

Minutes for the Northeastern
Workforce Development Board
May 16, 2023

Call to Order: Chair Sean Lavin called the meeting to order at 6:00 p.m. The meeting is being held in person and electronically. Presence of quorum was determined by roll call with **Eleven (11) members present:** Chair Sean Lavin, JD Williamson, Krystal Watson, Dave Carroll, Montique McClary, Dr. David Loope, Dr. Kimberly Gregory, Larry Donley, Richard Thorne, Carlos Riddick, and Trey Goodson. **Members Absent with notice:** Lisa Brown **Members Absent without notice:** Vice Chair Janet Russ, Alvan Overton, Charlie Long and Amber Lennon. **Partners/Staff:** Director David Whitmer (staff), Asst. Director Amber Morse (staff), Niaisha Stokley (staff), Annette Barnes (staff), and Rachel Clipston (staff) and Career Center Manager Chasity Pailin.

Welcome/Introduction: Chair Sean Lavin welcomed the Board and thanked everyone for attending the meeting. Chair Sean Lavin welcomed the new NextGen Career Advisor Cecilia Hagley to NWDB/NCWorks.

Approval of Agenda (Vote): Chair Sean Lavin asked for a motion to approve the agenda. **Motion by Dr. Kimberly Gregory, seconded by Krystal Watson, to approve the agenda. Motion passed unanimously with a roll call vote.**

Approval of the Minutes (Vote): Chair Sean Lavin asked for a motion to approve March 2023 Minutes with a correction that was made. **Motion by Dave Carroll, seconded by Carlos Riddick, to approve the minutes. Motion passed unanimously with a roll call vote.**

Mission Moment Succeed Story: Presented by Chasity Pailin, NCWorks Career Center Manager. Royal Farms was connected to NCWorks by a partner agency. Royal Farms, representative Kym Robinson, reached out last year to discuss the possibility of NCWorks Career Center hosting a hiring event for the new upcoming location in Grandy, NC. Royal Farms was seeking to hire about 40-50 people for their first location in NC. NCWorks Career Center was honored to assist the employer. NCWorks Business Service Coordinator Hillary Robertson assisted Royal Farms in creating an NCWorks account and getting jobs posted. Out of 22 job seekers interviewed, Royal Farms anticipated hiring 15 customer service employees. Royal Farms also attended NCWorks Career Center Spring Job Fest. Presented also was a thank you video from Royal Farms, representative Kym Robinson.

Presentation NWDB PY 2023 Adult/DW and Youth Services Proposals: Director Whitmer introduced Danny Giddens. NWDB has contracted with Mr. Giddens to review, score, and make a recommendation for the PY 23 Adult/DW and Youth Services proposals. Mr. Giddens started by reviewing the scoring documents for the two youth proposals received – One from Family Affairs, LLC and one from Two Hawk Workforce Services, LLC. Mr. Giddens noted that the proposal received by Family Affairs scored a 49 out of 100. A score of 80 is required to be considered for funding. This proposal had many issues and it was hard to understand and did not convey an understanding of WIOA Title I Youth Services. The proposal from Two Hawk scored an 80 but Mr. Giddens noted many serious concerns with the proposal as follows:

- Discussions with other WDB Directors where Two Hawk is a current service provider have revealed significant issues with data management, WIOA recordkeeping, and staffing problems.
- It appears that much of the Youth proposal was copied from Two Hawk's Adult and Dislocated Worker proposal. There are many differences in the services required for those groups, but the proposals treat them almost the same way.
- The proposal does not provide funding for work-based learning, which is a WIOA requirement.
- The proposal does not provide funding for Occupational Skills training, which then leads to an industry-recognized credential.
- The Northeastern area has a large area with many geographical transportation challenges. The proposal did not demonstrate an acknowledgement of this issue.
- The proposal did not articulate how staff would serve the counties where there is no Career Center and staff job descriptions did not indicate that they would work out of the Centers as required.
- The Request for Proposal requires that the bidder cover all site costs for services locations in the counties without Career Centers. The budget does not include these costs.

Mr. Giddens stated that his recommendation was to not fund either proposal.

Mr. Giddens then reviewed the one Adult/DW proposal that was submitted by Two Hawk and noted that the proposal scored at an 80. Mr. Giddens then noted that this proposal has many concerning issues as follows:

- Discussions with other WDB Directors where the proposer is a current service provider have revealed significant issues with data management, WIOA recordkeeping, and staffing problems.
- The proposal had numerous errors in the budget and, in many cases, the numbers stated disagreed with the budget narrative. Attention to detail is a prerequisite for a successful WIOA program. Additionally, the proposal was required to contain an Adult budget, a Dislocated Worker budget, and a combined budget. Only a combined budget was submitted.
- The budget does not contain funds for childcare and includes very little for other participant support services.
- The Northeastern area has a large area with many geographical transportation challenges. The proposal did not demonstrate an acknowledgement of this issue.
- The proposal did not articulate how staff would serve the counties where there is no Career Center and staff job descriptions did not indicate that they would work out of the Centers as required.
- There is a disconnect between the numbers of customers that are proposed to be served, when compared with the customers already in training.
- The Request for Proposal requires that the bidder cover all site costs for services locations in the counties without Career Centers. The budget does not include these costs.

Mr. Giddens stated that his recommendation was to not fund this proposal.

Questions: **Krystal Watson** asked Danny Giddens for his opinion about what we are asking for in the services and results we are asking them to provide in the budget legitimate? Is this a fair request that we are asking for? **Danny's** answer was yes, he believes so.

