



## **NCWorks Commission Quarterly Business Session**

Wednesday, February 12, 2025  
NC State University McKimmon Center | Webinar  
1:00 P.M. – 2:00 P.M. | Raleigh, N.C.

### **Minutes**

#### ***Present:***

Chair Tom Rabon, Christopher Arabia, Rebecca Axford, Daniel Briggs, Shawn Brown, Sherry Carpenter, Rodney Carson, Wesley Davis, Andrea DeSantis (*Secretary Lee Lilley*), Robert Doreauk, Chris Egan, Secretary Gabriel Esparza, Christopher Gergen, James Hartman, Byron Hicks (*Peter Hans*), Suzanne Johnson, Candace Lowry, Paul Lawler, John Loyack (*Jeffrey Cox*), Marti Martin Mathews, Darla McGlamery, Nikki Nissen, Olalah Njenga, Mark Richardson, Sharene Pierce, Cheryl Richards, Secretary Devdutta Sangvai, Tammy Simmons, Cynthia Speight, Gregory Thompson, Sandra Thompson, Kim Toler, and Annie Izod

#### ***Absent:***

Kindl Detar (*Governor Josh Stein*), Jeffrey Frederick, Superintendent Mo Green, Stephen Hunt, Himanshu Karvir, Pam Townsend, and Hope Williams

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### **Welcome and Opening Remarks**

Chair Tom Rabon welcomed the commission members and guests to the first quarterly business session of the year at the McKimmon Center in Raleigh. Chair Rabon thanked the McKimmon Center staff and North Carolina State University for hosting the meeting, and for being a key workforce development partner in this region.

### **Opening Remarks**

Chair Rabon introduced the first guest speaker of the day, Secretary of NC Department of Health & Human Services (NCDHHS), Dr. Devdutta Sangvai, who provided opening remarks. Dr. Sangvai discussed several key points of interest, including new strategies he plans to implement at NCDHHS. One new recruitment strategy is to focus more on the desired skills set of potential applicants, instead of only focusing on filling the vacancy. Furthermore, Dr. Sangvai discussed how management is increasing their engagement with current NCDHHS employees to keep them focused on their role, and more vested in how their individual job aligns with the overall mission of NCDHHS. An additional aspect he mentioned is the complete elimination of paper documentation at NCDHHS in favor of computer files. This will have the benefit of attracting younger, more computer-savvy applicants to look at NCDHHS for job opportunities and perhaps stay longer to increase the department's retention rates.

### **Workforce Updates**

Chair Rabon began by thanking the staff of the North Carolina Assistive Technology Program (NCATP) - Raleigh Center for providing the commission members with an excellent workforce tour. He also

thanked Chris Egan for coordinating the tour. Next, Chair Rabon mentioned the month of February is Black History Month, a celebration of achievements by African Americans and their role in US History. Chair Rabon then welcomed several new members to the commission, Jim Hartman, Owner/Operator of Secret Garden Bees in Linden, and Mark Richardson, County Commissioner from Rockingham County. They are replacing outgoing members, Brock Ashburn and Ronnie Smith. Rabon also welcomed Governor Josh Stein to the commission and expressed how the members are looking forward to his leadership. Chair Rabon also welcomed Lee Lilley, the Secretary of the North Carolina Department of Commerce, Gabe Esparza, the Secretary of the North Carolina Department of Administration, Dev Sangvai, the Secretary of the North Carolina Department of Health and Human Services, and Mo Green, the Superintendent of the North Carolina Department of Public Instruction. Lastly, he thanked all the outgoing members for their years of service on the commission.

Chair Rabon reported that indicators are showing 2024 was a strong year for new jobs and investment in North Carolina. The State of North Carolina announced 16,956 new jobs, representing 218 business recruitments, expansion or rural development projects that engaged with the North Carolina Department of Commerce or its team at the Economic Development Partnership of North Carolina. These projects will bring \$15.2 billion of capital investment into the state. This was an increase from 2023's overall results of 14,114 jobs and \$12.9 billion of capital investment. One project under Governor Cooper's administration was a new Local Innovation Reentry Grant which was awarded to a Piedmont Triad Regional Workforce Development Board reentry partnership in the amount of \$125,000. This grant will support an effort to address reentry workforce challenges. It's called the *Reentry Empowerment and Workforce Integration (REWI) Initiative*. In other news, there was an expansion of Temporary Recovery Jobs, which provides training for the residents of 39 Helene-Impacted counties. With this initiative, residents of 39 counties may now apply to participate in the temporary jobs program. A new unemployment insurance dashboard was recently launched, which provides information into the industries, occupations and demographics of those seeking unemployment insurance assistance which can be tracked with a new data dashboard hosted by the North Carolina Department of Commerce.

#### **November Minutes Approval**

Chair Rabon asked for a motion to approve the minutes from the November 13<sup>th</sup> quarterly business session meeting. Christopher Gergen made the motion to approve, and Shawn Brown seconded the motion. There being no corrections, the minutes were unanimously approved as written.

