



NCWorks Commission Business Session

November 18, 2020

Cisco WebEx Meeting Webinar

1:00 – 2:00 P.M.

Raleigh, NC

Minutes

Present: Secretary Tony Copeland, Chair Tom Rabon, Osceola Elliss, Brock Ashburn, Anita Bachman, Shawn Brown, Sherry Carpenter, Scott Daugherty (William Roper), Chris Egan (Mandy Cohen), Jessica Englert (Governor Cooper), Jeff Frederick, Christopher Gergen, Steven Hunt, Annie Izod, Suzanne Johnson, Himanshu Karvir, Paul Lawler, Maureen Little (Bill Carver), Candace Lowry (Machelle Sanders), Marti Matthews Martin, MaryBe McMillan, Trey Michael (Mark Johnson), David Miller, Olalah Njenga, Stan Sherrill, Walter Siegenthaler, Kim Toler, and Pam Townsend

Absent: Ronnie Smith, Jim Van Camp and Josh Arant

Opening Business

The Department of Commerce Secretary Tony Copeland welcomed NCWorks Commission members and those attending the fourth and final quarterly Commission meeting of the year. He spoke about how COVID-19 continues to disrupt the lives of North Carolinians and our economy. We have paid out nearly 9 billion dollars in unemployment claims this year. North Carolina's unemployment rate stands at 7.3 percent, which is an improvement from where we were in the beginning of the year but remains a concern. He noted that our primary focus is protecting public health as we prepare to get our state back to work and improve our economic health. North Carolina has become home to life-saving research, development and production in the health and life sciences.

Secretary Copeland highlighted some of many new economic development projects in North Carolina, including that Pratt and Whitney, an aerospace supply chain company, recently announced the largest-ever project in western North Carolina (with an investment of \$650 million and the creation of 800 jobs). Secretary Copeland discussed the duality of our current economy in which many companies are expanding operations or locating to North Carolina at the same time as many folks have been dislocated due to the pandemic.

NCWorks Commission Chairman Tom Rabon began the meeting and acknowledged Secretary Copeland for his leadership and the Commission members for their flexibility in utilizing the webinar format this year. Following, Chairman Rabon recognized Commission members Melanie Chernoff, Walter Siegenthaler and Scott Daugherty who are transitioning from the Commission and thanked them for their service.

Minutes Approval: Chair Rabon called for a motion to approve the minutes as written from the August 12, 2020 meeting. Olalah Njenga made the motion, Sherry Carpenter seconded the motion; having no discussion, the motion passed, and the minutes were approved.

Action Item – NCWorks Commission By-laws

The next action item of business included the approval of the amended Commission By-laws. The U.S. Department of Labor mandated the Commission to add two seats specifically to represent *WIOA Title 2 (Adult Education and Family Literacy Act)* and *WIOA Title 4 (Vocational Rehabilitation)*. Additionally, to add one more appointee to represent business and industry to maintain the 51 percent majority of business representation on the Commission. Lastly, a new section was added for remote participation in meetings via remote technology.

By-laws Approval: Chair Rabon called for a motion to approve the amended By-laws as written. Dr. Hope Williams made the motion, Jeff Frederick seconded the motion; having no discussion, the motion passed, and the amended By-laws were approved.

Presentation: GuilfordWorks

Chris Rivera, Executive Director of GuilfordWorks, provided a presentation highlighting initiatives and work accomplished by the GuilfordWorks Workforce Development Board during the COVID-19 pandemic. The pandemic has caused the local Workforce Development Boards to reimagine and retool how they provide services to job seekers and businesses in the community. Mr. Rivera provided several innovative service strategies the GuilfordWorks WDB has initiated in response to the pandemic. One such initiative is the use of *Zip Whip*, a cloud-based software which links landlines to SMS texting to serve businesses with immediate staffing needs and job seekers who are seeking employment opportunities or Unemployment Insurance information. Since this system was operationalized in mid-March, over 27,000 text messages have been exchanged and nearly 5,500 individuals received information on Unemployment Insurance, over 2,000 individuals were provided with employment opportunities and nearly 1,800 were able to schedule a virtual appointment. Another initiative highlighted was GuilfordWorks partnership with Coursera. GuilfordWorks has partnered with Coursera to provide unemployed or furloughed jobseekers with job-relevant online learning, at no cost. The initiative's goal is to help impacted workers develop the knowledge and skills to become re-employed.

Committee Reports

The *Skills and Education Attainment Committee* Chair Sherry Carpenter reported that the committee last convened on August 24th and October 14th. At their August meeting, the committee held a discussion with K-12 to postsecondary education administrators about their institutions' strategies for continued learning around COVID-19. At their October meeting, the committee was provided a presentation on NextGen and their resources available for disconnected youth; and discussed how the committee could help reengage this population. Additionally, the committee welcomed new ad-hoc member, Yvette German, planning and policy manager at the Division of Workforce Solutions. Lastly, the committee reviewed their strategic goal and is in the process of updating the objectives for the next strategic plan cycle.

The *Governance and System Alignment Committee* Chair Hope Williams reported that the committee last met on September 23rd and October 26th. At these meetings, the committee reviewed and voted to approve the draft NCWorks Commission Policy Statement which begins the new process of all major *WIOA Title 1* and *Title 3* workforce policy statements being approved directly through the NCWorks Commission. Additionally, the committee reviewed and voted to approve converting 21 current DWS Policy Statements into NCWorks Commission Policy Statements to completely establish this process. Furthermore, the committee reviewed the draft revised NCWorks Commission Bylaws and voted to approve them as written and submit these to the full Commission for a vote of acceptance. Lastly, the committee is currently working on revising Goal 4 of the Commission's Strategic Plan for the 2021-2023 cycle.

