



NCWorks Commission Quarterly Business Session

Wednesday, February 10, 2021

Cisco WebEx Meeting Webinar

1:00 – 2:00 P.M.

Raleigh, NC

Minutes

Present: Chairman Tom Rabon, Broxton Ashburn, Anita Bachmann, Shawn Brown, Sherry Carpenter, Chris Egan (Mandy Cohen), Osceola Elliss, Jessica Englert (Governor Cooper), Jeff Frederick, Christopher Gergen, Byron Hicks (Peter Hans), Steven Hunt, Suzanne Johnson, Himanshu Karvir, Paul Lawler, Maureen Little (Thomas Stith), Candace Lowry (Machelle Baker Sanders), Marti Matthews Martin, David Miller, MaryBe McMillan, Olalah Njenga, Mike Okun, Stan Sherrill, Ronnie Smith, David Spratley (Interim Secretary of Commerce), Kim Toler, Pam Townsend, Jim Van Camp, and Hope Williams

Absent: Tammy Simmons, Catherine Truitt, and Leslie Walden

Opening Business

The first quarterly business session of the year began with a welcome to the commission members and attendees from Chair Tom Rabon. He recognized former Secretary Tony Copeland for his leadership and many accomplishments during his four-year tenure of service with the North Carolina Department of Commerce. He then spoke about North Carolina's reputation for attracting corporate headquarters and how major investments have accelerated during the pandemic because of the state's low costs and less dense population. For example, he mentioned that Epic Games has recently purchased the former Cary Towne Center for \$95 million to turn it into their new corporate headquarters. He added that in Greenville, a group of long-time Greenville families are backing plans to renovate two old tobacco buildings into 70-room boutique hotel - to be called the Ficklen Hotel – with additional plans for a 76,000 square feet food hall and market.

Furthermore, he informed the commission about the **North Carolina Workforce Development Leadership Academy**, a new partnership with North Carolina State University's (NCSU) Municipal Research Lab. This new academy will provide professional training and educational opportunities for workforce development professionals, elected officials, local business leaders, economic development professionals, and other interested parties throughout the state of North Carolina. Graduates of the academy will be prepared for leadership positions within the workforce development community across the state. The curriculum will be taught virtually or in person at the McKimmon Center at NCSU by one of eight professors from the UNC System. One of the stipulations of this partnership is that two commission members will serve on an advisory board for the Workforce Academy. The advisory board,

which will be comprised of a total of five individuals, will provide feedback on the plans of the academy, the curriculum of the program, and other matters as needed.

Chair Rabon recognized five new members who recently joined the NCWorks Commission: Catherine Truitt, the new state superintendent of the North Carolina Department of Public Instruction; Thomas Stith, president of the North Carolina Community College System; Leslie Walden, vice president of public affairs with Fidelity Investments; Byron Hicks, the new state director of the Small Business and Technology Development Center and assistant vice chancellor of business and technology extension programs in the office of external affairs, partnerships, and economic development at NCSU; and Tammy Simmons, marketing vice president of human resources at Machine Specialties, Inc., who will also be our registered apprenticeship expert and serve on the Employer Leadership Committee.

In moving the meeting to more formal business, Chair Rabon asked for a motion to approve the minutes from the November 18th meeting. The motion was approved by Candace Lowry and seconded by Jeff Frederick. The minutes were approved as written.

The second action item of business was the approval of the updated and revised **NCWorks Commission Strategic Plan for 2021-2023**. Updates were made to the current strategic plan which focuses on key priorities from Governor Cooper's *NC Job Ready Initiative*. NC Job Ready targets three core principles; skills and education attainment, employer leadership, and local innovation throughout North Carolina. Collectively, ensuring North Carolinians are ready for jobs of today and tomorrow is our goal. The plan contains many updates to focus on inclusively reaching many more North Carolinians with improved technology and services, which will ensure more people are equipped with the resources needed to improve their careers and provide our local businesses with a highly skilled workforce. A motion was made by Dr. Hope Williams to approve the plan, seconded by Sherry Carpenter. The strategic plan was approved unanimously.

