

**Minutes for the Northeastern Workforce  
Development Board  
January 21, 2020**

**I. Call to Order:** Chairman Zach Bray called the meeting to order on November 21, 2020 at 6:00 p.m. The presence of a quorum was determined with **ten (10) members present:** Zach Bray, Larry Donley, Tameka Gibbs, Dr. David Loope, Terri Gallop, JD Williamson, Sandi Brickhouse Smith, Diane White, and Larry Lombardi. Dave Carroll participated via GoToMeeting link. **Members Absent with Notice:** Rex Anderson, Vernon Brinkley, Debra Keenan, Janet Russ, Sean Lavin, and Michael Twiddy. **Guests/Partners/Staff:** Amber Morse, Erica Spear, Lora Aples, Matthew Fowler, Sheryl Stevens, Cindy Gossage, Annette Barnes, Emily Nicholson and David Whitmer, Fred McConnell, Linda Hofler, Natalie Rountree, Cindy Powers, Erica Spear, Robin Zinsmeister, and Casey Bass.

**II. Welcome/Introduction:** Chairman Bray welcomed everyone to the meeting, introducing NWDB's new Business Services Representative Amber Morse and new Career Advisor Erica Spear as well as new NWDB Board members Sandi Brickhouse Smith, Diane White, and Larry Lombardi. He also welcomed guests Robin Zinsmeister, COA Dean of Workforce, Edenton-Chowan Campus, Casey Bass, John A. Holmes High School Director of Secondary Education and Career and Technical Education, Albemarle Commission Board Member and Gates County Commissioner Linda Hofler, Gates County Manager Natalie Rountree, DWS Regional Analyst Cindy Powers, and Senior Director of Workforce, ACT Client relations Fred McConnell.

Chair Bray asked for a moment of silence in remembrance of former Vice-Chair Steve Bryan who tragically lost his life in a car accident. He was a well-loved member of the community, who did many things for others and he will be missed.

**III. Approval of Minutes for November, 2019 (Vote):** Chairman Bray asked for a motion to approve the minutes from November 19, 2019 meeting. **It was moved by Terri Gallop, seconded by Tameka Gibbs, 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 Terri Gallop, to approve the agenda as presented. With no further discussion, the motion carried unanimously.**

**V. Presentation: Mission Moment: Zia'kieya Brickhouse.** Lora Aples stated that although Ms. Brickhouse was unable to attend the meeting, she shared that Ms. Brickhouse become very emotional when she was told she would be recognized for her success tonight. Ms. Aples stated that Zia'kieya

is a senator on the student council, working at a job she loves and is doing exceptionally well in school. When asked what plans Zia'kैया had for her future, she responded that she wants to stay in Chowan County so she can help other young people achieve the same success. Lora added that her Career Advisor, Angus Spencer has done a great job working with Zia'kैया.

**VI. Presentation: Fred McConnell, Senior Director of Workforce, ACT Relations.** Mr. McConnell gave a brief background on ACT, explaining that one of its main objectives is helping people find workforce success. Since about 1993, ACT has developed an assessment called Work Keys, which assesses skills for the workplace. He congratulated Gates County on their achievement, presenting Gates County Commissioner Linda Hofler and Gates County Manager Natalie Rountree with the Work Ready Communities Certification. Ms. Hofler stated that it was an honor to be recognized and to receive the award on behalf of Gates County. She noted that the school system was the driving force behind this, stating that this work will help Gates County residents find better jobs and a living wage.

**VII. Presentation – NWDB Assistant Director Emily Nicholson, Dean of workforce Development and Career Essentials Robin Zinsmeister and John A. Holmes High School Director of Secondary Education Casey Bass.** Ms. Nicholson introduced the guests and gave a brief background on the new program. She reported that NWDB has partnered with COA Edenton and the Edenton-Chowan Public Schools to begin implementation of a "Career Essentials" Curriculum. Beginning in the spring 2020 semester, a cohort of high school seniors will take this series of courses. The goal of the Career Essentials program is to offer a short term (6 weeks) program that students can use to acquire local positions. NWDB and COA are currently working with employers of the area to determine how employers can incentivize program completers (i.e., interview preference). The current curriculum design of the Career Essentials program includes the following: Workplace Success and Characteristics of a Good Employee, Problem Solving and Critical Thinking, Ins/Outs of a Business, Nuts/Bolts of Manufacturing, Quality Assurance, Blueprint Reading, Basic Electricity, and Basic Hydraulics and Pneumatics. Students will also get a Forklift Certification, OSHA 10, a White Belt Certification and a Yellow Belt Certification. Dean Zinsmeister noted that participating in this program really allows that student to pursue any area.

