

**Minutes for the Northeastern Workforce
Development Board
November 19, 2019**

- I. Call to Order:** Chairman Zach Bray called the meeting to order on November 19, 2019 at 6:00 p.m. The presence of a quorum was determined with **ten (10) members present:** Zach Bray, Steve Bryan, Dave Carroll, Larry Donley, Wanda Fletcher, Tameka Gibbs, Dr. David Loope, Terri Gallop, Michael Twiddy, and JD Williamson. **Members Absent with Notice:** Rex Anderson, Vernon Brinkley, Debra Keenan, Janet Russ, and Sean Lavin. **Guests/Partners/Staff:** Lora Aples, Kenny Kee, Phillip Holloway, Matthew Fowler, Sheryl Stevens, Cindy Gossage, Annette Barnes, Emily Nicholson, Laquita Clark, Myquetia McPherson, Brandi Bragg, and Melanie Metzler.
- II. Welcome/Introduction:** Chairman Bray welcomed everyone to the meeting, introducing NWDB's newest career advisor Myquetia McPherson, B&M Contractor's Marketing Director Melanie Metzler, and NEPZ Career Pathways Facilitator Brandi Bragg. Chairman Bray notified the Board that Janet Russ had been involved in a serious car accident and will be out while she convalesces. David Whitmer isn't here today because he's out with his wife's surgery.
- III. Approval of Minutes for September 19, 2019 (Vote):** Chairman Bray asked for a motion to approve the minutes from September 19, 2019 meeting. **It was moved by Wanda Fletcher, seconded by Michael Twiddy to approve the minutes as written. With no further discussion, the motion carried unanimously.**
- IV. Approval of Agenda (Vote):** Chairman Bray asked for a motion to approve the agenda. **It was moved by Tameka Gibbs, seconded by Steve Bryan, to approve the agenda as presented. With no further discussion, the motion carried unanimously.**
- V. Mission Moment: B & M Contractors, presented by Myquetia McPherson.** Myquetia introduced Melanie Mexler from B & M Contractors. Myquetia explained that B&M is a very strong On-the-Job-Training partner to NWDB and she invited Melanie to speak to the board about how OJT has been very beneficial to their company. Melanie stated that it is very hard to find experienced trades people and the OJT program has been very successful for them in hiring, training, and keeping people employed as electricians. She commented that B&M have 5 people employed now that went through the OJT program. She added that she also goes to high schools every year to talk about the trades, working to get young people interested in the work. The OJT program is really great as it gives an opportunity for people who don't want to go through a four year college to have a career and make a good living. They are working on an apprenticeship program now that she sees as being a great companion to the OJT. Emily asked Melanie to

share some of the backgrounds of the five people who were successful in the OJT program.

Melanie replied that one person worked at the YMCA and didn't know what he wanted to do, he went through the program and is very successful today. Matthew asked what B&M's experience was like prior to the OJT program? Melanie said it was very hard to find people that had the experience and we didn't have the money to take the time to teach them what they needed. With this program we can take more time and do the training needed. Melanie said that before the OJT program, she was having difficulty finding young people to go into the trades. She said that she thinks trades have started to go down because people think if they don't get a college degree they will make less money, which is not true anymore. Melanie said that going into the high schools and letting the students know the benefits of a trade is really important.

