MINUTES

WDB Executive Committee Meeting

March 17, 2020
Attendees: Duwan Bogert, Chair, Gwen Morris, Rev. Carolyn McCombs, Sue Ronga, Erica Dawson, Beth Marmolejos, Mike Powell, Cynthia Miller, Chrystal Cleaves, Addie McEachern

Welcome & Introductions:
Duwan Bogert, Chairperson called the meeting to order at 10:09 AM

Minutes from March 4, 2020 were approved.

Cynthia Miller officiated roll call.

Duwan opened the Executive Committee meeting by establishing the date, Tuesday March 17, 2020. Before moving forward with the slated business, Duwan addressed some add-ons pertaining to the outbreak of COVID-19 pandemic. The public meetings have been transitioned to conference calls. All events have been postponed or canceled possibly for the year, he is not certain when the venues will become available. As of March 16, 2020, Governor Murphy issued and executive order that mandates in-person gathering, meetings, college/university institutions, and other types of businesses be limited to 50 people or less. Those instructions should be honored for the WDB chairs upcoming meetings and events. Duwan suggested members insert the topic with other endeavors as they incorporate and increase next year’s plans. He will secure feedback from the committee’s chairs the next upcoming meetings. If Duwan can support with brainstorming or planning, he would like to know immediately. His goal is to make certain everyone is on the same page. Several events should to be postpone, if not canceled for the year as the committee establish dates later in the year. WDB primary focus should be next year plans, which is his thought process.

Another topic of discussion is the One-Stop Operation based on the March 16, 2020 meeting with Hugh Bailey, Department of Labor (DOL) and the state Directors
concerning the COVID-19 crisis regarding Workforce Development Board (WDB) plans at the One-Stop locations. Initially, the Commissioner of Labor was scheduled to close the One-Stop offices today. However, he was notified to continue services to the public by keeping the doors open. There are other state staffers to cover the One-Stop programs that requires the day-to-day work with customers. This policy will remain in place until we receive further notice from the DOL.

From the County perspective a plan is in the development process in the event of a government shut-down. WDB will assist the public as they advance through this crisis. He does not foresee any loss of service to our customer. In the event of a full shut down, perhaps there will be restrictions to limit services throughout the county. Duwan will keep the committee informed with the evolution of changes as the information flows through the County’s website. The Board information will be provided to the committee members via email to remain in constant communication with the staff regarding services provided to the community.

Q & A Session

Duwan shared that the primary focus of WDB is to provide continual services by assisting all clients that need the assistance. From the business side there is shared information about New Jersey’s Small Business Association (SBA). Today’s meeting has been moved over to a conference call from a face-to-face. During the conference call, Duwan noted Governor Murphy mandates all New Jersey (NJ) higher education institutions closed as of March 16, 2020.

Duwan opened this segment of the meeting up to questions.

One of the significant point, is that the Executive Committee remains on the same theme with providing service and assistance to clients that need support. New Jersey Small Business Association (SBA) is putting information in place to assist business affected by the COVID-19 pandemic. Duwan requested the committee to provide everyone with our associates, partners, and community information after the meeting. We are also available to service businesses and to ensure they have the proper tools to support opportunities available to them. Those are some of Duwan’s emergency updates. If anyone have questions about the shared information,
he is available via email or mobile phone. In addition, the executive committee members that do not have Duwan's mobile number or alternate contact information, he will provide it at the end of the conference meeting. Additionally, the executive committee should also exchange contact information among each other. The committee will probably receive an email from Cynthia to ensure we stay in contact at all times because communication is imperative.

Questions and Answers

Carolyn asked: "What will happen with individuals who are in the service industries like restaurants, hair salons, and places that have been mandated by the state to shut down? How will these people cover their income gap? What will One-Stop and Employment Service be claiming?"

Duwan advised, he has not received an official notice from the state of New Jersey regarding office closures. However, SBA is providing non-interest loans, loans are approved at a higher volume with low interest rates, and they are also extending credit to businesses. Currently, he would like to discuss what he can control at Workforce Development Board (WDB) and remain open because businesses will need financial support, assistance, and service. On the front line, Duwan hopes the income and stop-gap regulations will pass to furnish clients with additional assistance to ensure employees are serviced with ease and financial assistance to families to ensure they are safe, healthy, and fed. The Executive Committee is making every effort to provide expeditious service, accurate guidelines, and additional services at all levels to relieve the needs associated with COVID disease. Furthermore, the committee will inform the community and clients of additional services and benefits when they become available.

Gwen questioned if workshop and training at One-Stop will continue.

