WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT BOARD MEETING POCONO COUNTIES WORKFORCE INVESTMENT AREA JUNE 17, 2020

Members Participating in the Conference Call

Frank Revitt WDB Member

Garry Wentz
Susan Rhoads-Procina
Samuel Hellen
Pocono Counties WIA
Pocono Counties WIA
Carbon WIOA/CareerLink
Wayne County Commissioner

Cynthia DeFebo Pike County Workforce Development Agency

Chuck Leonard WDB Member Fred Mutzek WDB Member

Kristi Hammond Monroe WIOA/CareerLink

Marybeth Ferguson WDB Member
Matt Connell WDB Member
Joseph Ruvane WDB Member
William Cockerill WDB Member

Lisa Price BWPO

Kim Miller WDB Member
Terrence Purcell WDB Member

Steven Guccini Pike County Commissioner

Ladora Phillips WDB Member

Donna Sokolowski
Sharon Lavendure
Deborah Harrison
Brian Smith
Joseph Adams
Helene Mancuso

Monroe WIOA/CareerLink
Monroe WIOA/CareerLink
Wayne County Commissioner
Wayne County Commissioner
Wayne/Pike Workforce Alliance

Cindy Matthews WDB Member Anthony Herzog WDB Member Marybeth Wood WDB Member

Pamela Joseph BWPO

Anthony Manzione WDB Member Barbara Dilberti WDB Member

WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT BOARD MEETING POCONO COUNTIES WORKFORCE INVESTMENT AREA

June 17, 2020

CALL TO ORDER

A meeting of the Pocono Counties Workforce Development Board was held on Wednesday, June 17, 2020. The Meeting was conducted by Conference Call. The Meeting was called to order by Chairman Frank Revitt at 1:00 p.m.

The Chair asked if there are any proxy forms from the membership to be entered into the minutes. There were no proxy forms submitted.

REVIEW OF MINUTES

The Minutes of the March 4, 2020, Workforce Development Board Meeting had been emailed to the membership. A motion was made by Joseph Ruvane to approve the Minutes of the March 4, 2020, Workforce Development Board Meeting, seconded by Lori Phillips - Board polled – motion carried.

FINANCIAL REPORT

Susan Rhoads-Procina addressed the Board with a Financial Report. She asked if there were any questions from the Board members. She also noted that she had transferred \$425,000 from the Dislocated Worker Program to the Adult Category, and needed approval from the Board. A motion was made by Charles Leonard and seconded by Joseph Ruvane to approve the transfer as requested. Board Polled – Motion carried. Garry explained that WIOA allows us to transfer funds from one category to another and we had done so because spending under the Adult Fund had been higher, and we had more

Dislocated Worker funding available and wanted to balance out those 2 funding sources going into the next Fiscal Year. Due to the COVID-19 virus situation and shutdown of our CareerLink and affiliate sites for the past quarter, we will not meet our spending goals for the WIOA programs, but since all of the WDA's in PA and the other states are in the same situation, it is likely we will be allowed to carryover our unexpended funds without penalty. On a related note, Garry notified the Board that we have received our WIOA Allocations for Adult, Dislocated Worker, and Youth funds for next year. The Adult and Youth funds were slightly lower, but were offset by higher funding for the Dislocated Worker Program.

Overall, he said our total funding would be approximately \$100,000 more than last year. Susan will be working with the Title I Service Providers as they prepare their budgets for the next Fiscal Year.

PROGRAM UPDATE

Mr. Wentz provided an update regarding the status of CareerLink and affiliate sites and the impact on service delivery due to the COVID-19 virus situation. All of the CareerLink® and affiliate sites have been working with reduced staffing or remotely since mid-March. They have been doing their best to assist customers with UC issues and other services. We're also in communication with the Department of Labor staff with plans to reopen. Even when our offices will be open to the public again, it will be mostly by appointment and limited access to the Computer Resource Areas for job search. The courtesy phones normally available for UC customers at our sites will not be active when we re-open, but there will be some other means for us to assist customers in resolving some of their UC issues. The local offices are coordinating their plans with the local County Commissioners.

