for his comments and added that as a group, the board was really moving forward.

VI. Budget and Expense Report

In the absence of Thomas McCabe, Accountant, WDB Director Rivera provided the Board with budget and expense updates. He stated that in light of the fact that there were new board members that he would be brief. He made mention that we have Federal Funding from the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act. This funding is intended for Dislocated Workers. We also receive funding from Workforce New Jersey. Additionally, we receive funding from TANF or

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Temporary Assistance for Needy Families. He further stated that in the right hand side of the packet there were two program year summaries. The summaries are for WIOA years 2017 and 2018. He referenced the fact that both summaries were as of December 31st 2018. Director Rivera then reported that some money from 2016 had to be returned as it was not used. With each subsequent year we are making better usage of the funding and returning less. The actual numbers to be sent back in the future will only be around \$20,000. He referenced the fact that we are working with Amy Wagner, Debbie Ann Anderson, and Elton Armady in reworking and finalizing a budget, one that makes sense. We will make sure that all the services needed are there as well as full accountability. It will also be one that will not see the return of large amounts of unspent funding.

VII. Revised AJC Budget Request

Item was initially skipped per Director Rivera's request.

VIII. Committee Reports

Elton Armady spoke first regarding the AJC Partner's Committee. He mentioned that Debbie Ann Anderson was not able to attend the last meeting and that he would be giving a report. Lisa Bonanno was making copies of the revised budget to be presented to the board members. He began his report by stating that he would discuss some of the highlights from the AJC Partners Committee Meeting. The first of which was in regards to WIOA. He discussed how Group I & I has worked with staff as well as the committees. Elton mentioned that the committee discussed the performance measures regarding second and fourth quarter employment as well as the measurements of median earnings, credential rates and skills gains. However, the biggest item with regards to the American Jobs Centers is that they are making sure that partners, who in the past had not ordinarily been at the table, are now coming to it. This is to ensure that we can combine services. The committee had discussed what everyone's role is at the AJC. Additionally, Elton added that the committee is creating a continuing dialogue about the partner's successes and issues as well as the sharing of information through integration. Members were given homework due January 31st in which they were to communicate what they felt were the most relevant sub-strategies. He spoke about the revised budget numbers that are available in a handout. He followed up with an overview of it. He stated that the 2017 grant year will end on June 30th of this year. He stated that he came to the table with Antonio, Debbie Ann and Melissa, as well as Perle Almeida. They really tried to prioritize spending. Essentially, they shifted money out of TANF, GA as well as SNAP dollars and moved it into salaries on the WIOA side. This includes Dislocated Workers as well as Adults and some of the Youth. The group feels that this is a more efficient way of providing client services. They also rerouted IT funds to ensure that we are providing money for AJC improvements that we are prioritizing. These items would be addressed later in his report. These items will include new software, computers and other similar items. We will be hiring

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an outreach worker. Additionally, providing additional funding to Union County College has been discussed for the purposes of making an affiliate One Stop so that they may provide services for WIOA clients.

Antonio Rivera inquired as to whether we may go back to item VII.

At that point Debbie Ann Anderson began to speak. She addressed WIOA and stated that WIOA requires the American Job Center create a committee that is a linkage between the partners. She mentioned that Union County College, United Way and some board members were at the table. She further stated that Group I & I which has been contracted by the board and sits there to assist. We are creating a roadmap to see what success really looks like. She went on to add that the employment data will be analyzed as well as the people looking for jobs. We need to as a system be able to guide the employment seekers. We need to work as a group, because one organization cannot do it all. So, having partners at the table can create that journey to the next step, a pathway to a career. Debbie Ann then spoke as to what the strategy from a federal perspective might be and how we are going to address certain things as a system.

