



NCWorks Commission Quarterly Business Session

Wednesday, May 12, 2021
Cisco WebEx Meeting Webinar
1:00 – 2:00 P.M.
Raleigh, NC

Minutes

Present:

Chairman Tom Rabon, Sa'Metria D. Jones (Governor Roy Cooper), Secretary Machel Baker Sanders, Kim Toler, MaryBe McMillan, Shawn Brown, Marti Matthews Martin, Paul Lawler, Suzanne Johnson, Jim Van Camp, Byron Hicks (Peter Hans), Broxton Ashburn, Candace Lowry (Secretary Pamela B. Cashwell), Chris Egan (Secretary Mandy Cohen), Stan Sherrill, Maureen Little (Thomas Stith), Osceola Elliss, Pam Townsend, Anita Bachmann, Christopher Gergen, Himanshu Karvir, Olalah Njenga, Sherry Carpenter, Jeff Frederick, Dr. Hope Williams, David Miller, Leslie Walden, Ronnie Smith, Stephen Hunt, Kristie VanAuken (Catherine Truitt), and Tammy Simmons.

Absent:

Mike Okun, Josh Arant

Opening Business

The second quarterly business session of 2021 began with a welcome to the NCWorks Commission members from Chair Tom Rabon. He then introduced NC Commerce Secretary Machel Baker Sanders and Chief Deputy Secretary of Commerce, Jordan Whichard. Afterwards, Secretary Sanders provided opening remarks to the commission on her vision for the post-pandemic economic recovery in North Carolina.

Secretary Sanders thanked the commission staff and the I.T. staff for all their work to make it possible for us to meet virtually. She stated she is a native of Belhaven, in rural eastern North Carolina. Before joining Governor Cooper's administration, she worked in leadership roles in the pharmaceutical and biotechnology sector. In her previous role as the Secretary of the Department of Administration, she also served on the NCWorks Commission.

Secretary Sanders discussed her plan to execute on a bold vision for economic restoration and progress for our state and its people in the wake of the COVID-19 pandemic through establishing five main priorities for the Department of Commerce.

- **Job Creation** — attracting, retaining, and expanding jobs, with an increased focus on entrepreneurialism, emerging markets, and the innovation economy.

- **Workforce Development** — in keeping with the Governor’s NC Job Ready initiative, we must support world-class talent for the jobs of today and tomorrow -- which is why we are all here today.
- **Post-pandemic Recovery** — with a sharp focus on rural North Carolina and equitable, inclusive practices in all that we do.
- **Public Policy** — advocating, enabling, and advancing policies that influence the business environment, economy, and well-being of residents and communities; and finally...
- **Cultural Transformation within the Department of Commerce** — operational excellence, enhanced employee engagement, equity and inclusion, superior customer service, talent development, and making decisions with data and evidence.

Secretary Sanders further stated she envisions North Carolina as 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 our people can start their own businesses and become employers. With effective collaboration and innovation, we will realize new economic possibilities for rural areas and groups that have historically been marginalized.

Secretary Sanders commended the Division of Employment Security for their hard work during the pandemic. Since March of 2020, the Division has paid out well over \$11 billion in assistance to almost a million North Carolina workers - most of that coming from federal funds. She stated our current state unemployment rate stands at 5.2 percent, which is lower than the national unemployment rate. She reflected on a recent study which found that North Carolina has been among the states with the fewest job losses per capita, since the pandemic began.

Secretary Sanders discussed several recent economic development projects which highlight the rapid growth of North Carolina’s economy. In March, Governor Cooper announced that FUJIFILM Diosynth Biotechnologies, a world leading contract development and manufacturing organization, will create 725 jobs in Wake County. Raybow, a global provider of outsourced pharmaceutical process development and manufacturing services, will expand its operations in Transylvania County - adding 74 jobs. Robinhood Markets, a California-based financial services firm, will create nearly 400 jobs in Mecklenburg County. Abzena Holdings, another life sciences contract development and manufacturing organization, will locate a significant biopharmaceutical manufacturing site in Lee County, creating 325 jobs. AP Emissions Technologies, an automotive exhaust manufacturer, will create 96 new jobs in Wayne County. Finally, the biggest “win” of them all may have been last month’s announcement that Apple will create 3,000 jobs in Wake County, while investing more than \$1 billion in our state by 2032. These jobs will have salaries that average \$187,000 per year.

Secretary Sanders discussed a recent report by the Department of Commerce on the offshore wind industry, which included a discussion of workforce needs. North Carolina stands to attract a significant portion of a more than \$100 billion market opportunity in this sector. Part of our state’s competitive edge comes from our traditional strength in manufacturing because we can produce the components needed for the offshore wind market. Wind energy means new jobs for North Carolinians.

