



New Jersey State Employment and Training Commission

Dennis M. Bone, *Chairman*

Philip D. Murphy, *Governor*

State Employment and Training Commission

Meeting Minutes

February 2, 2022

10 am – 12 pm

Online GoTo Meeting Platform

I. Welcome & Introductions

Chairman Dennis Bone called the meeting to order at 10:04 am and welcomed members and guests. Chairman Bone announced that, in accordance with the Open Public Meetings Act of 1978, notice of this meeting was submitted to the Trenton Times and Star Ledger and was posted on the SETC website. Roundtable introductions were conducted. Tapas Sen made a motion to approve the February 2, 2022 meeting; the motion was seconded by Terri Duda. The minutes were unanimously approved by voice vote.

II. Chairman's Report

Chairman Bone welcomed members to the meeting and provided an update regarding member appointments. Chairman Bone spent discussed the Partnership to Pathways Program. An update on that effort was shared by Chrissy Buteas of the New Jersey Business and Industry Association NJBIA, on the importance of partnerships. The idea behind the effort is for employers in targeted fields to become partners with Community Colleges. The Partnership to Pathways Program, is focusing on the following critical industries that are in need. These include; Healthcare, Innovation and Technology, Infrastructure and Energy, Manufacturing and Supply Chain Management. Participation is recommended and appreciated to get involved in all these pillars and industries. The Governor and legislator approved \$8.5Mto create pathways in these sectors. The desire is to collaborate and work with all levels of government, labor unions, businesses, and educational facilities. State Employment and Training Commission Acting Executive Director Gary Altman made mention of an upcoming Shared Youth Vision Council meeting which will include the Partnership to Advance Youth Apprenticeship (PAYA). PAYA's goal is to expand Youth Apprenticeship nationwide. This should help young people gain skills for career success with good wages and benefits.

Chairman Bone discussed the topic of the day's meeting, "The Great Resignation/Big Quit". A 60 Minutes – CBS News segment which broad casted on January 9th, 2022 was with the attendees of the SETC meeting. More than ever, employees are leaving their positions and trying new careers. Employees are reinventing themselves. People want a change of what do they want to do, and are pursuing new opportunities.

The 60 Minutes segment that was shared in the meeting is available online and may be found at: <https://www.cbsnews.com/news/great-resignation-60-minutes-2022-01-10/>

III. The New Jersey Perspective Update: Assistant Commissioner Lesley Hirsch, Office of Research and Information (ORI)

Assistant Commissioner, Lesley Hirsch shared a New Jersey perspective that included several considerations with regards to "The Great Resignation/ Big Quit". The data and research, based off of the "Bureau of Labor Statistics information", based off a monthly survey, called the job openings and labor surveys, has indicated 29 million people have quit their jobs since May of 2021. 1 in 5 workers in the labor force which represents 18 percent in the workforce have quit their jobs. In 2021, up to recently, 2/3 of unemployed people are changing careers. One of the main reason's workers are rethinking their employment is because people have realized while home during the pandemic, they may want to change industries/careers. The quit rate at hotels and restaurants is now 6.9 percent, retail trade follows with quit rates at 4.4 percent. 16 percent of all quits are in professional services. Quitters aren't leaving the workforce, people are more willing to leave their jobs when there is a higher rate of job openings, they are not exiting the workforce altogether. Woman in the workforce are finding the need to adjust to childcare needs and focusing on which careers upon their return to the labor force. Also cited was a recent MIT study which credited workforce culture, people having a safety net of savings and stimulus funds have allowed for people to stay out of work. Due to the pandemic and the individual concern about being in contact with people, many employees are using personal savings after leaving jobs, to determine next steps in their respective careers including decisions regarding industries and jobs. The Assistant Commissioner referenced a recent California survey which found increased mortality rates in certain industries during the pandemic. Black, Latino, and Asian workers had death rates which were twice as high as white workers. Worker voice is up with strikes being experienced in places including Kaiser nurses, Hollywood production crews, John Deere employees, and Harvard graduate students leading to more people wanting a career change. Implications of how this would hold for the workforce was discussed. More than ever communication with employers is essential both to meet their needs and to assess underlining problem.

IV. New Jersey Department of Labor Commissioner Rob Asaro-Angelo

New Jersey Department of Labor Commissioner Rob Asaro-Angelo provided information on workforce trends and New Jersey perspectives. His presentation included an update regarding Unemployment Insurance and the status of claims. This time last year we were dealing with record numbers of Unemployment claims, and establishing Federal UI programs which have helped to distribute more than 40 billion dollars, to about 1.6 million claimants from March of 2020 until now. The Commissioner thanked everyone for all of their efforts in helping our economic situation. He indicated the need for national UI reform, so we may better serve the people of New Jersey. He indicated the need for a federal system that works for everyone. Commissioner Asaro-Angelo explained how change must come from the Federal level. Currently the Federal UI system is inheritably inequitable, creating access barriers particularly for low wage workers. To help, the New Jersey Department of Labor and Workforce Development has applied for a federal Department of Labor grant, to fund eight US equity projects, totaling 6.8 million dollars, that NJDOL hopes to operate over the next two years. The efforts should strengthen communications with claimants. NJDOL goals are to continue to work with stakeholders, non-profits, and community partners to have a better connection to low income residents. NJDOL is also using data analytics to promote equitable access to use the UI system. This will allow for a better system to work with social service agencies. The New Jersey Department of Labor and Workforce Development was selected by the USDOL and US digital service, as a pilot state for Unemployment modernization. The purpose of the effort will be to design a system that is equitable and provides more timely benefits to UI benefits for claimants. The focus will be to target resources where there is greatest need. The focus will be to target resources where there is greatest need. We are working to bring more help to urban areas and as we get into the second term, and now that we are coming out of the pandemic, will be focusing on how to better serve the public.