Julio Sabater, Chair discussed the Literacy Committee. Julio was very enthusiastic about the future of the committee and mentioned the fact that they had a second meeting he described as very successful. He added that they continued to work with Group I & I to come up with the most relevant sub-strategies to be aligned through literacy efforts. The sub-strategies have been put into a google document and a final group of them will ultimately be selected by the committee with the assistance of Group I & I. Every member will have an opportunity to put his or her input into the selection of the most relevant sub-strategies. He further stated that the committee, prior to the next meeting will have an outline of those sub-strategies that most align with their goals. They will have a document to share with the WDB board which will ultimately be implemented by the committee.

James Horne, Chair discussed the Youth Committee. Initially, he mentioned that 30 people attended the previous sub-committee meeting. It was an opportunity for all providers in the county to have a free exchange of ideas. The committee looked at the Strategic Plan as well as performance outcomes of the second and fourth quarter after exit. The members of the committee had been given an assignment to list the sub-strategies that they felt were the most relevant. James also stated that one of the goals of the committee was to find ways to better work together. They wish to discuss how they may better work together. That is, to create synergies and partnerships. James also spoke of potentially having UCC go out into the community.

IX. WDB Director's Report

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Director Rivera spoke about summer youth employment programs. He mentioned that he is working with Deputy County Manager Wagner to put together a proposal. Additionally, he stated that there should be three hundred thousand dollars available and there will be two hundred to three hundred youth that will participate in the program. The governor's office has a pilot program with approximately two million dollars in funding available. The state has selected several counties. The proposal is called the Summer Youth Employment Program. It is similar to our own program. Our program has allocated funding for TANF eligible youth. They don't need to be on TANF, just in the age range. We will be able to pay fifteen dollars an hour as opposed to the state program which pays ten dollars and fifty cents. We are looking at 210 hours per participant. They will receive training in soft skills and financial literacy. Our program will work in tandem with the state's program. There will be between two hundred and three hundred youth. They will have an opportunity to acquire work skills. Director Rivera stated that they are still working on figuring out the theory of what does and doesn't work. We will be working with businesses to see that they will hire the youth. They will be receiving training stipends so they have cash in their pockets. The additional services that we will be providing will be double the original budget. The training will be over the summer, ending in September. Staffing will ramp up in March. Director Rivera declared that he was in discussion with Deputy County Manager Wagner as to the roll out as well as synchronization with the American Job Center. The youth will be exempt from taxes. In response to a query from Ms. Wagner, Mr. Rivera stated that any flexibility in the wages paid by the state was up to the governor's office.

Amy Wagner recognized the fact that we are open to providing youth with jobs where they may acquire skills that they can carry forward.

James Horne communicated that he has reached out to local businesses. He is particularly interested in placing youth in IT programs as well as parks and recreation. He is looking at medical institutions such as Trinitas Regional Medical Center and facilities that are part of the Atlantic Health Group to provide opportunities for young people. We are thinking about some strategies as to how to expand the program. With regards to ISY you would like to match them with a program that will align with their career path. With OSY it is a longer journey. The work experience is skill building as well as the aftermath. With the work experience, what do you want to do with your life? We try to create a career path.

Edwin Gomez spoke about the importance of summer programs from his own experience with youth in Elizabeth. He wants to see programs within the restaurant industry. He also spoke of a program he is currently involved with that brings students into recording studios so they may become involved with different facets of the recording industry. He would like to see programs inside the schools. He wants to see the programs be year round, not just in the summer.

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Director Rivera replied that we have a "ton" of money and Mr. Gomez should speak to James Horne.

Chairman Dominguez asserted that not everyone is college material and we should look at other careers as well. There are careers such as chefs or musicians. Youth should find their niche and follow wherever their passion guides them. We can help them along whether it involves college or not. You just want to have a career and college is not for everybody.

Director Rivera was asked how many kids the three hundred and fifteen thousand dollars would affect. He replied approximately one hundred kids over an eight week period. He also mentioned that we have additional funding that we manage independently. We have an additional three hundred kids that are involved on an annual basis.