#### **2025 Annual Workforce System Performance Report**

Chair Rabon introduced Dr. Oleksandr Movchan, the Director of Data Analytics and Research for the Labor & Economic Analysis Division (LEAD), to discuss the 2025 Annual Workforce System Performance Report. Dr. Movchan discussed several cohorts in the report and reflected on how the methodology for data collection (specifically for WIOA Title 1 and 3) has changed to make the report more accurate and more in line with USDOL reporting. Afterwards, Chair Rabon welcomed Nathan Copley, the Director of Performance for the Division of Workforce Solutions and Wendy Johnson, the Senior Workforce Development Analyst for the commission, to join Dr. Movchan for a panel discussion on WIOA Performance Reporting. The panel discussed the various databases utilized to collect performance data and service delivery outcomes for workforce services throughout our system.

#### **NCDHHS Employment Services Presentation**

Chair Rabon recognized Kenneth Bausell, BSN, RN— who currently serves as the Senior Director of Employment and Inclusion at NCDHHS, where he supports the Division of Employment and Independence for People with Disabilities (EIPD), the Division of Services Blind (DSB), the Division of Services for Deaf and Hard of Hearing (DSDHH) and Employment First. Kenneth Bausell explained NCDHHS administers the state vocational

rehabilitation grant program (WIOA Title IV), through two sister divisions, which operate with a no wrong door approach and utilize many of the same policies and regulations. He highlighted all the various employment services available through NCDHHS.

### **Committee Updates**

#### **Skills and Education Attainment Committee**

Chair Sherry Carpenter provided highlights from their most recent meeting which featured a presentation from Charles Mautz, Director of Rehabilitation Services, Division of Rehabilitation and Reentry, NC Department of Adult Correction, about the Work Release Expansion program, where offenders have the opportunity for employment during incarceration. Other reports included an update on the Fierce Fellows reentry program; discussion on a collaborative project with the Division of Workforce Solutions Business Services for a career analysis logic model for career pathways; and an update on the North Carolina Association of WDB - Directors Council and NextGen Youth Leads, which hosted the 4th annual Youth NextGen Forum on Feb. 11-12 in Greensboro. Lastly, the committee welcomed a new subject matter expert Chris Harrington, state director of Apprenticeship NC.

#### **Employer Leadership Committee**

Dr. Annie Izod provided the update for the Employer Leadership Committee in Chair Jeff Frederick's absence. In their most recent meeting, Dr. Jenni Harris updated the committee on several activities, including Sector Partnerships and the work to finalize the NC Statewide Business Services Framework, which is based on information gathered at the recent NC Business Services Summit in Greensboro. Another topic Dr. Harris mentioned was the Sector Partnership Academy which was held in Sanford on February 6<sup>th</sup>. During the previous meeting, John Metcalf provided a summary from the Employer Forums pointing out the employers' lack of awareness about the services and resources available through the workforce system. He also underscored the need to diversify funding sources for our workforce system.

#### **Local Innovation Committee**

Chair Cynthia Speight provided an update on the committee's most recent meeting. The committee welcomed Jim Hartman and Mark Richardson. The Local Innovation Grantees from *Opt-In/J.E.T.* and *Hope Renovations* provided updates on the most recent quarter during the meeting and a representative from Strategic Evaluations also joined the meeting and answered questions. The committee discussed ideas for the upcoming Spotlight Publications as well as new Webinar Series topics. The committee also shared how technical assistance will be provided to all grantees as needed. Finally, the committee discussed the new Reentry Grant with the Piedmont Triad Regional Workforce Development Board, called the *Reentry Empowerment and Workforce Integration Initiative (REWI)* grant. This grant seeks to strengthen the region's network of career navigation services for the justice-involved population, while also raising awareness among employers about the positive impact of inclusive hiring practices. All committee members collaborated on innovative ideas that may be replicated across the state.

#### **Governance and System Alignment Committee**

Chair Chris Egan reported on the most recent committee meeting. During the meeting, Michael Hoskins, the Information Technology Director for DWS and Dr. Oleksandr Movchan, Director of Data Analytics and Research at LEAD, presented to the committee on the 2025 Annual Workforce System Performance Report. The committee also reviewed and voted to accept one new Commission Policy Statement, CPS 01-2025 - North Carolina Modification for Local Area Workforce Development Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act Title I Plans. This year, the plan instructions have been

somewhat abbreviated into a more concise version to eliminate redundancies during the plan update years. Chair Egan then turned the floor back over the Chair Rabon

**Approval of Commission Policy Statement**

The Commission voted to unanimously approve CPS 01-2025 - North Carolina Modification for Local Area Workforce Development Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act Title I Plans.

**Closing Remarks**

In closing, Chair Rabon reminded the commission about the remaining 2025 meeting dates, he then turned the floor over to Dr. Annie Izod for her closing remarks. Dr. Izod mentioned that she will soon be sending out a survey to all the commission members on participating in a taskforce on advocacy for North Carolina's workforce development system and planning for the next steps. She also reminded the members of the upcoming Southeastern Employment and Training Association (SETA) Spring 2025 Conference scheduled for March 16-19, 2025, at the Embassy Suites in Myrtle Beach, South Carolina. Dr. Izod then turned the floor back over the Chair Rabon.

Chair Rabon asked the members for any additional new business or additional discussion on the reports that were presented earlier in the meeting. There being no new business, Chair Rabon thanked the commission members, staff, and the staff of the NCSU McKimmon Center for all their efforts in ensuring the work of commission continues to be successful. He wished everyone safe travels on their return trips and adjourned the meeting.

Respectfully submitted,

Dr. Annie Izod

Approved on May 14, 2025