Participatory Discussion – SETC Members, Invitees, and Guests:

Joann Hala with United Way of Northern NJ and Raritan WDB, discussed ALICE (Asset Limited Income Constrained Employed) which works in the frontline jobs which became essential jobs by terms of the pandemic. People who could not, and cannot not work because they cannot afford to stay home, may not have savings, often times are working more than one job, these are folks who are suffering financially before the pandemic, then once the pandemic hit, they were impacted further. Many such as the undocumented immigrants were not able to receive any assistance, pandemic relief, or unemployment, nor the economic payments.

Alfa Demmellash of Rising Tide Capital, considered the Alice perspective and the picture that is forming around these essential workers. The ALICE workers being those who were able to get us through the pandemic are calling it quits. It seems that on one side

they are calling it quits even though they live pay check to pay check, but on the other side it raises questions as to how are they surviving. It has also raised the question, regarding whether they may come back in 6 months due to economic pain which may result in a need return to the workforce? Or, do we need to look at a more holistic view on what may be happening on the mental health dimension of this as well as physical health.

Tara Colton of the New Jersey Economic Development Authority, focused on the “Great Resignation/Big Quit” and how it has impacted small businesses per the data through the NJEDA. The challenges around the businesses have been around finding workers and considering the potential wages they can offer, the benefits they offer, and taking a closer look at employees of families that in need of child care which is a need and the data is showing has all had a significant impact on workers of all wage levels and sectors being willing and able to stay or continue employment and or continuing on to employment.

John Kennedy of NJMEP discussed how “The Great Resignation/ Big quit has impacted the manufacturing industry. Mainly, and since this industry is essentials workers had to continue to go to work. Prior to the pandemic there was 33k opened positions in New Jersey so the need to have these essential workers was imperative during the pandemic. Recently, the need has grown to over 45k, due to some drop outs and also because companies have a growing need for workers who can produce more food, medicine, and essentials. As a result of the fear in 2020, what is happening may be attributed to fatigue, due to mandatory overtime, particularly with food production. Automation has had to increase because there is a need for higher trained workers. The pathways in these fields, which have been lucrative, can pay up to \$94k with full benefits because the industry is evolving. Upskill grants are important because this is where manufacturers can train on lean and six sigma, enhancing the employee’s certifications. Both the manufacturer and employee have had tremendous growth. EDA, DOE, and OSHE, to name a few partners, have really pushed forward. It has really allowed the creation of pathways within the college consortia.

Karen Bussey with OSHE spoke on the trends with college campuses, the national of what we are seeing across the State of New Jersey. There are four trends which are happening. First, the “Great Resignation/Big Quit” is impacting higher education on a large scale. Particularly for woman and younger employees. There is some evidence what types of positions within the higher education positions, such as it could be business related or student affairs positions. Second, the students are feeling they have transferrable skills and can move onto to other areas, therefore this is an option. Third, in person to online and hybrid options, and how students are would have prior to Covid-19 eventually come back to a traditional school setting, however students are now wanting to

stay virtual and flexibility is wanted. Lastly, remote work and not having to come to the campus is a need and wanted by the students. We wanted to also understand how students can did a work and learn since most students were impacted by the “Great Resignation/ Big Quit”. We want to think about their enrollment, their education, keeping them enrolled as they transition on what job they want and may have some gaps in their affordability which they need support with. We want to continue to thinking about the data and realities at colleges and universities to best serve the student needs.

Kevin Kurdziel from the Middlesex County Workforce Development Board, touched on those who have quit their jobs are now starting small businesses which may be home based businesses so they may stay home and work to earn and income as independent contractors. It is a current trend he is seeing. We also need to create more training which can meet the high demand of the positions we have because the need is there.

Michelle Martin with Workforce Development Institute, Rowan College at Burlington County (RCBC) spoke about exploring additional ways in addressing training needs and services to incorporate trainings which can highlight on how to start small businesses because this type of training is essential in order to provide knowledge in a changing workforce. More cohort opportunities into certifications and entry level jobs are not going to go away and by creating ways to incorporate the One Stops to offering this type of training would be beneficial.

