



NCWorks Commission Quarterly Business Session

Wednesday, May 10, 2023

NC State University McKimmon Center

Zoom Meeting Webinar | 1:00 – 2:00 P.M.

Raleigh, N.C.

Minutes

Present:

Andrea DeSantis (Governor Roy Cooper), Chair Tom Rabon, D. Jordan Whichard IV (Secretary Machel Baker Sanders), Hugh Allen, Broxton Ashburn, Daniel Briggs, Shawn Brown, Sherry Carpenter, Rodney Carson, John Wesley Davis IV, Chris Egan (Secretary Kody Kinsley), Jeffrey Frederick, Christopher Gergen, Stephen Con Hunt, Suzanne Johnson, Paul Lawler, Candace Lowry (Secretary Pamela B. Cashwell), Marti Matthews Martin, Cameron McDonald, Olalah Njenga, Nikki Nissen, Mike Okun, Cheryl Richards, Gilda Rubio-Festa, Dan Segovia, Tammy Simmons, Kim Toler, Cynthia Speight, Kristie Van Auken (Superintendent Catherine Truitt), Leslie Walden, Hope Williams, Jim Van Camp, and Annie Izod

Absent: Jeff Cox, Byron Hicks (Peter Hans), Himanshu Karvir, Ronnie Smith, and Pam Townsend

Welcome and Opening Remarks

Chair Tom Rabon thanked the McKimmon Center for hosting the meeting, and for being a key workforce development partner in this region. Additionally, Chair Rabon thanked Pat Sturdivant, the Executive Director of the Capital Area Workforce Development Board, and the staff of the NCWorks NEXTGEN Career Center in Raleigh, for providing the commission with a guided tour of their facility earlier that morning. The NEXTGEN Career Center at Tillery Place is a specialized NCWorks Career Center designed to offer programs which target job seekers ages 16-24 to provide the best possible career opportunities for youth.

Chair Rabon noted that the NCWorks Mobile Unit was parked outside of the building for the commission members and guests to walk through. He stated the Mobile Unit is the state's official "career center on wheels", and it is deployed to communities across North Carolina to help people find jobs. The mobile unit was recently deployed to the Pactiv Evergreen rapid response event in Haywood County. Chair Rabon discussed the many services provided by the unit including assistance during job fairs, special events for veterans, Rapid Response services, career counseling, resume preparation, free internet access, and help using NCWorks.gov.

Next, Chair Rabon welcomed new commission member Cameron McDonald. Ms. McDonald is Duke Energy's vice president of talent acquisition and talent management. In this role, she is responsible for

developing and executing strategies to build a strong and diverse recruitment pipeline, enhance leadership and talent development and create an inclusive and engaged workforce. She is replacing outgoing commissioner Stan Sherrill. Chair Rabon thanked Stan for his many years of service on the commission.

Chair Rabon also recognized and congratulated commission member Olalah Njenga for being recognized as one of the “100 Women to Know in America for 2023” by JPMorgan Chase & Co., and The KNOW Women. This is a recognition that showcases the most influential, achieved, and honorable women in our society. Olalah and the other entrepreneurs, executives, creatives, and philanthropists who were selected for this award have not only grown their dreams but have created boundless opportunities for the next generation of female leaders.

Opening Business

Chair Rabon highlighted several new developments related to our workforce, since the last meeting on February 8th. There have been announcements of at least 11 new businesses planning to invest more than \$469 million in North Carolina and create more than 1600 jobs. North Carolina welcomed companies like UPS, Kempower Inc., Global RFID, Axium Packaging, Siemens Mobility, Tex-Tech Industries, Severn Peanut Company, Pilkington North America, EPOC Enviro, TAT Piedmont Aviation, and Marshall USA. Rabon also shared the great news that filmmakers spent more than \$258 million on production in North Carolina last year. This is the sixth highest year-end total since 2000, when N.C. started offering incentives. Additionally, he stated the N.C. Department of Commerce recently awarded special workforce training grants totaling more than \$1.6 million to four North Carolina nonprofit organizations. Federal American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) funds are supporting this state initiative, called the “ARPA Business Work-Based Learning Grant” program. These innovative grants will help small businesses meet their talent needs through work-based learning, in important fields like hospitality, construction and aviation.

