

Bucks County Department of Workforce and Economic Development

Workforce Development Board Meeting Minutes

Date of Meeting: June 22, 2022, 9:00 a.m.

Teleconference

In Attendance

Board of Directors: Jim Horan, Anita Diggs, Doug Edwards, Dr. Felicia Ganther, Greg Krug, Chris LaBonge, Erin Lukoss, Jessica Peiffer, Dr. Benjamin Rusiloski, Brian Shields, Sara Tsvikis, Yolonda Udvardy.

Bucks County WED Staff: Billie Barnes, Alice Colyar, Brian Cummings, Michael Gilmore, Brittney Jones, Dianna Kralle, Andrea Walls.

Guests: Danielle Bodnar, Martin Focazio, Andre Hardy, Susan Herring, Margie McKeivitt, Larry Melf, Jessica Peterson, Robert Pisko.

Next Meeting: TBD

Location: TBD

Agenda Discussion

I. Welcome & Call to Order, Jim Horan

Jim Horan, Board Chair, called the meeting to order at 9:02 a.m. and greeted attendees. Dianna Kralle announced that a quorum was present.

II. Meeting Minutes, Jim Horan

Mr. Horan directed board members to review the meeting minutes from March 23, 2022. Mr. Horan requested a motion to approve the meeting minutes.

Action/Vote: Greg Krug made the motion. Chris LaBonge seconded the motion. All were in favor; none opposed.

III. Executive Committee Appointments, Jim Horan

Mr. Horan spoke about the appointment of Dr. Mark Hoffman and Marybeth Williams to the Executive Committee. Dr. Hoffman and Ms. Williams are longstanding members of the Bucks County Workforce Development Board. They will fill the two open seats on the committee. Mr. Horan requested a motion to approve the Executive Committee Appointments.

Action/Vote: Yolonda Udvardy made the motion. Erin Lukoss seconded the motion. All were in favor; none opposed.

IV. Fiscal Update, Jim Horan and Michael Gilmore

Michael Gilmore reviewed LWDA PY21 budget YTD Q3, focusing on the financial status report for the 3rd quarter filed with the PA Department of Labor & Industry. Overall, PA CareerLink® is below budget or 32% for the year. However, it is at budget in the facilities and operations category. At this point in time, 43% is unexpended. The expected relocation in mid-to-late July is a consideration.

WIOA Funding: 80% expenditure by year's end

- Adult: 87%
- Dislocated Worker: 78%
- Youth: 68% -- below the expected 70% -- currently reviewing this area monthly with contractors, including Bucks County Community College.

Mr. Gilmore directed the board to review the TANF category, ISY, and other funding streams, including assistive technology.

Mr. Gilmore segued into the operating budget for program year 2022 concerning estimated funding. WIOA funds have 4-26% reductions across categories. The budget has been adjusted on a line-by-line basis to account for reductions.

With regard to the PA CareerLink® Operating Budget, moving company estimates average around \$30,000. The county will select a vendor for the relocation in July.

Mr. Horan stated that the Finance Committee reviewed the fiscal budget and requested a motion to approve LWDA PY21 budget YTD Q3.

Action/Vote: Dr. Felicia Ganther made the motion. Brian Shields seconded the motion. All were in favor; none opposed.

V. Bucks County Workforce Development Board Policy Changes, Dianna Krall

Ms. Krall directed board members to policies last updated in 2016. The Executive Committee reviewed the proposed changes prior to the board meeting.

- **Individual Training Account Policy (ITA) Policy**
 - The maximum amount of an ITA is \$6,500 per customer. This limit is reviewed annually by a *Committee of the Board* and may be adjusted higher or lower during the course of a program year.
 - The ADA Compliance section has been updated to include self-certification.
 - Under "Stipulations," the line referring to hold back for providers has been removed.
- **On-The-Job (OJT) Policy**
 - Goal wages have been increased to \$12.50 per hour for adults and dislocated workers and \$10 per hour for youth. Overtime is not eligible.
 - OJT contracts are executed for full-time employment positions with a maximum reimbursement of *40 hours per week*.

- The period of time required for an OJT Employee to become proficient in the occupation for which the training is being provided; a maximum period of six (6) months; or the Employer receiving \$10,000 in subsidy.
- Under ADA compliance, the line about ADA inspection prior to referrals has been removed.
- Under “Stipulations,” line 5 referring to reverse referrals has been removed.

Mr. Gilmore stated that “holiday pay is not eligible” should be added to Goal Wages.

- **Incumbent Worker Training Policy**

- The definition of full-time has been changed to 32 hours per week.
- Under “Stipulations,” priority of funding will be for workers not earning a self-sufficient wage and/or for workers employed in Manufacturing, Healthcare, Biotechnology, Information Technology, Transportation, Logistics, Distribution, or Tourism
- Under “Stipulations,” trainings that span program years (July 1-June 30) will be considered on a case-by-case basis, based on the availability of funds.

