



NCWorks Commission Quarterly Business Session

Wednesday, August 11, 2021

Zoom Meeting Webinar/NCSU McKimmon Center

1:00 – 2:00 P.M.

Raleigh, NC

Minutes

Present:

Chair Tom Rabon, Jordan Whichard (Secretary Machel Baker Sanders), Sa'Metria D. Jones (Governor Roy Cooper), Kim Toler, Dr. MaryBe McMillan, Shawn Brown, Marti Matthews Martin, Paul Lawler, Suzanne Johnson, Jim Van Camp, Broxton Ashburn, Secretary Pamela B. Cashwell, Chris Egan (Secretary Mandy Cohen), Stan Sherrill, Dr. Bruce Mack (Thomas Stith), Pam Townsend, Christopher Gergen, Himanshu Karvir, Olalah Njenga, Sherry Carpenter, Jeff Frederick, Dr. Hope Williams, David Miller, Ronnie Smith, Stephen Hunt, Kristie VanAuken (Catherine Truitt), Gilda Rubio-Festa, Mike Okun, and Tammy Simmons.

Absent:

Josh Arant, Osceola Elliss, Leslie Walden, Anita Bachmann, Byron Hicks (Peter Hans)

Opening Business

The third quarterly business session of 2021 began with a welcome to the NCWorks Commission members from Chair Tom Rabon. He then introduced Chief Deputy Secretary of Commerce, Jordan Whichard.

Chief Deputy Secretary Whichard discussed the state's latest Economic Development Strategic Plan, entitled "First in Talent", emphasizing that investing in our workforce is the key to building a more prosperous and resilient economy for all North Carolinians. The First in Talent plan recognizes that our most valuable asset is our people, and it is based on Governor Coopers' vision that our economy must be one that works for all people throughout our great state. He emphasized the pandemic has demonstrated that conditions can change rapidly, and if our workforce is to be resilient, they must be equipped with skills to adapt and thrive.

Chief Deputy Secretary Whichard outlined the new plan which includes three over-arching goals:

1. *Preparing North Carolina's workforce for career and entrepreneurial success.*
2. *Preparing North Carolina's businesses for success by growing and attracting a talented workforce.*
3. *Preparing communities across North Carolina to be more competitive in growing and attracting a talented workforce and businesses.*

Chief Deputy Secretary Whichard echoed Secretary Sanders' vision to make North Carolina the envy of the world. In order to make that vision a reality, it will take sustained efforts in workforce development, so that North Carolina has the workers with the skills they need for good jobs, and so that people can start their own businesses and become employers. North Carolina's job growth has been strong this year, and in June, the Department of Commerce released new projections that more than 300,000 new jobs will be created in North Carolina by 2028.

Chief Deputy Secretary Whichard concluded his presentation by recognizing Capital Area Workforce Development Board for being awarded this year's National Association of Workforce Boards Trailblazer Award. Capital Area Workforce Development Board and their Executive Director, Pat Sturdivant, were commended for their focus on apprenticeships and career pathways. Only two local workforce boards in the country received the award this year and this is the first time that any workforce board from North Carolina has been recognized with the Trailblazer award.

Chair Rabon officially welcomed Dr. Bruce Mack to the Commission who is taking over the role previously filled by Maureen Little. Dr. Mack is the Vice President of Economic Development at the NC Community College System Office. Additionally, Chair Rabon thanked Dr. Hope Williams for her service as chair of the Governance and System Alignment Committee and welcomed Chris Egan as the new chair of the committee.

Furthermore, Chair Rabon mentioned the August Economic Quarterly Report, noting that North Carolina's June unemployment rate was 4.6% compared to the national rate of 5.9%. North Carolina's total job growth rate, year to date was 5.8% and June saw the strongest job growth since last summer, along with declining unemployment and stable labor force participation. Although our state has yet to regain all the jobs lost during the COVID-19 recession, expectations for future business growth remain near the highest level in more than three years. Although we were hit hard by COVID-19, it did not interrupt the progression of major investments and new corporate businesses to North Carolina. Chair Rabon stated that over the past three years, North Carolina has successfully announced more than 73,000 new jobs and over \$19 billion in private business investment. Since last meeting, we have continued to see investments across the state including:

- 205 new jobs coming to Warren County as performance textile manufacture Glen Raven expands with an \$82 million investment.
- Roseburg Forest Products will bring a high-tech sustainable sawmill to Halifax County creating 137 jobs through a \$200 million investment.
- Red Bull and Rauch filling company who will invest \$740 million into a new manufacturing, filling and distribution creating 400 new jobs in Cabarrus County.
- 125 new jobs that will be coming to Brunswick and Columbus Counties through a \$9.3 million investment from Precision Swiss Products, Inc.
- 500 new jobs coming to Craven County through the opening of new manufacturing site of White River Marine Group, a leading manufacturer of recreational boats.