Chair Rabon remarked that North Carolina is America’s most military-friendly state and is working hard to connect our veterans with good jobs, and encourage employers to not only hire veterans, but to apply for recognition with a HIRE Vets Medallion Award, an official program of the U.S. Department of Labor that recognizes an employer's commitment to veteran employment. In 2022, 27 North Carolina companies received a HIRE Vets Medallion Award. The N.C. Department of Commerce pioneered a first-of-its-kind online feature that highlights employers that have received the award on the state’s NCWorks job search portal and on the NCWorks Veterans Portal, veterans.ncworks.gov. This tool helps veterans more easily find jobs that the recognized companies are currently advertising.

Chair Rabon also discussed the new Caregiving Workforce Strategic Leadership Council, led by N.C. Department of Health and Human Services and the N.C. Department of Commerce. The council will use data and expert input to identify strengths and challenges facing direct care workers, nurses, and other caregiving positions as well as the rising demand for these services, he thanked Dr. Annie Izod for her valued work on this Council.

Lastly, Chair Rabon stated that the N.C. Rural Infrastructure Authority (RIA) has approved 14 grant requests to local governments totaling \$6,644,500. These requests include commitments to create a total of 324 jobs, and public investment in these projects will attract more than \$31.5 million in private investment.

February Minutes Approval

Chair Rabon asked for a motion to approve the minutes from the February 8th quarterly business session. Hope Williams made the motion to approve, and Olalah Njenga seconded the motion. There being no corrections, the minutes were unanimously approved as written.

Carolina Across 100 – ncIMPACT Initiative Presentation

Chair Rabon introduced Anita Brown-Graham, the founder and director of the ncIMPACT Initiative at the UNC School of Government. This initiative seeks to expand the school's capacity to work with public officials on complex policy issues including economic mobility, the expansion of prekindergarten, and extending the labor pool. Carolina Across 100 focuses on cohorts of communities that come together to work on common challenges. Professor Brown-Graham remarked this five-year initiative is bringing people together in communities from different sectors, geographic boundaries, and perspectives to tackle the most pressing challenges. Carolina Across 100 is also facilitating development and peer learning across communities requesting support. Teamwork helps local collaborators learn from each other and their university partners. She stated the results and success stories from Carolina Across 100 will be published for all communities to access.

Chair Rabon thanked Professor Brown-Graham, for the very informative presentation, and then asked if there were any questions. NCWorks Commission member Christopher Gergen asked, "How is the program currently funded? How do you plan to sustain this program over time? And how does entrepreneurship play a role?" Anita's response was, "We have some seed funding from the transfer office. It certainly is not the kind of funding that would allow us to do all these things, so we've also done some private fundraising. The Blue Cross Blue Shield Corporation has invested in this as part of their overall investment in creating a larger health care workforce. The Golden Leaf foundation has also invested in this project. We are trying to get these teams to build a kind of robust system that supports opportunity." NCWorks Commission member Chris Egan asked, "As we think about building the system, how are we preparing the students to know what aspects of the system already exist, so that they're utilizing those in their local communities?" Anita's response was, "It's not just about making sure that the young people understand the resources in the existing system. There are system providers who don't understand the resources. So, one of the real ah-ha's to me, was having someone come from the community college system and talk to the teams." NCWorks Commission member Gilda Rubio-Festa asked the question, "How large are your teams?" Anita's response was, "So they vary. I think the smallest team has 15 people on it, and the largest team, (recognizing that some of these are multi-county teams) probably has over 50 people on it, and the support that we give them financially, is not just the mini grant. We also fund a program manager for each team that is responsible for waking up every day and figuring out how to keep the team together and set the monthly meetings and make sure there are minutes and the sorts of things where, when everybody is busy, it just doesn't happen."

Chair Rabon thanked Professor Brown-Graham for all the work being done.

