Minutes for the Northeastern

Workforce Development Board

**January 19, 2021**

**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:** ChairZach Bray, Vice-Chair Janet Russ, Dr. Kimberly Gregory, Dave Carroll, Larry Donley, Diane White, JD Williamson, Terri Gallop, Tameka Gibbs, Richard Thorne, Montique McClary, Sandi Brickhouse Smith, and Larry Lombardi. **Members Absent with Notice:** Debra Keenan, Sean Lavin, and Dr. David Loope. **Members absent without notice:** Vernon Brinkley and Rex Anderson. **Guests/Partners/Staff**: Sheryl Stevens, Annette Barnes, Emily Nicholson, Amber Morse, Matthew Fowler, Kenny Kee, Heidi O’Neal, and David Whitmer.

**Welcome/Introduction**. Chairman Bray welcomed everyone to the meeting.

**Approval of Agenda (VOTE).** Chairman Bray asked for a motion to approve the agenda. **Motion by Terri Gallop, seconded by Tameka Gibbs, to approve the agenda.** **The motion passed with a roll call vote.**

**Approval of Minutes (VOTE): Motion by Terri Gallop, seconded by Tameka Gibbs, to approve the minutes as written. The motion passed with a roll call vote.**

**Mission Moment – Success Story, Cary Burkette:** Dare Career Center Manager Kenny Kee gave a brief synopsis of Cary’s successes. When she came to NWDB in 2018, she was on public assistance and working part time. Working with Career Advisor Paige Griffin, Cary was able to return to school and graduated the top of her class in Computer Integrated Machining. She is now a full-time employee, off of public assistance, and has a lasting and fulfilling career.

**Presentation: Heidi O’Neal NCWorks Outreach Coordinator:** Heidi presented a PowerPoint presentation to the board that she called a “360 degree view” of her position as Outreach Coordinator. She said the basic premise of the program is to build relationships with our partner agencies such as Vocational Rehab, public libraries, and departments of social services and many others. As the Outreach Coordinator she has worked one on one with job seekers on resume preparation, hosted 27 job fairs, and presenting various workshops. She is also the primary for online and print exposure. She noted that there have been many press releases in the Daily Advance and the Perquimans Weekly as well as daily posts on Facebook. She said she sends out a weekly blast to about 1500 who are signed up to receive job opportunities. Other activities Heidi has been involved with is working with COA through a memorandum of understanding to test students for career readiness certificates as well as working with counties to become Work Ready Communities. She noted that the first NCWorks career center video was recorded on November 20th and it should be ready for review this week. Heidi also reported on the new technology that is now being used by staff. This includes Engage by Cell, which is a texting platform. People can text 56512 and they have access to many of NCWorks offerings through their cell phone. She also spoke about the WIN career readiness tool that is used for assigning various classes to help improve career readiness scoring.

**Presentation: NWDB Finance Committee: Allocations & Budget 101:** JD Williams, Chair of the Finance Committee, explained that with the Board having a more active role in this year’s budget process, he asked David to give a brief presentation on the steps for creating the NWDB annual budget.

David explained that revenues received by NWDB are allocated into three different funds: Adult, Dislocated Worker, and Youth. 10% of the total allocation is assigned to Administration. 20% of the Youth funds are assigned to Work Based Learning (WBL)– which funds Youth Work Experience (WEX) and On-the-Job training (OJT). The remaining Youth funds are apportioned at 75% Out of School Youth (OSY), with the remaining 25% assigned to In School Youth (ISY). This is mandated by the state. Additional grant funds are allocated for the Business Engagement Coordinator salary (Business Services). Two other grant funds – Finish Line Grant (emergency funds for college students) and Enhancement grant funds which fund the Outreach Coordinator and other activities, such as the Teach the Teacher bootcamps that were conducted last year. The Enhancement grant funds are expiring at the end of this fiscal year and there are not being made available for next year.

David explained that NWDB has no control over how much funding we get year to year. Funds are allocated by the federal government to the states by a formula and the states then allocate the funds to the 23 Workforce Development Boards using the same formula. Since funding allocations are not known until April or May, the proposed budget for next year is an estimate based on past year allocations and amount of carryover funds from the current year. Funds are allocated each year but the workforce development board is given 2 years to expend the funds. Carryover funds are important because we only receive a small portion of our funding in July, with the remainder coming in October or November. Without a carryover we would have little or no operating funds between July and November. David stated that once notification has been received on funding levels, budget amendments based on actual funding levels are taken to the Albemarle Commission Board to adjust the budget with the actual revenues received.

Zach said that the Finance Committee plans to make more regular reports to the Board to help the board be more aware of where we stand financially.

**Administrative Reports.** David reported that a meeting was held in mid-December with Center Leadership to discuss whether or not changes needed to be made to our operational status and if there was anything different or additional that needed to be done to ensure staff safety. Since then, more concerns have been raised and he will be meeting with the Leadership Committee in the coming week to discuss what changes, if any, need to happen in the short term. He noted that despite the obstacles that are being faced, staff continues to serve the public, noting several services that are being offered both virtually and in person and staff is doing an excellent job.

