

**BERKS COUNTY WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT BOARD
(WDB)**

7:30 a.m.

March 15, 2019

PA CareerLink® Berks County, 1920 Kutztown Road, Suite F, Reading, PA 19604

Meeting Summary

Members Present

Ms. Debra Antol
Ms. Auria Bradley
Mr. John DeVere (via conference call)
Ms. Kristi Gage-Linderman
Mr. Robert Harrop
Ms. Carole Homolash
Ms. Joanne Judge
Mr. Lewis McCoy
Mr. Thomas McKeon
Mr. John Morahan (via conference call)
Mr. James Nichols (via conference call)
Mr. Michael Rowley
Mr. Mark Schlott
Mr. Russell Showers
Mr. Pablo Tejada (via conference call)
Mr. Barry Unger
Ms. Tammy White
Dr. Anne Zayaitz

Members Absent

Mr. Thomas Brizek
Ms. Marianne Egolf
Mr. Michael Fischetti
Mr. Modesto Fiume
Ms. Peggy Kershner
Mr. Brian McMahon
Mr. Randolph Peers
Mr. Mark Pinkasavage
Ms. Karyn Troxell

Staff and Guests Present

Mr. Daniel Fogarty	Berks County Workforce Development Board Staff
Mr. John Moser	Berks County Workforce Development Board Staff
Ms. Megan Noll	Berks County Workforce Development Board Staff
Mr. Rory Stevenson	Berks County Workforce Development Board Staff
Ms. Patricia Spencer	Berks County Workforce Development Board Staff
Ms. Patricia Adamczyk	PA CareerLink® Berks County Administrator
Ms. Marybeth Ferguson	Bureau of Workforce Partnership and Operations
Mr. Larry Melf	Educational Data Systems, Inc.

The meeting was called to order by Ms. Gage-Linderman at 7:35 a.m. A quorum was present.

Ms. Gage-Linderman asked for a motion to approve the minutes of the December 14, 2018 meeting. The motion was made by Mr. Showers and seconded by Mr. Rowley. All members voted their approval.

Ms. Gage-Linderman asked Ms. Noll to comment on the Finance Committee Report. The PY18 Budget vs. Actual reports actual expenses through January 31, 2019. Expenditures for the year to date are at or within the approved budget for all programs. The PY2018 Discretionary/Competitive Grants Status Update lists funding sources and the status of each grant. Mr. Fogarty commented that Ms. Noll has completed fiscal monitoring for all current year contractors and has also provided technical assistance to grant partners. Ms. Noll provided updated projections to the Committee for PY2018 Adult and Dislocated Worker funds to meet the minimum 80% obligation requirement by June 30, 2019. The Board has planned for this required outcome by developing Requests for Proposals for (1) an additional staff resource for Apprenticeship/Pre-Apprenticeship Outreach and (2) Community-Based Pre-Apprenticeship Programs in Construction and Healthcare.

Mr. Fogarty introduced the Training and Industry Partnership Committee Report on behalf of Mr. DeVere who was participating in the meeting by phone. The Committee has approved a revision to the Board's Work-Based Training Policy to include provisions for Registered Apprenticeships effective July 1, 2019 and asked the full Board to formally approve the revisions. Mr. Stevenson added that the application process is almost identical to the incumbent worker training policy and reimbursement to employers will be at 75% of the related instruction cost for employers with 1 to 100 employees, and 50% of the related instruction cost for employers with more than 100 employees. Pointing out that this provision aligns with the WDB's pre-apprenticeship/apprenticeship strategy, it was noted that providing this matching fund opportunity could have an added benefit of acting as an incentive to create new registered apprenticeships in Berks County. Ms. White moved to approve the Policy; Mr. Schlott seconded the motion and all members voted their approval.

In support of the manufacturing sector, approximately 65% of a \$100,000 WIOA Title I budget allocation for Incumbent Worker Training upskilling activities has been obligated. The Greater Reading Chamber Alliance (GRCA) has been awarded a \$75,000 Next Gen IP Implementation Grant through June 30, 2019 and a \$45,000 PAsmart Next Gen IP Convening Grant has been awarded through June 30, 2020. GRCA is the convener; Berks WDB is the fiscal agent for these grants.

Mr. Fogarty referred to the Reading Eagle article on the very successful third annual *What's So Cool About Manufacturing?* video contest held at the DoubleTree by Hilton in Reading on March 5, 2019 which was attended by over 1,000 people. Thirty-five schools from Berks and Schuylkill Counties participated. Mr. Harrop, Mr. Schlott, Mr. McKeon and Ms. Antol commented positively and enthusiastically on its success. The WDB contributed \$29,000 each year over the last two years and will contribute \$7,000 toward the next event for the next school year.