Committee Updates

Skills and Education Attainment Committee

Chair Sherry Carpenter welcomed the newest committee member, Cameron McDonald, from Duke Energy; and recognized outgoing committee member Stan Sherril and thanked him for lending his expertise and support in the effort to help reach the committee's goals. Chair Carpenter stated that Michael Westray, regional reentry specialist from N.C. Department of Commerce Division of Workforce Solutions (DWS) recently presented to the committee about the justice-involved reentry initiative. The committee continues to discuss how they can support this initiative. She also updated everyone on the evaluation of the NCWorks Career Pathways project, the N.C. Office of State Management and Budget Evaluation Fund Grant documents were finalized and that the researchers are now working with N.C. Department of Commerce Labor and Economic Analysis Division (LEAD) to gather data. Also, the career pathway review subcommittee is working with the N.C. Association of Workforce Development Boards Directors Council's Strategic Planning Council on the approval of the questions for the career pathway survey that will soon be underway and completed by the WDBs. Chair Carpenter remarked that the committee also recently discussed and reviewed the application from Mountain Area WDB for an IT Career Pathway and recommended that the commission recognize it as a certified N.C. Career Pathway.

Portrait of a Graduate Presentation

Chair Carpenter turned the floor over to committee member Kristie VanAuken, who is the special advisor to the State Superintendent for Workforce Engagement at the Department of Public Instruction (DPI), for a brief presentation on [Portrait of a Graduate & Career Development](#) in North Carolina. Kristie stated the North Carolina Portrait of a Graduate launched in October 2022, and it is the culmination of a nine-month design process that included multiple sectors with 1,200 design team members. It includes seven competencies (now referred to as DURABLE SKILLS) to ensure that students are prepared for success beyond high school, which include: Adaptability, Collaboration, Communication, Critical Thinking, Empathy, Learner's Mindset, and Personal Responsibility. For more information about this initiative led by DPI to define the skills and mindsets students need for success after high school visit their website: [Portrait of a Graduate | NC DPI](#)

Committee Updates

Employer Leadership Committee

Chair Jeff Frederick reported that the committee met twice in April, and they continue to work on several initiatives important to Goal 2. He introduced committee members and guests and recognized the newest committee members Olalah Njenga, Dr. Andrea DeSantis, and Jordan Whichard. He confirmed the committee is working closely with Josh Levy and Jeff DeBellis from LEAD on the next round of the Employer Needs Survey. The committee is reviewing options for survey development, and is seeking relevant, actionable questions which follow our strategic plan. The committee discussed several opportunities for research partnerships and collaborations at universities and colleges who may also be interested in this topic as well as continue to work with NCSU Center for Urban Affairs and Community Services. Chair Frederick discussed a recent presentation to the committee by Freeman Denton from DWS. Freeman talked about leveraging employer data and reviewed the U.S. Department of Labor Report requirements. Additionally, he provided an update on Salesforce which will be available to every workforce board by June, allowing another method for employer data collection.

Local Innovation Committee

Chair Cynthia Speight stated the committee welcomed its two newest members, Marti Matthews Martin and Daniel Briggs during their April meeting. She remarked on their extensive workforce background and valuable expertise which will add to an already thriving committee. Chair Speight confirmed that the committee has received several proposals for the NCWorks Local Innovation Fund Grant, and the committee is currently overseeing an extensive review of these applications. The committee plans to meet with Dr. Annie Izod and staff during this process to review the grant scoring matrices for the proposals that have been submitted. The grant awards announcement is scheduled for June 14th. Lastly, she stated the committee continues to develop the Spotlight on Local Innovations Publication, which highlights promising workforce programs and initiatives and will also continue to host the webinar series that feature innovative partnerships and programs around our state.