- **Supportive Service Policy**

- Under “Stipulations,” clearances required for training and/or employment and driving lessons have been added to supportive services.
- Driving lessons: An individual may require driving lessons in order to obtain transportation to/from allowable WIOA activities. This activity will be capped at \$1,000 per enrollee.
- Dependent care will be paid at the rate of up to \$50.00 per day per dependent for a licensed daycare center only. The total dependent care allowance cannot exceed \$1,200.00 per enrollment.
- Needs-related payments are contingent upon available funding and will be reviewed on a case-by-case basis. The maximum payment is \$1,200 per enrollment. Needs-related payments are not available for projected costs such as tolls and mileage.

Mr. Horan thanked Ms. Krall for reviewing policy changes.

Action/Vote: Mr. Horan made the motion. Dr. Ganther seconded the motion. All were in favor; none opposed.

VI. OJT Policy Exception, Dianna Krall

Ms. Krall directed board members to the OJT Policy Exception. Of note, changes result from requests made by Zober in Croydon.

- In Line 5, from \$16 to \$25.
- 30 job openings.
- Trainees are happy.
- Retention numbers have been changed from 5 to 10.

Jessica Peterson mentioned that the Business Services team has a great relationship with Zober and hope for continued partnership.

Action/Vote: Mr. Horan made the motion. Mr. Krug seconded the motion. All were in favor; none opposed.

VII. Board Manual Update, Andrea Walls

Andrea Walls introduced changes to the existing Board Manual, a tool to enhance board orientation and increase overall engagement. The manual helps to explain the moving parts of the workforce development network, including governance at federal, state, and local levels, WIOA legislation, one-stop services through PA CareerLink®, and essential reference materials.

Ms. Walls created a one-page summary of board manual updates that correspond to sections in the manual. She reviewed key points and explained the significance of each update.

WED Highlights include:

- WED Newsletter launched in June 2021 and is emailed to subscribers each month.
- The first Behind the Walls event was held on July 22, 2021. Eleven employers, five support agencies, and 141 inmates participated in the Bucks County Correctional Facility's on-site job fair.
- WED Talks launched in June 2021 as virtual discussions that explore the most important aspects of workforce efficacy, led by trusted experts in their fields.
- Funding from PA L&I created a new position shared by Bucks and Montgomery counties to expand apprenticeships. Adina Tayar, the Regional Apprenticeship coordinator, consults with businesses, training providers, and intermediaries to develop talent solutions through employer apprenticeship programs.

On the horizon:

- PA CareerLink® Relocation to Trevoze, PA
 - Anticipated to relocate in summer 2022 to a more accommodating facility.
 - Bucks County Technology Park, 4800 E. Street Road, Suite 50, Trevoze, PA 19053.
 - Improve customer experiences, enhance service delivery, and increase accessibility.
 - It is highly visible, just steps from multiple SEPTA routes and has a drop-in daycare center that clients may utilize when receiving on-site services.
- American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) Funding
 - Oversee \$5M in ARPA funds for Bucks businesses and underserved populations most affected by the pandemic, including reentrants, youth, the unemployed and the underemployed.
 - Brittney Jones joined the WED team as a project manager to coordinate, track, and report ARPA fund allocations on behalf of the county.

Economic Development highlights include:

- The Economic Development side of WED is funded through Engage! and PREP grants.
- Going forward, the department will seek Economic Development grants to aid in implementing the Transition Report created by the Economic Development Task Force.
- Brian Cummings joined WED as the Economic Development program manager in May 2022.

- Aid small businesses through COVID-19 recovery and appropriately administer this funding.
- Resource guide for business owners and the public on economic development needs countywide.
- In 2021-2022, WED provided oversight for the Bucks Business Recovery Grant through the American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA).
- In PY21, WED has dispersed more than \$10 million to local businesses through ARPA and the COVID-19 Hospitality Industry Recovery Program (CHIRP).

Finance updates include:

- WED contracted with Service Access & Management (SAM), Inc. to assist with the fiscal transition to the county system, training, and professional development offered through the state. Consultants at SAM, Inc. provide support for Finance Manager Michael Gilmore, hired in fall 2021, as he acclimates to fiscal/technical oversight, policies, procedures, and reporting. This assistance has helped mitigate potential transition issues as they arise.
- WED has access to greater resources that the Fiscal team had spent time working on, for example, the IT Department, the Law Department, and Accounts Payable.

Major goals and objectives for PY22 include:

Statewide WIOA Activities Funding

- In November 2021, the BCWDB received more than \$700,000 in additional funds to:
 - Expand Incumbent Worker Training.
 - Hire a Project Manager for Workforce and Economic Development.
 - Fund WED Talks Resource for Employers. Develop a Virtual Reality Program.
 - Develop a Welding Certificate Program. Expand the In-School Youth Program.
 - Create a Workforce Outreach Campaign. Fund EMT and Paramedic Training.
 - **Expand PA CareerLink® Bucks County. Business Services Initiatives.**
 - Fund Mobile Technology/Virtual Service PY21.
- Job Seeker Engagement
 - To increase job seeker engagement, we will continue to reduce service disruptions while mitigating transportation barriers for customers through virtual enrollments, counseling, and workshops.
 - Plans are in progress to add SkillUp® PA as a resource for virtual instruction to promote on-demand access to content.
 - Additionally, WED and PA CareerLink® are looking to increase the number of customers served in-person at the career service center since the pandemic has reduced overall foot traffic.
- Streamline Processes
 - WED plans to streamline contracting processes through EDSI.
 - As the one-stop operator contractor, EDSI will assume duties to compensate providers in the one-stop delivery system.
 - Streamlining processes will allow us to be nimble in delivering quality service more timely and efficiently.