Duwan confirmed workshops and activities would continue. He understands DOL guidance to clients and parents are not required to attend workshop and activities if their children's schools are closed. Although, no legislation has passed to support that speculations, DOL does understands and is sympathetic to the community and care about families' nutrition, health and
safety. He believes no state legislature has passed, but an announcement could be disclosed this morning (March 17, 2020).

Gwen’s purpose for the question was based on reports that Essex County One-Stop suspended workshops and activities that was shared with Passaic County’s participants. She would like to validate the accuracy of Essex County information.

Duwan advised the committee as of March 16, 2020, NJ mandated Passaic County to close services and did a reverse pivot. WDB made the same assumption and begin to cancel appointments and advise clients we would be open indefinitely until further notice. As of 4:00 PM on March 16, 2020, DOL reversed the decision that One-Stops would be open for continued services. He will be open and transparent about what he knows. Duwan also mentioned that each One-Stop is managed and comprised differently. Some buildings are owned by the state and they make the decision to close for a particular reason. Others buildings are independently leased through different entities and decisions are made between One-Stop and the County. Presently, he speaks for the County and we are open to provide services. The state mandate is to keep as many One-Stops open and operable to service the community. He suspects, we will soon hear about revised changes. All information will be shared with the committee as he receives updated details.

Duwan moved to the upcoming business agenda, considering there were no additional questions.

**WDB 2020 Re-certification 2020** is imminent and we will be reviewing all the MOU’s and IFA communication that is in the building, website, public information shared for accuracy, the complexion of the board, and the correct percentage. There are approximately 13 – 14 criteria we review with SETC before re-certification is received. A portion would be MOU and IFA. As of March, we submitted a draft to SETC to secure re-certification. WDB has not submitted the re-certification to the board because we have to be in compliance with DOL. Additionally, SETC are required to provide WDB with guidance and the template prior to submitting information to Board for approval and Freeholders for signatures. Duwan was advised yesterday that some approvals were placed on hold until the end of the month when the files are expected to be worked. The Committee and Full
Board will be kept informed of the state's approval that meets the MOU's and IFA criteria.

**Q&A forum opened for MOU and IFA.**

Beth asked about the release timing of the MOU and IFA.

The MOU's and IFA were submitted in March. He anticipated to have them back by the first week of March, but there were no approvals for the MOU's or IFA. The state has been very busy with reorganizing and planning for the COVID-19 crisis. By the end of the month, we expect to have the state's approval to begin the process, but he has not been guaranteed a date. At the point, the documents will be submitted to the board for approval and the Freeholders for signatures to have the MOU's and IFA in place. Duwan does not foresee addedums or revisions to the documents, but there are no guarantees. Although the process is fluid and involved, the Executive Committee will be secure an update and inform us when they will obtain the documents from DOL.

**One-Stop Operator Procurement** was last completed and posted June 13, 2017 for the One-Stop operator job mandate according to WIOA. The board moves through a selection process every four years to examine and reevaluate to select a One-Stop operator. The contract is for one year with an opportunity to extend an additional two years of the position. Dr. Irving was the director during the last constructed Selection Committee and Procurement contract. Nonetheless, the last portion was sent to the County's legal department for recommendation and potential Procurement changes to the contract. WDB will have a round table discussion with the Youth Service Committee when they reconvene to form a Selection Committee as performed in the past. There was a combination of positions from WDB with the County administrative staff for the Selection Committee to proceed with the Procurement process. To assure there is a fair and even process several steps are completed: 1) technical assistance is required 2) execute public disclosure – WDB will have the Selection Committee to construct and allow the County legal providers to assemble open documentations for the board to approve and assure the process.

**Selection Committee Q&A**
Beth questioned if Duwan is requesting the Executive Committee to be a part of the Selection Committee. Is he selecting individuals? In addition, has he assembled the process and timing?

As for the Selection Committee, he will speak with his direct reports at Human Services and the Freeholders to gain additional insight and provide instructions on how the selection process will be conducted. He was not the director at the time and he believes the Selection Committee is a part of the County Procurement process. He will have answers before the next meeting. In addition, he needs counsel from legal. Currently, everyone is preoccupied with the state officials associated with the COVID crisis. Nevertheless, he does not believe the selection process is on a volunteer basis. Based on prior information the committee will be comprised of a Chair and Vice Chairperson. He thinks, there will be someone from the County Administrator Office possibly a Deputy Administrator after he reviewed the individuals on the last Selection Committee. He will secure clear written guidance from the Executive Board and distribute before the next meeting to WDB Committee members of how the Selection Committee will be organized. There is another County and Human Services meeting next week with a County counselor who can provide a clear understanding. In addition, Procurement process is slated for June 2020 with an amendment extension possibly into August 2020 that is dependent upon the COVID situation. Currently, Duwan is not sure how it will affect the Procurement process, if a meeting could be held or maybe they utilize a Virtual solution to make adjustments given the different time we are in.