EARN UPDATE

Mr. Wentz provided the Board with an update on some issues and potential changes to the EARN Program for the next Fiscal Year. He noted that the Department of Human Services was revising the Guidelines for the program for the next Fiscal Year, but because those changes were rolled out so late, we will likely still be operating under the current Guidelines and budget for the start of the next Fiscal Year. Despite the uncertainty as to when the new guidelines for this program will go into effect, we will have access to significantly more funding to support this program next year. Our current service providers for this program are Carbon County Workforce Training, Pathstone, and Pike County Workforce Development. Garry asked for Board approval to extend the current contracts with these service providers for the next Fiscal Year, from 7/1/20 to 6/30/21. Frank Revitt expressed some concern regarding approving the contract extensions and financial liability for the Board based on the uncertainty of these changes. Garry noted that, because of the uncertainty of the changes to the program for next year, the approval of the extensions and budgets will be based on the current funding levels from last year. He assured the Board we would not be approving contract extensions beyond the funding levels we are sure we can support. Budget negotiations and revisions to the Service Provider contracts will be made once the final budget figures and timeline for the new Guideline changes are finalized by the Department of Human Services. Garry noted that the current training providers are meeting all of the performance and program requirements at this time.

A motion to approve an extension of the current Service Provider contracts for the EARN Program for the next Fiscal Year was made by Ladora Phillips and seconded by Kim Miller – Board polled - Motion carried.

POCONO COUNTIES OPERATOR CONSOTIUM CONTRACT

Mr. Wentz reported that current Operator Consortium is comprised of Northampton Community College, the Carbon Career & Technical Institute, Carbon County Workforce Training, and Monroe County Job Training. The next Fiscal Year will be the final year the current consortium will be eligible for an extension under the terms of the 3-year agreement. We will have to issue an RFP prior to 6/30/2021 to select an Operator next year. The current Operator Consortium is meeting all of the conditions required under our current agreement. He recommended the Board approve an extension for the period from 7/1/20 to 6/30/21 at the current budget. A motion to approve the contract extension was made by Anthony Herzog, and seconded by Ladora Phillips.— Board polled — Motion carried.

POCONO COUNTIES TITLE I SERVICE PROVIDER CONTRACTS

Mr. Wentz reported that current Title I Service Providers are Carbon County

Workforce Training, Monroe County Job Training, Pike County Workforce Development,
and Workforce Wayne, Inc. The next Fiscal Year will be the final year the current Title I

Service Providers will be eligible for an extension under the terms of the 3-year agreement.

We will have to issue an RFP prior to 6/30/2021 to select Title I Service Provider(s) next

year. The current Title I Service Providers are all meeting the performance and service
delivery requirements required under their current agreements. He recommended the

Board approve an extension for the period from 7/1/20 to 6/30/21 and the budgets will be
based on the funding available under next years' allocations. A motion to approve the
contract extensions was made by Matthew Connell, and seconded by Joseph Ruvane.—

Board polled — Motion carried.

MONROE COUNTY YOUTH EMPLOYMENT SERVICES (YES) CONTRACT

Mr. Wentz reported that was likewise requesting an extension of the current contract for the next Fiscal Year for youth program services provided by YES for Monroe County, under the current budget amounts. They have been a longstanding youth services provider for Monroe County and have done an excellent job in expanding the youth service programs offered in Monroe County. A motion to approve the contract extensions was made by Matthew Connell, and seconded by Joseph Ruvane.— Board polled — Motion carried.

REQUESTS FOR PROPOSALS

Garry Wentz informed the Board that the Executive Committee had approved his recommendation regarding the selection of the Resource Guide and Video Production vendors for the Manufacturing Industry Partnership project. Idea Works and Coal Creative were the successful bidders for the services. Garry stated that even though these marketing tools were aimed at supporting and encouraging job seekers to consider employment in Manufacturing, the Resource Guide would be helpful for any businesses that were trying to find resources and assistance in growing and succeeding in their industry. A motion to approve the action by the Executive Committee was made by Charles Leonard and, and seconded by Joseph Ruvane.— Board polled — Motion carried.

