



## **NCWorks Commission Special Meeting**

Wednesday, March 30, 2022

Cisco WebEx Meeting Webinar | 1:00 – 2:00 P.M.

Raleigh, NC

### **Minutes**

#### *Present:*

Governor Roy Cooper, Chair Tom Rabon, Broxton Ashburn, Shawn Brown, Sherry Carpenter, Chris Egan (Secretary Kody Kinsley), Jeffrey Frederick, Christopher Gergen, Byron Hicks (Peter Hans), Suzanne Johnson, Andrea DeSantis, Candace Lowry, Secretary Pamela B. Cashwell, Bruce Mack (Thomas Stith), MaryBe McMillan, Himanshu Karvir, Mike Okun, Stan Sherrill, Rodney Carson, Paul Lawler, Pam Townsend, Olalah Njenga, Cheryl Richards, Cynthia Speight, Kim Toler, Kristie VanAuken (Superintendent Catherine Truitt), Leslie Walden, Gilda Rubio-Festa, Chief Deputy Secretary Jordan Whichard (Secretary Machel Baker Sanders), Hope Williams, Marti Matthews Martin, Tammy Simmons, Jim VanCamp, John Wesley Davis IV, Nikki Nissen, Steven Con Hunt, and Annie Izod

*Absent:* Ronnie Smith

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### **Welcome**

The meeting began with a welcome from NCWorks Commission Chair Tom Rabon to the special meeting of the NCWorks Commission. Chair Rabon provided a brief overview of the upcoming meeting and told commission members that Governor Cooper would be joining the meeting to provide opening remarks. Chair Rabon then introduced the Honorable Governor Roy Cooper.

### **Opening Remarks**

Governor Cooper began by recognizing the Governance and System Alignment committee for all their efforts in studying workforce development board system alignment. The committee met several times over the past few months to analyze data and to hear diverse perspectives on how our local workforce development areas are currently arranged. They also learned of the opportunities to bring them into closer alignment with economic development activities. The Governor stated this was most likely the most inclusive and extensive study that has ever been done regarding workforce and economic development alignment in North Carolina.

As the result of this study, the committee recommended *a realignment of the existing service areas of local workforce development boards to promote alignment with economic development activities in our state*. In addition, the Committee identified eight guiding principles to help local leaders in their realignment efforts:

1. Seek to better the lives of North Carolinians through realignment.
2. Expand local workforce development board access.
3. Decrease redundancy among local workforce development boards within economic development areas.
4. Better align community college and workforce development board service areas.
5. Match local workforce development board outreach to area jobseeker and business customer needs.
6. Ensure consistent service, strong visibility, and sufficient capacity among local workforce development boards.
7. Allow flexibility for administrative entities
8. Consider further review of the broader workforce system.

The Governor stated the NCWorks Commission is not mandating a particular map or a particular number of local workforce development areas. Instead, the commission is providing an invitation for local elected officials to align local areas in a way that meets the needs of their regions. Through these eight guiding principles, the commission is providing tools to help guide these leaders at the local level. This represents an opportunity to consider ways to improve upon our state's overall effectiveness in delivering workforce services, while following the lead of federal law and responding to what jobseekers and businesses need today.

The Governor emphasized that we want to foster better coordination and partnership among agencies, promote greater consistency, particularly for North Carolina businesses, use resources efficiently, and strengthen our economy through closer alignment between workforce and economic development.

The Governor reiterated through closer alignment, we can continue to bring more jobs and investment to all corners of North Carolina, leaving no region behind. This initiative is one important part of keeping North Carolina competitive today and for years to come.

### **Workforce Board System Realignment Memorandum Approval**

Chair Tom Rabon thanked Governor Cooper for his remarks and for his leadership on these important issues related to workforce development in North Carolina. Chair Rabon joined the Governor in recognizing the efforts of the Governance and System Alignment committee members, as well as staff, on their dedication and thoughtfulness in completing this study. Chair Rabon stated this marks a historic opportunity for the NCWorks Commission to show leadership in our role of developing and recommending policies and strategies for the workforce system. If approved, this document will serve as guidance to local elected officials and stakeholders across North Carolina. Chair Rabon then moved on to the first order of business for the meeting, the approval of the Workforce Board System Alignment Study memorandum. Prior to the meeting, all commission members were sent a copy of the Workforce Board System Realignment memorandum from the Governance & System Alignment committee, which includes recommendations and guiding principles. This memo was also placed on the North Carolina Department of Commerce website for a public comment period of 14 days. Chair Rabon asked the commission members if they had any questions or comments before the vote. There being none, Chair Rabon asked for a motion to approve the memorandum. Chris Egan made the motion to approve and Gilda Rubio-Festa seconded the motion. The commission then voted to unanimously to approve the