The next item of business was a presentation by Jade Manley, director of local innovation at the NCWorks Commission, highlighting some of the initiatives and work accomplished by the Local Innovation Committee.

Spotlights, Local Innovation Committee Presentation

Ms. Manley highlighted three programs. The first program was *GuilfordWorks on Coursera Initiative*, which is targeted to Guilford County residents. The initiative is offered at no cost to participants, as the cost is assumed by Coursera. Participants can take as many courses as they like, but they must have completed the courses by December 20, 2020 to earn certificates. Typically, courses take two-three weeks, but some can run as short as sixteen hours to as long as three months, providing more opportunities for participants to earn certificates.

The second program highlighted was the *Charlotte Mayor's Youth Employment Program (MYEP)*. MYEP, which started in 1986, began to be reimagined as a virtual career readiness program in partnership with Radius Learning Group, LinkedIn Learning and Charlotte Mecklenburg Schools, offering a five-week career pathway experience. The Radius team developed the virtual pathways, CMS provided 20 teachers to serve as virtual guides, and LinkedIn Learning provided access to a content library of more than 5,000 courses. The pathways consisted of skills development, work-based learning, coaching sessions, industry interactive sessions with representatives from local employers and life skills sessions focused on developing confidence and professional habits.

The last program, Ms. Manley highlighted was the *Year Up Charlotte* program that targets young adults, ages 18-26, residing in the Charlotte area. There is no cost to participants and students earn college credits and have access to Central Piedmont Community College's many services, including the college's library and tutoring resources, as well as additional Year Up services. Participants are provided a career pathway into one of the three in-demand fields: cybersecurity, software development or project management support.

Hearing no questions, Chair Rabon moved to the next order of business - reports from the commission committee chairs.

Committee Reports

Skills and Education Attainment Committee Chair Sherry Carpenter reported that last year, much of the committee's time was spent working with education officials and learning about the changes in their systems due to the pandemic. In addition, the committee is revisiting their workplan for the initiatives in that are included in the new NCWorks Commission strategic plan. Committee members met on February 2nd, where they received an update on *NCCareers.org* from Jamie Vaughn, senior analyst for market intelligence, N.C. Dept. of Commerce Labor and Economic Analysis Division, and how the committee can help support their efforts. He talked about how the website is progressing since its launch last summer and its new features, such as the addition of eligible training providers, skills matchers, and new start jobs. The outreach for this platform to a variety of populations, including the incarcerated, was discussed. The committee plans to help raise awareness of *NCCareers.org* and share feedback from employers and job seekers.

Another area of discussion is around disconnected youth and the *NextGen Youth Summit*, in which the committee hopes to support this year and work with the workforce development board directors' youth leads group. Recently, the committee heard a presentation from the Youth Summit co-chairs, Solomon McAuley and Jeremy Wilson, about the summit and its virtual plans for the year.

Committee members were very engaged in the revisions of strategic plan goal 1. They look forward to aligning committee work with myFutureNC and the local workforce development boards, to name a few.

Last of all, the committee is adding a work group meeting in March to allow more time to deep dive into agenda items. The next official meeting is on May 4th.

Chair Rabon thanked Committee Chair Carpenter for her report and turned it over to Committee Chair Jeff Frederick

Employer Leadership Committee Chair Frederick informed the commission that the committee last met on January 20th, where they received a status update from Dr. Jenni Harris, Executive Director of Business Services for DWS, on the draft workforce incentive policy. This new grant would be included with NC Commerce incentive proposals to business prospects who may locate or expand in the state and this proposal will further support the alignment of economic development and workforce development. The data captured on these projects will allow us the opportunity to better address economic and workforce development needs, enhance collaboration with economic and workforce development on data collection, provide valuable information on projects looking to locate or expand in North Carolina; and provide more consistent and compliant data to meet federal WIOA requirements.