**VIII. Administrative Reports:** Director Whitmer reported that a comparison of numbers between this year and last year shows good news for NWDB and NCWorks, noting that training participants are up 82% from last year. He said that the Career Development Center at COA is averaging 52 people per month. He referenced the hiring event for Telephonics that was held recently saw 170 job seekers. He stated that the Business Support Services Career pathways application, which is in partnership with COA, Perquimans County, Edenton-Chowan, EC/Pasquotank County, Dare County,

and Currituck County school districts for local implementation certification. Local implementation means that the colleges, schools, and NCWorks Career Centers are working together seamlessly to promote and support careers within the Business Support Services pathway.

Director Whitmer reported that staff is continuing to partner with Elizabeth Standafer, Youth Apprenticeship Coordinator, NC Colleges System Office, on the Partnership to Advance Youth Apprenticeship. He reported that Beaufort County Community College has identified an employer “Champion” are working to add more employers. He stated that it is hoped that CTE teachers from Washington, Tyrrell, and Hyde will join this effort as well.

Director Whitmer stated NWDB continues to partner with the Governor’s Office and the Research Triangle Institute (RTI) to develop a career pathway to help recruit and retain teachers. He reported that Brandi Bragg, Career Pathways facilitator, met with superintendents from 13 of the northeastern NC counties and has received agreement from the superintendents to the next step in the process for building a Teacher/Education pathway.

Director Whitmer announced that ARHS has been awarded the \$275,000 NCDHHS Community Linkages to Care grant to help the AOPC with their efforts to implement community based strategies to prevent fatal and non-fatal opioid overdoses, increase access and linkages to care services for the most vulnerable populations, and build local capacity to respond to the overdose crisis.

There was no report from Dare as Manager Kenny Kee is out ill. Career Center Manager Matthew Fowler reported that the NCWorks Edenton offices will change its hours beginning the first week of February, opening three days – Tuesday thru Thursday and will no longer close for lunch. He reported that the Partnership meeting on January 8<sup>th</sup> was well attended and thanked Lora Aples for speaking on NextGen Youth services and Tameka Gibbs spoke on Vocational Rehab services. Bill Blake of United Way spoke about NC Care 360. The Partnership meetings are held every other month. Manager Fowler stated it was open to the public and the Board was more than welcome to attend a meeting. He stated that NCWorks Career Center Corner Radio show is on the 28<sup>th</sup> on ECSU 89.9, commenting that it’s a great way to get out and talk about our services.

Assistant Manager Sheryl Stevens reported that the Career Center is holding many trainings, including CRC Employability Skills, workshops, and will be offering federal resume workshops in February, March and April. They run from 9 a.m. to noon and she invited the board members to attend any of their training and workshops at any time.

## **IX. Committee Reports.**

Leadership Committee - Zach Bray. Chair Bray stated that he was pleased to have several new members on the board. There are three more vacancies that board and staff are working hard to fill so

we can have a full board as soon as possible. He noted that there are several committees that need additional participation and urged the new members to identify what they have interest in supporting. Chair Bray said he would take into consideration a board member's choices and will be reaching out in the next week or so to finalize assignments.

Career Center Committee – Larry Donley. Mr. Donley reported that the committee added several new trainings to the approved training list, which included Forklift Operator and Career Essentials at COA; and, Dental Assistant at Martin Community College. The committee is in the process reviewing the first draft of the NCWorks quality assurance guide. Mr. Donley gave an update on the NCWorks Elizabeth City move to new offices. He said that there has been verbal agreement reached with the landlord on the potential site and they are currently working with the current landlord for a temporary lease for 5-6 months.

Business Resources and Opportunities (BROC) – Emily Nicholson. No report.

NCWorks NEXTGEN – Teri Gallop. Ms. Gallop reported that there are currently 7 students involved in Work Experience. She reported that there were four community outreach events in December. Ms. Gallop stated that upcoming events include the annual Youth Summit which has 10-15 youth identified to attend in Cary, NC and the committee is working on a NextGen Achievement Banquet in May or June. Program Manager Lora Aples reported that they have received at least 6 referrals from her attendance of the Partnership meeting.