memorandum, with only Sherry Carpenter abstaining from the vote. After the vote, Executive Director Dr. Annie Izod noted that counties may make requests for transfer at any time. Local elected officials are encouraged to contact the NC Department of Commerce Division of Workforce Solutions for any guidance and technical assistance needed on realignment. Dr. Izod also encouraged local elected officials to submit their requests by August 1<sup>st</sup>, 2022, for approval during the August 10<sup>th</sup>, 2022, NCWorks Commission Quarterly Business Meeting, in order to meet the target date of July 1<sup>st</sup>, 2023.

### **Workforce Updates**

Chair Rabon began by thanking all the commission members for their service on the NCWorks Commission and highlighted all the great work they have accomplished together in their 4 respective committees during the previous year:

*The Skills and Education Attainment Committee* collaborated with myFutureNC to set state-level 2030 goals for workforce indicators, given their shared commitment to partner and align data and metrics. Additionally, the committee organized the NCWorks Commission Youth Focus Group Series “Pathways to Success.” This project was designed to learn more about the obstacles for youth in growing their careers and their ideas on how to reach other youth to connect them to NextGen Services.

*The Employer Leadership Committee* in partnership with myFutureNC, The Department of Commerce’s Labor & Economic Analysis Division (LEAD), and the Duke Energy Foundation, released the 2021-2022 Business Pulse Survey which has provided timely insights from our businesses about recruitment and retention strategies as the state continues to navigate changes due to the COVID-19 pandemic. The Employer Leadership Committee also continues to support the development of the North Carolina Workforce Academy.

*The Local Innovation Committee* is working on an in-depth evaluation of the six NCWorks Local Innovation Grants to highlight best practices in local workforce development, which will result in a final report to be published this year. Additionally, since starting the NCWorks Local Innovation Webinar initiative, the committee has hosted three webinars to further promote and highlight local workforce innovations. Their next webinar will be announced in the committee reports today.

*The Governance and System Alignment Committee* has been diligently working since November on the workforce board system alignment study. But they have also had several other projects. They have reviewed and provided recommendations for the two-year revision cycle for the WIOA Unified State Plan and the 2022 NCWorks Career Center certification criteria.

Chair Rabon, thanked each of the committees and staff leads for all the valuable work they have done in the past year to help the NCWorks Commission achieve its overarching goals in ensuring all North Carolinians are prepared for the jobs of today and tomorrow.

Chair Rabon then recognized and introduced the newest member of the commission. John Wesley Davis IV is a native of Winston-Salem and has served as Director & Client Advisor at Alex.Brown (formerly Deutsche Bank, and now a division of Raymond James) since 2008. Mr. Davis manages investment portfolios for private and institutional clients. He previously worked with RBC in a similar capacity. Prior to that, he held sales and

marketing positions with Aon, Nextel, and several other consulting firms.

### **February 2022 Minutes Approval**

In moving the meeting to more formal business, Chair Rabon asked for a motion to approve the minutes from the February 9<sup>th</sup> meeting. The motion to approve the minutes as written was made by Olalah Njenga and seconded by Stan Sherill. There being no corrections, the minutes were unanimously approved as written.

### **Committee Reports**

***Skills and Education Attainment Committee*** Chair Sherry Carpenter reported the committee continues to focus on its goal to prepare workers to succeed in our economy by increasing skills and education attainment. To expand on the youth focus group series that Chair Rabon previously mentioned, the series is intended to help address awareness of NextGen services under their disconnected youth initiative. A next step for the committee is a long-term awareness project using an ambassador model to engage youth and industry leaders who will share their pathway experiences and highlights about careers in their industries. The committee will also review the 40 NCWorks certified career pathways and follow up on the pathways' progress, validity, and to develop ways to support their efforts. The committee is currently in the process of gathering information and developing a strategic plan of action, which will include organizing a subcommittee to concentrate on specific elements and report back to the committee.

