

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

**7:30 a.m.**

**September 20, 2019**

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

**Meeting Summary**

**Members Present**

Ms. Debra Antol  
Ms. Jenny Batista  
Ms. Auria Bradley  
Mr. John DeVere  
Ms. Marianne Egolf  
Mr. Michael Fischetti (via conference call)  
Ms. Kristi Gage-Linderman  
Mr. Robert Harrop  
Ms. Carole Homolash  
Ms. Peggy Kershner  
Mr. Lewis McCoy  
Mr. Thomas McKeon  
Mr. Thomas McNelis  
Mr. James Nichols  
Mr. Mark Pinkasavage  
Mr. Michael Rowley  
Mr. Mark Schlott  
Mr. Pablo Tejada (via conference call)  
Ms. Tammy White  
Dr. Anne Zayaitz (via conference call)

**Members Absent**

Ms. Joanne Judge  
Mr. John Morahan  
Mr. Russell Showers  
Mr. Donald Snyder  
Ms. Karyn Troxell  
Mr. Barry Unger

**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. Helen Amole	PA CareerLink® Berks County Administrator
Ms. Amber Columbo	ResCare Young Adult Program Director
Ms. Bridget Wolf	ResCare Regional Director
Ms. Billie Barnes	Bucks County Workforce Development Board Director
Mr. Ruben Pachay	Bureau of Workforce Partnership & Operations Director
Ms. Marybeth Ferguson	BWPO Assistant Regional Director
Ms. Marie Direso	BWPO Workforce Development Supervisor, Staff Development

The meeting was called to order by Ms. Gage-Linderman at 7:30 a.m. A quorum was present.

Ms. Gage-Linderman welcomed two new members to the Board: Ms. Jenny Batista, Human Resources Manager at L&H Signs, Inc. and Mr. Thomas McNelis, President/CEO at Threshold Rehabilitation Services, Inc.

She also welcomed two special guests: Mr. Ruben Pachay, Operations Director of the Bureau of Workforce Partnership & Operations and Ms. Billie Barnes, Director of the Bucks County Workforce Development Board.

Ms. Gage-Linderman stated that because of the need to discuss a minor change to the SE PA Regional Multi-Year Plan through PY2020, she is moving that item from the consent agenda to the Executive Committee discussion later in the meeting. She asked the members if any of the remaining items should be moved from the consent agenda.

Hearing no such requests, Ms. Gage-Linderman asked for a motion to approve the remaining items on the consent agenda:

- Approval of the June 21, 2019 WDB Meeting Minutes
- Approval of Updated Berks County WDB Industry Sector Priorities (2019-2023)
- Approval of Revisions to Berks County WDB Local Multi-year Plan through PY2020
- Approval of WDB/PA CareerLink® Berks County Supportive Services Policy Revision

Mr. DeVere moved to approve the remaining consent agenda items and Ms. Antol seconded the motion and the items were approved.

Ms. Noll commented on the Finance Committee report referring to the final PY2018 budget vs. actual expenditures results through June 30, 2019. Expenditures for the year were at or within budget for all programs and at the same time the requirement to obligate 80% of the annual PY2018 Title I formula funds by June 30, 2019 was met.

The Approved PY2019 Budget Vs. Actual YTD through August 2019 report showed that all PY2019 expenditures are on track to remain within budget.

The PY2019 Discretionary/Competitive Grants Status Update as of September 3, 2019 provided a summary of eleven discretionary grants successfully managed by the WDB. Six of those grants are now closed. Mr. Fogarty commented that the staff is administering three new grants: PA Smart Apprenticeship (I.B.E.W.), PA Smart Industry Partnership (GRCA) and Teacher in the Workplace 2019 (BCIU).

The Executive Committee Report was introduced by Ms. Gage-Linderman with the first item of business being the approval of revisions to the SE PA Regional Multi-Year Plan through PY2020. The Region includes the Local Workforce Development Areas (LWDA) of Berks

County, Bucks County, Chester County, Delaware County, Montgomery County and Philadelphia County. Chester County is the Designated Submitting Local Workforce Development Board of the Regional Plan. Several copies of the regional plan were available to members to review during the meeting. Based on public comment received, all local WDB Directors in SE PA recommended that the following wording be added to paragraph 2 on page 9 of 34: *Apprenticeship programs in Healthcare, Human Services and Early Childhood Education have been developed successfully in the region. Further development of these apprenticeships will provide skilled workers in these areas as they grow.* Mr. Fogarty explained that following approvals by all six local WDBs, the revised SE PA regional plan will be submitted to PA L&I by October 1, 2019 for review and approval.

Mr. Rowley moved to approve the SE PA Regional Multi-Year Plan as revised. Mr. DeVere seconded the motion and all members voted approval.

An updated chart of current committee assignments was included in the handouts as well as a calendar of 2020 Board meetings, Executive Committee and Finance Committee meeting dates.