VI. Presentation – Brandi Bragg, NEPZ Career Pathways Facilitator. Chair Bray introduced Brandi Bragg. Ms. Bragg reported that she has been working in partnership with the three Workforce Development Boards (NWDB, Turning Point, and Region Q), a total of 20 counties. Partnership has been together since 2012. She provided the Board with 2019-20 Career Pathways Projects and Activities covering Pathways, Training, Collaboration, and Marketing. She also provided the Work Plan for 2019-20 (both documents attached). Brandi stated that she will be conducting Career Pathways Training on all four pathways in February. Brandi highlighted training and professional development for all NCWorks and NC Commerce staff that she's been conducting, referencing the most recent training in Traitify. She also described the recent Social Media training she conducted with NWDB staff. Brandi reported that northeastern North Carolina has been given an opportunity to take part in an Agricultural apprenticeship program. Brandi said she met with Dr. Loope and the goal is by next October to have 5 companies offer apprenticeships to one person. There are a lot of hurdles to overcome but they see a lot of possibilities to utilize these funds. The goal is to have someone permanently here dedicated to apprenticeships. Was approached by Workforce Board Association to work with RTI for a potential Teacher Pathway for rural areas. Just getting started in this and is very excited about the opportunities. David Carroll suggested adding training in solar panels to the Agricultural pathway as it is predicted to be one of the fast growing industries in Northeast North Carolina. Mr. Bryan suggested reaching out to Cherry Farms in Tyrrell County which has a fascinating program of buying and selling seed to Bolivia. Zach Bray said we are extremely fortunate to have Brandi Bragg to lead the Career Pathways program in the northeast.

Presentation – Phillip Holloway, NCWorks Career Advisor: Hyde, Washington, Tyrrell Drug Treatment Board. Phillip reported that he serves on the District Two Recovery Court which serves Hyde, Washington, and Tyrrell counties. The mission of the Recovery Court is to

provide an environment where individuals can find support, compassion, and assistance needed for recovery. Start date for the Recovery Court is January 17, 2020 and court sessions will be held every other Friday. The team and representatives from each advisory board will attend a National Drug Court training that will detail how to operate and sustain a drug court. There are strict eligibility requirements for participation referral, with the goal being to supply the tools necessary with mandated individualized treatment, court supervision, random drug screens, consistent sanctions and incentives, and dedicated involvement. A grant of \$400,000 was awarded to help fund the Court over the next 4 years. The grant requires a 25% match, and through donations and fundraisers, the match has been raised. Phillip reported that he serves on the transportation committee as he serves as the chair for Hyde Transit. He added that the employment and education committee is also directly connected to his duties as Career Advisor which can create an opportunity for other collaborations with the stakeholders. Phillip said that he also signed up for the clothing committee, where he learned that there is a great need for clothing for interviews. He said that they are looking for additional volunteers. Chair Bray thanked Phillip for his work and dedication to this effort.

VII. Administrative Reports: Assistant Director Nicholson distributed books for the board that include what she felt was important information for the board's use. It includes staff contact information, goals, vision and some other information for their reference. Assistant Director Nicholson reported that the Board is still in need of board members. She stated there are 2 private sector openings; 1 joint labor-management or union affiliated member; and an economic development opening. She asked for the board to assist in filling these seats. Emily reported the continuing partnership with Elizabeth Standafer, (Youth Apprenticeship Coordinator, North Carolina Colleges System Office) on the Partnership to Advance Youth Apprenticeship (PAYA). This is a multi-year initiative that will support efforts in states and cities to expand access to high-quality apprenticeship opportunities for high school age youth. Eastern North Carolina will be participating in a regional project to implement youth apprenticeship within the Agricultural industry sector. Emily reported that Finish Line Grant posters have been created and distributed throughout the region to bring awareness of this assistance to college students who are facing emergencies which may jeopardize their ability to finish college. Emily reported on the partnership with COA to support a NC DOT Highway Construction Training Academy. The main goal is to provide minorities, women, and disadvantaged persons with training opportunities and supportive services that lead to a journeyman level status in the highway construction industry and connect them to the 92 contractors that do road work for DOT. It is anticipated that up to 30 students could be trained.

Manger Matthews reported that the career centers attended the Washington County Expo on October 30th, which was well attended. He reported attending the Home Strong event October 29th and staff participated in an integrated service delivery training on October 31st. Matthew said staff is working very hard on youth enrollment as well as being a strong presence in Tyrrell, Hyde and Washington counties. Matthew talked about the upcoming telephonic event at COA and hopes to see a large turnout for this as they are offering customized training for the new positions. COA Development Center has been coming along well. Last month had 49 who were provided services and to date there have been 53 through November 15th so the numbers are definitely going up. Matthew stated that a major initiative next year is going to be our re-entry program so next month he is hoping to start putting together a committee with local law enforcement and others to try and close the gap on people we are missing. Sheryl reported that we received a very nice thank you last week from a person who used the center and its services and received a job offer quickly. She said the center is implementing staff feedback on how we should be listening to them and to our customers to do our jobs better.

