



**MINUTES OF THE MONTGOMERY COUNTY  
WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT BOARD  
MONTCOWORKS  
FULL BOARD MEETING**

**January 14, 2022  
9:00 a.m. – 11:00 a.m.**

A meeting of the Montgomery County Workforce Development Board, MontcoWorks, was held virtually on Friday, January 14, 2022 via WebEx. Members on the call included Ms. Suzanne Ryan, Chair; Ms. Dorothy Miller, Vice-Chair; Ms. Peggy Lee Clark, Secretary; Mr. Kyle Longacre, Youth Committee Chair; Ms. Susan Clauser, Training and Performance Committee Chair; Mr. Michael Coakley, Finance Committee Chair; Ms. Pamela Kelly, Local Management Committee Chair; Mr. Paul Pappasergi, Ms. Marybeth Ferguson, Ms. Catherine Judge Cardillo, Ms. Megan Tomlinson, Ms. Shanae Stallworth, Mr. Emad Abdanelby, Mr. Kim Solomon, Mr. Jason Acree, Ms. Kelly Canally, Ms. Rochelle Culbreath (via proxy) and Dr. Victoria Bastecki-Perez (via proxy).

Others in attendance included Ms. Jennifer Butler, Executive Director; Ms. Josette Walton, Executive Assistant; Mr. David Zellers, Commerce Director; Ms. Jane Stein, Performance Officer; Ms. Kathleen Candelore, Training & Education Coordinator; Ms. Melinda Onchitta, Projects Coordinator; Ms. Tamara Hordijenko, Fiscal Compliance Officer; Ms. Terri Jones, Support Services Coordinator; Mr. Craig Cuthbert, Montgomery County PA CareerLink® Program Manager; Ms. Jean Andrews, Rapid Response; Ms. Adina Atayar, Regional Apprenticeship Coordinator; Ms. Tara Loew, Director, Apprenticeship and Training Office; Brenda Dean, Montgomery County Assistance Office, Bernadette Debias, Montgomery County Community College and John Tkach, Director, Keystone Development Partnership.

Ms. Butler noted that we have proxy votes from Rochelle Culbreath and Dr. Victoria Bastecki-Perez. Dr. Victoria Bastecki-Perez later joined the meeting after the votes on action items.

The first item on the agenda was the approval of minutes from October 22, 2021. Ms. Ryan asked for a motion to approve the minutes. Ms. Miller made the motion, Mr. Longacre seconded the motion, all members were in favor and none opposed.

Then next item on the agenda was the Apprenticeship Overview. Ms. Butler introduced the guest speakers. Ms. Loew introduced herself as the Director of Apprenticeship and Training since November 2020 and gave a brief background on herself. Ms. Loew was the former Director of Operation at the PA CareerLink® in Lancaster County. The Apprenticeship and Training Office of the Pennsylvania Department of Labor and Industry oversees all of the policy and program development in the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania related to registered apprenticeship and pre-apprenticeship. Pennsylvania is known as a “State Apprenticeship agency” which means that the Office of

Apprenticeship and Training acts as an arm of the Federal Office of Apprenticeship and they are responsible for overseeing all Pennsylvania specific registration processes and provide support to the programs as well as hold them accountable.

After a detailed overview, Ms. Loew introduced Mr. Tkach. Mr. Tkach shared that he is the Executive Director of the Keystone Development Partnership. Mr. Tkach said that they are a workforce intermediary. They have contracts through the US Department of Labor and The Apprenticeship and Training Office that help employers with registered apprenticeship programs. They also have contract with local workforce development boards and help them manage their industry partnerships. Ms. Loew gave an overview of registered apprenticeship explaining that it is a way for employers to invest in their workforce through an employer driven, earn while you learn, structured training model. Components of apprenticeship include Paid Work, On-the-Job Training, classroom setting education designed to improve job skills, mentorship and credentials. Registered apprenticeship closes the skills gap and creates a safer workplace which results in highly skilled employees and allows people to earn a salary while they work. Apprenticeship is a career versus a job with wage increases as skills grow.

Next, Mr. Tkach talked about the return on investment and employee retention. Mr. Tkach explained that ninety four percent of apprentices stay with the employer who trained them. Their return on investment is \$1.47 on every \$1.00 invested.

Ms. Loew shared that there is a lot of funding to support this initiative. Through PA Smart, Governor Wolf has already distributed 28 million dollars through the apprenticeship and training office. There is additional support through "Back to Work PA". The Biden Administration has reaffirmed their commitment to registered apprenticeship and there is also WIOA funds available.

Next Ms. Loew introduced Adina Tayar, the new Apprenticeship Coordinator. Ms. Tayar explained that an Apprenticeship Coordinator works deep within the County to increase diversity in apprenticeship participation. They work with stakeholders in Montgomery and Bucks Counties educating them in conjunction with the State. They also work with secondary and post-secondary schools to talk to them and explain what registered apprenticeship is. The Apprenticeship Coordinator connects local training providers to the PA CareerLink®, Intermediaries and Workforce Boards.