Mr. Moser reported the WIOA Title Performance Outcomes for the 4<sup>th</sup> Quarter PY2018 Program Year-to-Date were achieved within L&I parameters.

Referring to the PY2018 30% Training Target and 50% Barrier Expenditure Initial Report, Mr. Moser stated that Berks achieved an actual rate of 29.90%. A final report will likely be required by L&I in early October. Despite narrowly missing the PY2018 30% target, Mr. Fogarty commented that the Board increased expenditures on training by \$72,847 over the previous year when a 33% expenditure rate was achieved. He also mentioned that he currently projects comfortably exceeding the 30% target in PY2019. Mr. Moser also pointed out that we once again comfortably exceeded our target that at least 50% of training funds go to assisting individuals with one or more barriers to employment.

An Employer Engagement (“4-legged chair”) draft Statement of Work (SOW) was reviewed with the Executive Committee at its September 12, 2019 meeting. Mr. Rowley and Mr. Showers volunteered to work on a subcommittee to guide the staff in completing a full SOW by early October which would allow the County of Berks to release a formal Request for Proposal (RFP) by the end of November 2019. The Board has budgeted \$50,000 towards the RFP. Mr. Fogarty commented that this timeline would serve to provide the WDB’s Policy, Planning and Priorities Committee adequate time to identify significant findings and follow-up actions to be included the next Multi-Year Local Plan effective July 1, 2021.

Mr. McKeon reported for the Committee on Increasing Opportunities for Individuals with Disabilities commenting that the 2<sup>nd</sup> Annual Employer Symposium was another very successful event with 90 in attendance, a 38% increase over last year’s attendance, and over 20 employers were represented. Financial contributions from Penske, Customers Bank, and Goodwill were received thereby reducing the WDB’s financial commitment to a minimum. County of Berks Commissioner Barnhardt attended, as well as Representatives of Senators Casey and Schwank. A resolution of support from the Board of County Commissioners was received and read. Mr.

McKeon said that Mr. Chris Kaag, Director of IM ABLE, was absolutely inspirational as our keynote speaker. He was also particularly impressed with the employee/employer panel moderated by Board Member Karyn Troxell.

Ms. Homolash added to Mr. McKeon's report stating that the attentiveness of the audience spoke to the success of all the hard work involved. She reported that OVR's Diversity Fair will be held on October 1, 2019 at BCIU and is free to employers. Mr. Fogarty thanked Mr. McKeon, Ms. Homolash and Mr. Moser for all the background work completed towards the Symposium's success. Ms. Gage-Linderman and Mr. McCoy expressed their appreciation from their employer perspective.

Ms. White introduced the Youth Committee Report commenting on the success of the Summer TANF In-School Youth and State/Local Internship Program Paid Work Experience (PWE) programs. The 2019 TANF Summer In-School Youth concluded with a total of ninety-five 16-18-year-old TANF youth placed into 25 hour/week, \$8/hour PWE at hosted worksites. Eighty-eight participants successfully concluded their PWE for a 93% completion rate. Twenty-six employers, some with multiple locations, hosted youth, including five new worksites.

The Berks WDB 2019 State/Local Internship Program (SLIP) Demonstration Project was awarded \$59,602 in funds. Twenty-two 17-24-year-old young adults were determined eligible, invited to an orientation session and placed into eight-week sponsored internships at ten individual worksites that provided a 25-30-hour work week and a wage of \$10.35/hour. The program concluded with twenty-one of the participants successfully completing their internships for a 95% program completion rate. SLIP participants were required to perform goal setting, complete biweekly journal assignments and attend a four-week midway and eight-week recap session.

Also reported was the successful Reading Muhlenberg Career & Technology Center (RMCTC) and Berks Career and Technology Center (BCTC) Summer Internship Program. This program is funded almost entirely from private (non-public) resources including employers and donors. Seventy-two students completed the program (36 from BCTC and 36 from RACC). In addition to being paid by employers for hours worked, students received a \$1,200 bonus for successfully completing program requirements.

Ms. White commented on the Berks Connections/Pretrial Services and PA CareerLink® Berks partnered Youth Reentry Demonstration Project grant proposal under development that will couple high school equivalency academic attainment (GED/ABE) with instructive learning supports as preparation for justice affected young adult's entrance into the BCPS Rebuilding Reentrants & Reading (R3) registered pre-apprenticeship program. The proposal submission is due October 4.

The One Stop Oversight Committee Report was introduced by Ms. Kershner. She referred to the handout listing PA CareerLink® Berks County Services to job seekers and businesses, as well as on-site services offered by Partners. A year-end *By the Numbers* report for PY 2018 (July 2018 – June 2019) was included in the Board's handout. Ms. Kershner referred to the impressive number of 33,871 in foot traffic and 1,977 orientations for the program year.