Mike is developing and exploring other systems with a couple public interfacing platforms for the Planning board during the COVID crisis to avoid the management committee from moving sideways. He spoke with the planning board and preservation commission and as he learn, he will share the information with Duwan.

Duwan advised that Passaic County MIS is working to design a video chat platform that is currently in production. In the interim, he is trying to setup Webex to allow us to have visual interaction with each other. With the numerous platforms, we can find a solution to accommodate our needs. WDB will have an opportunity to better communicate with each other.
Beth shared they have migrated to Webex because of: 1) the flexibility to see, engage, and hold up to 500 people 2) the mute feature to clear background noise 3) the ability to record meeting and return information oppose to writing notes/minutes. 4) there is a free version that allows for segments of 45-minute meeting. 5) there is a work platform that stores meetings from the calendar invites. She thinks these are great options for those that cannot attend the meetings. Duwan will consider the recommendation when making a platform decision.

Mike inquired about nominations, COVID issues, and effective communicate information that was missed by his late arrival to the meeting. He mentioned Carmen is conducting research about small business partners’ concerns. The treasury secretary announced they will be setting up a fund for zero interest like low interest loans to make cash flow. He attempts to determine how the federal plan relates to Treasury and IRS. He spoke with New Jersey Economic Development Authority (NJEDA) yesterday regarding numerous invoices coming through the system. Once he receives the summaries, he will share them with Duwan to ensure they are on the same page with external communication. It could become a disaster in a short time for some small business members.

Duwan confirmed with Mike, he spoke about the implementation of COVID-19 strategies to assist small business owners. He also discussed some of the pending legislation that could be passed down to businesses and employees. Mike requested Duwan to forward him any written information he has regarding small business and he will forward to Duwan the NJEDA information he recently received that address small business government funding. Duwan believes there will be tax credits and numerous services for NJEDA. Mike questioned if the Executive Committee have additional information the Economic Development professionals could read and study to design a rollout plan. Benjie Wimberly advised Mike yesterday he is not aware of any state communication or information to address monetary support due to the COVID crisis. However, Duwan has a blurb from New Jersey Education Association (NJEA) regarding SBA guidelines that are open to implementation. He has been informed the logistics are near completion, but to secure the funds would be extremely challenging. In the interim, they will notify each other as updates are received.
Duwan shared WDB is also anticipating the state to adopt legislation to protect workers due to loss of income and childcare expenses connected to the virus outbreak. At the WDB level, they are trying to help, inform, and provide information that affect both side of the spectrum. Yesterday, he was given directives from NJDOL to close One-Stop doors, which was reversed by 4:00 PM. He was appointed by WHIP directors that One-Stop operators disclosed that numerous businesses (restaurant, casinos, hair and nail salons) were closing due to the COVID-19, as of today and yesterday. Given the lapse of income associated to these business the agency will try to offer employers and employees rapid service to make it easy and palpable given the evolving circumstances. There is a strong possibility DOL will give directives to close the One-Stop office. Mike expressed that the state closed higher education institutions, which maybe a precursor of a full government shut down by the end of the week. Mike will forward Duwan information for small business funds, he recently received from NJEA. Duwan believes there will be tax credits with numerous other services available. However, securing the funds to support small businesses will be challenging.

In switching gears, Duwan would like to speak about the sub-committees and topic the board will address funding for activities and changes coming from DEA.

**Q&A opened for One-Stop Operator Procurement, MOU’s, Sub-committee selections, and additional COVID-19 agenda items.**

**Additional Sub-Committees**
Duwan plans to present the Executive Committee with a recommendation to form two additional sub-committees for amenities based on human services of clients. He spoke with several individuals on this board regarding past activities and discussions that the Workforce Investment Board had with industry round tables. The portrait Duwan paints of the sub-committees is to establish and spearhead functions that provide navigations and insight directly from industry partners to the One-Stop office when thinking of services, needs, and programs assessing for industry future and information council. Before he explore the next topic he would like to get some feedback on the mentioned information to submit a report to the Executive board in the immediate future.
Mike frankly thinks the committee structure is fine and healthcare makes sense because it is a dominant factor. Although, we refer to the committee as Faith-Based, it appears to be a broader segment. It is segmented by future industry or a part of partnership council. Actually, that makes sense because the committee speaks to the future of work, real time demand matters in terms of how we build employer's partnerships with different data points of the micro and macro indicators we are observing in the workplace intervention.

