

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

7:30 a.m.

December 9, 2016

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

Members Present

Ms. Debra Antol
Ms. Ashley Chambers
Mr. John DeVere
Ms. Marianne Egolf
Mr. Michael Fischetti
Ms. Kristi Gage-Linderman
Mr. Robert Harrop (via conference call)
Ms. Carole Homolash
Mr. William Hornberger
Ms. Joanne Judge (via conference call)
Ms. Peggy Kershner
Mr. Lewis McCoy, Jr.
Mr. Thomas McKeon
Mr. Brian McMahan
Mr. John Morahan
Mr. James Nichols
Ms. Jeannine O'Neill-Rohrbach
Mr. Mark Pinkasavage
Mr. Michael Rowley
Mr. Russell Showers (via conference call)
Ms. Connie Skipper
Mr. Barry Unger
Dr. Anna Weitz
Mr. Chester Winters

Members Absent

Mr. Thomas Brizek
Mr. Modesto Fiume
Mr. Tom Herman
Mr. Gregg Riefenstahl
Ms. Jennie Rodriguez-Priest
Mr. Mark Schlott
Mr. Edward Swoyer
Mr. Pablo Tejada
Ms. Karyn Troxell
Ms. Tammy White

Staff and Guests Present

Mr. Daniel Fogarty	Berks County Workforce Development Board Staff
Mr. Alan Fineman	Berks County Workforce Development Board Staff
Mr. John Moser	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. Terri Lampe	Manufacturers Resource Center

Ms. Judge participated in the meeting via conference call and had previously asked Ms. Gage-Linderman to chair the meeting. The meeting was called to order by Ms. Gage-Linderman at 7:35 a.m. and a quorum was present.

Mr. Fogarty said that there was an error in the September 16, 2016 minutes which would be corrected: Ms. Troxell was listed in the attendance as Mr. Troxell. The corrected minutes of the September 16, 2016 meeting were approved unanimously upon motion by Mr. DeVere and seconded by Mr. Winters.

Ms. Gage-Linderman welcomed Mr. Unger to the Board. She said that Mr. Unger is President and Co-Founder of Vision Mechanical, Inc. and she briefly commented on some highlights from Mr. Unger’s biography.

The Executive Committee report was introduced by Ms. Gage-Linderman who noted that two items on the agenda required Board approval: the Berks WDB/CEO Agreement and the Final PY2016 WIOA Performance Metrics.

Mr. Fogarty explained that the WDB/CEO Agreement is a governance document with guidance issued by the State. The Agreement had been sent to the State in June for review but no additional comments had been received back and the Board was directed to execute the Agreement which is effective July 1, 2016.

Mr. Morahan asked if there is an agreement between the State and the County. Mr. Fineman replied that there is an approved Local Plan and funding agreements. Mr. Fogarty added that there are also Resource Sharing Agreements and Resource Sharing Agreement budgets in place. Mr. Morahan moved to approve the Berks WDB/CEO Agreement and his motion was seconded by Ms. O’Neill-Rohrbach. All members voted in favor of the Agreement.

Mr. Fogarty noted that under the Workforce Investment Act (WIA), the same nine metrics were followed yearly by all Boards across the state. With the advent of the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA), eighteen new metrics are specified that local WDBs will need to negotiate with the State. For PY2016, only eleven need to be negotiated. He said that Berks negotiated levels slightly lower than most areas in Pennsylvania. Labor and Industry Secretary Manderino has assured Boards there would be no sanctions on negative performance vs. measures this year. Answering Ms. O’Neill-Rohrbach’s question as to the length of time these measures are in effect, Mr. Fogarty replied that the measures are in effect for a program year. Mr. Hornberger moved to accept the eleven negotiated measures, Ms. Kershner seconded the motion and all members voted in favor.

Mr. Fogarty added that the Executive Committee had approved the schedule of 2017 Board and Executive Committee meetings which would be advertised publicly in the Reading Eagle in January.

2017 Executive Committee Meetings		2017 Berks WD Board Meetings	
Thursday March 9	8:45 a.m.	Friday March 17	7:30 – 9:00 a.m.
Thursday June 8	8:45 a.m.	Friday June 16	7:30 – 9:00 a.m.
Thursday September 7	11:15 a.m.	Friday September 15	7:30 – 9:00 a.m.
Thursday November 30	8:45 a.m.	Friday December 8	7:30 – 9:00 a.m.

The Finance Committee report was introduced by Ms. Gage-Linderman. Mr. Fogarty explained that the current year's budget had been approved in June, but some revisions were required to be made in September due to the impact of the County's \$128,593 increase in indirect cost allocations for CY2016. Half of the increase (approximately \$64,000) had to be absorbed in the current program year. Mr. DeVere moved to approve the revised budget and the motion was seconded by Mr. Winters. All members voted their approval.

Mr. Fogarty referred to the Discretionary/Competitive Grants Status Update 12/1/16 included in the Board's packet. He said it is anticipated that some additional funds would be forthcoming including an indication from the State that \$200,000 in additional Rapid Response funds would be approved.

