



NCWorks Commission Quarterly Business Session
Wednesday, November 19, 2025
Carteret Community College, Townsend Event Hall | Webinar
1:00 P.M. – 2:00 P.M. | Morehead City, N.C.

Minutes

Present:

Chair Tom Rabon, Daniel Briggs, Shawn Brown, Sherry Carpenter, Rodney Carson, Wesley Davis, Nancy Cross (*Superintendent Mo Green*), Andrea Desantis, Kristi Day, Kindl Detar (*Governor Josh Stein*), Robert Doreauk, Chris Egan (*Secretary Devdutta Sangvai*), Jeffrey Frederick, Christopher Gergen, Suzanne Johnson, Himanshu Karvir, Paul Lawler, Secretary Lee Lilley, Marti Mathews Martin, Darla McGlamery, Nikki Nissen, Olalah Njenga, Sharene Pierce, Cheryl Richards, Mark Richardson, Maria Richardson (*Secretary Gabriel Esparza*), Tammy Simmons, Cynthia Speight, Gregory Thompson, Kim Toler, Pam Townsend, Robert Van Dyke, Annie Izod

Absent:

Chris Arabia, Rebecca Axford, Jim Hartman, Byron Hicks (*President Peter Hans*), Stephen Hunt, John Loyack (*President Jeff Cox*), and Hope Williams

Welcome

Chair Tom Rabon welcomed the Commission members and guests to the last quarterly business session of the year at Carteret Community College in Morehead City. Chair Rabon thanked the college staff and Dr. Tracy Mancini, President for hosting the meeting, and for being a key workforce development partner in this region. Chair Rabon acknowledged Dr. Mancini for her leadership and contributions to workforce and economic development and then welcomed her to deliver opening remarks.

Opening Remarks

Dr. Mancini welcomed the commission members and guests to Carteret Community College. She thanked the members for touring the college earlier in the day, and she discussed some of the college's unique programs from the tour, such as aquaculture technology, boat manufacturing and service, and the hospitality and culinary arts programs. She also discussed Carteret Community College's current enrollments and shared that the college has been in the top 15 of Smart Assets' top community colleges in the country for 5 of the last 6 years. Dr. Mancini stated the high ranking of the college is due to the quality of their instruction, the affordability of attending the school, and their incredibly high completion rate.

Workforce Updates

Chair Rabon began his update by highlighting "Employ A Veteran Week," which honored veterans and emphasized their value in the workforce. Chair Rabon also shared several major job announcements,

including new investments and job creation by Pacific Life, SoFi Technologies, and Scout Motors in Charlotte, as well as expansions by Electrolux, Cardon Rehabilitation, and Judco Manufacturing in Eastern Carolina. Rabon also celebrated the 2025 Governor's NCWorks Awards of Distinction and the opening of a new NCWorks Career Center in Gastonia. Additional initiatives included a career expo for military families at Camp Lejeune and Governor Stein's promotion of North Carolina during a recent trade mission to Japan.

NC Department of Commerce Secretary Lee Lilley shared economic updates as well and noted that we've had a lot of activity and that we've had an extraordinary couple of weeks in new jobs announcements. In the last 8 days, he noted that we've announced 4,200 new jobs, more than \$2 billion of investment in the state. Secretary Lilley shared that two new corporate headquarters are moving to Charlotte, Scout Motors and Maersk, the world's largest shipping company, moving their North American headquarters from New Jersey to Charlotte. He also shared that Gaston County announced a project, and we'll have a few more that are coming to rural North Carolina next week from the Economic Investment Committee, provided the committee votes affirmatively.

The Secretary shared that we have been very fortunate in North Carolina, and that consistently in these projects, the differentiator for our state is our talent and our workforce. He shared that he and Governor Stein took a 10-day trip to Japan and Taiwan in October. The differentiator when they talk to companies in those countries is also workforce. Secretary Lilley stated that he thinks we win projects because we have good partnerships, and we put everything together, but the real difference maker for us, over and over again, in being able to announce and ultimately deliver projects that pay family-sustaining wages all across the, is the availability of a top-tier workforce that can go and get trained and be ready to work on day one. He gave credit to the NC Works Commission for its invaluable work in supporting these job projects and all economic activity in the state of North Carolina.

August Minutes Approval

Chair Rabon asked for a motion to approve the minutes from the August 13th quarterly business session. Shawn Brown made the motion to approve, and Maria Richardson seconded the motion. There being no corrections, the minutes were unanimously approved as written.

Charting the Waters of Workforce in the Boating Industry

Sheila Glazewski, Vice President of Parker Offshore LLC, delivered a presentation highlighting the company's leadership in HR, marketing, and sales, and their commitment to fostering a positive workplace culture. She also provided the members with an overview of North Carolina's boating industry over the past 5 years.

Governor's Council on Workforce and Apprenticeships

As a member of the Governor's Council on Workforce and Apprenticeships (the Council), Sherry Carpenter provided updates on the Council's work. Sherry Carpenter stated the 11 goals are on a 4-year timeline – with annual reports on progress due to the Governor December 2026, December 2027, and December 2028. She then highlighted the efforts of the four subcommittees of the Council on the development of the 26 aligned strategies (at the time of the meeting there were 26 strategies-which was later increased to 30 strategies in December), which will be incorporated into a comprehensive first year report to the Governor, which outlines actionable recommendations to strengthen work-based learning and apprenticeship initiatives across the state. In the upcoming year, the Council and the NCWorks Commission will move towards developing implementation tactics for these 11 goals and 26 strategies

(at the time of the meeting there were 26 strategies-which was later increased to 30 strategies in December).