David reported that a virtual Business Roundtable was held on December 9th with 8 businesses participating. There were 3 parts to the roundtable: Center staff provided information on business services offered through the NCWorks Career Center; a presentation was made by Economic Development Director Christian Lockamy about how NCWorks services assisted with their project; and, an opportunity was given for the businesses to share their challenges and discuss ways to help each other with solutions.

David gave an update on the Aviation Career Pathway project. He said that an initial scope of work has been identified with the main goal of creating a talent pipeline for aviation related employers in and within commuting distance from the NWDB ten-county region. Currently, a survey is being created to share with aviation related businesses to help determine next steps as well as developing marketing materials. Staff is in discussions with ECSU regarding getting them on the approved training list which will give students assistance in their last two years of school.

David gave a brief update on the #worklocal project. He said that the presentation was very successful at Perquimans County High School, noting that it was covered by the Daily Advance. He said that initiatives are currently underway in Dare, Currituck, Hyde, and Tyrrell counties.

David updated the board on the RFP process, stating that a request for letters of intent are currently being advertised. He noted that if no letters are received, the board can move forward with a failed procurement and request that all services be performed in-house.

David reported that every Friday since November the management team and finance have been reviewing NWDB policies and procedures in order to ensure all appropriate checks and balances are in place. There are no significant changes that are being made, but it is a good exercise for staff to make sure a policy is the best and most efficient as possible.

**Committee Reports.**

**Leadership:** Chair Bray reported that the leadership committee is participating in the RFP process and as David reported, will be meeting with the center management staff regarding concerns due to COVID 19.

**Career Center Committee:** Committee Chair Tameka Gibbs reported that the committee did not meet in December but did meet in January. She was unable to attend and Sean Lavin chaired the meeting in her place. The committee approved the staff recommendation for One Stop Operator and Title I Monitoring and approved the scope of work for the secret shopper program, which is on the board agenda for approval tonight. In addition, the committee discussed adding a Work Experience Program (WEX) for adults and dislocated workers, similar to the WEX Program currently being used for Youth. The committee directed staff to develop a policy for the committee’s review.

**Business Resources and Opportunities:** Committee Chair Larry Lombardi reported that the committee is moving forward with updating and publishing the new LMI books. He said the plan is to have an online version as well as a limited supply of hard copies for distribution. He said it has been some years since this has been updated and it is a project that has been proposed to be included in next year’s budget. Larry reported that the new Currituck Tractor Supply will be having their groundbreaking ceremony next week. They hope to have construction completed within the next 14 to 16 weeks. He said that Amber Morse is working with them to help get staff in place in time for opening.

**NextGen:** Committee Chair Terri Gallop began her report by sharing with the board that Lora Aples recently lost her father and asked everyone to keep her and her family in their prayers.

Terry reported that the committee voted to recommend several changes to financial incentives for participants in the WEX program that they will be bringing to the board at their next meeting:

* Increase the WEX activity from 800 hours to 1040 hours.
* Increase wage increase increments for a range of $.25 up to $1 depending on the WEX.
* Increasing the incentive for secondary education to $150.
* Adding an incentive for participants reaching CRC platinum in the amount of $100.

Terry asked Kim Gregory to speak on the committee’s discussion regarding partnerships with schools. Kim reported that the committee would like to complete two flyers, one for those schools that are in the COA service area and one for those schools outside the COA service area. These flyers would be made available to students in the schools giving them information regarding the High School to College program. She said that it is important that it be a collaborative effort with the schools, making sure that it is understood that this is an opportunity to work together for the benefit of all students.

**Finance:** Committee Chair JD Williamson reported that the finance committee met

last week. He spoke about the committee reviewing the monthly fund report, noting that a copy is placed in the board packet each month. He said the fund report shows the allocation of funds in the budget by year and what has been expended to date. He said it’s important to review this report as it tells us if funds are being expended in a timely way and that there is no issue with being able to expend all the funds before they expire.

JD reported that the committee reviewed project requests from the NWDB committees for the new budget. He thanked the committees for providing the information. JD said the committee reviewed the strategic plan, noting that a new goal has been added is for the development of an accounting and finance SOP. He said that it will be a go-to manual to provide an institutional record of how NWDB finances are managed from year to year.

**Mystery Shopper (VOTE):** David stated that this a strategic plan goal of the Career Center Committee. He said the project is to contract with someone that visits the career centers and provides a report on their experience. He said that this is something that Rivers East WDB has done for the last couple of years and the Career Center Committee revised it for our use. David stated that this is in no way a “gotcha” project. The management and staff are very good at what they do, but there is always room for improvement. The Career Center committee is requesting the boards approval to procure a contractor and move forward with the project.

**Motion by Kimberly Gregory, seconded by Larry Lombardi, to authorize the project. Motion passed with a roll call vote.**

**Environmental Scanning/Other Business:** Larry Lombardi shared with the board that a second round of PPP funds has been approved and banks have started receiving the funds. He said most of the banks are now on board.

**Adjourn (Vote).** With no further discussion, motion by Larry Lombardi to adjourn the meeting. Chairman Bray adjourned the meeting at 7:06 p.m.

The next meeting is scheduled for Tuesday, March 16, 2021 at 6:00 p.m.



\_03/16/21\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ Date