VIII. Leadership Committee - Zach Bray. Chair Bray reported on attendance of Vision East and reiterated the need for new board members and encouraged everyone to reach out to potential candidates. Chair Bray reported on performance measures that are included in the packet. These are federal performance measures that show where we sit with things. Will do a deeper dive into these and will hopefully talk about them at the next meeting. Feel like we are making progress and going in the right direction.

Career Center Committee – Michael Twiddy. Reported that at the last meeting the committee was updated on the center lease for the Elizabeth City site and were given an update on Ocracoke. Center site visits were on October 15th and 16th. Committee is closing in on the final stages of the performance dashboard and have been submitting activity reports for each of the centers.

Business Resources and Opportunities (BROC) – Emily Nicholson. Emily stated that with the resignation of Loretta Williams, the BROC is looking for a new chair. Chair Bray asked if anyone serving on the committee is willing to step up and be chair, please let him know.

NCWorks NEXTGEN – Wanda Fletcher. Wanda reported that Real World received rave reviews and it was a resounding success. NextGen currently has 82 participants - 43 active and 39 in follow up. NextGen is looking for more participants as always. The WEX program is expanding with 4 students in WEX to date. Wanda reported that the 14th annual youth summit will be held in April in Cary NC and their hope is to take 10-15 kids.

Finance Committee – JD Williamson. JD reported that the committee is currently looking at fund reports, financial reports and budgets trying to get up to speed on the financial aspect of our program. As a new committee, it has been very enlightening to have staff's assistance with understanding everything. JD said that budget prep starts early next year and as a finance committee, they would like to get input on budget requests from the committees for special projects. He said that he envisions the Finance Committee as the channel for NWDB committees to get projects moved forward that align with their strategic plans. JD said the committee will bring the budget request form with instructions to the next meeting for each of the committee's use. Cindy explained the process will be for a committee to submit to the Finance Committee a budget request. The finance committee will review and submit with recommendations to the Leadership Committee for approval.

IX. Discussion about Committee Proposals for Budget. Discussed previously.

X. Revisions to Support Services Policy – Transportation (Vote). Assistant Director Nicholson explained that this policy relates to the amount of money allowed to participants for transportation expenses. Currently, the mileage rate is .45 cents per mile, with a cap of \$500 per month. After review, approximately 35% of participants are reaching that cap, which means they are not getting the full benefit of this allowable support. It is recommended that the Board authorize raising the per mile rate to the federal mileage rate (currently .58 per mile), and increasing the monthly cap to \$600. This will apply for all Pell and non-Pell students. **Moved by Dr. David Loope, seconded by Wanda Fletcher to accept staff's recommendation. Motion carried unanimously.**

XI. Environmental Scanning. Larry Donley recognized Assistant Career Center Manager Sheryl Stevenson for graduating from the STAR Leadership Academy, put on through NCWorks Workforce System. She is one of only 37 across the state that has completed the leadership program and wanted to recognize for her hard work. Michael Twiddy commented that Vision East was excellent, great group of people and that you can see all the things that are getting done. Also, the NCWorks Partnership Conference was an unbelievable event. Very excited about the work that is being done on apprenticeships. Steve Bryan reported that the new Dollar General will be opening in March in Columbia, which is very exciting. There are some grave concerns about losing the prison because of the loss of payments for services and for people moving in order to get closer to where they will now have to work, could be upwards of 600 families. Chair Bray wanted to make sure to thank the staff for all their work and making everything happen the way they do.

XII. Other Business. None.

XIII. Adjourn (vote). With no further discussion, Chairman Bray adjourned the meeting via motion by

Dr. Loope at 8:17 p.m.

XIV. Next Meeting: The next meeting will be held on Tuesday, January 21, 2019 at 5:30 p.m.

NWDB Chairman, Gerald Z. Bray

Date