Krystal Canady commented how this was a great idea. The YMCA is often the first employment of one's career.

James Horne stated that he is working with Juanita Vargas to put students on an IT track, creating a career.

Dr. Hiscano stated that consideration should be given as to how Union County College may be integrated after the high school level, as they offer Associates in Arts degree. She further stated that UCC offers part-time programs so that someone may work while going to school. A student may gain credentials that offer the opportunity to attend a four year school.

Director Rivera then addressed the goals of the Local Strategic Plan.

Regarding Goal 1 He commented that everyone is talking about career paths. That is why it is so important. He was impressed by the comments and intends to incorporate them into the strategic plan going forward. He also mentioned how the sub-strategies have been divided up by committee to see which are relevant. They are also part of the Northern New Jersey plan. The State Workforce Development Board also has its own strategic plan. This is where the "rubber meets the road" as to where it affects our own strategic planning. The comments are really important to the strategic planning process. Career pathways are an important part of the strategic plan.

Regarding Goal 2 Director Rivera stated that the county is in the process of integrating services in the One Stop Delivery Program.

Regarding Goal 3 Director Rivera stated that the AJC is in the process of acquiring new technology. This all relates back to the strategic planning process.

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Regarding Goal 4, He communicated that we want to serve all those in Union County who may need our services. Union County means business and the WDB is the business portion of the county. We are working with consultants to see that that expanded access to service levels takes place. We need to discern where the failures are taking place so that we may identify and correct them.

Regarding Goal 5, Mr. Rivera discussed ways that will lead to enhanced employer engagement.

Regarding Goal 6, Director Rivera discussed how the WDB will be using expanded evaluation metrics beyond national performance standards, as well as increased systemic oversight.

The new strategic plan will carry through June 30th of 2022. Our updated plan is due May 30th. The freeholders as well as this board must approve the plan.

Director Rivera then addressed policy. He addressed both WAGL-2019-1 and WAGL-2019-2. He stated the purpose of the policies of both advisories, which may be found in the materials distributed to the board.

Per the guidance of WAGL 2019-1, if you receive Federal money you must be audited. We will do our own preliminary audits to monitor our sub-recipients. We will do sit downs with the agencies as well as conduct interviews with personnel. What we do is not exactly an audit. However, it is pretty close. We look at pay stubs and analyze their billing. When the Federal Government audits us, they will do similar things. They will make sure that there are no conflicts of interest. You can't hire a relative. The policy outlines what are allowable costs. It helps to establish fiscal controls. We are reviewing what Federal law dictates. Whoever does business with the WDB will have a copy of this WAGL and know what needs to be done.

WAGL-2019-2 deals with the receipt of supportive services. This WAGL states what WIOA deems as allowable supportive services. Supportive services may not be provided to exited individuals. This WAGL corrects the error that allows for supportive services to be provided to exited individuals.

James Brady offered a motion to approve the resolution. Tony Patti seconded it. The motion carried.

- X. Resolution of The Union County Workforce Development Board Authorizing The Use of Competitive Contracting procedures For The Procurement of AJC Affiliate Career Services Operator.**

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- XI. Resolution of The Union County Workforce Development Board Authorizing the Issuance of RFQ'S and / Or RFP'S for The Potential Procurement of Certain Professional and Consulting Services.**
- XII. Resolution of The Union County Workforce Development Board Authorizing The Use of Competitive Contracting Procedures for The Procurement of Workforce Innovation Opportunity Act In-School and Out of School Youth Services.**
- XIII. Resolution of the Union County Workforce Development Board Authorizing the Use of Competitive Contracting Procedures for The Procurement of Work First New Jersey Services.**

Elizabeth Paskewich offered brief explanations for agenda items X thru XIII.

Dr. Hiscano asked if there was a timetable.

Antonio Rivera informed the board that these were just to release proposals without a specific timeframe. We cannot issue an RFP without authorization from the board. This is just an authorization to release them.

