

**Employment Security Advisory Board Meeting
Connecticut Department of Labor
July 23, 2015
Minutes**

Members Present: Mark Sullivan, Shawn Coyne, Henry Zaccardi, Sue Garten, Dave Bosco, John Barasso, Eric Gjede

Absent: John Olsen, John Toomey

Agency Staff: Commissioner Sharon Palmer, Carl Guzzardi, Bruce Berman, Daryle Dudzinski, Ken Petow, Andy Condon, Steve Lattanzio, Anne Rugens, Maria Hagen, Celeste Valakos, Sue Crabb, Dave Ricciutti, John Matteis, Ram Aberasturia, Laurie Coburn, Lynne Knox, Kathy Marioni, Marisa Morello, Nancy Steffens, Susan DeVito.

Observer: Rich Siegel, UTMC

Approval of Minutes

Mark Sullivan called the meeting to order at approximately 9:31. The minutes of the February 25, 2015 meeting were approved. Eric Gjede abstained.

State Legislative Update

Marisa Morello discussed the most recent legislative session, which was largely focused on the state budget. Only one CTDOL bill passed, pertaining to Occupational Health Clinics.

UI Program Update

Daryle Dudzinski provided an update on UI benefits. July's numbers show 3,000 to 4,000 initial claims. For the week ending July 17, 2015 there were a total of 42,000 claims.

The agency's integrity efforts in the past 8 – 9 months have brought in over \$12 million dollars. DOL's partnership with the Chief State's Attorney office continues to operate effectively. In 2013 there were 106 arrests with over \$900,000 recovered. Daryle also spoke of the criteria for referring fraud to the Chief States Attorney, noting that the Agency ensures that all individuals are afforded due process. Daryle advised the Board that the Department of Labor in Tennessee will be visiting DOL to learn from Connecticut's program.

Employment Services/Office of Workforce Competitiveness

Kathy Marioni, Director of the Department's Office of Workforce Competitiveness, provided an update on the Department's efforts to comply with the federal Workforce Investment Act and discussed the Department's Manufacturing Innovation Fund Apprenticeship Program, which

provides financial assistance to Connecticut manufacturers that have a Registered Apprentice Programs. The Program is administered by the Connecticut Department of Labor and funded through the Department of Economic and Community Development's Connecticut Manufacturing Innovation Fund.

Ram Aberasturia, Director of Labor Operations - Employment Services, provided an update on Employment Services Operations, including Jobs First Employment Services, Reemployment Assistance, additional WIOA efforts, and the transition of the Agency's Connecticut Works Business System (CTWBS) to CTHIRES, operated by Geographic Solutions.

Unemployment Trust Fund Update

Carl Guzzardi provided an update to the Trust Fund. Special assessment bills are due August 31, 2015. The rate has gone down this year to \$3.00 per full time employee compared to last year's rate of \$7.50 per employee. The Department still owes \$102 million in loans which could be paid in full by November 2016, which would prevent federal tax increases based upon the unpaid loan. Carl also reiterated the fact that recessions happen approximately every 10 years and Connecticut system's remains broken and unprepared for a recession.

Agency Update

Commissioner Palmer spoke to pending budgetary problems at DOL. The Commissioner noted that federal funding is significantly dropping as of October 1, 2015. While DOL has taken mitigation efforts to reduce the gap, the Agency has no choice to but to layoff federally funded personnel and close some offices. The Commissioner noted that this is a national problem, and that North Dakota recently laid-off 40 employees.

Future Agenda Items

Items to be discussed at our next meeting include DOL layoffs and the Trust Fund.

The next meeting is scheduled for October 9, 2015 at 9:30 a.m.

The meeting was adjourned at approximately 10:49 a.m.