Chair Rabon stated, given the strong record of growth and investment even amidst the pandemic, national organizations have taken notice with North Carolina being awarded one of the 2021 Golden Shovel Awards by Area Development magazine as well as being named the 2nd in the country by CNBC on their list of, "Top States for Business." These national awards highlight North Carolina as being a

national and international force when it comes to creating an ecosystem that provides all North Carolinians a high quality of life through strong connections between our education, workforce, and economic development systems.

Chair Rabon also commended our local workforce development boards and community colleges for their continued efforts to support innovative workforce development programming and training for key populations including youth and justice-involved individuals. Recently, three workforce development boards – Northeastern, Centralina, and Capital Area were all awarded grants from the State of North Carolina to support youth-based initiatives from the Department of Commerce. These grants allow these local areas to expand or enhance employment and training services to eligible youth and young adults in their regions and continue to diversify our workforce pipeline. In continued support of youth, Chair Rabon mentioned that earlier this summer the Governor announced the Longleaf Commitment Grant to provide graduating 2021 high school seniors with a tuition free community college education at one of the 58 community colleges. Additionally, numerous community college have announced they are going tuition free this next year through new promise programs. Cape Fear Community College, in partnership with Cape Fear Workforce Development Board, received a \$3.9 million grant from the US Department of Labor to support access to courses and job training for up to 400 individuals in New Hanover and Pender County who are currently or formerly incarcerated.

Next, Chair Rabon celebrated the 1-year anniversary of the launch of NCCareers.org, the state's comprehensive career information systems. In short time, the site has had over 1.3 million visits and 180,000 unique individuals exploring various career pathways. Chair Rabon commended this innovative tool as it will continue to support career planning for individuals at various levels across the state and thanked the Department of Commerce and workforce partners who made this possible.

Chair Rabon reported Senate Bill 126 was adopted by the North Carolina General Assembly Conference Committee and signed by the Governor on July 22, 2021. The Bill will add two additional seats on the NCWorks Commission for WIOA Title II and Title IV Program representation.

Chair Rabon then recognized commission members for their work around the state. He began by recognizing Tammy Simmons, Commission member of Machine Specialties, Inc. for her continued commitment to supporting work-based learning and apprenticeships. Recently, one of her company apprentices, James Early, won a gold medal at the National SkillsUSA competition for Information Technology Services. Chair Rabon also recognized Secretary Machel Baker Sanders of the NC Department of Commerce for being appointed to the myFutureNC's board of Directors. Additionally, Chair Rabon offered congratulations to the NCWorks Commission's Executive Director, Dr. Annie Izod on the completion of her doctoral degree in Public Administration from NC State University.

May 2021 Minutes Approval

In moving the meeting to more formal business, Chair Rabon asked for a motion to approve the minutes from the May 12th meeting. The motion to approve the minutes as written was made by Paul Lawler and seconded by Shawn Brown. There being no corrections, the minutes were unanimously approved as written.

Workforce Updates

Afterwards, Chair Rabon introduced Chet Mottershead, Assistant Secretary of the NC Department of Commerce's Division of Workforce Solutions (DWS) who provided the Commission workforce updates. He began his update by discussing the role of the DWS at the North Carolina Department of Commerce. DWS is the state-level administrator for the Workforce Innovation & Opportunity Act (WIOA), Titles I and III, as well as the Jobs for Veterans State Grant and Trade Adjustment Assistance programs. Assistant Secretary Mottershead emphasized that DWS is focused on connecting talent to jobs, helping people get back to work, helping employers find and training the employees they need. The Division does this in partnership with the 23 local area workforce development boards across the state and the 80+ NCWorks career centers.

Assistant Secretary Mottershead commended Mountain Area Workforce Development Board for leading a successful job fair with an innovative "\$17 per hour and beyond" theme. This job fair was the first time Mountain Area has ever required employers to have at least one job opportunity paying that wage or more, in order to participate in the event. At the job fair, there were more than 300 jobseekers and 70 employers in attendance. Additionally, Assistant Secretary Mottershead emphasized the tight labor market and how it reinforces businesses to reach out to the NCWorks system to support them through recruiting, training, and work-based learning. There is an increased interest from employers to identify and connect to those "untapped" talent pools, people who have historically been underserved, overlooked, or marginalized. These can include youth, veterans, people with disabilities, older workers, jobseekers with criminal records, and people receiving public assistance. Assistant Secretary Mottershead echoed Secretary Baker Sanders and Deputy Secretary Whichard in that we have a historic opportunity, currently, to engage a more diverse workforce and utilize the talents and skills of all North Carolinians.

Assistant Secretary Mottershead continued his update by expounding upon DWS's role of providing policy and monitoring oversight of federal workforce funds. Currently, they planning a new training initiative for workforce development staff on contract management and other financial monitoring issues by working with the nationally known firm, Maher & Maher.