Dr. Harris also gave a presentation on the on the *Enterprise Customer Project*. The project will serve to amend the current Job Order Policy. Workforce is starting to receive requests for large job orders crossing multiple workforce development boards local areas. This new policy change will make the hiring process seamless for these large employers with multiple locations across the state.

Freeman Denton, business services strategy and performance analyst with Division of Workforce Solutions, shared an update on the Salesforce pilot project. He demonstrated the key areas of the business services salesforce platform and provided an overview of this project from the prospective of the DWS and from the prospective of the local workforce development boards.

The Employer Leadership Committee is in discussion with the Municipal Research Lab at NCSU to assist in the development of the NC Workforce Development Academy. The MOU has been signed and the next step is to release a needs assessment questionnaire, which will be mailed to workforce professionals, economic developers, and other audiences. The intent is to start the academy in August 2021.

Next, **Local Innovation Committee** Chair Olalah Njenga announced that committee the hosted the first webinar in the *Commission Webinar Series* on December 10th, highlighting technology utilized by the Rivers East Workforce Development Board in providing a virtual job fair to jobseekers and businesses within their local area. The webinar had roughly 20 participants and received positive feedback. The committee plans to meet on February 11th to discuss the next steps in the series as they look to expand the audience.

The committee held its first meeting of the new year on January 21st to review and discuss changes incorporated into the commission's strategic plan. The primary changes included integrating additional language to strengthen the committee's objectives. Also, the addition of a third bullet, which outlines the committee's focus in highlighting workforce recovery efforts aimed to address challenges due to the global COVID-19 pandemic. While it is broad in scope, the additional bullet allows the committee to bring in a wide variety of examples to spotlight as they work to provide a reimagined approach to talent pipeline efforts, like the virtual job fair platform that commission members previewed in December.

Additionally, at that meeting, the committee decided to utilize the *Workforce Observer* and local area member highlight. Moving forward at each committee meeting, members will be expected to share something they learned from the observer as well research innovative workforce programs in their area or sector to share. This new format of knowledge sharing will provide great insight into future spotlights and webinars.

Lastly, the committee decided on a 2021 meeting schedule. They will meet monthly, primarily on the same week for an hour with their second meeting of the new year scheduled February 11th.

Next, **Governance and System Alignment Committee** Chair Dr. Hope Williams reported their committee last met on January 22nd. Chair Williams stated the committee reviewed the following four policy statements for the full commission to vote on. Final drafts were sent to the members prior to the quarterly business session.

1. CPS 01-2021--NCWorks Commission Sanctions Policy Statement: The U.S. Department of Labor (USDOL) has mandated the NCWorks Commission establish and implement a sanctions policy for

the *State Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA)*. This new policy statement will be the first sanctions policy for North Carolina and will establish both a sanctions process and an appeal processes for all subrecipients of federal grant awards and state grants, where applicable.

Chair Rabon asked if there were any comments or questions before the vote. A motion was brought to the floor by the committee and the NCWorks Commission Sanctions Policy Statement was approved.

2. CPS 03-2021--2021 Local Area WDB Plan Update: This year is the second year of a four-year planning cycle—with the comprehensive four-year plan being released last year. This year’s plan is an update year for the local area plans. The committee reviewed and voted to approve the 2021 Local Area Plan Policy Statement (and the associated instructions attachment) and forward it to the commission for a vote of acceptance.

Chair Rabon asked if there were any comments or questions before the vote. The motion was brought to the floor by the committee. The Commission voted to approve the 2021 Local Area Plan Policy Statement and Guidance as written.