Ms. Ryan thanked the presenters and asked the Board if there were any questions. Mr. Acree stated that he is with IBEW 126 and they have an apprenticeship program in place that is a well-oiled machine. Mr. Acree said that if anyone has any questions, or is wondering how things work, to feel free to give them a call and they would be happy to assist.

The next item on the agenda was Resolution 01-01-22 Modification of MCIU Budget. Ms. Butler explained that this is a modification to the MCIU budget for MontcoWorks Now Youth and Young Adult Programming. The Department of Labor and Industry designated \$80,000.00 for the development of business education partnerships. This would allow the MCIU to use some of the funding to train some

teachers in Montgomery County around cooperative education. This partnership has already been established with Temple University.

Ms. Ryan asked for a motion to approve the resolution. Ms. Judge-Cardillo made the motion, Ms. Miller seconded the motion, all members were in favor and none opposed.

The next item on the agenda was the approval of RFP 21-81 MontcoWorks Supplementary Content-Training and Career Development- Selection of Providers. Ms. Butler thanked the board members that volunteered to review the proposals. We received five responses from five entities. Based on the scores from the review committee, the recommendation is to award Full Circle for projects specific to the Montgomery County Correctional Facility and also a Healthcare Credentialing Cohort; Variety for both employer and workforce staff training specific to working with job seekers and candidates with disabilities and EDSI for the purpose of purchasing subscriptions that will add value to their Title I Service delivery. Ms. Butler said the final two scored very low and unless anyone has any concerns, these are the recommendations of the review committee. Ms. Stallworth said that she knew that Variety was submitting a proposal and she is excited because it will help with bridging the gap with individuals with disabilities. Ms. Ryan said that she has come to learn a lot about Variety and she believes they do great work.

Ms. Ryan ask for a motion to accept the recommendations of the review committee. Ms. Stallworth made the motion, Ms. Cardillo seconded the motion, all members were in favor and none opposed.

The next item on the agenda was the Executive Director's Report. Ms. Butler stated that in the interest of time she will allow the Board to review the report at their convenience but did want to highlight a couple of items. The Manufacturing Labor Demand Study that was conducted in partnership with DVIRC is completed and they are looking to report out through two presentations. The presentations will be held on January 21, 2022 and January 25, 2022 at 12:00 p.m. There will be a presentation on the Opportunity Youth Study that was conducted for all of Southeast PA through Delaware County. Ms. Butler said that she does not have the dates for that presentation at the moment but if anyone is interested to let her know and she will send out the link when she has the date. Ms. Butler also shared that Nepris is now live and available for employers and educators to sign up.

Next Ms. Butler talked about the re-envisioning of ManuFest. Ms. Butler shared some tentative logo's that were discussed during the Executive Committee meeting with the concept "Careers of Tomorrow". Careers of Tomorrow would be a series of virtual or in-person expos to inform students about other occupations and industries.

The next item on the agenda was the PA CareerLink® Montgomery County Update. Mr. Cuthbert gave the update noting that they are currently offering limited in-person services due to the current status of Covid-19. The PA CareerLink® has moved from the WebEx platform to Go To Meeting and the feedback from Full Circle Computing and the customers has been positive. The Customer Satisfaction surveys are

positive.

Next Mr. Cuthbert said that the PA CareerLink® received funding from the Department of Labor and Industry to provide additional furniture upgrades and make them more accessible for those with needs. The furniture installations have started and they are planning to update classrooms and some ADA required furniture installations will be installed.

Next Mr. Cuthbert shared that they are expanding some of their services to Pottstown and there will be a staff member attending the YWCA in Pottstown on a monthly basis. Ms. Clauser asked if the start date of the staff person was put on hold due to the rise in COVID-19 cases. Mr. Cuthbert said that they were looking at the first week of February, but they are monitoring the situation. They operate this location as they do the PA CareerLink® office by appointment only.

The next item on the agenda was the Oversight Report. Ms. Butler shared with the Board that we were advised by the Program Monitor at the Department of Labor and Industry to make the Oversight report an agenda item to ensure that the Board is aware that the report is in the packet. The Oversight report details our ongoing oversight of all providers and OJT employers. Ms. Butler stated that if there should be any issues, those matters would be brought to the Board and discussed at the meetings.

The next item on the agenda was the Finance Committee Report. Mr. Coakley gave the update noting that there was approximately \$695,000.00 remaining from PY21 Dislocated Workers funds. With the projects that were approved today, there is \$490,000.00 left to expend by June 30, 2022. Mr. Coakley stated that it is the Finance Committee's recommendation that we do another round of RFP's to come up with some projects to expend the funds. Ms. Butler stated that the review committee believes that the reason there were not as many responses to the RFP was because the description in which the funds could be used for may have been too vague. We would reissue the RFP as two RFPs. One would focus on Adult and Dislocated Worker and the other would focus on more extraordinary ideas. Ms. Stallworth asked if there was a way that the recipients could increase their outcomes and add funds to their contract for this RFP. Ms. Butler said that it is her understanding under the purchasing policy in Montgomery County, that we would not be able to do that. We have to award the contract amounts for what they are but we could go to them and tell them to feel free to resubmit another project for this April if they have any other project ideas. After some discussion, Ms. Ryan asked if there are funds available to assist providers with grant writing. Ms. Butler said that she will check with purchasing to see if there is some type of assistance we could offer to an entity to continue to do the work they do.