Several grants have been awarded in support of the Berks Construction Industry Sector. A PAsmart Next Gen IP Convening Grant in the amount of \$40,000 was awarded to the Berks/Lancaster "Construction Connection" partnership with Lancaster acting as fiscal agent. The Berks Connections Pretrial Services (BCPS) Rebuilding Reentrants and Reading (R3) project was approved for Registered Pre-apprenticeship status by the Apprenticeship & Training Office and BCPS was awarded a PAsmart Pre-apprenticeship grant for \$77,000 through June 30,

2020. The IBEW Local Union 743 was awarded a PAsmart Registered Apprenticeship grant in the amount of \$50,346 with the assistance of the Berks WDB as fiscal agent.

Mr. Moser commented on the status of the PA CareerLink® Berks County One Stop Operator Request for Proposals. PathStone Corporation was the lone eligible bidder in the second round of RFPs. After an extensive review process by Board members and Board staff, it was recommended not to award the contract to PathStone, but to extend EDSI's contract for an additional year. Educational Data Systems, Inc. will be responsible for hiring a PA CareerLink® Administrator to begin July 1, 2019. Ms. Bradley and Mr. McKeon assisted staff in the review process and commented that it was a great experience and recommended that other members volunteer when needed.

Ms. Adamczyk reviewed the By the Numbers chart (July - December 2018):

- Foot Traffic Total 17,064
 - Orientation 847
- UC Claimants
 - Phone: 2,164
 - RESEA: 497 (Reemployment Services and Eligibility Assessment)
- New Training Accounts
 - 29 WIOA \$5,060 Average
- 6 New Work-Based Training Contracts \$4,929
- 438 Individual Businesses Served
 - 130 Manufacturing Sector
 - 101 Health Care Sector
- 41 Employer Recruitments
 - 896 Job Seekers
- 1 Job Fair
 - 687 Job Seekers

The Spring Job Fair will be held on Wednesday, May 15, 2019 at the Crowne Plaza.

Mr. Harrop commented that he was very happy with the recruitments held by East Penn Manufacturing Company at CareerLink.

Ms. Adamczyk said that CDL training is a popular choice for many seeking training assistance. Currently not too many employers are willing to engage in the paperwork and time necessary to obtain On-the-Job Training funds. Considering the current tight availability for qualified applicants, most employers are anxious to onboard new hires immediately rather than risk losing them to a competitor.

Mr. Rowley asked for an update on the Berks Career and Technology Center CDL customer re-testing required after a PennDOT audit. Mr. Fogarty welcomed the question and explained that BCTC Administrator Dr. Kraft recently briefed the Training and Industry Partnership Committee to the Committee's satisfaction and that details on that briefing can be found in the Training and Industry Partnership Report contained in the Board packet. Mr. Moser said he

judges BCTC to be on track with their corrective action plan. Mr. Moser further explained that current BCTC CDL customers travel to Lancaster for their exams. Any customers needing to re-take the test following the audit are accompanied by a licensed driver in a truck furnished by BCTC to retake the test and to return to Reading. Mr. Fogarty noted that there is a current nationwide shortage of 60,000 drivers. Ms. Adamczyk said that PA CareerLink® met this week with drivers displaced from the recent Bieber Bus Company closure and that many of the drivers from Bieber have already secured new employment.

Ms. Adamczyk reported on Representative Jim Cox's recent two-hour visit and tour of PA CareerLink® Berks County. Rep. Cox is the new PA House Labor and Industry Committee Chair and was very pleased with what he saw and learned through talking with our dedicated CareerLink staff members.

Mr. McKeon introduced the Berks County Committee on Increasing Opportunities for Individuals with Disabilities report. The Committee is planning its Second Annual Employer Symposium to be held September 11, 2019. Attendees last year expressed a desire to have HR Managers and persons with disabilities speak together on panels. The Committee hopes to include a variety of Berks County companies and diversity in the sectors represented. Senator Bob Casey held a Disability Employment Summit in April 2018 in Harrisburg, and Senator Casey will be invited to be the keynote speaker this year if he is available. The location for this year's Symposium has yet to be determined. Ms. Homolash urged Board members to volunteer their company's participation. She added if members are aware of employers who have had success in hiring individuals with disabilities to share best practices. Mr. Fogarty thanked Mr. McKeon, Ms. Homolash and Mr. Moser for their leadership in this endeavor.

The Youth Committee Report was introduced by Ms. White. Referring to the Year-Round Out-of-School Young Adult & Summer In-School Youth Paid Work Experience Update, 37 individuals have entered WIOA Out-of-School Paid Work Experience (PWE) since July 1, 2018 and 25 new enrollees are confirmed for a Young Adult orientation. There are 25 individuals enrolled in the TANF Spring work experience and the goal is to enroll 25 more.