Finance Committee – JD Williamson. Mr. Williamson reported that the committee's main focus at this time is the upcoming budget. He referenced the budget request form that is included in the board packet, noting that staff will be asking the committees they staff to submit any new budget requests that they are currently working on for the upcoming year. He said the Finance Committee is asking for the requests to be submitted to Cindy by February 10<sup>th</sup> and the Finance Committee will review the requests on February 11<sup>th</sup>. The requests will then be forwarded to the Leadership committee for review and recommendation to staff. The staff will use these for preparing next year's budget. Mr. Williamson briefly discussed the upcoming budget calendar with the board.

**X. Career Center Certification – Chair Bray.** Chair Bray and Director Whitmer congratulated and presented framed plaques to Career Center Manager Fowler and Assistant Center Manager Stevens signifying that the career centers in Elizabeth City, Edenton, and Dare have satisfied the requirements and standards established by the Governor's NCWorks Commission for quality customer service.

**XI. Contract for Services – Local Career Pathways Facilitator (VOTE).** Director Whitmer outlined a new proposed contracted position that will support the effort for local career opportunities to local youth through expansion of the #worklocal campaign throughout the 10-county NWDB region. As this work

involves extensive work with local employers, school systems, and community colleges in the NWDB region. The initiative is geared to help high school students realize that there are promising local job opportunities in industry sectors that offer sustainable wages. The position of local Career Pathways Facilitator will work closely with school systems to market NextGen services for the purpose of recruitment and retention of participants. Overall, the facilitator will promote the NCWorks Career Center system to generate awareness among the youth of the region for promising career opportunities to help local companies fill current and future openings. The estimated contract cost will be \$55,000. This proposal has been endorsed by the Finance Committee as well as the Leadership Committee. There are ample funds in the current budget to support this expenditure.

**It was moved by Dr. David Loope, seconded by Dave Carroll, to approve the Contract for services for the Local Career Pathways Facilitator. With no further discussion, the motion carried unanimously.**

**XII. Environmental Scanning.** Chair Bray gave an explanation of environmental scanning to the new members, explaining that is a time when board members can share news from their respective industries that may be of interest to the board.

Sandi Brickhouse Smith: Not aware of NWDB services in Tyrrell County and would like staff to set up a meeting in Tyrrell with businesses to let them know what is available.

Larry Lombardi: Said that he serves on the Veterans Advisory Board and one of the biggest issues is making sure veterans are working once they are retired from the service. Noted that Currituck County has yet to achieve Work Ready Status.

Dave Carroll: Reported that he has a new position with the Machinist Union which puts him in contact with multiple contractors. He reported they are all having a hard time filling positions with experienced people. He noted that the ECSU Aviation Program as well as COA are working hard getting people trained but it is the same throughout the United States. He suggested developing an apprenticeship partnership with ESCU Aviation. Director Whitmer said he would get him a contact person at ESCU.

Dr. Loope: Noted that Beaufort CCC has had some conversations with the local airport in his region about the possibility of doing something similar to ECSU but it doesn't seem to be a real starter in his region.

**XIII. Other Business.** Chair Bray announced that Albemarle Commission Director Melody Wilkins has taken another position. Her last day is January 31<sup>st</sup>. Ms. Gallop asked for an update on Ms. Janet Russ. Director Whitmer said it is a slow process but she is getting better.

**XIV. Adjourn (vote).** With no further discussion, Chairman Bray asked for a motion to adjourn. Motion by

Tameka Gibbs, seconded by Terri Gallop to adjourn at 7:21 p.m.

**XV. Next Meeting: The next meeting will be held on Tuesday, March 17, 2020 at 6:00 p.m.**

*Gerald Z Bray*

05 / 20 / 2020

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NWDB Chairman, Gerald Z. Bray

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Date

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<b>TITLE</b>	January 2020 NWDB Minutes
<b>FILE NAME</b>	NWDB DRAFT Board Minutes 01.21.2020.docx
<b>DOCUMENT ID</b>	26beb7c7cc00008e821409c923eead0604f27b57
<b>AUDIT TRAIL DATE FORMAT</b>	MM / DD / YYYY
<b>STATUS</b>	● Completed

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## Document History



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