Mr. Fogarty stated that Ms. Amole has stepped in as CareerLink Administrator since July 1 and has successfully handled several challenging facility issues that arose since she began, including server room AC problems which necessitated that both she and Ms. Columbo come to the building over a weekend to monitor the problem.

This Committee also reviewed and approved the Supportive Services Policy Revision at its July 30, 2019 meeting and recommended approval by the full Board. Approval by the full Board was included in the Consent Agenda items approved earlier in this September 20, 2019 Board meeting.

Mr. DeVere reviewed portions of the Training and Industry Partnership Committee Report.

Following a protocol established at the start of the 2016-2017 school year, the Committee reviewed the 2019-2020 the Occupational Advisory Committee (OAC) member lists for both the Reading Muhlenberg Career & Technology Center (RMCTC) and the Berks Career & Technology Center (BCTC). A quorum being present at the August 29, 2019 committee meeting, a vote was unanimous and both OAC lists were approved for committee endorsement.

Since no bids were received in May for the Apprenticeship Outreach Coordinator Request for Proposals (RFP), outreach activities will instead be conducted by the PA CareerLink® Berks County Business Services Team (BST). The BST will solicit employer feedback as research for a comprehensive report on the status of apprenticeships in the Berks manufacturing sector and report back to the Committee in November.

The WDB approved an award of \$225,000 in PY2019 Title I funds for contracted registered pre-apprenticeship construction industry training services to be provided by Berks Connections/Pretrial Services (BCPS) through May 2020 via their Rebuilding Reentrants & Reading (R3) program.

The Committee was briefed on the development of a collaborative BCPS/PA CareerLink® Youth Reentry Demonstration Project Grant proposal that will couple high school equivalency academic attainment (GED/ABE) with instructive learning supports as preparation for justice affected young adult entrance into the R3 registered pre-apprenticeship program. This proposal submission is due October 4. This project will align itself to the shifting of the Board's focus from in-school to out-of-school youth.

Mr. Fogarty updated members on the Lancaster/Berks Construction Connection Next Generation Industry Partnership (NGIP). The Lancaster WDB is fiscal agent and co-convenor with the ABC, Keystone Chapter. The Partnership convened on July 24 and agreed on action items targeting opportunities for career awareness and talent pipeline growth. Mr. Fogarty commended Mr. Unger's commitment to the NGIP and acknowledged Mr. Unger's committee reassignment to the Training and IP Committee.

Ms. Kershner invited the Board to BCPS's *Connecting with Talent: The Mutual Benefits of Second Chance Employment* to be held on September 26, 2019 from 7:30 a.m. to 10:30 a.m. at

the DoubleTree by Hilton. Keynote and panel discussions with employers and reentry professionals will be led by PA Department of Corrections Secretary John Wetzel. Ms. Kershner stated that Secretary Wetzel is one of the most innovative leaders and influential voices in the field of reentry. Mr. Craig Poole who has supported hiring reentrants will be the closing speaker.

A BCPS Job Fair will also be held on November 4, 2019 at the DoubleTree by Hilton.

Mr. Fogarty referred to updated Berks County Labor Market figures from his COO report charted from May 2010 through June 2019.

Six areas of Board focus for the period covered by the revised plan (PY2017 – PY2020) were initially approved by the WDB on March 17, 2017 and remain in effect to promote economic growth and economic self-sufficiency:

1. Meeting the needs of employers/the retirements of baby boomers
2. Ongoing support for Career and Technical Education Pathways/Technical Academies
3. Local industry sector priorities and strategies
4. Leading local initiatives for disconnected and under-employed young adults
5. Promoting work-based experience tied to Career Pathways for in-school youth (ISY), including Summer Youth Employment Program (SYEP) and internship opportunities
6. Unemployment: increasing employment opportunities for individuals with barriers to employment, including:
  - a. Individuals with disabilities
  - b. Individuals with histories of convictions

Mr. Fogarty said that in preparation for the 2020 Census, the federal government has already hired 25,000 temporary workers across the country. The PA CareerLink® Berks County Business Services Team is assisting local Census management by hosting seven recruitment events through December. The normal facility fee for these important recruitment events has been waived for this very important endeavor.

August 30, 2019 was the 20<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the PA CareerLink® Berks County. A summary of the planning efforts, the partners and the opening ceremony was included in the Board's handouts. Three current WDB members—Lewis McCoy, Jr., John DeVere and Thomas McKeon—were also members of the original Workforce Investment Board. Thank you for your commitment!

Ms. Gage-Linderman opened the meeting for Market Intelligence Discussion.