Antonio went on to offer a further explanation for new members of the board. He stated that funding is from July 1st thru June 30th. The Federal Government through WIOA gives us two years to spend the money. TANF allows eighteen months. We are working with both state and federal funding.

Stan Robinson, Jr. Made a motion to approve the resolutions. Krystal Canady seconded it. The motion carried.

XIV. American Job Centers Report

Elton Armady introduced himself as new director of the American Job Center. He stated that he began in his current position in October of 2018. He stated that he had distributed two copies of the budget. One was the original budget, while the other was the revised. He asked the board to look at the AJC line items. He stated that salaries had been shifted from WFNJ and TANF and moved to Adult and Dislocated Worker. He referenced the actual revisions which may be found in your handouts. He reiterated the need to spend the money in a timely fashion as provided by law. He further stated that when he "came to the table", these revisions were necessary

Debbie Ann Anderson began her portion of the presentation. She stated that the purpose of the budget modifications was to address some of the concerns that the board had last year. She spoke of being more innovative, acquiring new computer systems, as well as getting software that is universal so that our partners may use it in addition to the AJC team members. In doing this modification we will become more innovative and proactive. We will also be

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able to bring in key staff members who were not in the original budget, such as outreach workers who will have the ability to inform people as to what the AJC can do. We will also have the ability to bring in co-location of services such as bringing in the WFNJ portion of social services back into the One Stop building. We will also have the ability to work with Community Coordinated Child Care, the county's child care provider. They will be coming to the One Stop once or twice a week. This will assist the TANF population as well as the GA population. These are amongst the most vulnerable of populations. These are people who, if they receive a benefit must do a work activity. In the county we have approximately nine hundred clients who are on TANF and six hundred fifty seven clients who receive GA. They are required to do some things at the One Stop. Shifting the budget in the way we have, will be more aggressive in assisting this population.

At this juncture Ms. Anderson asked for a resolution to amend the budget. This item is listed as agenda item VII.

Mr. Rivera reported that this is analogous to maximizing the use of funds. He also asked how we can modify the budget so that we don't send any money back. Part of this modification asks for an additional three hundred and fifty thousand dollars for TANF that may be used by our partners to provide direct service. In addition to that there is an additional three hundred and fifty thousand dollars to fund another AJC center. We are looking at an additional seven hundred thousand dollars to be re-allocated for other services. There are additional resources being leveraged to hire additional staff. These positions are not covered by the grant provided by the Department of Social Services. In the future the AJC will have to increase its budget.

A motion to approve the revised AJC budget request was made by Teresa Soto-Vega and seconded by Paul Belardo. The motion carried.

Mr. Armady interjected that this is what we have been up to since our last meeting in October. To kick things off, United Way's numbers include both ISY and OSY. A total of forty six individuals were certified and individuals receiving service elements, including individuals receiving services from months prior is a total of fifty nine. In terms of services provided including financial literacy and other services we have a total of one hundred and thirteen. UWGUC is currently servicing two hundred and sixty three individuals. Elton then complimented James Horne as well as his staff members for a well-run operation. They are really coming to the table for the Youth Committee as well as other aspects of the partnership as well. UCC in the same time frame rendered services to twenty seven individuals receiving soft skills training as well as seventeen for funded outreach such as job fairs. Thirty six individuals were One Stop referrals.

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At the AJC we have been taking a look at the foot traffic that comes in through the door. Our program administrator, Meredith Barracato has been taking a look at the number of SNAP clients who have come through the doors. Between November of 2018 and January of 2019 there have been twelve hundred and thirty seven individuals. Plainfield has only seen one hundred and forty individuals. In terms of foot traffic, the Elizabeth AJC has seen twenty nine individuals a day. The majority of them are from the SNAP program. That number is twelve hundred thirty seven. Additionally, five hundred seventeen other clients have been seen. This averages out to twenty seven clients per day. In contrast, Plainfield has seen one hundred forty SNAP clients and four hundred thirty four other clients. This works out to ten clients a day. These individuals have received occupational training as well as other services. In terms of the AJC, reportable individuals, who include anybody who walks through the doors, four hundred thirteen have gone through orientation. Six hundred ninety four have done a self-directed job search. Two hundred eighteen have been in demand occupations and twenty seven have been seen through outreach.