The Berks WDB has been awarded almost \$60,000 in State/Local Internship Program (SLIP) funds for 2019. An 8-week internship program beginning in June will serve 17- to 24-year olds with a total recruitment goal of 25. The program will place 20 participants into internships with a 25-30 hour work week during the 8-week program period and a wage of \$10.35/hour will be paid as specified by the grant guidelines. SLIP eligibility requires that participants who are chosen must show commitment to a career pathway as a focus for their work-based learning experience. Second year TANF youth participants who apply for consecutive, specific career-related employment experience could be vetted as good SLIP candidates.

Ms. White reported that our latest Business Education Partnership (BEP) grant has been awarded for \$130,000 through June 30, 2020. BEP partners for the new grant include the Berks and Reading/Muhlenberg Career and Technology Centers, Berks County Intermediate Unit, Greater Reading Chamber Alliance, and the Manufacturers Resource Center.

Ms. Gage-Linderman asked Mr. Moser to comment on the Performance Outcomes report which was included with the Executive Committee's report. The report compares our actual performance year-to-date in each category versus targets negotiated with the state last Fall. Mr. Moser noted that we are near or above all targets as indicated by the positive "checkmark" in the lower right corner of the report. Our local targets are set measurably higher than those for the state in nearly every category.

Mr. Fogarty commented on plans announced by the PA Department of Human Services (DHS) to discontinue their Employment and Retention Network (EARN) workforce development program for TANF recipients in the Commonwealth. Given the uncertainty about EARN's future, the County was asked to withdraw the issued EARN RFP in favor of a one-year extension of the current contract with Educational Data Systems, Inc. (EDSI). Mr. Rowley moved to extend the current contract with EDSI for one year; the motion was seconded by Mr. Unger and all members voted their approval.

For the first time under WIOA, the State WDB required Workforce Development Boards to provide annual reports for calendar year 2018. Mr. Fogarty thanked Mr. Moser and Mr. Stevenson for their input into the report. Mr. Fogarty reported that the State WDB was very collaborative in implementing this new requirement. As a result, it has been a worthwhile task. Publication of a similar report will be continued on a yearly basis.

The COO report was commented on by Mr. Fogarty. He shared that 2018 was an exceptionally good year for job seekers in Berks County as the local job market began the year strong and ended even stronger. December set two very important all-time records for both local jobs and local employment. Local average weekly wages grew 4.0% from July 2017-July 2018. January 2019 seasonally-adjusted local unemployment was reported at a healthy 3.7%.

The COO report provided additional details regarding the DHS EARN/TANF redesign announcement and the potential implications for the PA CareerLink® Berks County. Mr. Fogarty said the WDB staff will produce a "white paper" in the next few weeks detailing plans for the upcoming program years and how DHS's redesign initiative may impact local customers and partners in Berks County.

Also attached to the COO report was the PY 2017 Program Evaluation & Targeted Technical Assistance Review Summary performed by the Pennsylvania Department of Human Services. Mr. Fogarty pointed out that Berks County received a stellar review summary with zero deficiencies/findings. Most impressively, the program exceeded statewide results on all five performance measures and exceeded regional results on 4 of 5 measures.

Mr. Fogarty thanked Board members who have completed and returned their 2018 Statements of Financial Interests. 21 of 27 statements have been returned to date. The State mandates a May 1 deadline for receipt of the Statements to local Boards.

Leading into the Market Intelligence Discussion, and as a follow-up to a discussion initiated at the December 14, 2018 meeting, Ms. Gage-Linderman and Mr. Showers met with Mr. Fogarty to explore ideas for strategic employer engagement in promoting workforce develop-

ment in Berks County. Mr. Fogarty said it is a different world at present, e.g. when Schneider Electric closes its operation, there are many local manufacturing employers waiting to interview those employees. Strategies need to be developed to facilitate discussions with employers regarding how to share best practices. Mr. Showers shared with the Board a model for the relationships between the Board, employers, the community and educators using four legs of a stool as an analogy. He said all legs must be stable in a community. If only three of the legs are stable, the employer region may be loose and wobble. He asked the question: What can the Board as workforce stewards do to influence employers to engage more completely into the discussion?

Ms. White said that United Way hears from partners about barriers to employment, including transportation challenges. Mr. Showers said that employers do compete for talent but if there are barriers, perhaps there are also solutions which can be shared regarding those barriers. Ms. Gage-Linderman would like to facilitate further conversations to find ways to address the workforce skills crisis. Ms. Homolash commented that transportation is always a barrier to the talent pool of persons with disabilities and disconnected youth. She added that these two populations need to be taught how to be successful employees.

Mr. Rowley suggested that a small group of members convene to address that one wobbly leg. Members agreed that members of the Executive Committee would meet in the near future for a non-Executive Committee planning meeting. Ms. Gage-Linderman and Mr. Showers agreed to prepare an agenda.

There was no public comment

Ms. Gage-Linderman adjourned the meeting at 9:10 a.m.

The next quarterly meeting of the Board will be held at 7:30 a.m. on Friday, June 21, 2019 in Room 100 of the PA CareerLink® Berks County, 1920 Kutztown Road, Reading, PA 19604.