Tom Rabon thanked Secretary Sanders for her remarks and reiterated 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 since we last met in February, more than 5,400 new jobs have been created in North Carolina with manufacturers Polykemi AB, Gusmer Enterprises, Abzena Holdings, AP

Emissions Technologies, American Racing Headers & Exhaust, Gilead Sciences, and FUJIFILM Diosynth Biotechnologies. Probably the most exciting news is Apple will build a new technology campus in the triangle, creating three thousand lucrative jobs offering salaries at a minimum of \$187,000.

Chair Rabon recognized commission members for their work around the state. He began by recognizing Ronnie Smith, who is the president of the North Carolina Association of County Commissioners and a Martin County Commissioner, on forming the Resilience Task Force to identify ways counties can help ensure all North Carolinians have access to high-quality, affordable food, and improve efforts to transport food into homes so no North Carolinian will go hungry. Chair Rabon then discussed the formation of a national consulting team, which includes Christopher Gergen, a founding partner at Forward Impact Solutions, which is working with local community leaders and the Greensboro Regional REALTORS® Association on a strategy to strengthen the small businesses in Guilford County.

Chair Rabon offered congratulations to North Carolina Independent Colleges and Universities president Dr. Hope Williams on the articulation agreement she recently signed with NC Community College System. Additionally, Chair Rabon recognized Maureen Little, Vice President of Economic Development for the North Carolina Community College System. She is the designee on the commission for Thomas Stith, the North Carolina Community College System President. Maureen is preparing to retire on July 1st after 34 years of service.

In moving the meeting to more formal business, Chair Rabon asked for a motion to approve the minutes from the February 10th meeting. The motion to approve the minutes as written was made by Olalah Njenga and seconded by Sherry Carpenter. There being no corrections, the minutes were unanimously approved as written.

Post-Pandemic Recovery Presentation

Afterwards, Chair Rabon introduced Dr. Michael Walden, a professor and extension economist at North Carolina State University, who provided a post-pandemic economic forecast for North Carolina. Dr. Walden discussed the permanent impacts from the pandemic on the job market, first and foremost is the acceleration of on-going technological unemployment from the increasing adoption of automation. Dr. Walden also highlighted the most desirable skills in today's economy: data analysis, problem-solving, and communication skills. Sectors in the economy with rapid job growth will be technology-cloud computing, robotics, logistics, health care, and renewable energy. In closing, Dr. Walden mentioned North Carolina would see continued growth, as North Carolina is considered a safe state. Households and businesses, both domestic and foreign view the state positively. The next game changer will be universally available high-speed internet which could increase rural growth.

North Carolina Workforce Development Academy

Tom Rabon thanked Dr. Walden and then introduced Dr. Bruce McDonald, associate professor of public budgeting and finance in the Department of Public Administration at North Carolina State University, who provided a brief update on the Workforce Development Academy. Dr. McDonald outlined the courses which will be included with this training. He stated those who complete the program will earn the title of Certified Workforce Developer. The primary focus of the academy is to develop leaders within the workforce development and economic development communities. This summer they will focus on fund raising, with the first anticipated class to begin in January 2022.

Committee updates

Skills and Education Attainment Committee Chair Sherry Carpenter stated their committee recently met on May 4th. They welcomed their newest committee member, State Superintendent Catherine Truitt, and her designee Kristie Van Auken, who is special advisor to the superintendent on workforce development. The committee also approved supporting the efforts of NCcareers.org by assisting in efforts to promote and increase awareness of the tool by alerting LEAD (Labor and Economic Analysis Division) to events where they can present on NCcareers.org and any new methods that can be utilized to help promote the tool and sharing ideas for improvements and additions as well as feedback.

In the most recent committee meeting, several project ideas were discussed on how the committee can promote access to job training for high-demand and high-growth fields and help to increase access to education for those that have barriers. The idea is to collaborate and support workforce development boards in efforts to increase career awareness in youth programs, such as NextGen and other community youth programs, which will also help meet the goals of the committee's disconnected youth initiative. They are in the process of considering a couple of awareness events and models, such as the Dream It, Do It model – including its Ambassador Program – and the possibility of partnering with workforce boards and credential industries on public service announcements or career pathway videos to reach youth in diverse communities.

