

Minutes for the Northeastern
Workforce Development Board
July 20, 2021

Call to Order. Chair Sean Lavin called the meeting to order at 6:01 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 Sean Lavin, Vice-Chair Janet Russ, Alvan Overton, Dr. Kimberly Gregory, Dave Carroll, Sandi Brickhouse Smith, Larry Donley, JD Williamson, Larry Lombardi, Montique McClary (arrived late in the meeting), Charlie Long, Lisa Brown, and Carson Rich. **Members Absent with Notice:** Richard Thorne, Dr. David Loope, and Tameka Gibbs. **Members absent without notice:** Rex Anderson. **Guests/Partners/Staff:** Annette Barnes, Emily Nicholson, Amber Morse, Matthew Fowler, Kenny Kee, Cindy Gossage, Sheryl Stevens, Warren Eason, Rachel Clipston, and David Whitmer.

Welcome/Introduction. Chair Lavin welcomed new board member Charlie Long to the Board. He also welcomed NCWorks Elizabeth City intern Warren Eason to the meeting.

Approval of Agenda (VOTE). Chair Lavin asked for a motion to approve the agenda. **Motion by Dave Carroll, seconded by Sandi, to approve the agenda. The motion passed unanimously with a roll call vote.**

Nomination of Officers: Chair and Vice-Chair. **Motion by Sandi Brickhouse Smith, seconded by Carson Rich, to open nominations for Chair of the Board. Dave Carroll nominated Sean Lavin. Janet Russ moved to close nominations. Motion by Dave Carroll, seconded by Kimberly Gregory to elect Sean Lavin as Chair. Motion approved by roll call vote.**

Dave Carroll nominated Janet Russ as Vice-Chair. Charlie Long moved to close the nominations. Motion by Dave Carroll, seconded by Sandi Brickhouse Smith, to elect Janet Russ as Vice-Chair. Motion approved by roll call vote.

Success Story, Fred Smith Company: NCWorks Dare Manager Kenny Kee presented the Fred Smith Company. He said that NCWorks has been working with the company for several years. The company contacted the Dare office requesting assistance in hiring this past April. NCWorks held a job fair and one person was hired on the spot, starting work that very afternoon. Starting wage was \$23 an hour and the employee has since received a raise to \$31 an hour. The Fred Smith Company also hired a veteran who came into NCWorks looking for work. Kenny added that they have a couple of job orders right now for the company. He said the great relationship with this large company is part of the reason the company calls them whenever they have hiring needs. Sean complimented Kenny and his staff, saying that having the employer reach out to them is a sign that NCWorks is answering their needs.

Administrative Reports. Director Whitmer reported that all Career Centers are open without an appointment, except for the COA Development Center, which will be opening in a few weeks. Staff continues to offer many workshops, virtually and in person, that are being well attended. He noted that the career centers are conducting several hiring events for employers. They include Surf or Sound Realty; CVS Pharmacy; Big G Toys; Allied Research Technologies; and the NC Ferry System. He noted a recent hiring event conducted at First Flight High School in Dare County with a very good showing of 57 businesses. David announced an upcoming event being put on by the NCWorks Elizabeth City career center called "It's All in the Details". The intent being to educate and introduce the community to the partners and resources of the career center. Tours of the center and information sessions will be provided. Local employers will be in attendance and will offer interview opportunities and community partners will be in attendance to showcase their resources.

David reported that NWDB continues to work with ECSU on various projects. The most recent is the 2-year project MyFutureNC Local Educational Attainment Collaborative Communities. We are partnering with ECSU, along with COA, Elizabeth City-Pasquotank public schools, and the City of Elizabeth City. The goal is to increase educational attainment in our region.

David reported to the board that staff has completed their “One Stop” monitoring review of the career centers. He explained that since we perform our services in-house, DWS is the one stop operator. Staff has conducted the review, which is patterned after our own review by the DWS Program Monitor each year. The report is given to Larry Donley, as the representative for DWS. He can take issue with items and negotiate for changes, or accept it as submitted.

David reported that the Enhancement Grant has been extended until December 31, 2021. This means that Outreach Coordinator Heidi O’Neal will continue to work under the grant until the funds expire. He noted that she has started to provide workshops for jobseekers in libraries throughout the region again.

David reported that NWDB’s allocations for PY21 has decreased by 17%. He noted this is the lowest allocation that he can recall ever receiving. The decrease in funding will have an impact on NWDB’s services, and staff is working on identifying areas where we can make cuts with having as minimum of impact on our customers as possible. Staff has also been successful in obtaining additional funding to help offset these cuts. Besides the \$125,000 in youth funds reported at the last meeting – NWDB has obtained an additional \$79,860 in PY19 funds from Kerr-Tar WDB (\$7,600 Admin; \$45,000 for DW; and \$27,600 in youth funds).

David announced that NWDB was one of only three workforce development boards in the State of NC that were awarded a Youth Incentive Grant by DWS. Our grant for \$100,000 will be used to support our E3 Initiative: Enroll More Youth, Expose Youth to Local Careers, and Ensure Stronger Completion Rates. This represents an expansion of our #worklocal initiative, which was established to encourage youth to seek employment within growing career fields located in northeastern North Carolina.

Committee Reports.

Leadership: Chair Lavin said the committee spent time discussing the officer nominations, as well the funding reductions. He reported that AC Director Mike Ervin attended the meeting to discuss his efforts, and it was very much appreciated. He said the committee discussed the need to make some minor changes to our meeting policy as it pertains to virtual meetings. The current policy is based on the state emergency declaration. He announced that the board will most likely be meeting in person in September.

Career Center Committee: David Whitmer reported in Chair Tameka Gibb’s stead (her mother recently passed away). He said the committee has been extremely busy working on the one-stop operator monitoring report. He said that they are finalizing the customer surveys and are still discussing ways to be able to reward staff who are doing exceptionally well. He noted that the surveys will be reviewed by staff as well as the Career Center Committee.

Business Resources and Opportunities: Committee Chair Larry Lombardi reported that staff has held 5 on-site and off-site job fairs. He reminded everyone to try and stop by the “All in the Details” event tomorrow at the Elizabeth City Career Center. He said the committee discussed the Business Services budget as well as started work on updating the strategic plan.

NextGen: Committee Chair Gregory started by welcoming the committee’s two new members – Alvan Overton and Lisa Brown. The committee is working on the strategic plan. She said the committee is very excited about receiving the new grant funds and when she read the press release, it sounded so good because we were one of only three workforce development boards to receive funding.


Finance: Committee Chair JD Williamson welcomed Carson Rich to the Finance Committee. He said the committee reviewed the fund report, the expenditure and financial projections graph. He said the staff was doing an excellent job of reviewing possible cuts to expenses and pursuing opportunities for additional funds.

Environmental Scanning/Other Business: Lisa Brown commented that the housing market is slowing down. She said she expects to see more foreclosures in the near term, as well as an opening up of available rental properties. She said the fact that lumber prices are starting to come down is a very good thing for the builders.

JD spoke about the expanded tax credit, which started going out to families last week. He noted that people can elect to opt-out and take it off their taxes at the end of the year rather than get the monthly check.

Adjourn (Vote). With no further discussion, **motion by Larry Donley, seconded by JD Williamson, to adjourn the meeting. Motion passed with a voice vote.** Chairman Lavin adjourned the meeting at 6:47 p.m.

The next meeting is scheduled for Tuesday, September 21st at 6:00 p.m.



NWDB Chairman, Sean Lavin

09 / 22 / 2021

Date

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