



## **NCWorks Commission Business Session**

Wednesday, November 6, 2019

1:00 – 2:30 P.M.

GE Aviation

Durham, NC

### **Minutes**

*Present:* Governor Roy Cooper; Chair Tom Rabon, Secretary Tony Copland, Josh Arant, Brock Ashburn, Shawn Brown, Sherry Carpenter, Melanie Chernoff, James Van Camp, Chris Egan (Mandy Cohen), Osceola Elliss, Jeff Frederick, Christopher Gergen, Himanshu Karvir, Marti Matthews Martin, MaryBe McMillan, Olalah Njenga, Candace Lowry (Machelle Sanders), Mike Okun, Walter Siegenthaler, Kim Toler, Pam Townsend, and Hope Williams

*Absent:* Nate Davis, Maureen Little (for President Peter Hans), Mark Johnson (Trey Michael), Scott Daugherty (William Roper), Stan Sherrill, and Ronnie Smith

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### **Opening Business**

The meeting began with Department of Commerce Secretary Tony Copeland welcoming the Commission members and guests and thanking GE Aviation for hosting the meeting and tour of their jet-engine factory. Secretary Copeland noted the strong history of partnership the Department of Commerce has with GE Aviation and how they continue to create jobs, which “shows that our state offers all the ingredients needed for today’s competitive marketplace to be successful.”

Secretary Copeland talked on the economic conditions in North Carolina, highlighting that “the economy is strong with a tight labor market that is at or near full employment.” Since Governor Cooper took office in January 2017, the Department of Commerce announced more than 55,000 new jobs across the state and that non-farm jobs have increased by more than 102,000 since last year. He emphasized that education and workforce training has kept North Carolina competitive, and that our world-class institutions of higher learning and community colleges puts us on the radar of business leaders as well as our support for employers with cutting-edge research and customized industry training programs. Durham ranks #1 in the country among metro areas with populations of 500,00 or more for percentage of people with Ph.D.’s and #3 for populations of people with master’s and law degrees.

The Governor recognized GE Aviation as a great employer for North Carolina, representing state-of-the-art, innovative advanced manufacturing. There are more than 200 aerospace companies and more than 400 aerospace suppliers, making North Carolina the second fastest growing aerospace cluster in the country.

The Governor recapped his comments from the NCWorks Partnership Conference in Greensboro about the progress made through the *NC Job Ready Initiative* and his appreciation for the workforce development professionals in their leadership and efforts to support workers and employers with training services. He expressed gratitude to the Commission for incorporating *NC Job Ready* into the new strategic plan, using *three core principles*: promoting education and skills attainment, leveraging employer leadership, and

encouraging local innovation. For skills and education, he noted the *Finish Line Grants* program and how NCWorks partners awarded more than 2,300 grants to help community college students complete training and prepare to enter the workforce. In employer leadership, *NC Job Ready* supported *Next Generation Sector Partnerships* that will promote a coordinated strategy among workforce, economic development, and education organizations to meet businesses' needs. In local innovation, he noted that the Commission had a key role in the *Local Innovation Fund* – awarding six grants to promising community-based initiatives that address workforce challenges.

Governor Cooper spoke about the insurance coverage gap and how Medicaid expansion would benefit our workforce and economy. If expanded, 38,000 more jobs would exist, according to the latest estimates. In Durham County, more than 4,300 jobs would be created, which would be almost \$444 million in additional economic activity by 2022. Half of those jobs would be in health care and the other half would be in construction, retail, food service and other local businesses. For *Employ-a-Veteran Week*, Governor Cooper's administration "is committed to honoring the service of veterans and continuing to make North Carolina the most veteran and military-friendly state in the nation and premier choice for veterans to work and live." One way to repay veterans is to help them obtain gainful employment and access the training they need so they won't uproot and take their talent to other states.

Larry Hall, Secretary of the Department of Military and Veterans Affairs, voiced that many veterans are faced with significant barriers in finding suitable employment when transitioning into civilian life. Programs like NC4ME helps educate business leaders on the value of hiring a military workforce and connects military talent to jobs, education and training opportunities. There are 23,000 active duty that will be leaving the military and transitioning to civilian life in North Carolina. There is also USO Pathfinder and the North Carolina National Guard Employment Center that provide transitioning and employment services.

NCWorks Commission Chair Tom Rabon, opened the business session meeting emphasizing the importance of what Governor Cooper and Secretary Copeland said in staying the course and continuing to champion workforce issues.

*Minutes Approval:* Chair Rabon called for a motion to approve the minutes as written from the August 7<sup>th</sup> meeting. Shawn Brown made the motion, Olalah Njenga seconded the motion; having no discussion, the motion passed, and the minutes were approved.