(NWDB PY 2023 Adult/DW and Youth Services Proposals Vote) Motion made by Chair Sean Lavin from the Leadership Committee to accept Mr. Giddens recommendation to not fund any of the proposals received and to request a waiver to provide services in-house and seconded by Dr. David Loope. Motion passed unanimously with a roll call vote.

Administrative Reports: Director David Whitmer reported we have had to implement some cost-saving measures as follows:

- Reducing On-The-Job Training (OJT) reimbursements from 75% to 50% of their salary and reducing the time of training reimbursement from 6 months to 5 months.
- Pausing OJT reverse referrals
- Pausing Incumbent Worker Grants until the beginning of the new program year. Since we have put that grant on pause, we have 5 employers on a waiting list.
- We are required to spend no more than 25% of our funds on In-School-Youth (ISY). Since we have gone above that 25%, we put a freeze on ISY enrollment and Work Experience(WEX) until the new fiscal year.
- Reducing our travel reimbursement, which helps participants get back and forth to work and school, from \$600 a month to \$400 a month. We have decided not to make any changes to childcare reimbursements currently.
- Freeze Adult/DW enrollments due to staffing capacity. We only have 1 Adult/DW Career Advisor north of the sound currently.

We have applied for a couple of grants. The Sentara Cares grant in the amount of 80K that will provide funding to pay for training in the health care field and a grant for 5k with the Chowan Foundation to do an expungement clinic in Chowan.

The Elizabeth City Career Center was just awarded NEAAAT their community partner of the month.

We are still out in the community a lot attending various events.

The Elizabeth City Career Center did a Highway construction trades Academy cohort with NCDOT. The Spring Job Fest at the Elizabeth City Career Center was a success with an attendance of over 70 job seekers attended and 15 job offers.

NextGen is doing a lot of great things with their Employer in Foyer events.

We have completed the One Stop Operator monitoring.

There was a Career Expo held in Plymouth and we partnered with Beaufort Community College in the town of Plymouth. Mayor Brian Roth was a very big contributor to this expo. Dr. David Loope gave his thanks for having the expo in partnership with Beaufort Community College.

We have moved into Phase 2 of the Good Jobs Challenge Grant.

The Annual Plan has been submitted on time. We still need to fill one board seat to receive our allocations and have our plan approved. The Vocational Rehabilitation Services seat should be filled soon.

We were recently informed that our programmatic monitoring has started and it's a 3-year monitoring.

We have been chosen for a program called Fierce Fellows. This program is a 40-hour course for justice involving individuals to help get them back into the workforce.

Committee Reports:

- a. NCWorks NextGen: Dr. Kimberly Gregory welcomed the new NextGen Career Advisor Cecilia Hagley. NextGen has been continuing to be successful with Adulting Day in March it was held at CB'S Auto and in April it was held at Hurdle Associates. The next Adulting Day is set for this Friday held at COA in Currituck. NextGen staff took a group of students to Beaufort and Martin Community College recently. An email was recently sent out to save the date for Real World October 4th and it will be at the Eastern 4-H Center in Terrell County.
- b. BROC: Krystal Watson reported BROC met on May 2nd and two new members have since joined Trey Goodson and Alexis Davis. Alexis replaced Marcus. Krystal went over some useful information that was received from the board retreat this year. Some of the work-based learning activities were discussed and are being put on hold due to spending measures. Regulator Marine has partnered with the local Boys and Girls club in Edenton to have mini workshops with students.
- c. Finance: JD Williamson reported we discussed some of the cost saving measures that Director David Whitmer discussed earlier.
- d. Career Center: Director David Whitmer mentioned the committee has not met in the past couple of months. The committee needs a new chair so we can continue to meet.
- e. Leadership: Chair Sean Lavin reported cost reduction activities. Board membership. We will continue to work on our outreach for the upcoming years for funding.

Extension of the One-Stop Operator Agreement (Vote): Director David Whitmer reported last year we agreed to contract with the Albemarle Commission to be the One-Stop Operator (OSO). That agreement was a 1-year agreement with an option to extend it for 4 years. NWDB has completed the monitoring for the One-Stop Operator, and we are very pleased with the outcome. Usually, the Career Center Committee would ask to extend the agreement of the One-Stop Operator but due to not having a chair it's being brought to the Board as a staff recommendation to extend the agreement. Reminder the contract with Albemarle Commission is a no cost contract and in addition they provide the salary for the Career Center Manager. **Motion by Dr. Kimberly Gregory, seconded by Trey Goodson, to approve the extension of the OSO contract for 1 year. Motion passed unanimously with a roll call vote.**

Environmental Scanning: Dr. Kimberly Gregory shared that COA College Career Readiness Department will be offering credentials and certificates for the retail industry: business customer service, warehouse inventory, and logistics, free of charge. The longest course is 16 hours.

Krystal Watson shared in Edenton Snap Back NC is a non-profit organization that Regulator Marine partnered with. Snap Back NC focuses on mental health, drug addiction recovery, peer-to-peer individual counseling, and family counseling. Snap Back NC has been very successful thus far with Regulator Marine workers.

NextGen Program Manger Rachel Clipston shared that their 3rd work experience participant in the last 4 months has transition from their paid work experience into unsubsidized employment.

Adjourn (Vote): With no further discussion, Chair Sean Lavin adjourned the meeting at 7:07 p.m. The next meeting is scheduled for Tuesday July 18, 2023, at 6:00 p.m.



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NWDB Chair Sean Lavin

Date

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