***Employer Leadership Committee*** Chair Jeff Frederick informed the commission that the committee plans to follow-up on results gathered from the Employer Needs Survey. The committee is working with NC State University, Institute for Emerging Issues on an EDA (Economic Development Administration) grant to support the establishment of the first ever North Carolina Workforce Academy. Sarah Langer Hall, Interim Director at the Institute for Emerging Issues has indicated the application process is moving forward and anticipates a final decision by May 2022. If the grant is approved, the Workforce Academy will begin operations in the fall of 2022.

***Local Innovation Committee*** Chair Leslie Walden reported The Local Innovation Committee is charged with supporting local innovation through three workstreams, the NCWorks Local Innovation Fund, the Spotlight on Local Innovation Publication, and the Local Innovation Webinars. The committee is currently overseeing the evaluation of the NCWorks Local Innovation Fund. Additionally, the committee will continue to develop the Spotlight on Local Innovation publication, which highlights promising workforce programs and initiatives. Lastly, the committee is excited to host the fourth webinar in the commission webinar series. This webinar will feature Craven Community College's Manufacturing Career Pathways at the Volt Center.

***Governance and System Alignment Committee*** Chair Chris Egan reported the committee's next major project will be developing the 2022 Annual Program Review later this spring. The committee is planning to survey the 5 state agencies which operate the 19 workforce development programs within the state, this is done on an annual basis pursuant to North Carolina General Statute. The committee will use the results of the survey to develop the 2022 Annual Program Review report which will be presented during the August 10, 2023, commission meeting. The committee plans continue reviewing all major WIOA Title I and Title III policies and make recommendations to the commission.

## **2022 Career Center Certification Criteria**

Chair Egan stated last fall, the committee sent out surveys to the Local Workforce Development Boards, career center staff, and career center partners across the state on the changes in service delivery since the pandemic. The committee used the results of these surveys to aid in the development of the revised Career Center Certification Criteria, which was updated to reflect all the changes in virtual technology which have been implemented in the career centers across North Carolina.

## **Transfer of Chatham and Lee Counties to the Capital Area WDB**

Chair Egan noted the committee recently met to review all the forms related to the transfer of Chatham and Lee Counties to the Capital Area WDB due to the dissolution of the Triangle South WDB. After review and discussion, the committee voted in favor of the request to transfer Chatham and Lee Counties to the Capital Area WDB.

## **CPS 03-2022 Local Workforce Development Area Transfer of County(ies) Policy**

Chair Egan remarked that the primary purpose of this policy is to inform Local Area Workforce Development Boards (WDBs) and local elected officials of the requirements and process for the transfer of one or more counties when a unit of local government requests a change to the composition of their Local Workforce Development Area. The need for this policy became apparent because of the expressed local desire for the Triangle South Workforce Development Board area to be dissolved, and for the counties that are currently being served by Triangle South WDB to be served by either Capital Area WDB or the new Mid-Carolina WDB in the future. Therefore, our state needed to have in writing, as a policy statement, some instructions regarding the procedures that should be followed when local elected officials want a transfer to happen. This type of local realignment has not occurred in North Carolina for many years and having a policy like this in place keeps North Carolina in compliance with the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA). Additionally, it should be noted that the local officials' decisions regarding Triangle South WDB came well before the Governance & System Alignment Committee began its study regarding a potential realignment.

Following Chris Egan's update, Chair Rabon moved to vote on 2022 Career Center Certification Criteria, Transfer of Chatham and Lee Counties to the Capital Area WDB, and CPS 03-2022 Local Workforce Development Area Transfer of County(ies) Policy. As the motion was brought to the floor by the Governance and System Alignment Committee, Chair Rabon asked if there were any comments or questions before the vote. There being none, the Commission then voted unanimously to accept the 2022 Career Center Certification Criteria, Transfer of Chatham and Lee Counties to the Capital Area WDB, and CPS 03-2022 Local Workforce Development Area Transfer of County(ies) Policy as written. Chair Rabon asked for the meeting minutes to reflect that commission member Rodney Carson abstained from voting for the action item -Transfer of Chatham and Lee Counties to the Capital Area WDB.

## **Closing Business**

Chair Rabon thanked all the commission members for their tireless work in ensuring North Carolina continues to be a leader in workforce and economic development. He reminded members that the next NCWorks Commission meeting will be in person with virtual access on May 11<sup>th</sup>, 2022, at The Conference Center at Guilford Technical Community College. With no questions or comments, Chair Rabon closed the meeting by

thanking everyone for their participation and patience in the virtual setting. There being no more business, the meeting was adjourned.

Respectfully submitted,

Dr. Annie Izod  
Approved on May 11, 2022