*Career Center Certifications:* Chair Rabon recognized the following local workforce areas that have completed the center certification process by meeting the Commission's criteria for quality customer service: Region C, Guilford County, Regional Partnership, Triangle South, Northeastern, and Turning Point. There are 74 centers certified across 19 of 23 workforce areas around the state.

*Presentation:* Casey Steinbacher, executive director of Made in Durham, and Jacob Dolan, employer engagement strategist, spoke about their community partnership program and strategy to develop a work-based learning system; and their outcomes and collaborations to connect Durham's youth to future career and life successes. Made in Durham's goal is for all Durham's youth to complete high school and a postsecondary credential and begin a rewarding career by the age of 25.

### **Workforce Development Updates**

*Executive Director Report:* Annie Izod, executive director of the NCWorks Commission, talked about the NCWorks brand and outreach campaign. The Commerce Department is working with APCO Worldwide to help NCWorks inform employers about their services. One component of the campaign is a 60-second

video, which premiered at the NCWorks Partnership Conference to announce the new visual identity for NCWorks. This video serves to help launch the refreshed NCWorks brand and describe the value that NCWorks brings to North Carolina businesses.

Jess Englert, Governor Cooper's workforce policy advisor, spoke about credentials of value as the next steps for myFutureNC's education attainment goal— *two million 25-to 44-year-olds with a high-quality postsecondary degree or credential by 2030*. The state must figure out what credentials and degrees to incentivize and its parameters to meet the goal. There are thousands of postsecondary degrees that job seekers can earn, and most are uninformed to what degrees are valued in the labor market. A cohort is learning how other states are addressing the same issue.

### **Committee Reports**

*Skills and Education Attainment Committee:* Sherry Carpenter, chair, noted that the committee focuses on *goal #1* of the strategic plan. The committee meets with the NC Association of Workforce Development Boards Directors Council on December 2<sup>nd</sup>, in Raleigh, to learn more about their current work efforts and discuss possible collaborative opportunities that are in alignment with *goal #1*. All Commission members are invited. *Goal #1* is also in alignment with myFutureNC's goal, so agenda topics will be discussed for myFutureNC's presentation to the Commission in February. The committee received a presentation on the Department of Commerce's *Reentry Initiative* by Wendi Eure, program coordinator. The program helps job seekers with criminal records overcome barriers through the resources available to help transition into the workforce productively. The committee will also assist The Department of Public Instruction in their efforts to promote the 75 career pathway programs of study.

*Local Innovation Committee:* Mel Chernoff, chair, reported that the committee further discussed *goal #3* of the strategic plan and work related to promoting the replication of creative solutions to challenging workforce problems by supporting local innovation. For the *Local Innovation Fund*, the committee discussed: what additional money is available and what it can be used for; grant applications that did not receive funding and what are the NC Local Workforce Board Directors best shared practices around local workforce innovation; criteria for evaluating the six grants from the *Local Innovation Fund*; and the best ways to communicate and share the program outcomes of the *Local Innovation Fund* and other best practices surrounding local innovation.

*Employer Leadership Committee:* Jeff Frederick, chair, reported that the committee is focused on *goal #2* of the strategic plan and that they have been absorbed in employer engagement strategies; such as field trips to visit small business employers to learn about their experiences working with local workforce boards and leveraging the system, and where the committee can help fill in the gaps. The *NCWorks Employer Needs Survey*, with assistance from NC State University, is underway. The survey includes questions about childcare, access to capital, and focus groups meetings. Chair Frederick informed: Pam Townsend and members met with Gary Salamido, new NC Chamber president, to discuss opportunities for collaboration; conferred on the new branding campaign for NCWorks; heard a presentation from Holly Yanker on BLNC/1-800 small business counseling efforts and tactics to guide entrepreneurs in business development; and a talk from Jim Van Camp, Esq., on his experiences working with the reentry population and the challenges they face – such as the myths to hiring the previously incarcerated.

*Governance and System Alignment Committee:* Hope Williams, chair, commented that the committee's attention is directed on *goal #4* of the strategic plan. They reviewed myFutureNC and how "it brings all the stakeholders to the table to attain the goal – which will need NCWorks to help implement." It was noted that some of the committee's work ties into the myFutureNC goal. Additionally, the committee mulled over

the purpose of a taskforce for the future of career centers and a survey to distribute to the taskforce for feedback on the system's successes and challenges. Also discussed: the NCWorks branding and outreach campaign and video; NCWorks Customer Feedback Tool and survey; and the *2020 State Unified Plan*. The plan will be reviewed in December to ensure its alignment with Commission goals.

**Closing Business**

Chair Rabon reminded Commission members that the next meeting will be in Winston Salem on February 12<sup>th</sup>. With no other business to conduct, Chair Rabon asked for a motion to adjourn the meeting. Chris Gergen made a motion, seconded by Walter Siegenthaler. The motion carried and the meeting was adjourned at 2:30 P.M.

Respectfully submitted,

Annie Izod

Approved on February 12, 2020