APPOINTMENTS/REAPPOINTMENTS

Garry Wentz noted that there are 11 members of the Board whose terms end and would need to be reappointed to the Board for July 1, 2020. He notified the Board that he had received the completed nomination and reappointment letters from the Carbon County

Commissioners for Marybeth Ferguson, Kim Miller, and Barbara Green to serve terms beginning 7/1/20 through 6/30/23. He had received nomination and reappointment letters from the Wayne County Commissioners for Anthony Manzione, Cindy Matthews, and Barbara DiLiberti to serve terms beginning 7/1/20 through 6.30/23. Cynthia DeFebo and Debbie Harrison reported that they anticipated having the nomination and re-appointment letters from the Pike and Monroe County Commissioners before the beginning of the next Fiscal Year.

INDEPENDENT MONITOR CONTRACT

Because of the shutdown of our CareerLink® and affiliate sites, our new monitor Don Langlois has not had an opportunity to start with his responsibilities. As our operations start up in the next month or so, he will begin conducting our monitoring of various subcontractors and other operations.

CAREERLINK REPORTS

The following CareerLink® and affiliate site reports were distributed to the Board members prior to this meeting.



PA CareerLink® Carbon County Overview
2/26/20 through 6/9/20

A. Administrative/Staffing

Due to the current situation with COVID-19 and a statewide shutdown, PA CareerLink Carbon County has been closed to the public since late March. The Department of Labor

and Industry staff have been telecommuting, and Carbon County Workforce Training (Title I) staff has continued to maintain operations both in office and while telecommuting.

The CareerLink continues to work on reopening plans to eventually open again to the public. This includes extensive changes to a number of factors in the operations of the CareerLink, including cleaning, security, office layout and flow, as well as using proper social distancing methods with the staff and customers. Masks will also be required to enter the building. Although we are working to open the CareerLink to the public as soon as possible, as of this report an official date has not been established. BWPO staff will be returning to work at the CareerLink on Monday, 6/15/20 as part of a "soft" reopening, where the office will work to prepare for opening to the public, as well as accept appointments on an as-needed basis.

Carbon County Workforce Training has added a new caseworker to the staff, Heather Brown, who started on 6/8/20. Heather comes to us with extensive administrative and customer services experience with PPL Electric Utilities, and her skillset will be a great asset as she becomes acclimated with position, and eventually replaces Dorinda Getz towards the end of 2020.

B. Services/Programs

With the office still functioning yet closed to the public, Carbon CareerLink staff has continued to effectively support clients with their needs. WIOA Title I staff has continued to offer training funding to individuals, and has moved forward with the Summer Youth employment, and SLIP programs. EARN has started accepting referrals as of 6/8/20, and anticipate an increase in clients following the pandemic.

Title I training services has continued throughout the shutdown, albeit at a slower rate. Unfortunately, in person classes have been suspended for the time being, but virtual or online classes have been able to continue. Once the CareerLink opens to the public and all services are offered, as well as schools offering in person classes again, we expect a continual increase in training application and ITAs.

Summer Youth and State/Local Internship Program (SLIP) is currently accepting employers and student/youth applications. There is a delay in the progress of these programs due to the pandemic shutdown, but there are a number of public and private employers that will be accepting youth employees and interns.

The CareerLink continues to provide assistance to the public both virtually and over the phone. Both Title I and BWPO staff continue to assist individuals that may have questions, concerns, or comments in regard to Unemployment Compensation. If we are unable to assist them, we are able to refer to the proper channel. Both the CareerLink and the state are working to create a process to assist individuals with unemployment compensation questions once the office is open to the public, as the direct phone line will be off until further notice.

Virtual training is offered to clients through EOC, and once the office reopens the possibility of in person training or classes will be explored with necessary changes to the program due to social distancing requirements. The RESEA program is still currently on hold.

Title I Staff is moving forward with the Youth Offender Re-Entry Program, and establishing the program with Pinebrook Family Answers. Due to the pandemic, in-person services at the prison have not commenced, but once the prison is open for services, the program will provide full services described in the RFP.

C. Current LMI/Foot Traffic Levels.

According to PA Workstats, Carbon County's current unemployment rate as of April 2020 is 18.8%, which is 3.7% higher than the state's average, which is at 15.1%. These are both higher than the national average of 13.3%. This is due to temporary and permanent layoffs due to the COVID-19 pandemic and shutdown. The largest industries affected by this are Trade, Transportation, & Utilities at 27.5% of UC Exhaustees, and Manufacturing with 20% of UC Exhaustees.

