

## Workforce Alliance Board Meeting Minutes

January 23, 2020

Board Members: Larry McHugh, Joe Mirra, Chris Brown, Chris Cozzi, Robin Golden, Stephanie Wolfe, Ed Dooling, Angel Rivera, Mary Burgard, Tiana Ocasio, Richard Borer, David Reitz, Bonita Grubbs, Howard Hill, Marcia LaFemina, Toni Walker, Maria Campos Harlow, Marc Nadeau, Serena Neal-SanJurjo

Invitees: Patrick Flaherty from CT DOL Economist; New Haven Mayor Justin Elicker, Durham 1<sup>st</sup> Selectman Laura Francis, Earl Foster, Mike Dunne, Pamela Tonello, LuAnn Gallichio, Kevin Alvarez, Jim Misenti, Julie Roebelen, Deb Holman, Chris Marinaro, Lisa Sementilli, Wayne Vilaitis, Marcy Reed, Erika Lynch

Staff: Bill Villano, S. Vamathevan, Josie Vazquez, Earl Foster, Ann Harrison, Chris Reardon, Kymbel Branch

### **Call to Order**

The meeting was called to order at 8:05 a.m. Ms. Golden asked all board members to introduce themselves.

### **Regional & State Economy Presentation by Patrick Flaherty, Economist CTDOL**

Mr. Villano introduced Patrick Flaherty, Economist CTDOL for a presentation on the regional and state economy. Mr. Flaherty indicated that the economy right now is strong and job openings right now are high. Assuming the U.S. economy avoids a recession in 2020, the Connecticut's economy will continue to grow. US labor force projections indicate that 2 million people will be aged 75 and over and those over 55 have doubled since 1990. He added that the number of workers aged 55 and over increased 37% in the last ten year period. The portion of workers aged 55 and over increased from less than 20% to more than 25% of all workers. The number of workers aged 25 to 54 declined as the last of the baby boom aged into the 55 and over group while the number under age 25 declined due to lower birthrates in recent decades and a drop in labor force participation for those aged 16 to 18. Looking at other demographic factors, in each of the past two decades, the number of males employed has decreased slightly while the number of females increased a bit. By 2017 the number of females employed slightly outnumbered the number of males employed in private sector payroll jobs. At the same time, the number of white and not Hispanic or Latino workers has declined while all other groups have seen increases with Black or African-American employment up 18% and employment of Hispanic or Latino workers up 28% in the ten years from 2007 to 2017.

Mr. Flaherty then discussed employment projections. Healthcare employment is growing, driven by increases in ambulatory care and home healthcare services. Transportation and warehousing will also increase as online shopping continues to grow. Manufacturing, which has been growing for the past three years, will continue to expand; IT jobs have grown slowly since recession

started. Mr. Flaherty showed a few slides on labor shortages; (CT vs USA) adding that the population 20-24 years old is moving from CT. He added that those that are moving out from CT will make more money and those moving into CT from other states will make less money. Mr. Flaherty stated that manufacturing positions are stable right now. After his presentation there were some questions regarding jobs and how to retain those jobs in CT.

In conclusion, Mr. Flaherty indicated that over the ten-year period from 2007 to 2017, Connecticut employment gains have been concentrated in firms with 500 or more employees. The workforce is aging, employment projections indicate that the demographic shifts will continue in coming years. Employment growth in Connecticut will require workers to fill new jobs and replace workers who are leaving the workforce due to retirement. This is perhaps the largest challenge facing firms of all sizes. Other measures of total private employment in Connecticut indicate that the expansion described has continued to add private sector jobs through 2018 and into 2019.

Mr. Villano introduced Mayor Elicker to the board, Mayor Elicker said that he is looking forward to working with WA board and added that one of his priorities is jobs in New Haven and is hoping that we all can work together in this issue.

### **Approval of Minutes**

The minutes from the previous meeting were presented, with no changes/comments, Mr. Mirra moved the motion to accept them, Ms. Ocasio seconded. All present approved unanimously.

### **CT Recovers – Statewide Opioid Employment and Recovery Support**

Mr. Villano reported that CT was just awarded a USDOL Opioid Grant. Our share of this grant will serve about 80 individuals who have been affected by the opioid epidemic, either through their own addiction or the addiction of a friend or family member. WA intends to target individuals who have been incarcerated at the Whalley Avenue Correctional Facility, as a continuation of their LEAP Program there. Mr. Villano indicated that although this is a two-year project, funds have initially been appropriated for one-year only. Remaining funds will be distributed based on successful local subcontractor performance in the initial year. Amount of award for our Board is \$283,911. Right now we are in the hiring process of two individuals. The grant will support a dedicated job developer, who will place individuals into grant-funded transitional employment, direct job placement or on the job training, including participant support. Mr. McHugh indicated that they are running a CT Recovery program and about 74 individuals are in the program and eight individuals have gotten jobs to date. He noted that it is a great program but very difficult. Mr. McHugh suggested hiring a job coach to be part of the program. Ms. Reardon added that we will be working with a new facility, Retreat Premier which is a detox unit with 88 beds. Mr. Borer asked if there are any other agencies working with WA; Mr. Villano said that right now we have been meeting with other partners.

## **2018-2019 Customer Service Summary**

Mr. Villano included a copy of a Customer Service Summary that shows total number of individuals that received services in the past year that includes the subset of New Haven residents served. There was over 16,000 unduplicated throughout our 4 AJCs with about 6,050, or 36.5 percent from the New Haven area. Mr. Villano added that these numbers have been consistent in the last few years.

## **Expense Report**

Mr. Villano presented the expense report and noted that most expenses were as expected but pointed out line items that showed footnotes that explained variations in those line items. The Tech Hire Program was due to expire but was granted a 6 month no cost extension. The HCAP funding period just started in December and the CT Recovers program has not yet started. The OJT and ITA line items are usually lagging because of delays in invoicing submissions are also a little lower than we have budgeted for.

## **Other Business**

Mr. Villano indicated that Rosa DeLauro came to the New Haven AJC this week to hear first-hand how federal funding for employment and training impacts lives in South Central CT. Mr. Reitz asked what programs have increased or decreased; Bill said that a few competitive grants just expired and the H1B funds that have been used for these types of programs have been diverted for other uses. Our overall funding dropped about \$1 million but the manufacturing grant that was just awarded has brought us close to level funding for the fiscal year. Mr. Villano also noted that the CT DOL issued an RFP for \$10m in additional pipeline funding issued by the Bond Commission. We should hear within a month if we receive any funding. Ms. Walker added that she's been working on transportation issues which is a big problem for people that are looking for employment.

Mr. Villano included an article of the Seasons of New Haven Magazine that talks about manufacturing programs.

With no other business the meeting adjourned on 9:18 am. Ms. Golden noted that this was a good meeting.

Submitted by,

Josie B Vázquez  
Executive Assistant