3. CPS-2021--Status and Use of Current DWS Policy Statements: Chair Williams stated that at the November 18th business session meeting, the Commission approved the first Commission Policy Statement which began the process of all major WIOA Title 1 and Title 3 policies being approved by the Commission. She added at that time, the Commission voted to convert 21 existing DWS Policy Statements over to Commission Policy Statements. After much due diligence, the committee found there are more DWS Policy Statements which will need to be updated and converted to Commission Policy Statements over the coming months. The DWS Policy and Planning Department has developed a new policy statement to clarify the status and use of current DWS Policy Statements during the transition of policies, according to NCWorks Commission Policy Statement (CPS) 01-2020. This replaces the former DWS Policy Statement format and ensures compliance with the USDOL mandated change to grant the NCWorks Commission approval authority over major WIOA Title 1 and Title 3 policy in North Carolina. This policy statement will serve document this process. The committee reviewed and voted to approve the Status and Use of Current DWS Policy Statements.

Chair Rabon asked if there were any comments or questions. A motion was made by the Governance and System Alignment Committee to approve the policy statement. The motion carried to accept the statement as written.

4. Goal 4 of the 2021 Strategic Plan: Chair Williams noted that the committee discussed the 2021 *NCWorks Commission Strategic Plan* and the edits they incorporated into Goal 4. The committee voted to accept the revised 2021 Strategic Plan and move it forward to the entire Commission for a vote of acceptance at the February 10th quarterly meeting.

After the committee reports, Chair Rabon introduced Dr. Betty McGrath, Employment Statistics Director, N.C. Dept. of Commerce Labor and Economic Analysis Division, for a presentation on the 2021 Annual North Carolina Workforce Development System Performance Report.

2021 Annual North Carolina Workforce Development System Performance Report

Dr. McGrath began with an overview of the background of the annual workforce development system performance report. Under the *Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act* and N.C. General Statute, the NCWorks Commission is authorized with the responsibility to develop and continuously improve performance measures to assess the effectiveness of workforce programs in the state. The statute outlines the Commission's duties, including the development and delivery of an annual report to the N.C. General Assembly about the effectiveness of its workforce programs. The Commission staff is responsible for collaborating with the Department of Commerce on the Common Follow-up System (CFS). In 2012, the Commission appointed an advisory committee to assist the Commission in the development of performance measures. The committee's work resulted in a definition of methodology, a set of core measures to be utilized and a data source - CFS. CFS is a longitudinal system that provides technology and analytical infrastructure to link student and participant data across programs and institutions to employment and wage information. To provide data to the CFS, the Department of Commerce works in collaboration with the various education, employment, and training agencies: NC Department of Health and Human Services, NC Community College System, the UNC System, the Department of Public Instruction, the Division of Workforce Solutions, the Division of Employment Security, and the Labor and Economic Analysis Division.

In this year's report, there are 15 workforce programs. Under the Dept. of Commerce, there are the Wagner Peyser, Veteran's Employment, WIOA Title I adult/dislocated worker/youth programs. Under the Dept. of Health and Human Services, there are the Services for the Blind, Vocational Rehabilitation, and Work First. For the Dept. of Public Instruction, there is the Secondary Career and Technical Education program. The N.C. Community College System has the Apprenticeship, Basic Skills, Customized Training, Human Resources Development, Workforce Continuing Education, and Postsecondary Career, Technical and Vocational Education programs. The 15 programs served more than 1.3 million individuals across the state in 2010. In 2014, the number served declined to slightly more than 886,000 individuals; in 2018 it had further declined to nearly 758,000, and in 2019, we saw an increase to 855,000 individuals served. As the pandemic continues, it is anticipated that several of the programs will see an increase in participants. Each of the programs have a set of cohort measures that were calculated. The reporting includes information for two cohort years – 2012-13 & 2013-14 programs.

Closing Business

With no questions or comments for Dr. McGrath and no new business, Chair Rabon closed the meeting thanking everyone for their participation and patience in this virtual setting until we can all come together again for an in-person meeting. The next NCWorks Commission meeting will be another webinar session on May 12, 2021. There being no more business, the meeting was adjourned.

Respectfully submitted,

Annie Izod

Approved on May 12, 2021