With the CareerLink being closed to the public, foot traffic is nonexistent. We fully expect a large increase once the site is open to the public. A major increase will be questions in regards to unemployment, as well as summer youth programs and EARN referrals or questions. We expect questions and concerns in regards to unemployment compensation to decline when it is common knowledge that the UC Courtesy Phone is turned off.

The number of WIOA Adult, Dislocated Worker, and Out-of-School Youth customers applying for training assistance through our Individual Training Account or On-the-Job Training services has decreased significantly due to Unemployment and a number of school programs being put on hold. We are seeing a steady increase of participants and employers in the Summer Youth and SLIP programs.

Monroe County Report

To report that Spring 2020 has been a challenging time would be an understatement to say the least. Shortly after the last in person Workforce Development Board meeting in March, the "Monroe County Commissioners determined that as of 5pm on Wednesday, 3/18/20, all non-essential personnel operating under the Commissioners are to be sent home in order to help slow the spread of COVID-19 in Monroe County. Essential personnel, department heads, and elected officials are expected to report to work as usual. We expect this partial shut-down to be effective for approximately 2 weeks, but as this is a fluid situation, personnel may be recalled or sent home as needs change and

arise." As we all now know, the projected 2 weeks stretched into 7, while at the same time, all BWPO State Staff were instructed to immediately start teleworking from home.

The PA CareerLink Monroe County is closed to the public, but services are and have been provided both remotely and with reduction of on-site staff throughout the months of April, May and June. By far the most assistance provided to our customers has been helping them navigate the UC and PUA process during this unprecedented time. Phone calls for Unemployment Compensation jumped to 341 for the month of March, 661 for the month of April and 684 for the month of May. Those are only the calls we tracked for staff working in the CareerLink. Staff working remotely contributed greatly to finding UC solutions for our customers.

There has been constant outreach and numerous Zoom meetings with our partners and providers as we continue to conduct our contracted programs, EARN, Youth Reentry, Summer Youth Employment, SLIP, and WIOA Training.

We continue working on these community events with CareerLink contributions to the following:

- Monroe County Career Pathways Internship Program
- Economic Summit at ESU
- "On-The-Job-Training presentation to the Pocono Mountain Chamber of Commerce Board of Directors
- Meeting with the Director of Services at the Monroe County Correctional Facility to jump start the Youth Reentry program.

We are now earnestly working with the state and county governments to safely reopen our CareerLink to the public while following CDC and Dept. of Health guidelines. We look forward to once again serving our customers in person safely, but will continue to work diligently to provide the services outlined by the teams.

Business Services Team (BST)

The BST team has been able to continue supporting the businesses of the Poconos from home during this pandemic. Services that have been provided are:

- Virtual Job Fairs
- Pandemic Employment Website
- Unemployment Compensation Assistance
- Rapid Response Assistance

II. Career Guidance Team

- The Career Guidance Team has written 115 ITAs so far this program year.
- The Career Foundations and Technology Program at CDE has enrolled 5 new students.
- The EARN program has enrolled 12 new participants in the program; 9 are currently active, with carry overs.
- The Career Guidance Team & YES is currently enrolling 30 ISY/OSY and 3 supervisors for the Summer Youth Employment Program.

III. Customer Information & Resources Team (CIRT)

In April, we started providing virtual seminars to the participants. We are offering 2-3 seminars a week and have been getting around 60 participants a month. Some of the topics are:

- How To Cope With Job Loss
- How To Apply For Government Jobs
- Interview Basics (including virtual interviews)
- Resume Writing
- Careers In The Health Field

Our team is also working on designing new seminars for career planning and other topics. We set up a "GoToMeeting" account to hold all of these workshops. We worked on getting all our computers up to date with cameras and microphones so staff can partake in the necessary online meetings. We are also reaching out to employers and trying to set up on-the-job trainings.

Pike County

Current office operations look much different since last we met. Every effort is made to maintain continuity of services as offered before COVID-19. County staff continues to work full time, with the majority of time spent in assisting individuals with Unemployment Compensation, Pandemic Unemployment Assistance, and Pandemic Emergency Unemployment Assistance. While we are not the Office of Unemployment, we are able to provide information gathered from the UC website and can contact a UC representative on behalf of the claimant to resolve issues. We receive 20 – 40 phone calls each day regarding unemployment.