Duwan agreed with Mike thoughts based on the youthfulness of the industry council and how WDB is developing the small business council. Nonetheless, Faith-Based role as a member of Human Services works on a case-by-case basis with One-Stop. He understands how Faith-Based incorporates community contributions and understandings, which are vital functions. He believes, Faith-Based leadership has a seat at the table and always will have that space. On a state level Faith-Based is understood and needed. Though Duwan understands both sides, but the Faith-Based community consistently does meaningful and in-depth community outreach services. On a community level they are more involved, but from a business perspective the communication and navigation the committee provides to our clients is invaluable.

Mike was not suggesting Faith-Based is invaluable, he was trying to determine the details and variables associated with the workforce boards because many conferences are conducted with limited funds that needs to be disbursed among the committees – prompting the economies of scale theory. When we coordinate the major conferences and youth activities, he thinks those areas of activities can be merged. He is not attempting to be critical, but thought it was an organizational question to solicit premier thoughts and the best use of the board's mission, which are employment, training, education, and beyond.

Sue believes it would be invaluable to have an industry for future council and information from the industry may be helpful because she has the Youth Corp program, the citizenship, and etcetera. Therefore, the input is greatly needed and would be crucial and indispensable. She is in total agreement with those thoughts. If we could develop a partnership with progressive industries would strengthen our future.
Carolyn speaks from Faith-Based perspective. In her opinion, they have not connected the dots in terms of the value of human capital for economic growth. From a Faith-Based perspective we bring a ground level understanding that could be extremely helpful in terms of how they source, develop and deploy human capital that results in economic growth. She thinks this is our opportunity to think creatively and out of the box of how we can connect dots. A council idea is great and needed. If we do not connect the dots because of numerous functions and initiatives it still become side load activity. That is the perspective she visualize on the topic.

Duwan is in full agreement with the valuable points the committee shared. He thinks every committee should work in cooperation and unison at numerous levels. Everyone must be forward thinking, speaking from the same message and hymn note, and proceeding in a clean smooth circle. We must have a clean system, industries, and individuals that are ready and informed. Coupled with involved, innovative, and earnest businesses that would contribute to the client’s training programs for the most effective way to progress the system. He expects wishes everyone is of the same mindset with the industry future council (to be named), which are the keys for those positions. The President of the North Jersey Chambers is involved with the board. In addition, Ira Stern is heavily involved the apprenticeship and the unions. There are several union leaders on this board that would be welcomed and sincerely excited to work with small and large business owners that would be insightful with providing additional information.

Duwan spoke with Ken Drake from PSEG about joining the board and the committee looks forward to starting the membership as an addition to the board. We recently added Joseph Knight of IHOP to the board and some of his private ventures. He is the proprietor of Cornbread in Essex County and will be more involve with WDB. We have a large strong base of businesses that need to be furnished with the platform and energy to provide the needed input.

Q&A session Duwan posed for additional comments about the new Sub-committees.

The next thought is regarding a new Sub-Committee Council for the justice involved. Duwan is heavily involved with the youth re-entry program and post-incarcerated populations that leads them through the
community and One-Stop operation. WDB made many friends on different levels from probation through parole on the county and state levels. There is a need and desire for a collaborative committee that works with the justice involved in unison and with the Passaic County justice system activities. He is presenting this opportunity to the board because some clients are missing opportunities because they do not have a smooth navigation. Some of the activities are not well thought out to make it easy to assimilate with a comfortable landing spot as customers re-enter society. This Council would provide community programs, mentoring, and navigation into the One-Stop system.

Duwan requested insight from the committee regarding adding a justice involved sub-committee.

Beth requested a clearer explanation of what the committee will be offering.

Duwan explained the committee will be providing more navigation and useful thoughts about working with Passaic County Justice Department that highlights parole, probation, Passaic County jail, Youth Services Division, and the Drug Court with having court representation. This opportunity allows the committee to offer mentoring services and work closer with the community's re-entry program, CUMAC, CDL certification that are adjacent to the justice system. We need the committee to effectively bring fragments from other committees together, to effectively collaborate, and communicate available opportunities to assist clients with employment. As participants proceed to various tables and speak with different individuals there could be a lapse of information that affects cohesive and valuable material that could assist customers. However, this committee would have fluid services that would be instrumental to get individuals back on track. The more support, service, and coordination placed behind these individuals, we will foster a better community. The clients need to be given opportunities, choices, and expand communication as the committee begins the process. As the committee develops a process with the parole department, the community, the jail, and the One-Stop office the customers would be allowed to meet at the table.