For the same November 2018 thru January 2019 period, the AJC has seen WIOA reportable participants numbering eighty eight for skills assessment. Fifty five were reported as pre-vocational and one hundred twelve received training.

In terms of upcoming AJC Improvements, we will be seeing new computers that are Windows 10 capable. We will also see Launchpad software which will be utilized for comprehensive client service and data sharing with clients.

There will be the addition of six to eight social service staff in Elizabeth. These additions will be made by February 18th and will make it a true One-Stop Center. There will be a further addition of new staff to include two bi-lingual career counselors and an additional program analyst.

There will be Wi-Fi added to the 1st, 2nd, and 4th floors in Elizabeth

There will be two smart boards for each center location.

Regarding partnership engagement, we will see wrap around services. This means that employers will have access to representatives from AJC, training providers and employment services.

We will see collaborations with partners. They will focus on educating staff and employers.

There will be workshops with Group I & I to strengthen the AJC network.

The partners have made commitments to tackle deficiencies that exist in the network.

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In terms of client engagement, we will see a special focus on participants who are exiting the 4th quarter and will offer additional services.

We will see more industry job fairs, recruitment events and information sessions with AJC, training providers as well as employment services.

There will also be a targeted outreach based on occupational interest or training.

We will be seeing more staff professional development. This will consist of training and technical assistance workshops. They will be conducted by Group I & I, representatives from the state, as well as partner agencies.

There will be updated and redesigned casefile documentation.

We will set up an online resource directory for easy access for career counselors.

We have seen an improvement in the employment rate second quarter after exit as well as the credential rate for both Adult and Dislocated Workers. We are working with the system to see how we may shore up any deficiencies.

Director Rivera commented that it is very important to know that he and Elton went to a meeting at the State Training Commission. He referred to areas in the handout marked in red that are in need of improvement. The problem is systemic on a statewide level. The state is failing at issues because the system is antiquated. That is why we are looking for an improvement in software. Part of the challenge that we have been struggling with is the system. We are doing a "deep dive" with the data. It is a reporting issue. The One Stop staff inputs the data. Futureworks can go in and extract that data and tell us what it means. That synchronization needs to go on. Up to now, the data has been bad. Futureworks has found a number of bugs in the data.

Dr. Hiscano questioned if the data of January 3, 2019 indicating second quarter after exit means, in fact, that the client exited the system in January of 2018?

Director Rivera replied that it means they exited six months prior to the date.

Doctor Hiscano was concerned that the data might be really old. She felt that the movement was slow because of old data.

Mr. Armady replied that it is a problem statewide. He added that all the counties are failing and the data is very inconsistent. When people need to go in front of their boards, tell them the data is not super accurate and should be taken "with a grain of salt".

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Mr. Armady continued by stating In terms of the system, in one account we have with United Way, our contract budget of four hundred seventy seven thousand based on the approvals and expenses, there remains a balance of twenty four thousand nine hundred. In the other account of four hundred eighty thousand, there is a balance of eighty four thousand. For UCC, from a contracted budget of one hundred thousand, there remains a balance of fifty six thousand. For their other contract of three hundred thousand there remains one hundred and seventy eight thousand. We have used money subsequent to the dates this was prepared, so the balance will be lower.

XV. Old Business

None

XVI. New Business

None

XVII. Public Comments

XVIII. Adjournment

Chairman Dominguez adjourned the meeting at 10:35 AM.

XIX. Next Meeting:

**Wednesday March 20, 2019,
Holiday Inn Clark, Washington Conference Room**

Verbatim dialogue is available through recording.