Referring to current staffing challenges at her medium-size manufacturing facility, Ms. Egolf commented that there may be hundreds of job candidates on job boards like Indeed who are contacted for interviews but often do not respond or show for a scheduled interview. Of those hired for entry-level positions, many also do not show up for work and have multiple excuses for not showing up. It appears that the majority of the younger generation production workers do not have a work ethic. The company's older supervisors are not equipped to manage this generation. She added that for the first time ever her company was not able to produce finished product for

customers in a timely manner. She has hired more people than are needed just to make sure enough bodies are on hand for production. She stressed that her plant's production issues are beyond crisis. "How do we keep these kids", she said. "How can we train our supervisors to effectively communicate with them?", she added. "There is such a degree of immaturity and lack of respect." "Three years ago, the WDB asked if we were in a crisis and I replied yes. We are now way beyond the crisis."

Ms. Egolf's comments opened the floor for intuitive responses from fellow Board members.

Ms. Gage-Linderman commented that many manufacturing supervisors may not be ready to supervise an increasingly diverse workforce.

Ms. Batista commented that perhaps supervisors should be encouraged to shift their attitude, slowing down to listen differently to the younger generation. Trying to understand how people are born and raised is indeed a big task; however, all generations have different experiences. She mentioned the need for supervisors to be trained to work with a diverse workforce. She shared that her company is in Reading and manufactures commercial signs. The employee population are mostly younger folks and mostly living in Reading. The owner of the company was born and raised in the city. Some reentrants have been hired.

Ms. White commented that United Way offers an Emerging Leaders United program for individuals between the ages of 21 and 45 on a volunteer basis. ELU's mission is to connect, educate and empower Emerging Leaders in Berks County through volunteerism and philanthropy.

Ms. Bradley, speaking as an educator, said she has worked with Reading High and other school students to specifically address disrespect and work habits. She said many of these young folks come to school with great social issues. She said sometimes it takes a little bit of empathy and compassion to relate to these issues. She suggested a collaboration with social service agencies and training for employers to help supervisors and managers working with young or reentry populations, so they can better understand the social issues faced by these groups.

Ms. Egolf said she has plans to speak with Ms. Terri Lampe Melcher to investigate opportunities for supervisor instruction in practices to better relate to this culture.

Mr. Fogarty explained that Ms. Lampe Melcher is the Business Development Manager, Berks County, for the Manufacturers Resource Center and is also a member of the Board's Training and Industry Partnership Committee. Mr. Mark Dolinski, Greater Reading Chamber Alliance, could also be a helpful contact. Mr. Dolinski worked on a Manufacturing Training to Careers grant project to provide pre-employment fundamental to job skills training to individuals interested in entering the manufacturing job market. Mr. Fogarty also referred to Penn State Berks and RACC's potential training resources for manufacturing employees needing assistance in this area.

Mr. DeVere commented that he has heard similar conversations over the last ten and even twenty years about generational issues in the workplace.

Mr. Schlott confirmed that the situation is indeed challenging. He said it is really more of a leadership training issue dealing with entry level and seasonal employees. He said usually skilled, older workers stay on the job. His concern is less with the availability of entry-level production employees than with the area's huge shortage of skilled industrial maintenance talent.

Mr. DeVere, referring to the feasibility study completed for the Schmidt Training and Technology Center 10-15 years ago, dealt with how best to get people into the programs. The challenges became more intensified with automation. He said a worker often comes to a business or plant with a mindset. The employer must change that mindset.

Ms. Kershner mentioned that Mr. Craig Poole, Manager of the DoubleTree at Hilton, often hires second chance citizens, homeless persons and others. He makes sure managers are aware of people's challenges. He goes down a line of applicants focusing in their demeanor, takes aside those who are smiling and appearing in good spirits and personally offers them a chance at employment.

She said the R3 programs are great. She said we need people to stay at work. Successful graduates have developed people skills. Coworkers and managers must have engagement.

Ms. Egolf commented that she appreciated the advice. Her company has been working on these programs as well.

Mr. Harrop confirmed that these issues were a struggle. He appreciates the recruitments held at the PA CareerLink® Berks County office and commented that, in recruitment, shift schedules are always a challenge. There are not enough people going through training. RACC and the CTCs offer highly automated skill training. He said the gap is real. Furthermore, East Penn's location in Lyons Station can be a transportation issue for some workers. He added that everyone must think a little bit differently about the problem and how to solve it.

Mr. Fogarty commented that the State tracks hiring and that the latest information the state reported showed that over 9% of our workforce was "new hires" with their employers. He said that there is a lot of churn in hires which correlates with the intelligence shared by employers on the WDB.

There was no public comment

Ms. Gage-Linderman adjourned the meeting at 8:56 a.m.

The next quarterly meeting of the Board will be held at 7:30 a.m. on Friday, December 13, 2019 in Room 100 of the PA CareerLink® Berks County, 1920 Kutztown Road, Reading, PA 19604. Ms. Gage-Linderman will not be in attendance. Mr. Showers will take the Chair position.