Additional staff activities and services available:

- Constant Contact newsletters for sharing information and services
- Job search and resume assistance primarily by phone and email. Appointments are made when necessary for staff assistance and computer usage in the CRC.
- Employer services identifying and posting employment opportunities
- Providing information regarding available resources

- Currently accepting applications for training, internship, and summer youth employment
- Virtual Seminars/Workshops provided by staff at the Monroe County CareerLink

Employer Activity: our in-house hiring for March was very successful with 7 employers and 21 jobseekers attending:

- PennDOT
- Hamaspik HomeCare
- Pike County Correctional Facility
- US Census
- Knapp Associates
- Bushkill Inn & Conference Center
- AARP

Summer Programs: we are currently accepting applications and employers who have signed on are beginning to conduct interviews for the State local Internship Program. We still hope to serve the 15 interns planned and budgeted for this summer. Every effort is made to connect these interns to workplaces that align with their career goals. At this time we have one intern who began his internship on May 15th.

We have received very few applications for our traditional Summer Employment and Training Program but we are hopeful that more applicants and worksites will sign up as the county moves from the yellow phase to green. This is supervised paid work experience program. We will work with our community partners to incorporate many of the 14 WIOA Youth elements as appropriate for youth including those who lack work experience.

WIOA Training: we currently have very few training options available with schools being closed due to COVID-19. Many participants who were previously enrolled are continuing through distance learning but some had to be put on hold. Some training providers in areas moving to the green phase are now excepting student enrollments.

- PY 2019 current obligations \$109,745.00
 - \$7,687.50 On-the-Job Training
 - \$102,057.50 Individual Training Accounts

WAYNE COUNTY

1. Guest Services

o Foot Traffic – March 1-13,2020-139

Unemployment Compensation-670 claimants since March 13 to June 8

Partnered with Monroe County to assist in claims processing. Assisted with the PUA and PEUC application process.

- Intensive WIOA Services
 - All WIOA intake forms are available on Wayne Pike Workforce Alliance's website. This allowed our participants and businesses to continue to seek WIOA services. We adopted an electronic signature policy for required documentation.
- Individual Training Account/ On the Job Training- 5 in progress

Due to the closure of the brick and mortar colleges, online training continues with 2 partners. We continue intensive case management with participants and engage in frequent contact. We provide weekly updates to those participants who were unable to continue their training due to the closure of the colleges and provide solace that their status for funding will not be impacted when their training resumes.

- We are in frequent contact with colleges and assist them in transitioning to online.
- Participants are engaging in webinars and other resources that may help them through this time
 of transition My participants have been very appreciative and understanding during this chaotic
 time.

- We developed Virtual Career fair, career exploration and a Re-entry program for returning citizens.
 - On the Job Training-2
 - Youth Programming-Caseload 28
 - o 14 obtained industry certifications since March

2. Employer Services

- o Incumbent Worker Training- YTD-4 contracts (some are still pending)
- On the job training- 2
- We Had 275 encounters with business to assist in onboarding, UC paperwork, Paid Work Experience, furloughs and reopen planning including on the Job training and incumbent worker training programs through WIOA.

3. Other Workforce Activity (Staff & Participants)

- Seamless continuing participation with juvenile justice system.
- Participation in Virtual Career Fairs
- Virtual Career presentations with Wayne Highlands students
- Recorded a "Career Exploration Corner "with EOC. On LinkedIn Facebook and Instagram
- Career Coach Certification obtained Caryn Decker
- Staff continues to prepare for CWDP certification
- Returning Citizens training with County jail and SCI Waymart Seamless transition to an online platform for use on an individual basis. Classes were cancelled, but service continues
- Numerous webinars and participation in Unemployment, Department of Labor and PA Chambers of Commerce presentation
- Wayne Tomorrow presentations
- Earned Youth Worker Certification

Welfare Funded Programs: This program year we have had 13 EARN clients. Seven have completed the job search phase of the program and have found employment. 5 are in the retention portion of the program; we continue to work with them and track their retention. Additionally; we have 4 Work Ready clients – 1 dropped out of program, 3 are working. Clients in both programs require intensive case management as they prepare to enter employment and become self-reliant.