VIII. Workforce Development ARPA Funding, Brittney Jones

Brittney Jones presented an overview of ARPA-funded projects with individual categories totaling \$4 million.

ARPA Projects

- Work Inside Corrections: \$1,200,000
- Youth Job Readiness: \$402,000
- Training Funds ITA/OJT/IWT: \$408,000
- WED Staffing at 10%: \$400,000
- Workforce on Wheels: \$868,000
- Apprenticeship Awareness: \$240,000
- Employer Training Cohorts: \$137,000
- Entrepreneurship Training: \$135,000
- Essential Workers Signing Bonus: \$130,000
- Supportive Services: \$80,000

Projects for RFP:

- Entrepreneurship (\$135,000) -- Released RFP on 6/1, responses due 6/27 at 9 am. Requesting proposals from higher educational institutions (or those partnered with one) to provide an entrepreneurship curriculum program consisting of workshops, creating a business plan, and guidance on how an individual can open his/her own business.
- Employer Training (\$137,000) -- Will be released on 6/29, responses due 7/25 at 9 a.m. CareerLink® and local Chambers surveyed members to see what training would be beneficial. Proposals from businesses to provide training to Bucks County employers for their employees. Multiple or single workshops on different topics to enhance skill sets.

Department of Corrections (DOC) and Reentry Program – (\$1.2 million)

- Partnership with DOC and WED.
- Reconfiguring a space in all 3 Correctional facilities for re-entry services (with furniture and supplies).
- VITA will aid in job search prep, job placement, trainings, certifications, and various educational services & workshops.
- Assist with obtaining documents needed for future employment.

Workforce On Wheels (WOW) – (\$868,000)

- A mobile CareerLink®
- RFQ was issued, and Farber Specialty Vehicles won (to be awarded on the 7/6 agenda).

Billie Barnes stated that Bucks County is the 4th in the nation to launch a WOW. Newark, Prince George County, and Washington, D.C. also have WOWs.

Additional funding for current projects

- Youth Job Readiness with BCCC – (\$402,000)
 - Adding funding to BCCC's current ISY program.
 - Expand current job readiness & career exploration to all HS students in Bucks County.

- Follow the current WIOA program but be open to all students in Bucks County.
- BCCC is looking at expanding into school districts they do not currently serve and building relationships with those they currently serve.
- EDSI – multiple projects
 - Training ITA / OJT / IWT (\$408,000)
 - Assisting individuals in obtaining the skills they need to succeed in their chosen career path
 - Supportive Services (\$80,000)
 - Reducing any barriers to employment that the individual might encounter
 - Apprenticeships and Pre-apprenticeships (\$240,000)
 - Creating more of both & coordinating with the state to register these opportunities
 - Essential workers signing bonus (\$130,000)
 - Work in process - but trying to get essential workers hired into essential businesses throughout Bucks County a bonus

Ms. Jones can be reached at bjones@buckscounty.org, Office: 215-345-3953, Cell: 267-614-7872.

IX. Economic Development Update, Billie Barnes and Brian Cummings

Billie Barnes announced that Brian Cummings joined WED as the Economic Development Manager in May 2022. Mr. Cummings replaced Deanna Giorno, who resigned in March 2022.

Mr. Cummings introduced himself and reviewed his goals in the position. He met with economic development partners, including the Bucks County Economic Development Corporation, Chambers of Commerce, and local township leaders. He hopes to strengthen partnerships with PA CareerLink®. He spoke about identifying available space in Bucks County for companies looking to establish businesses in the area and working with statewide partners, including the Governor’s Advisory Council. He also stated the goal of bringing best practices to Bucks County.

X. General Discussion

Ms. Krallé provided a relocation update. WED is in the process of securing a moving company and mapping a floor plan with consideration for hosting new job fairs at the building.

Additionally, Ms. Krallé asked board members if the fourth Wednesday of each month at 9 a.m., upheld for the past seven years, is the best time for board meetings. She will send a Doodle poll to confirm.

XI. Adjournment, Jim Horan

Mr. Horan thanked all attendees and requested a motion to adjourn the meeting at 10:00 a.m.

Action/Vote: Chris LaBonge made the motion. Ms. Lukoss seconded the motion. All were in favor; none opposed.

The meeting adjourned.

Respectfully submitted:

Andrea Walls

Andrea Walls

June 22, 2022

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