

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

**Call to Order.** Chairman Zach Bray called the meeting to order at 6:00 p.m. The meeting is being held electronically per COVID-19 restrictions. Presence of a quorum was determined by roll call with **thirteen (13) members present:** Chair Zach Bray, Vice-Chair Janet Russ, Dr. Kimberly Gregory, Dave Carroll, Sandi Brickhouse Smith, Larry Donley, Diane White, JD Williamson, Larry Lombardi, Dr. David Loope, Terri Gallop, Michael Twiddy, and Richard Thorne. **Members Absent with Notice:** Sean Lavin, Vernon Brinkley, Tameka Gibbs, Rex Anderson, and Debra Keenan, and Montique McClary. **Guests/Partners/Staff:** Lora Aples, Sheryl Stevens, Cindy Gossage, Annette Barnes, Kenny Kee, Emily Nicholson, Michael Ervin, and David Whitmer.

**Welcome/Introduction.** Chairman Bray welcomed everyone to the meeting. He welcomed the board's newest member Richard Thorne to the meeting.

**Approval of Agenda (Vote).** Chairman Bray asked for a motion to approve the agenda. Motion by Dave Carroll, seconded by Michael Twiddy, to approve the agenda. With a roll call vote, the motion passed unanimously.

**Nomination of Officers: Chair and Vice-Chair (VOTE).** Motion by Janet Russ, seconded by Larry Donley, to open the floor for nominations for Chair. With a roll call vote, the motion passed unanimously.

Michael Twiddy nominated Zach Bray as Chair. With no further nominations, a motion was made by Terri Gallop, seconded by Michael Twiddy, to approve the nomination of Zach Bray as Chair. With a roll call vote, the motion passed unanimously.

Motion by Dave Carroll, seconded by Terri Gallop to open the nominations for Vice-Chair. With a roll call vote, the motion passed unanimously.

Dr. Loope nominated Janet Russ. With no further nominations, a motion was made by Michael Twiddy, seconded by Dr. Loope, to approve the nomination of Janet Russ as Vice-Chair. With a roll call vote, the motion passed unanimously.

**Approval of Minutes (VOTE):** Motion by Michael Twiddy, seconded by Larry Lombardi, to approve the minutes as written. Board members Zach Bray, Janet Russ, Dr. Kimberly Gregory, Dave Carroll, Sandi Brickhouse Smith, Larry Donley, Diane White, JD Williamson, Larry Lombardi, Dr. David Loope, Terri Gallop, and Michael Twiddy voted yes. Richard Thorne abstained. Motion passed.

**Administrative Reports.** Director Whitmer thanked staff for the tremendous job they have been doing throughout this pandemic. He introduced Mr. Michael Ervin, the new

Executive Director for the Albemarle Commission. Director Whitmer reported that Career Center Manager Matthew Fowler is out on medical leave and Sheryl Stevens would be managing the center in the interim. Director Whitmer reported that due to the Governor's order to continue Phase II, the career centers remain closed to the public, although services continue to be provided virtually. He shared the new opening dates if Phase III is implemented on July 17<sup>th</sup>. The plan is to have centers open to the general public by August 10<sup>th</sup>. Director Whitmer reported that, due to a difficulty in getting building supplies, the re-location of the Elizabeth City career center to its new location at Jordan Plaza has been delayed to September 18<sup>th</sup>. Director Whitmer shared with the board that NWDB has purchased two new online training platforms Career Edge and 14 Elements. He stated that having online services is critical to reaching customers that are geographically separated from the career centers. These platforms will help customers developed needed career readiness and soft skills in a virtual environment. Director Whitmer reported that the career center held a virtual career fair where over a dozen employers participated. Director Whitmer shared that the preliminary programmatic monitor report exit interview was held on July 2<sup>nd</sup>. He reported there were no findings and the monitor is very happy with the improvements she saw over last year. Director Whitmer reported that Amanda Patrick has been contracted with as the local career pathways specialist. Her main point of focus will be to manage the #worklocal campaign. This effort is meant to expose middle and high school students to local job opportunities and career ladders in an attempt to showcase the availability of great local careers. Director Whitmer reported that NWDB was awarded a \$9,800 Finish Line Grant for the purpose of purchasing laptops and hotspots for a loaner program. These laptops will be available on loan to students completing their college degrees and are eligible for the Finish Line grant program. Director Whitmer reported that the 4-year plan has been approved by DWS, which means that funding for the next year will be released. Assistant Director Nicholson reported that a second Teacher Bootcamp was held with 8 teachers participating. The Bootcamp exposed teachers to manufacturing careers and what it takes to be a COA student.

Assistant Elizabeth City Center manager Sheryl Stevens reported that staff is working from home. She goes into the office on Mondays and Tuesdays. The calls have decreased, due in her opinion to DES getting things under control. She said they are receiving more calls for one on one assistance for job search and resume assistance. She reported that staff has begun using the WIN system assessment and it is going well.

Dare Career Center Manager Kenny Kee reported that there have been inquiries by people who have exhausted their 2<sup>nd</sup> tier unemployment. He noted that employers are calling and that service jobs are going great. He reported that he is currently interviewing for a new career advisor and that the temporary position has been filled.

### **Committee Reports.**

**Leadership:** Chair Bray reported that the committee has been discussing how best to proceed in light of the pandemic. Since the board did not hold a board retreat he asked

that committees should prepare their strategic action plan for PY 20 and be prepared to discuss it at the September meeting.

**Career Center Committee:** Michael Twiddy reported the committee met in June and July. Lineman training at Nash Community College has been adopted as approved training. The committee is in the beginning steps of reviewing Bachelor degree programs at ECSU as an approved training for the last two years of the degree program. The committee recommended additions and deletions for the PY20 dashboard. The point is to see how the career centers are performing and where there are needs for improvement. Center Managers are working with staff to develop goals and will present them to the career center committee at the August meeting. Michael noted that the PY19 completed dashboard was in the board packet for the board's review.

**Business Resources and Opportunities:** Assistant Director Nicholson said that the committee will begin meeting again at the end of July.

**NextGen:** Terri Gallop reported there are currently 86 active participants in the program. There are 10 Work Experience participants, although 3 are suspended due to COVID-19, and there are 2 OJT participants. The committee is researching holding a virtual Real World Event this year.

**Finance:** JD Williams reported that at the end of May all PY18 funds were fully expended and we are now spending PY19 funds, so no funds were needed to return to the state. The committee has been working very hard on possible changes to the budget process in order to place more focus on committees and board members being involved in the process of preparing and adopting the budget.

**Other Business:** Chair Bray announced that Michael Twiddy is retiring at the end of August and this would be his last board meeting. Chair Bray presented Michael with a 5 years of service award. He thanked Michael for all his efforts. Michael stated that it had been an enjoyable 5 years. He appreciates how focused staff are on the job seekers and businesses and that he is very proud of the career centers. He also stated that he has been to several statewide meetings and NWDB is thought of very highly throughout the state. Vice-Chair Russ thanked Michael for all his efforts and work that he has done on Ocracoke Island and the mainland of Hyde County.

**Adjourn (Vote).** With no further discussion, Chairman Bray asked for a motion to adjourn. Motion by Michael Twiddy, seconded by Terri Gallop to adjourn the meeting. Motion passed. Meeting adjourned at 7:00 p.m.

The next meeting is scheduled for Tuesday, September 15th at 6:00 p.m.

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NWDB Chairman, Gerald Z. Bray

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Date