Ms. Gage-Linderman introduced the CareerLink Oversight Committee Report explaining that based on a new requirement of the PA Department of Labor and Industry's Bureau of Workforce Development Administration, Workforce Boards have been directed to procure competitively the delivery of WIOA Title I Adult and Dislocated Worker services effective July 1, 2017. It was decided by the Committee that the best way to accomplish this would be to combine the Request for Proposal (RFP) for the Title I Adult and Dislocated Worker services with the One Stop Operator Request for Proposal. The full Board would be asked to vote on the Committee's recommendation to approve the Work Statement.

One of the ramifications of the new structure, Mr. Fogarty added, is that eleven County employees—one manager, six full-time case management and clerical support positions, and four part-time positions who provide Title I Adult and Dislocated Worker services—would have their positions eliminated by July 1, 2017. In addition, Ms. Adamczyk was asked and agreed to stay on as CareerLink Administrator for two years to aid in the transition. The PA CareerLink® Berks County has been administered by a consortium of the State, County, and County Assistance Office required partners. Currently Ms. Adamczyk reports to that consortium. Mr. Fogarty said that the affected County employees would be meeting with a County Human Resource employee and union representative at 10:00 a.m. on December 9 to be informed of this decision. Mr. Fogarty noted that a stipulation was written into the Statement of Work that, if interested, employees whose positions were eliminated would be granted an interview with the entity that was awarded the contract. He said that most other local Boards have already taken a similar action voluntarily over the years. Now the State has directed the Berks WDB to take this action. We expect that Berks will receive notification of our annual allocation of PY2017 Federal Title I funds by the first week in May. There is a stipulation in the RFP that if Berks receives less funding, the contractor will also receive less money. Mr. Fogarty said that the CareerLink Receptionist's position would not be impacted.

Ms. Chambers asked if this direction was the only option. Mr. Fogarty replied affirmatively; the State has been clear on this requirement. Ms. O'Neill-Rohrbach asked whether the Board has control over the contractor. Mr. Fogarty replied that all stipulations are negotiated and written into the contract. Mr. McCoy moved to approve the Statement of Work, Ms. O'Neill-Rohrbach seconded the motion and all members voted their approval.

Ms. Gage-Linderman briefly reviewed dislocated worker activities outlined in the Committee's report.

The State's closing of a number of Unemployment Compensation (UC) Services Centers across Pennsylvania was discussed and the impact this action will have on not only State workers but also on the many additional calls to the four remaining centers from UC applicants. Ms. Adamczyk said that the calls from persons using the dedicated CareerLink UC phone go to the head of the queue, but there is also a challenge since many of the customers have Limited English Proficiency (LEP) and have to wait for interpreters. Mr. Nichols added that the Senate adjourned without approving \$57M in UC funding. He said customers are moving through and things are slowly returning to normal.

Ms. Gage-Linderman reported on the Fall 2016 Job Fair held October 3 at the Crowne Plaza with 888 job seekers in attendance to meet with 83 employers. The Spring 2017 Job Fair is scheduled for May 1, also at the Crowne Plaza.

The *By the Numbers* CareerLink customer activity report for the period of July 2016 through October 2016 which was included in the Board's packets was commented on by Ms. Adamczyk. She said she now has the ability to track individual businesses served. A WorkKeys® summary was included on the second page of the report.

In the absence of Ms. White, Chair of the Youth Committee, Mr. Moser introduced the Committee's report and shared some highlights from that report.

A new \$250,000 Strategic Innovation Grant was awarded for the period January 1, 2017 through June 30, 2018 for a project titled *Expanding Career Pathways to the Middle Class for Our Post-Millennial (Generation Z) Youth*. Partners include Lancaster County Workforce Development Board, Reading Muhlenberg and Technology Center, Berks Career and Technology Center, Lancaster County Career and Technology Center, Reading Area Community College, Harrisburg Area Community College, and Thaddeus Stevens College of Technology.

An out-of-school youth study contract was awarded to Thomas P. Miller & Associates in the amount of \$50,000. The purpose of the study is to better understand the reasons youth are disconnected, and whether these reasons are legitimately keeping youth from attending school or working; to better understand how poor disconnected youth are making ends meet; and to provide a context for the Board concerning disconnected youth in the development of young adult strategies. A proposal has been submitted by the County to the United Way of Berks County for a \$15,000 grant to help offset the study cost.

The PA State Workforce Development Board has announced that \$2.2M will be made available through grants for Business Education Partnership programs. The grant availability process and timeline has not been announced at this time.

A meeting was held on October 14, 2016 and included representatives from many young adult-serving agencies in the County as well as a number of Board members. The purpose of the meeting was to begin a discussion among providers of services to out-of-school youth and young adults to better inform agencies of what the others do and to foster collaboration in an effort to better serve this population.

At its December 1, 2016 meeting, the Youth Committee recommended approval of a one-year renewal for both the ResCare Summer Youth and Goodwill Summer Youth contracts. Mr.

McMahon moved to approve both one-year renewals. Mr. Unger seconded the motion, and all members voted their approval.

