



## County of Mercer Workforce Development Board

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Christian Estevez  
WDB Director

Dan Benson  
County Executive

Keith Secrest  
Chairperson

### WDB Quarterly Committee ♦ Chairperson: Keith Secrest

January 28, 2024 12:00 p.m. ♦ Zoom Meeting Minutes

#### In Attendance:

**Keith Secrest**, Chair (Kinetics Industries); **Carlos Hendricks** (Outreach); **Melissa Tenzer** (CEO Dress for Success); **Lesley Jack** (DVRs); **Latoya Wilson** (WCRC); **Damaris Cruz** (NJDOLE WIOA); **Anthony Carabelli** (Economic Development); **Pat Shump** (DOL); **Scott Needham** (Princeton Air); **Matthew Carey** (MCTS); **Dave Nash** (MCTS); **Terrell McCain** (DOL); **Dawn Paquette** (NJM); **Kathy Fiery** (Healthcare); **Umesh Naik** (DOL); **Scott Elliot** (PCIL); **Katherine Kish** (Einstein's Alley)

**WDB & MCOTES Staff:** Christian Estevez, Shanelle Gooch, Frank Stillitano, Chiara Tramo, Jamelette Negron, Eddie Roberts, Susan Rauscher, John Raines

#### Welcome & Introductions

Keith Secrest opened the meeting at 12:04a.m. and welcomed the group.

#### Approval of October 29, 2024 Meeting Minutes

Keith made the motion to approve; Carlos approved and Katherine seconded the motion. There were no oppositions and the motion to approve the minutes was approved.

#### MCTS/Vocational

- Mercer County and Middlesex County were awarded to split a \$375,000.00 grant for an AI Education Innovation program in robotics
- Matthew Carey will oversee the construction of the hydroponics lab, ensured to open by September 2025
- There will be an upcoming job fair on March 26, 2025 at Sypek from 6:00 p.m. to 8:00 p.m.
  - o Will connect employers with entry-level talent
  - o Adult evening career fair
  - o Future Fridays for high school students
  - o Magic Mondays
  - o Tours of adult evening school classes

#### Economic Development

- 2 economic development programs launched this January 2025
  - o A revitalizing grow grant program for façade and signage improvements
  - o Business builder rebate grant program for reimbursing eligible business expenses

- Concerns raised regarding immigration issues particularly E-Verify and potential ICE raids
  - o Department of Human Services will most likely handle these matters
  - o Possible procedure and policy may be created to help handle these issues

### **Advanced Manufacturing**

- Scott Needham will send out flyer for Advanced Manufacturing Lab event to the group

### **Disability & Healthcare**

- Kathy expressed the need for hospital representation on the committee amid a nurse shortage
- The resurgence of LPN's
- Challenges regarding CNA training costs
- Fixes at One Stop for handicapped customers will be ensured
- Both disabilities and healthcare boards gained new people on their committee

### **YIC**

- Summer Youth Employment Program had major success
  - o 161 youth and 35 worksites

### **WDB Issues/Updates**

- Draft policy to enhance follow-up services for WIOA funded youth programs
- Discussed amendments to the bylaws; suggesting a limit of 31 board members
- Single vote for amendments unless significant objections arose (**none arose**)
- Summer Youth Work Experience Program NGO was submitted for this summer
- Completion of the MOU IFA signed by all partners, it is approved and waiting for DOL to return
- Christian Estevez will finalize and implement the Mercer County case management policy to ensure compliance with federal guidelines
- Budget procedures and policies to ensure accountability and transparency in managing financial resources

Meeting adjourned at approximately 1:26pm

Next meeting: **April 29, 2025 at 12:00pm-1:30pm**