Workforce System Awareness and Advocacy Taskforce

Dr. Annie Izod provided updates on the NCWorks Commission's Workforce System Awareness and Advocacy Taskforce. The taskforce is preparing to begin a second phase which will refine their approach to ensure a deeper focus, stronger alignment with statewide workforce priorities, and a more targeted impact. The next phase will involve transitioning to a smaller, more specialized working group composed of committed commission members and selected Subject Matter Experts. The goal is to streamline collaboration and accelerate progress on key advocacy initiatives that support North Carolina's workforce development system. Key priorities for this next phase will be planning and initiating advocacy efforts around the state during the short legislative session and the long legislative session. Commission members who will continue their service on the Workforce System Awareness and Advocacy Taskforce are Dr. Andrea DeSantis, Paul Lawler, Dr. Cheryl Richards, Sherry Carpenter, Jeff Frederick, and Mark Richardson.

Committee Updates

Education and Credential Attainment Committee

Chair Sherry Carpenter provided shared an update on the work of the Education and Credential Attainment Committee. During their most recent meeting, the committee reviewed a draft of the 2026-28 NCWorks Commission Strategic Plan. Members were asked to continue reviewing the goals and strategies and identify priorities for early 2026 implementation. Committee members were updated on a reentry-focused panel titled Building Bridges: Reentry Programs in Action was held at last month's NCWorks Partnership Conference. Panelists included Charles Mautz (Department of Adult Correction), Rev. Philip Cooper (Operation Gateway), Deon Carter (Goodwill NWNC/Project Re-entry), and Eric Haddock (DWS). The session drew approximately 50 attendees, generated strong engagement, and received outstanding feedback, participants praised the panel's expertise, authenticity, and practical insights, with many notes it was one of the best workshops they attended.

Work Based Learning and Apprenticeships Committee

Vice Chair Chris Egan provided an update on the Work-Based Learning and Apprenticeships Committee, which recently held its first meeting to introduce new members, review strategic planning materials, and outline updated goals. The committee reviewed their expanded scope on the Governor's Council on Workforce and Apprenticeships, which now includes Goals 4, 5, 6, and 7. The primary focus is on doubling registered apprenticeships, increasing work-based learning participation, engaging 50,000 employers, and strengthening partnerships between education and workforce agencies. The committee reviewed updates from the NCWorks Partnership Conference before concluding with next steps and member updates.

Employer Engagement and Strategic Partnership Committee

Vice Chair Olalah Njenga stated that the Employer Engagement and Strategic Partnership Committee last convened on October 20th, led by co-chairs Olalah Njenga and Mark Richardson. They heard updates on the Governor's Council on Workforce and Apprenticeships and reviewed Goals 8, 9, and 10—focusing on sector-based strategies, AI integration in education, and reducing state government vacancies. Goals 9 and 10 were newly assigned to the committee, while Goals 6 and 7 were reassigned to the Work-Based Learning and Apprenticeships Committee. A new, small business initiative was also discussed, with possible options for in-person or virtual meeting formats.

Governing and Aligning a Future Ready Workforce System Committee

Chair Cheryl Richards stated the committee last met on November 12th. New members were provided with a detailed overview of the purpose of the committee and a review of several current workstreams of the committee. Wendy Johnson provided a report to the committee on the 2025 Annual Program Review and James Bain led a discussion on the 2026-28 NCWorks Commission Strategic Plan, which will now be closely aligned with Governor Stein's Council on Workforce and Apprenticeships. The committee reviewed and voted to accept four revised commission policy statements, CPS 05-2021, Change 1 NC Job Ready Workforce Investment Grants; CPS 06-2021, Change 2 Guidelines for North Carolina NCWorks Career Center Code of Conduct Violations; CPS 11-2021, Change 2 Eligible Training Provider Guidelines, Penalties, Appeal Process, and Performance Reporting; and CPS 02-2022, Change 1 Procurement and Contracting. After Dr. Richards' presentation, the commission voted unanimously to approve all four policy statements.

Approval of the Commission Policy Statements

The Commission voted to unanimously approve CPS 05-2021, Change 1 NC Job Ready Workforce Investment Grants; CPS 06-2021, Change 2 Guidelines for North Carolina NCWorks Career Center Code of Conduct Violations; CPS 11-2021, Change 2 Eligible Training Provider Guidelines, Penalties, Appeal Process, and Performance Reporting; and CPS 02-2022, Change 1 Procurement and Contracting.

Closing Remarks

Dr. Izod provided update on the Fall 2025 graduates of the Strategic Workforce Leadership Initiative. The Strategic Workforce Leadership Initiative is a comprehensive professional development program designed for those engaged in workforce or economic development. This fall's cohort brought together 26 leaders from education, government, workforce boards, and non-profits to explore the foundations of building a skilled regional workforce. The next cohort is planned for Spring 2026.

Dr. Izod also congratulated commission member Rodney Carson for winning the Bill Ragland Award at the recent NCWorks Partnership Conference for Outstanding Private Sector Workforce Development Board Member.

Afterwards, Chair Rabon announced that the next NCWorks Commission Business Session meeting will take place on February 11th, 2026, at the McKimmon Center in Raleigh. Chair Rabon closed the meeting by thanking everyone for all their work. He then adjourned the meeting and wished everyone safe travels on their return trips.

Respectfully submitted,

Dr. Annie Izod

Approved on February 11, 2026