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Atlantic County Workforce Development Full Board Conference Call Meeting 9am June 25, 2020

Attendance

| | | | | |
|------------------|-----------------|----------------|----------------|-----------------|
| Alan Beatty | Pat Constantino | Jim Drew | Roy Foster | Forrest Gilmore |
| Dr. Guenther | Joe Ingemi | Dan Kelly | Stephanie Koch | Rick Lovering |
| Terri Lutz | Paul McClellan | Maryann McGhee | Claire Millar | Riaz Rajput |
| Candace Titanski | Marian Woodson | Amy Gatto | Jim Kreischer | Samuel Ware |
| Fran Kuhn | Dan Konczyk | Neil Bellinger | | |

Minutes

This meeting was called to order at 9:05am by the Board Chair, Riaz Rajput. Alicia Oatman confirmed that a quorum was in attendance for the meeting. The minutes from March’s meeting were reviewed. The chair asked if there were any additions or corrections to the minutes. Membership raised no concerns. Paul McClellan made a motion to approve the March minutes, Pat Constantino seconded the motion. The minutes were unanimously approved.

Financial Report

John Fata, fiscal officer, reported on the PY19 revenue and expenditure. Overall on a total budget of \$9.487 million, the agency has expended \$6.1 million or 64% of total. On further examination of the non-personnel line items, WIOA contracts showed \$994,026 in expenditures or 60% of total allocated funds; while WFNJ contracts showed \$827, 217, or 40% of total allocated funds. The impact of the pandemic has had an obvious impact on services overall, which reflect an overall expenditure rate of 52%.

2020 Budget

John Fata, fiscal officer, submitted the workforce development board’s proposed budget for Program Year 2020. He indicated that the budget was preliminary as the county had yet to receive a notice of award for Work First New Jersey funds for the new program year. As a result, the proposed budget did not include over 50% of the total revenue expected for agency operations. Chairman Rajput inquired if the expected funds would be available; Fiscal Officer Fata stated that he hopes the allocation will be available by late July or early August. Executive Director Fran Kuhn also stated that there were additional concerns because a proportion of this allocation requires state match in the funding distribution. Mr. Kuhn and Mr. Fata also indicated that the Department had stated that they would consider a no cost extension of PY 19 revenue upon request by the county board. Director Kuhn indicated that Atlantic County will submit a request. Chairman Rajput requested a motion to approve the preliminary budget. A motion was made by Freeholder Amy Gatto to approve the budget and seconded by Jim Drew; Joe Ingemi recused himself from the vote. The motion carried and the budget was approved.

Chair Report

Riaz Rajput thanked the WDB staff for the continued work availability during the shutdown. A special thanks went out to those workforce staff that assisted community members with their unemployment claims, including Fran Kuhn and Marian Woodson and others that were responsible.

The re-organization of the Board consisted of the swearing in of newly appointed Board members as well as re-appointments of existing members. The members were sworn in by Freeholder Amy Gatto and welcomed by the entire Board. Those members that agreed to continue serving on the board and were sworn in include:

Dr. Barbara Gaba, Forrest Gilmore, Daniel Kelly, Richard Lovring, Carol Spina, and Marian Woodson

New members who were sworn in include:

Dan Konczyk and Tim Kreischer

Executive Director Report- Fran Kuhn

Reopening Strategy

The Atlantic County One Stop is at full staff with a projected opening to the public on July 13, 2020. The State's projected date to open is June 29, 2020 but is subject to change. There will be no unemployment workers present in the building on the planned reopening date. This is a major issue as there are customers that have not received any benefits thus far. The One Stop has a plan in place to service customers. This plan can be reviewed in the reopening strategy that is a part of the board packet. In an effort to avoid face-to-face contact, customers will be able to access the Atlantic County Workforce Development Board's and the One Stop Career Center's information within the county's current website, to access video presentations of information sessions and orientations, as well as instructions for obtaining training grants and job placement opportunities. The site will also be used to provide downloadable documents for applying for workforce development assistance and completing required eligibility documentation. The agency and the state are still working through policy on how to obtain acceptable electronic signatures as part of this process. In the meantime, downloadable documents will be completed and delivered to a drop box within the One Stop. Adult Basic Education Testing and High School Equivalency testing will be the one area of services that will be face to face with limited attendees to keep within the mandated guidelines of social distancing. For those customers who enter the One Stop and have limited access to technology, the office is arranged so that the customers will have the ability to interact with their case managers and employment specialist through the use of videophones.

Contracts

The proposed contract with Atlantic Cape Community College contains a continuation of supplemental literacy services that include the supplemental learning lab, the WFNJ ESL service and the WFNJ lower level (grade level 1-4) classroom instruction. These proposals are under review as the WDB only received first quarter funding for literacy and has received a reduction in WIOA funding of roughly 10%.