Erica thinks this is a wonderful idea that many agencies could support adults and youth's with coordination and interaction with law enforcement, probation, and parole
navigation. To have a task force that coordinates all the available opportunities and services would be a productive and excellent approach with making all resources available.

Gwen also agrees, although she is not well versed with the re-entry program. Nevertheless, she believes anyone looking for those opportunities and resources they will also need structure. The additional committee would be a great resource to have as a part of the community under the justice involve committee. However, a driver would be required to implement structure when referring to clients.

Beth concurs, but she is not certain what is available to the committee to form a council. She is open to someone explaining the resources and opportunities.

Carolyn can visualize the need and how the recommendation correlates to her earlier viewpoint. Nonetheless, the committee needs clarity in defining the outcome and expectations, as it relates to the Faith-Based Committee as an integrator for all of those roles. There may be an opportunity to rethink what we need based on how the committee is structured.

Duwan welcomed noble viewpoints and suggested that the committee consistently re-evaluate and observe the message and outcome. He thinks the Faith-Based committee is more of "me" service type of committee, whereas the Sub-Committee Council is more of an outreach network committee with more information that is evenly shared across the board not as much of what appears in an email. Those high profile client values offers a meeting place with open dialect, dialogue, and opportunity to understand each other and diligently focus on tasks that are involved. When there is a spike in clients there will be some that have trouble establishing their own businesses. With more guidance, assistance, and a platform with a community that can share with. Duwan thinks (54:00) Faith-Based role is similar to a switch-blade committee because of area and multitude of topics they covers. They can assist and be active. Whereas, some of the day-to-day functions with interaction provide clients with solid information and we receive information back to continually improve our services. He thinks if we are overlapping a service somewhere that we can redirect and restructure those services. There is a definite need for a re-entry organization to be bought to the table. When clients hear
justice involve task force they are incline to believe they will be attending a Faith-Based meeting oppose to coming to any other type of meeting. As you begin to improve individuals from day-to-day that is a door you will be able to open.

Beth advised the major opportunity the Executive Committee board has is to align the Sub-Committee Council and she would like to extend her support. The client’s meeting among the committee every year where we can discuss all activities we provide to integrate with each other. She would like to explore a client meeting among the committees to integrate among each other.

Duwan thinks in moving forward, we should have more Executive Committee meetings and the function of the committee is to have chair discussions to determine if there is a segment that needs to be removed from the agenda. In addition, we should assess if the quarterly meetings are enough or decide if we should have meetings in the earlier months. He is open to suggestions to determine the best approach to support committee leaders in their endeavors and achievements.

Beth believes there should be more synergy among the committees oppose to working independently as they have in the past.

Duwan thinks that is a great idea. Our next step is to create an in-depth strategy to implement that function. At the end of the meeting, he would like to have another Executive Committee meeting via phone conference probably April 27th to discuss our current situation. At the time, he suggests that Beth propose an in-depth strategy and share ideas how the team could integrate and work together in the future. Duwan highlighted Beth proposal that we are not anti. He is extremely supportive of integration and the synergy attitude and everyone should think about that for the next meeting. All sub-committee chairs should contemplate postponing meetings and collaborate on techniques to connect with each other on new initiatives and focuses for the future each committee. Additionally, if it is more productive to have a one-on-one discussion or brainstorm session to solicit his thoughts. He has championed “collaboration” as the latest theme of the Executive Committee.

Duwan invited feedback and the committee members did not have any.
Next month action items Duwan will convey to the committee:

- Publish these items via email
- How the Selection-Committee will be organized and structured
- Discuss the Procurement process with legal to ensure all details remain in place
- Review and furnish a template to Procurement contract and review the process

Beth questioned if Duwan would like to review different platforms to conduct our next meeting.

In the event, the County does not have information in the next two weeks, he will review different platforms and get back with the committee. Additionally, he will be working with the County for the upcoming Full Board meeting to have a regular conference meeting because the time is limited to submit the information. There was positive feedback about the two pending Sub-Committees. Duwan requested the Executive Committee to think about concrete names and structure. He will also address this at our next meeting.

Meeting was adjourned at 11:14 AM.

Next Meeting Scheduled: April 27, 2020