Employer Leadership Committee Chair Jeff Frederick stated the committee last met on April 16th. Dr. Jenni Harris, Executive Director of Business Services for the Division of Workforce Solutions (DWS) updated 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. Dr. Jeni Corn myFutureNC Director of Strategic Initiatives gave presentations on a Pulse Survey Proposal and Grant from The Duke Foundation. The goal is to receive a commitment from businesses across North Carolina to complete a 5-minute survey every month for six months. Additionally, myFutureNC, in collaboration with partners on the NC Workforce Credential Council will engage local workforce and economic development organizations across North Carolina to build support in securing participation. The survey and analysis of the responses will be conducted by LEAD of the Department of Commerce.

Jeff DeBellis, Director of Economic & Policy Department of Commerce, has presented several times on the Employer Needs Survey. After several committee meetings Jeff mentioned they are in the planning stages and developing questions which will be discussed at the upcoming May 19th meeting. The committee and commission are making preparations for the MOU approval in July between the NCWorks Commission and NCSU Center for Urban Affairs and Community Services with survey results completed by November. The survey will include Manufacturing, Healthcare, STEM, Hospitality, Small Business and Construction.

Local Innovation Committee Chair Olalah Njenga stated the committee last met on April 15th. At that meeting, the committee discussed the NCWorks Spotlight on Local Innovation Webinar Series. The committee announced its first live webinar to the public in the series, which highlighted Hope Renovations, a women's construction trades training program. The committee hosted two final presentation meetings for the NCWorks Local Innovation Fund grantees, one for the capacity grants and one for the implementation grants in May and June 2021.

Governance and System Alignment Committee Chair Dr. Hope Williams reported the committee last met on April 20th to review and vote on the four Commission Policy Statements listed below. Final drafts were sent to all commission members prior to the quarterly business session.

CPS 04-2021 Distribution of WIOA Funding

This policy statement covers the distribution of WIOA Title 1 and 3 funding and Trade Adjustment Assistance funding for the 23 Local Area Workforce Development Boards. DWS shall release Operational Guidance which outlines amounts, procedures, and criteria mandated to ensure the timely administration of WIOA funds to the 23 Local Area Workforce Development Boards on behalf of the NCWorks Commission.

CPS 06-2021 Guidelines for North Carolina NCWorks Career Center Code of Conduct Violations

This new policy statement will provide Local Area Workforce Development Boards (WDBs) with guidance and procedures for NCWorks Career Center staff to follow regarding customer behaviors that violate the NCWorks Career Center Code of Conduct and for the suspension and banishment of customers from NCWorks Career Centers. It is the intent of the DWS and the NCWorks Commission to provide a safe environment for customers seeking services and staff in the NCWorks Career Centers.

CPS 07-2021 Migrant and Seasonal Farmworker (MSFW) Complaint System and Appeal Policy Procedures

This will establish and implement the Complaint System and Appeal Policy Procedures addressing Migrant and Seasonal Farm Worker (MSFW) complaints as mandated by the U.S. Department of Labor. NCWorks Career Center staff will assist and record in writing any complaint filed by applicants, MSFW, and/or interested parties involving--acts or omissions on services provided, violations to wage regulations, job orders, terms and conditions of employment, field sanitation, farm labor housing standards, or other complaints that are MSFW-related.

CPS 08-2021 Customer Complaint, Appeal and Resolution Policy

The Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act mandates that each State and Local Area Workforce Development Board establish and maintain procedures for WIOA-related complaints. The US Department of Labor (DOL) has mandated that DWS develop a statewide complaint and inquiry intake system, as well as an appeals process for jobseekers who have been banished or suspended, employers who have been denied access to www.ncworks.gov, as well as Migrant and Seasonal Farm Workers (MSFW) and employers affiliated with the MSFW program. This Policy sets forth the procedures to be followed regarding complaints and grievances that may occur during the administration of any WIOA funded and related activities.

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.

NC Workforce Credential Council Presentation

Tom Rabon introduced Nate Humphrey, who is the associate vice president of Workforce & Continuing Education programs at the NC Community College System to report on the work of the NC Workforce Credential Council. Nate began his report by reviewing their goal for economic and workforce impact,

and their objective. Which is to collaborate with stakeholders to promote a workforce system that fosters innovation and establishes seamless connections among community colleges, K-12 education, universities, workforce and economic development partners, and business and industry. North Carolina is facing a deficit 300,000 individuals to achieve the myFutureNC goal of 2 million by 2030 of postsecondary credentials. The group is working on establishing a preliminary list of high-quality, non-degree credentials valued by NC employers that support North Carolinians in obtaining in-demand living wage jobs.

Closing Business

Chair Rabon thanked Nate Humphrey for his report and then 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 quarterly business session will be on August 11, 2021. The remaining 2021 Commission meeting dates are August 11, and November 10, 2021. There being no more business, the meeting was adjourned.

Respectfully submitted,

Annie Izod

Approved on August 11, 2021.