Concluding his updates, Assistant Secretary Mottershead discussed the Commission's policy process and the role DWS plays in that process:

1. DWS Policy and Planning staff will draft a policy, based on new U.S. Department of Labor mandates and local feedback.
2. DWS Leadership reviews the draft policy for legal compliance and alignment with the Governor's vision.
3. DWS Leadership and Dr. Annie Izod, NCWorks Commission Executive director, will meet with Director's Council Leadership for review.
4. The draft policy is released for a public comment period for WDB Directors, partners, and general public.
5. DWS Executive Leadership Team members and Assistant Secretary Mottershead review public comments and approve of the final draft policy.
6. Final Draft policies are submitted to the Governance and System Alignment Committee for review and vote to move to the full commission for a consent vote.

7. After Committee approval, policy is submitted to the Commission for an up-or-down vote at each quarterly business session meeting. Policy is then approved and posted on the Commerce web page. At the conclusion of the policy statement approval process, DWS may then add Operational Guidance later to refine or explain an existing policy.

2021 Annual Program Review Presentation

Chair Rabon thanked Assistant Secretary Mottershead and then introduced James Bain, Deputy Director of the NCWorks Commission, who provided a summary of results from on this year's Annual Program Review. The NCWorks Commission, in compliance with Session Law 2012-131, reviews and evaluates the plans and programs of the 19 workforce development programs administered by Department of Commerce, the Department of Public Instruction, the Department of Administration, North Carolina Community College System Office and the Department of Health and Human Services. The Commission collects data to determine funding levels, how funds are distributed, target populations, services to individuals, services to employers, program goals, performance measures, and types of outreach strategies as directed by the law.

The Annual Program review survey revealed that for both individuals and businesses networking events, printed materials, website, and word of mouth were the most common outreach strategies while newer social media platforms such as Instagram, Snapchat and Tik Tok are the least common. Also, only 45% of the program's surveyed are currently using the NCWorks app with their individual clients and business clients. However, several recommendations from respondents noted this may be a good opportunity to provide cross-training. Deputy Director Bain mentioned this is something that the NCWorks Commission staff will investigate as there are likely promising practices around outreach that individual agencies may be willing to share with partner agencies. This past year has challenged individuals, businesses, and agencies as the COVID-19 pandemic disrupted our lives. Along with this there has been renewed calls to address inequity and injustice within our society for those who continue to face systematic barriers to education and employment, including people of color, individuals with disabilities, and those who have been justice-involved. Programs reported they are using resources to address these challenges through specific programming including short-term training opportunities, specialized counseling, Diversity Equity and Inclusion Training and new programs to address digital literacy. This as an opportunity to continue promoting economic prosperity across North Carolina to serve all individuals and especially those who continue to face the greatest barriers.

Committee updates

Skills and Education Attainment Committee Chair Sherry Carpenter reported that the committee recently met on June 9th to have in-depth discussion on the disconnected youth initiative and projects. In collaboration and support of Piedmont Triad Regional Council, other workforce development boards and NextGen, the committee is focused on the development of the Dream It, Do It model – including its Ambassador Program which focuses on promoting access to job training and education and awareness of career pathways to youth, especially in the high-demand and high-growth fields. The committee's role will be to help identify or recommend industries for the ambassador program, promote the educational component of NextGen services and career pathways, create the outreach campaign, and facilitate focus groups of youth for feedback.

Additionally, the committee is continuing to support the efforts of NCcareers.org by assisting in efforts to promote and increase awareness of the tool by alerting the Labor and Economic Analysis Division (LEAD) to events where they can present on NCcareers.org and any new methods that can be utilized to help promote the tool, including the sharing ideas or feedback for improvements.

Lastly, the committee continues collaboration with myFutureNC. Recently, the committee met with Dr. Jeni Corn, director of strategic initiatives, myFutureNC, and Dr. Rebecca Tippet, director of Carolina demography, Carolina Population Center – UNC, to discuss the different methods and options that can be used to set state-level 2030 workforce target indicators. The committee set goals for labor market alignment, disconnected youth, labor participation and family-sustaining wage. Once all the target indicators are confirmed, the recommendations will be presented to the NCWorks Commission and the myFutureNC Board.

Employer Leadership Committee Chair Jeff Frederick stated the committee last met on July 15th. Dr. Jenni Harris, Executive Director of Business Services for the Division of Workforce Solutions (DWS) has continued to update the committee on the NC Job Ready Workforce Investment Grants. These grants are in response to the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) priority to foster the alignment of economic and workforce development. The NC Job Workforce Investment Grant Policy Statement, CPS 05-2021 is to be voted upon at today's Commission meeting.