The Training and Industry Partnership Committee report was introduced by Mr. DeVere. Mr. Fogarty had provided a review of the Berks Manufacturing Day 2016 activities to the Committee at its November 17, 2016 meeting. Ms. Lampe had updated the Committee on the *What's So Cool About Manufacturing* video contest currently underway in Berks County.

Mr. DeVere said that an update had been provided to the Committee by Mr. Stevenson. The Berks WDB has received \$50,000 in Rapid Response additional funds for incumbent workers in manufacturing in response to Berks County's overall Employment Retention/Layoff Avoidance strategy. The Board was also informed that it has been awarded Advanced Manufacturing Industry Partnership grant funds in the amount of \$166,388. A portion of that grant will be used for administrative and intermediary services performed by WDB staff. Combined with the \$50,000 in Rapid Response funds, the total program budget for manufacturing incumbent worker training will be \$191,450. Sweet Street Desserts, Cambridge-Lee and Brentwood Industries have already applied for training funds.

A presentation was made by Mr. Fogarty to the Committee on the current state of several industry sectors in the Reading MSA and the Committee will continue to monitor industries vital to the County's workforce and economic development health.

Mr. Fogarty had also provided information to the Committee on industry partnership collaborations with the Chester County WDB that will provide regional training and networking opportunities to Berks employers in the IT, Agriculture, Smart Energy and Healthcare related industries.

Mr. Matthew Zinman, Founder and CEO of The Internship Institute, a non-profit organization utilizing federal grant funds to grow an "Internship Seeding" initiative in Berks, Bucks and Montgomery Counties, reviewed their model with the Committee. Committee members were encouraged to correspond directly to Mr. Zinman with comments after the meeting.

An update from Ms. Homolash on the progress of the Working Group on Individuals with Disabilities was provided to the Board. Ms. Homolash, along with Mr. McKeon, has been co-chairing this ad hoc sub-committee of the Policy, Planning and Priorities Committee. She reported that a couple of very productive meetings have already been held and the group is putting together a survey to enlist the assistance of people who help those with disabilities as well as employers. One of the committee members suggested building internships into the model including utilizing some college students to tap into summer internship programs. Mr. McKeon said that only 37% of working age people with disabilities are employed and that there is 63% unemployment rate involved. The PA Department of Labor and Industry is a leader in the national "Employment First" movement and Pennsylvania now has Executive Orders signed by the Governor to promote this strategy. The Administration's next step is to attempt to put Employment First legislation in place. He said Berks County is one of the few Boards focused on this issue and that the group we have is very talented. Mr. McKeon thanked the Board for creating the working group. He said there is a strong business case to be made; it is not a charity.

Mr. Fogarty introduced the Staff and COO Update commenting on the local labor market unemployment rate in October was reported at 5.4% where it has held steady for the past three months.

Referring very briefly to a September 2016 Wall Street Journal article which reflected negatively on Reading and which was discussed at the September 16, 2016 WDB meeting, he said he had reached out to the Board's economic development partners and the Chamber and it was decided by all that it would not be beneficial to issue a response as responses tend to simply raise the online profile of the original article. GREP will continue to take the lead with continued positive messaging regarding the local economy.

The September 2016 Moody's Analytics, Mr. Fogarty added, contains good news about the local economy including: "Reading is powering forward. The private sector is creating jobs at twice the statewide pace." "The giant manufacturing industry is heading in the right direction, and healthcare and professional services are outperforming." "Faster job growth in high wage industries is driving above average gains in average hourly earnings." "The economy will remain in good shape thanks to strength in manufacturing." "Healthcare will slow a bit but will remain a solid short-term performer." The healthcare industry has accounted for one-third of job gains during Greater Reading's economic recovery.

Ms. Gage-Linderman invited members to share market intelligence comments. She began by stating Job Fair participation, especially by employers, has increased.

Ms. Antol said that recruitment has not been easy. Ms. Gage-Linderman added that there are trends of local employers responding with increased wages. Mr. Winters said that some companies are encouraging older workers to retire because aging baby boomers with higher wages can be replaced by lower wage entrants. Mr. Morahan replied that this practice would certainly depend on the job. For example, his hospital system works hard to retain baby boomer technical clinicians who have valuable experience. Ms. Skipper said Twin Valley School District profiles positions against grad requirements. She said she will keep the Board posted about the positive direction being taken.

No public comment was offered.

There being no further business to come before the Board, Ms. O'Neill-Rohrbach moved to adjourn and Ms. Egolf seconded the motion. The meeting was adjourned at 9:00 a.m.

Mr. Swoyer was unable to attend the meeting in person or via conference call, and sent his absentee ballots via email on December 8, 2016 as follows:

YES to all 7 items via absentee ballot.

1. *Approval of Previous Meeting's Minutes*
2. *Approval of Berks WDB/CEO Agreement*
3. *Approval of Final PY2016 WIOA Performance Metrics*
4. *Approval of Adjusted PY2016 Budget*
5. *Request for Proposal (RFP) C-L Operator, Adult/DW.*
6. *Approval of Summer Program Contract Renewals –CY2017 SYEP – ResCare Workforce Services*
7. *Approval of Summer Program Contract Renewals –CY2017 SWEAP – Goodwill Keystone Area.*