Contract renewals for both In School and Out-of-School Youth programs, as well as the continuation of the One Stop Coordinator position, have been reviewed and approved. The results for the current RFPs that include Work First New Jersey and the Job Development/Job Placement programs are pending. There are additional delays because of the lack of Work First New Jersey funding, as that impacts both of the pending contract awards.

Amended By-Laws

Following the second reading of the amended changes to the Atlantic County Workforce Development Board By-Laws-which state in summary that board members that miss two consecutive meetings will receive an e-mail advising them of the importance of their continued participation and the board's option

to recommend removal if they continue to fail to attend; and that no board member may hold a standing chair position on any subcommittee if they are receiving funding from the board; Chairman Rajput requested a motion to approve the amended by-laws. Terri Lutz made the motion and Alan Beatty seconded. The motion carried unanimously.

ACE

Atlantic City Electric (ACE)- Executive Director Kuhn explained that the training program funded by Atlantic City Electric and Exelon had been progressing until the time of the pandemic and subsequent shut down. The new cohort for the program had completed the first classroom training and was beginning the second when the pandemic forced the training cessation. Plans to initiate the line school training had to be put on hold once again.

John Fata and Director Kuhn met just prior to the shutdown to discuss the idea of developing a state-of-the-art training center for linemen at the IBEW training site in South Jersey. The development of this site would also help provide newly trained participants of the ACE program with an opportunity to interview with the Asplundh program that is a subcontractor of IBEW. This program would allow for training of new workers in the skills and safety requirements necessary to trim trees around the wires that distribute power for Atlantic City Electric and other providers. The Asplundh program also provides for a feeder system for IBEW membership. Roy Foster explained that the funding available through the Atlantic City Electric grant could lay the foundation for the new training program for the southern New Jersey location of IBEW.

GAINS

Director Kuhn stated that the agency had recently received a six-month extension on the current GAINS (Growing Apprenticeships in Non-traditional Sectors) grant. According to Ren Parikh of Ideal Institute of Technology, there are currently 13 paid apprentices with an anticipated 7 more to come in the month of July. Given the current employment circumstances in the area, he did not feel there would be any problem obtaining the required 10 more to obtain the proposed number of 30 for the anticipated level of service. Kuhn also explained that in recent conversations with the state representative of the US Department of Labor, Office of Apprenticeship, he learned that competency-based apprenticeships could speed up the training process for apprentices to move to journeyman status.

Dr. Phil Guenther suggested that Gina Demaio, who is responsible for managing the apprenticeship programs associated with ACIT, do a presentation for the board, to further assist in supporting this program.

Board Survey

Director Kuhn stated that he had surveyed board members in early May to assess how best to address the workforce development needs of the citizens of Atlantic County at the conclusion of the pandemic crisis. In summing up the responses, Kuhn indicated that the main concern during this shutdown time is the flexibility of the One Stop's response and the need to facilitate ongoing communication between customers and staff.

In reviewing reports from the subcommittees, Kuhn stated that the reports could be found in the board packet. He also stated that there were currently three to four committee chairs that were not filled. He expressed appreciation for Carol Spina, who has agreed to assume the chair position for the membership committee and indicated that he and Ms. Spina would be meeting shortly to begin to identify possible candidates for the chair positions. He also asked board members to consider the available vacant chair positions which are currently the following:

Business and Economic Development, Disability, Youth and possibly One Stop Oversight.

Policy proposals-

The executive director indicated that there were two additional proposals for consideration involving the agency training grant program.

The first proposal was to increase the maximum ITA grant amount from \$4000 to \$5000 this to include all expenses i.e books, supplies, equipment, and certifications, many customers are struggling to make ends meet and the increases in the grant size will help address some of the funding gaps that currently existed. Pat Constantino made the motion to increase the grant level from \$4,000 to \$5,000. The motion was seconded by Stephanie Koch. After calling for a voice vote, the motion passed.

A second proposal involved adopting a separate grant award specifically for customers pursuing the LPN program. The proposal suggested that the maximum grant amount for this program should be increased to \$8,000. The total cost of most local LPN programs is approximately \$13,000. In examining the placement data over the last three years for this position, Over 70% of all candidates obtained employment in the field and continued in the healthcare field. Alan Beatty indicated that he supported the proposal and also said that one of the other reasons for doing so was because those trainees that completed the program were also established in a career pathway that positioned them to achieve the registered nurse license in a relatively short time. Dr. Phil Guenther also stated that the program at ACIT was also aligned with the registered nurse degreed program at Atlantic Cape Community College and that there were articulation agreements that allowed them to transfer credits from ACIT to the community college. Alan Beatty made a motion to increase the ITA grant amount for Licensed Practical Nurse (LPN) from \$5000 to \$8000 and was seconded by Pat Constantino. The motion passed unanimously.

With no further items to discuss, the meeting adjourned at 10:14am.

The next full board meeting is scheduled for Thursday, September 24th at 9 am.

Respectfully submitted,