John Sarno considered how New Jersey is a small business state and what employers are doing with Health and Safety. Research is showing a lot of impact in retail, hospitality, and restaurants areas, low wages and showing employees with less education. The general picture is that businesses are not investing in Technology especially small businesses. Where there is high turn-over or a constricted labor force many businesses will invest in labor saving Technology. As a last resort an employer is looking to increase wages but for a small business who is not about to invest into Technology and who is not going to redesign jobs the only resort at that point would be to raise wages, and this is what we are seeing on the lower end. An increase of 4 to 5 percent. The other observation is gender playing a big part, a two-income household tends to have more savings and income than a single parent. This is a woman’s issue as well with the job occupation. Finally, with regards to culture in the center of work place culture, is Health and Safety. This will most likely stay a permanent topic along with flexibility which is required to allow employees to work in a good state of mind that they won’t be in jeopardy health wise. Small businesses do not like keeping track of information with regards to vaccines, who is a liability, they are nervous about privacy issues and there would be a need to hire individuals that can be trained and paid to hold a position in this capacity to implement a vaccination protocol. Employers were quietly saying if the OSHA standard was upheld, at least they can shift the blame and tell their employees we aren’t doing it, the government

is making us do it, it would make employers feel more comfortable. Employers are currently making decisions that best suit their needs.

IV. Public Comment and Adjournment, Dennis M. Bone, Chairman

No public comments were received. Chairman Bone announced that the next meeting will be held on Wednesday, April 6, 2022. The meeting was adjourned at 11:57 am.

Next SETC Meeting

Wednesday, April 6, 2022

10 am – 12 pm

Online GoTo Meeting Platform

PRESENT MEMBERS and ALTERNATES

Bone, Dennis
Asaro-Angelo, Rob
Bridges, Brian
Johnson, Natasha (for Adelman)
Butler, Kate (for Oliver)
Hala, Joanne (for Franklin)
Duda, Terri
Safrin, Michele (for Blake)

Cappello, Marianne (for Allen-McMillan)
Sen, Tapas
Wise, Robert
Lee, Edwin (for Brown)
Colton, Tara (for Sullivan)
Drakeford, Shamira (for Duda)
Catherine Milone

ABSENT MEMBERS

Blake, Allison
Brown, Kevin
Carey, Michael
Donnadio, John
Ferrera, Anthony
Gacos, Nicholas
Wade, Carolyn Carter

Hornik, Stephen
Reisser, Clifford
Rice, Ronald
Wilson, McKenzie A.
Wimberly, Benjie
Wowkanech, Charles

OTHER
ATTENDEES

Alpart, Davidene
Apple, Emily
Anochi, Eva
Arango, Oswaldo
Armstrong, Jane
Barracato, Meredith
Belin, Jacki
Bicica, John
Blanco, Francis
Bogert, Duwan
Bollhardt, Victoria
Brown, Melissa
Burkhardt, Ron
Bussey, Karen
Buteas, Chrissy
Butler, Kate
Carvajal, Allyson
Caramelo, JoAnne
Carral, Karen
Carter, Jean
Case, Kim
Celestin, Sancia
Choudhury, Mitra
Custard, Donna
Czar, Dianne
DeBaere, Gregg
Demmellash, Alfa
Drakeford, Shamira
Emigholz, Chris
Enright, Patricia
Everett, Kaitlin

Feldman, Eliot
Fichtner, Aaron
Gagliano, John
Gatling, Kerri
Gaylord, Karen
Gehrke, David
Giordano, Timothy
Grzella, Paul
Harris-Kuiper,
Stephanie
Hartman, Sharon
Hiller, Nanci
Hirsch, Lesley
Howard, Donald
Hunt, Stacy
Johnson, Hosea
Jubanyik, Danielle
Kuiper, Mark
Kurdziel, Kevin
Levandowski, Andrea
Levitt, Jill
Knight, Braheim
Kuhn, Fran
Kurdziel, Kevin
Kvarantan, Alexandra
Liu, Helen
Mader, Pamela
Martin, Michelle
Mazzagatti, Pete
McPartlan, Dennis

Mirasol, Catherina
Moody, Melissa
Morrison, Angelique
Murphy, Lauren
Meyer, Cheryl
Ochse, Maureen
Odeneye, Jobi
Philp, Amanda
Polack, Carol
Pierre, Eric
Rodgers, Beth
Reyes, Maritza
Sabater, Julio
Safrin, Michele
Sabir, Zahira
Sarno, John
Satchell, Brigitte Scalia,
Donna
Schaeffer, Janine
Schuster, Manuela
Seith, David
Seavers, Diane
Shamsid-Dean, Veda
Sheridan, Timothy
Shump, Patricia
Siekerka, Michele
Smith, Dawn

Sternbach, Larry
Sullender, Kyle
Sullivan, Sabrina
Staub, Stephanie
Starghill, Catherine
Strothers, Sandra
Swartz, Jeffrey
Tabassum, Zainab
Taguwa, Denise
Taylor, Sherwood
Taylor, Yolanda
Thomas, Katrice
Vail, Les
Vaidyanathan, S.
West, Kelly
Williams, Albert
Yuen, Paul
Zahirah, Sabir

SETC STAFF:
G. Altman
C. Lamarca
K. Robinson
C. Santarsiero