

## Business Development Committee Meeting

7-16-21 Minutes

### Members Attending:

Paul McClellan      Alan Beatty      Michael Chait      John Fata  
Erik Ditzio      Max Slusher      Jean McAllister

Meeting began at 9:04 am. The minutes from the April 16 meeting were reviewed. Motion to approve the minutes made by Michael Chait and seconded by Alan Beatty. April minutes were approved.

Discussion began with the difficulty that local businesses were having in hiring workers for jobs. The casinos all seem to have a significant need for help that is not being addressed despite offering increased salaries and bonuses. The belief that the unemployment stimulus payments and the reluctance to return to the hospitality and customer service industry has created the problem with businesses being unable to meet their staffing needs.

Michael Chait reported that restaurants have shifted to more pick-up and take-out because they do not have enough staff to serve inside. In addition, the staff that many businesses have are getting burned out so owners are being forced to have reduced hours thus serving fewer customers. Michael also expressed concern for those customers that are ending their unemployment payments at the same time that the season ends. There was concern that there would not be sufficient jobs for those customers that were coming off unemployment.

Fran Kuhn expressed the concern that there would be a large number of people coming off unemployment that would not be able to find work. He suggested that many of these customers would be coming to the One Stop and looking for assistance. The only opportunity available at that time would be the opportunity to receive additional benefits for training while they participate in occupational training. The concern expressed is that customers would not be sincere in pursuit of the training, but would only be interested in extending their unemployment. In considering the number of people that could potentially exhaust their unemployment in September, Mr. Kuhn stated that the number is estimated at 23,000. The actual number of unemployed is listed at 10,800, but does not accurately reflect the total number of people currently receiving.

Michael Chait discussed the concern with the growing presence of the Delta variant of the virus. He stated that many of the businesses that he had been talking to were seriously considering requiring staff to get vaccinated or be terminated. He also said that he was hopeful that some of the convention business may move its business into the latter part of the summer or fall because of the lack of guidance from the governor's office.

Discussion then shifted to those areas that might be potential growth areas that would provide additional opportunities for training and career development. Michael Chait indicated that he could bring a representative from IOTSE to discuss the stage hands and event support unions. He stated that the major efforts for the casinos and convention business is trying to determine where the concerts are

going and when they may be in the area of Atlantic County. He also said that there is a lack of corporate sponsorship because they could not support and indoor events. He stated that stagehands are paid a premium dollar and that did not appear to be shortage of those workers. The difficulty is in providing the live event venues for them to receive consistent work. He also stated that there has recently been a release of SVOG Shuttered Venues Operator Grant. There is an influx of significant dollars to either put deposits on 2022 or get things going by the end of 2021.

Survey to understand the impact of pandemic on small business. He said that there were a significant number of businesses that received small business loans, but no real number of small business closures. Max Slusher stated that the outcomes will not really be known

Jean McAllister asked if there would be an increase in training dollars for those students who were not in school or who had left during the pandemic. She cited the medical field, the off-shore wind opportunity and union-related jobs targeted to those trainees that would be interested in pursuing vocational training.

Fran Kuhn then introduced John Fata as the supervisor for the agency's new job development unit. He explained that the job development unit is focused on expanding the training array that the agency will provide to include On-the-Job training, apprenticeship and incumbent worker training. He emphasized that the philosophy of the agency needs to shift from training alone to training connected to identified-training needs. The intent is to use the agency's training dollars to help offset employer's training costs and create a skilled worker pipeline for the employer. Director Kuhn used the description of the job development interaction with Globalx to obtain qualified, pre-screened candidates for the flight attendant positions with GlobalX.

The discussion continued explaining that the combined services of the state and local workforce development departments to create a comprehensive resource for talent acquisition. Michael Chait mentioned the need for EMTs and EMS workers, especially for the summer season. He identified a company, Exceptional Medical, John Wolfram, is currently short ten EMTs. Fran Kuhn stated that the agency could use its resources to help with the staffing levels, or guide candidates to the field in the future. Alan Beatty mentioned that Barry Bruner is the instructor for ACIT. Michael and Alan would reach out to Barry during the summer. Jean said classes were running during the pandemic and did not shut down. Interest is focused on identified employer need.

Also discussed exploration of advanced manufacturing in Atlantic County. Agency has made initial inroads with small advanced manufacturers. Fran Kuhn mentioned the introduction to Mahogany and small composite manufacturer. The agency is interested in developing advanced manufacturing in the Atlantic County region.

Aviation is the newest industry area for Atlantic County that will be available for the next generation of the local area.

Jean McAllister indicated that Atlantic Cape is conducting dealer training at present and concludes that there is a generation of dealers that may be retiring, but she is disappointed in the level of interest in culinary.

There was also discussion regarding new assisted living facilities that are interested in hiring new staff and looking to open soon. A total of 240 staff. Alan Beatty indicated that medical industry will continue

to be needed going forward. Alan Beatty indicated that the primary need to Shore were respiratory therapist, medical assistant and nursing assistant. He stated that the hospitals do not require certification for the nursing assistant positions, but has a large amount of turnover in that position. He did say that some of the most successful nurse aids are ones that they are building themselves. Hoping to build a group that will remain more than a year.

Alan Beatty stated that he currently had 10 openings for medical assistants.

Fran Kuhn discussed the proposal to extend the summer youth employment program to work with the Work First New Jersey program to enhance this program using WFNJ funds for the summer program. He stated that the agency will be looking to use WFNJ customers to participate in summer work experience program. State has approved the program and placement opportunities are being requested. Focus now should be on summer opportunities for trade development. The agency is looking to place WFNJ candidates in the small business trade opportunities. Michael Hull explained the process to engage the employers for the summer youth program.

Michael Chait stated that he would like to determine ways to engage youth with manufacturing opportunities.

#### OLD BUSINESS

The results of the efforts to get the job opportunities to colleges and high schools. Michael Chait feels that it would require a more in-depth discussion. The Chamber landing page was being pushed, but while there are thousands of jobs, there does not appear to be that much interest in the group. Max reported that Stockton would not actively pursue the text message, but would use their own website. Atlantic Cape did say that they sent it out from the college, but not much in the way of response.

There was a continuing discussion regarding the lack of communication from the state capitol and the frustration associated with the continuing stimulus and bonuses that benefit recipients are receiving.

Motion made to adjourn by several members. Meeting ended 11:10 am.

Respectfully,