The next item on the agenda was the Youth Committee Update. Mr. Longacre gave the update noting that the Committee last met on November 12, 2022 with strong participation. The Committee discussed the labor shortages and how they can get disengaged youth into those positions. The Montgomery County Community College continues to look for more partnerships with the high schools and career and technical centers to find ways to use early college grant money to support dual enrollment opportunities. We continue to work to expand in apprenticeship having conversations with industrial

manufacturing technicians and other companies related to those type of opportunities.

Next, Mr. Longacre gave partner updates. ACLAMO staff continue to provide after school training for after school opportunities; Open Link continues to provide an all literacy training and Hiset testing and Keystone shared their strong completion rates of participants they are seeing.

The next item on the agenda was the Training and Performance Update. Ms. Clauser gave the training update. The Committee last met on November 16, 2022. Ms. Clauser shared some highlights from the minutes noting that Kathleen Candelore reported that there are 21 State approved courses and four Board approved courses on the Eligible Training Provider List. This is down from the prior year of 55 State approved courses. 56 ETG participants have been enrolled in either long- term training, associate degree programs or OJT programs. Adina Tayar was introduced as the new Regional Apprenticeship Coordinator for Bucks and Montgomery County. Paul Pappasergi said that he is enjoying participating as a member of the Racial Equity Learning Committee for Bucks and Montgomery Counties. He feels the meetings are very informative and believe they will be helpful to the local community. Keystone Opportunity Center is at a 65% increase in enrollment. The Montgomery County Community college is developing an apprenticeship program for a Industrial Manufacturing Technician position. This will be a two year learn and earn model. The Pottstown Area Industrial Development (PAID) has new branding. They are now the Pottstown Area Economic Development (PAED). The next meeting will be held on February 15, 2022.

Next Ms. Stein gave the performance updates. The Center for Workforce Information and Analysis informed us that the Common Measures as previously reported will be changing for the upcoming program year. They will only look at entered employment second quarter after exit and those related wages. All other common measures will be considered indicators for now.

Next Ms. Stein shared that we have returned to a pre-pandemic unemployment rate. We are 3.6% preliminarily for November 2021. We have noted that there are 20,000 less individuals in the labor force than there were two years ago. Ms. Stein stated that they are trying to establish where those 20,000 employees are and if they plan to return. Ms. Stein stated that we are using Covid National Dislocated Worker grant funding to have two dislocated workers from the PA CareerLink® calling to survey individuals that have applied for unemployment since March 2020. Ms. Stein said that early results from the study have shown 32% percent answered the phone for the first week, 64% of those that answered wanted to do the survey and 35% of those wanting to do the survey were also interested in a PA CareerLink® Career Coach for re-employment services. Since the first week, over 100 people who did not know about our services will now have the opportunity to get support reaching their training and employment goals and ultimately get them back into the workforce.

The next item on the agenda is the Local Management Committee Update. Ms. Kelly gave an overview of the meeting that was held on November 3, 2021. The guest presenter for the meeting was David Zellers, Director of Commerce. Mr. Zellers shared information about the newly established Recovery Office. The Employer Spotlight was with Einstein Medical Center, Montgomery. There were two representatives from Einstein who shared information about the new merger with Jefferson Health. They also shared that the pandemic has added stress and burnout to their employees and that they are providing various resources to help them get through this time. They are currently looking for bilingual employees and they are offering cultural sensitivity training to their current employees. Ms. Kelly noted

that Einstein has a relationship with the PA CareerLink® where their current job openings are available on the website.

Next, Ms. Kelly shared New Business that Jennifer Butler shared during the meeting. There was discussion about the need to create a way to inform all job seekers of the various program options through our different partners. The idea of putting together a collaborative video was talked about and they will continue to have talks about that possibility.

The next meeting is scheduled on February 9, 2022.

The next item on the agenda was Old and New Business. Dr. Bastecki-Perez shared that the Montgomery County Community College continues to have the Montco Recovery Tuition Assistance Program. Dr. Bastecki-Perez reminded the Board that this program is to provide last dollar education dollars for Certificate and Associate Degrees for anyone who had lost employment during the pandemic.

Mr. Longacre shared that the Community College received \$62,000.00 in WedNet funding to support companies for contracted training services.

Ms. Ms. Butler introduce Kaylyn Langdon as the new Business Assistance Coordinator for the Commerce Department.

Ms. Ryan asked if there was any additional business. There being none, Ms. Ryan asked for a motion to adjourn the meeting. Ms. Miller made the motion, Dr. Bastecki-Perez seconded the motion, all members were in favor and none opposed.

The meeting was adjourned at 10:07.

Respectfully submitted,

*Peggy Lee-Clark*

Peggy Lee-Clark  
Secretary