Governance & System Alignment Committee

Chair Chris Egan stated that NCWorks Commission Senior Workforce Analyst, Wendy Johnson, presented several items to the committee during their April meeting. The first item was the NCWorks Career Center Continuous Improvement Report, in which several observations and opportunities were outlined from the recent certification visits around the state. The next item discussed was the 2025 Draft Career Center Certification Criteria. The new draft criteria seek to further align the career center certification process in North Carolina to the Federal regulations, with the goal of a more streamlined process. Additionally, Chair Egan stated Wendy provided the committee with an overview of the 2023 Annual Program Review Draft Survey. During her presentation, she noted several revisions which are designed to make the survey more user-friendly as well as to provide more meaningful feedback for the Annual Program Review report. Chair Egan also stated that James Bain provided the committee with an overview of North Carolina's efforts in participating in the 2023 USDOL Research and Evaluation-Peer Learning Cohort. Lastly, Chair Egan confirmed the committee discussed Commission Policy Statement 09-2021, Change 1 WIOA Youth Formula Funds Expenditure Requirements. This is a revision to a previous policy statement, which was updated based on guidance that USDOL provided in TEGl 09-22 that was issued on March 2nd, 2023. During the meeting, the committee voted to accept CPS 09-2021, Change 1, and move it forward to the full commission for a vote during this quarterly business session.

Action Item: Policy Statement 09-2021, Change 1

Following Chair Egan's update, Chair Rabon moved to vote on Policy Statement 09-2021, Change 1 WIOA Youth Formula Funds Expenditure Requirements. Chair Rabon asked if there were any comments or questions before the vote. There being none, Chair Rabon asked for a vote of acceptance. As the motion was brought to the floor by the committee, the commission members then voted unanimously to accept Policy Statement 09-2021, Change 1 WIOA Youth Formula Funds Expenditure Requirements.

Career Pathway Recognition – Mountain Area IT Pathway

Chair Rabon and Sherry Carpenter recognized the Mountain Area WDB IT Pathway. NCWorks Commission, Executive Director, Dr. Annie Izod shared that this new career pathway in information technology will help address current and future employment concerns and training needs in the local area of Buncombe, Henderson, Madison, and Transylvania counties. Chair Rabon stated Mountain Area's workforce region was recently recognized by LinkedIn data analysts to have the 7th largest growing technology sector in the nation. To capitalize on that momentum, it is imperative that a workforce strategy in IT be deployed. The board will financially support IT employability skills, training

with federal and non-federal funding, foster collaboration among workforce partners, and continue to develop partnerships between public and private sectors. Their goals will include reinforcing IT employability skills for job seekers and incumbent workers and fostering collaboration and partnerships between the public and private sectors to ensure a job-ready pipeline for technology-aligned employers.

Closing Remarks

Chair Rabon thanked NCSU for hosting the meeting and he also recognized the staff of the NCWorks Commission for all their hard work. He stated the next NCWorks Commission meeting will be held on August 9th, 2023, at the McKimmon Center on the North Carolina State University campus in Raleigh, N.C. He then turned the meeting over to Dr. Annie Izod.

Dr. Izod shared that the commission staff would be hosting a new member orientation later this month on Microsoft Teams! The orientation will be highlighting several additional member resources now available. She encouraged all commission members who are interested to attend this virtual event. Dr. Izod also shared with everyone that the 2023 NCWorks Partnership Conference will be held on October 11th-13th at the Koury Convention Center in the Sheraton Four Seasons in Greensboro! The theme for this year's conference is *Intentional Inclusion: Opportunities for All*. This promises to be a great conference and we look forward to seeing you all there!

Chair Rabon wrapped up the meeting by asking if anyone had any additional new business or additional discussion on the reports heard from the floor. NCWorks Commission member Christopher Gergen thanked Stephanie Deese (Executive Director for the N.C. Association of Workforce Development Boards) and NC Idea for their coordination and facilitation of the "Fueling the Future of the Small Business and Entrepreneurial Economy" event at RTI on May 3rd, 2023.

Chair Rabon then recognized commission member, Gilda Rubio-Festa, and thanked her for all the work she has done for state government and for the commission as well. He confirmed that Gilda has recently announced her retirement, so this will be her last commission meeting.

With no further questions or comments, Chair Rabon then thanked the commission members for their participation in the meeting. There being no more new business, the meeting was adjourned.

Respectfully submitted,

Dr. Annie Izod

Approved on August 9, 2023