Terrence Purcell asked about the status of job seekers who were still having problems receiving Unemployment Compensation due to the large number of people laid off because of the Health Emergency situation. Garry said that he honestly felt because of the scale of the numbers filing UC claims, along with the need for Harrisburg to create

another UC system for the Self-Employed UC claimants, it might take close to 6 months for the UC staff working on these claims to work through all the backlog and resolve the problems for customers. Most of the staff still working in our sites have been trying to assist customers calling with problems related to UC, and we would likely be screening customers who come to our sites once we're open to the public, since we will have limited ability to assist them with this issue. Our area's UC rate was likely between 16 to 18% at its peak. He noted that Harrisburg has added new UC staff, called back recently retired staff, and assigned UC work to many Department of Labor staff that had UC experience but now work in the CareerLinks or other Departments. Marybeth Ferguson also explained the efforts that Harrisburg was taking to try to resolve the problems with the UC system. There were no questions by the members in regards to these reports.

POLICY UPDATES

Garry Wentz reviewed the new Apprenticeship Policy, and requested approval of changes to our existing OJT Policy, and the Procurement/Property Management Policy. The recommended policy changes had been sent to all Board members prior to the meeting for their review. The Apprenticeship Policy would be new. Workforce Wayne had requested we establish a policy to assist employers who might have or be interested in setting up registered apprenticeship positions with their companies and had provided a draft policy for consideration. The Department of Labor has been promoting the use of apprenticeships as a training model for businesses in PA. Apprenticeship Training assistance is an eligible service under WIOA. This policy is consistent with our ITA and OJT Policy, establishes a cap of \$8,000.00, and allows for WIOA funds to support apprenticeships for eligible job seekers through OJT, ITA or a combination of both

services. The policy is attached.



A Motion was made by Marybeth Wood to approve the Apprenticeship Policy, and was seconded by Cynthia Matthews. Board polled-Motion carried.

Garry Wentz requested approval for 2 changes to our current OJT Policy. While developing the Apprenticeship Policy, it was noted that the eligible wage under our current OJT Policy hadn't been updated for over 10 years. Garry requested that the Board approve a recommendation to set the OJT limit at \$8,000.00 per position, and the eligible wage for an OJT position to \$10.50/hr. The policy is attached.



A motion to approve the changes was made by Ladora Phillips and seconded by Fred Mutzek. Board polled- Motion carried.

The last policy discussed was a request to approve some minor changes to our Procurement/Property Management Policy. In reviewing this policy Garry found there was some inconsistencies and confusing language in our current policy. The changes he requested would eliminate these issues and better describe the Subcontractors' responsibilities regarding procurement and property management responsibilities. The policy is attached.



A motion to approve the changes to the policy was made by Charles Leonard, and seconded by Joseph Ruvane. Board polled-Motion carried.

Other Business

Garry Wentz discussed a request from Joseph Ruvane, that we discuss a topic that's come up often in the past, the issue of what resources are available to support training in the Hospitality Industry. Garry said it's been a subject that the Board has discussed often in the past, but it warrants more time than we can commit to in our quarterly meetings. He planned to ask for members of the Board and the CareerLink offices to participate in an Ad-hoc task group meeting or meetings to review what options we currently have, and hopefully identify other resources that might be of assistance in addressing this need. Garry will set up a Zoom meeting for interested individuals as soon as possible to start this conversation and give it the time it deserves. Matt Connell is interested in participating to explain how Northampton Community College may assist this industry. He asked that the meeting be set up prior to July if possible.

Another item that Garry brought up for further consideration was the request from Workforce Wayne to consider a policy regarding Youth Incentives. A draft of the policy was sent out to Board members prior to today's meeting. Garry indicated that the other 3 County Directors asked that the matter be tabled at this time. They believe a meeting with all 4 County CareerLink and affiliate sites to discuss this topic would be helpful. They will then discuss it with their local Board members and Commissioners with a plan to make recommendations prior to the September Board Meeting.

ADJOURNMENT

The next meeting will take place Wednesday, September 2, 2020, in Wayne County,

with a location to be determined. With no other Business to be brought before the Board, a motion was made by Anthony Herzog to adjourn, and seconded by Charles Leonard.

Board polled-Motion carried. The meeting ended at 2:05 P.M.