Secondly, Dr. Jeni Corn myFutureNC Director of Strategic Initiatives is working with the Employer Leadership Committee and has received a grant from The Duke Energy Foundation to implement the first ever Pulse Survey. The goal is to receive a commitment from businesses across North Carolina to complete a 5-minute survey every month for six months. The survey and analysis of the responses will be conducted by LEAD of the Department of Commerce.

Furthermore, with the assistance of Jeff DeBellis, Director of Economic & Policy Department of Commerce and with input from commission members and partners, the review of the Employer Needs Survey is complete. The committee hopes to have an outline of the survey report complete by the November Commission meeting and a final report by the end of the year.

Lastly, The NCWorks Commission and the Municipal Research Lab at NC State University have come together to establish the North Carolina Workforce Development Academy. The new academy will train individuals for positions of leadership within the workforce development community, with students graduating from the program as a Certified Workforce Developer. The academy is still in the fundraising stage; and are working towards the first class of students beginning in January 2022.

Local Innovation Committee On behalf of Chair Olalah Njenga, Executive Director, Dr. Annie Izod stated the committee last met on August 10th. At that meeting, the committee discussed old business, which includes the NCWorks Spotlight on Local Innovation Webinar Series. The next webinar in the series is scheduled for Wednesday, September 22nd at 2pm highlighting GuilfordWorks Adult Apprenticeship Program. The committee sent out a "Save the Date" to all members. The meeting will be recorded in the event members cannot attend. Additionally, the committee welcomed new business. New business included review of Workforce Observer and a discussion about rural innovation. At each committee meeting members are expected to share something they learned from the observer as well as any innovative programs related to rural workforce development.. This new format of knowledge sharing will provide great insight into future spotlights and webinars. Additionally, the committee was provided

a report on the initiatives of the Employer Leadership Committee. The committee looks forward to continuing to support the output of the other committees as it pertains to local workforce innovations.

Governance and System Alignment Committee Chair Chris Egan reported the committee last met on July 13th to review and vote on the two Commission Policy Statements along with CPS 05-2021 from a previous meeting listed below. Final drafts were sent to all commission members prior to the quarterly business session.

CPS 09-2021 WIOA Youth Formula Funds Expenditure Requirement

This policy statement will inform Local Area Workforce Development Board (WDBs) of the requirements to meet the mandated 20% work experience expenditure rate for local WIOA Title I Youth formula funds and the mandated expenditure rate of at least 75% for local Youth formula funds used to serve out-of-school youth.

CPS 10-2021 WIOA Nondiscrimination Equal Opportunity Standards and Complaint Procedure

This is the 10th Commission Policy Statement of 2021. This new policy statement will provide Local Area Workforce Development Boards (WDBs) and other subrecipients minimum standards and procedures designed to ensure that all WIOA programs will be conducted in accordance with applicable equal opportunity and nondiscrimination requirements. This policy statement also provides complaint procedure protocol and current contact information for state and federal officials.

CPS 05-2021 and DWS Operational Guidance 20-2021

This policy statement will set aside \$1 million in total funding for Program Year 2021 for the 23 Local Area Workforce Development Boards (maximum of \$50,000 per project) to participate in new and expanding economic development projects in North Carolina. This funding is for On-The-Job Training Grants and Incumbent Worker Training Grants to assist these employers with hiring new staff and training their current staff with new skills to do new operations.

Chair Rabon asked if there were any questions before the vote. There being no questions or corrections, the commission then voted to unanimously approve each of these policy statements by consent.

Career Pathways Recognition

Chair Rabon acknowledged Sherry Carpenter, chair of the Skills and Education Attainment Committee, to recognize a new career pathway in human services.

The Future Workforce Alliance launched the **Human Services Career Pathway** as an approach to address current and future employment concerns and training needs for human services occupations. The Future Workforce Alliance represents a collaboration of Foothills, High Country, and Western Piedmont Workforce Development Boards – serving 15 counties in North Carolina’s northwestern corner and Foothills area, including 10 of the 12 Future Forward Economic Alliance counties.

Sherry Carpenter then presented the Future Workforce Alliance representatives their certificate and certificates for three previous pathways from last year’s virtual recognitions that included: Construction and Skilled Trades Career Pathway, Aerospace and Aviation Career Pathway from May 2020 and Agriscience/Biotechnology Career Pathway from August 2020. North Carolina now has a total of 41 recognized career pathways.

Closing Business

Chair Rabon thanked Sherry Carpenter and then closed the meeting thanking everyone for their participation and patience in meeting in a hybrid setting. The next NCWorks Commission quarterly business session will be on November 10, 2021. The NCWorks Commission 2022 meeting dates are February 9, 2022, May 11, 2022, August 10, 2022 and November 9, 2022. There being no more business, the meeting was adjourned.

Respectfully submitted,

Annie Izod

Pending approval on November 10, 2021.