The *Employer Leadership Committee* Chair Jeff Frederick reported that the committee last met on November 5th. At that meeting, the committee received a presentation by Jenni Harris, Business Services Director, updating the committee on the Workforce Incentive Grant and progress on incentive proposals to prospects who may locate in North Carolina or expand in the state. Additionally, Jeff DeBellis gave a presentation on *NCCareers.org*. This site is the state's career information system designed to help people of all ages make informed career decisions and plans. Furthermore, the committee is still working with the NC Commerce Labor Economic Analysis Division (LEAD) on the employer needs survey, with the last survey conducted Fall 2019. Now that the economy has started to stabilize, the committee wants to re-engage with another survey. The committee plans to work with LEAD and NC State to conduct focus groups with additional businesses regarding their workforce development needs.

Local Innovation Committee Chair Olalah Njenga reported that the committee last convened on November 5th. At this meeting, committee members discussed hosting a "webinar series" to provide resources to jobseekers and businesses virtually and to further highlight local workforce innovations. The committee is excited to host its' first webinar, highlighting technology utilized by Rivers East Workforce Development Board in providing a virtual job fair to jobseekers and businesses within their local area. Additionally, at this meeting the committee reviewed current goals and objectives as the Commission's strategic plan will need to be updated for 2021-2023. Since that meeting, the committee has worked on developing new *Spotlights on Local Workforce Innovation*. The latest spotlight features Year Up Charlotte, a program that is continuing to create pathways to meaningful employment for low-income youth in in-demand fields, such as cybersecurity within the greater Charlotte area virtually.

Action Items- NCWorks Commission Policy Process and Conversion of Policy Statements

The next action item of business included the approval of a draft NCWorks Commission Policy Statement. The U.S. Department of Labor mandated all major *WIOA Title I* and *Title III* policies must now be established by the NCWorks Commission per WIOA regulations. To adhere to these guidelines the Governance and System Alignment Committee has collaborated with the DWS Policy and Planning Department to develop a new policy statement and process.

Policy Statement and Process Approval: Dr. Hope Williams made the motion to approve the new policy statement and process as presented, Olalah Njenga seconded the motion; having no discussion, the motion passed, and the new policy statement and process were approved.

The last action item of business included the approval of converting 21 current DWS Policy Statements to NCWorks Commission Policy Statements per WIOA regulations.

The 21 current DWS Policy Statements included:

1. PS 12-2020 Finish Line Grants Continuation
2. PS 14-2020 Dislocated Worker Eligibility
3. PS 15-2020 Employer Services Grant
4. PS 08-2019 Finish Line Grants Continuation Instructions and Request Form
5. PS 01-2020 Local Area Plan Instructions
6. PS 02-2019 Career Center Code of Conduct Violation
7. PS 20-2017, Change 1 Financial Management Policy for WIOA Title I
8. PS 07-2018 Nondiscrimination and Equal Opportunity Standards
9. PS 21-2017 Procurement and Contracting Policy
10. PS 18-2017 Conflict of Interest for Workforce Development Boards and Staff
11. PS 06-2017 WIOA Youth Formula Funds Expenditure Requirements
12. PS 03-2017 Priority of Service for Veterans
13. PS 01-2017 Federal Performance Measures
14. PS 04-2019, Change 2 Revised WIOA PY19 Title I Formula-Allotted Funds
15. PS 06-2020 WIOA PY 20 Title I Formula-Allotted Funds
16. PS 10-2016 Funds Transfer Between Adult and Dislocated Worker Programs
17. PS 09-2016 Voluntary Transfer of WIOA Funds
18. PS 04-2015, Change 1 On-the-Job Training
19. PS 19-2017, Change 2 Competitive Selection Processes
20. PS 21-2015 Customer Choice in Selecting Training Providers
21. PS 14-2015 Non-Criminal Program Complaints

Policy Statement Conversion Approval: Dr. Hope Williams called for a motion to approve the conversion of DWS Policy Statements to NCWorks Commission Policy statements as presented, Olalah Njenga seconded the motion; having no discussion, the motion passed, and the conversion of policy statements was approved.

Labor Market Information Report

Dr. Betty McGrath, Bureau Labor Statistics Director, provided a labor market update and highlighted economic conditions surrounding unemployment insurance. The COVID-19 pandemic has had a significant impact on national, state, and local economies as we have been in a recession since February 2020. At the start of the pandemic, the U.S. unemployment rate reached 14.7 percent and recently has decreased to 6.9 percent with the leisure and hospitality industry suffering the greatest reduction in workforce by shedding 4,163,000 jobs (24.7%) since February. North Carolina's unemployment rate peaked in April at 12.9 percent and has recently decreased to 7.3 percent, with the leisure and hospitality industry shedding over 135,000 jobs (25.4%) since February. Dr. McGrath provided historical data comparing past economic recessions to the current economic recession caused by the pandemic. Additionally, she provided an analysis of employment in the major industry sectors affected by the pandemic on both the national level and the state level. Dr. McGrath concluded by providing an overview of all the unemployment claims data for this year.

Closing Business

In closing the meeting, Chair Rabon asked members if there were any new business or discussions. There being none, he thanked everyone for their participation and informed all that the next NCWorks Commission quarterly business session will be another webinar on February 10th, 2020. The 2021 Commission meeting dates are February 10th, May 12th, August 11th, and November 10th. Chair Rabon adjourned the meeting at 2:00 P.M.

Respectfully submitted,

Annie Izod

Pending approval on February 10, 2021