

## PA WDB Quarterly Board Meeting

Tuesday, February 7<sup>th</sup>, 2023

10:00AM to 2:00PM

Zoom

### Meeting Minutes

#### Attendance

#### Members:

- Chair Jeff Brown
- Tom Foley for Governor Josh Shapiro
- Idayat Adewunmi
- Will Allen
- Denise Andahazy
- Eric Kratz for Senator Camera Bartolotta
- Tim Bean
- Deputy Secretary Dan Kuba for Acting Secretary Nancy Walker
- Richard Bloomingdale
- Julene Campion
- Wendie DiMatteo-Holsinger
- Gerardo Interiano
- Senator Amanda Cappelletti
- Terry Wiltrout
- Patrick Eiding
- Matt Yarnell
- Anjelica Sanders for Representative Morgan Cephas
- Chekemma Fulmore-Townsend
- Acting Secretary Dr. Khalid Mumin
- Nick Gilson
- Bernie Hall
- James Harper, Jr.
- Ryan Hyde
- Sarah Hollister
- Secretary Akbar Hossain
- Marguerite Kline
- Andrea McArthur
- John Scarpato
- Representative Ryan Mackenzie
- Gregg Riefenstahl
- John "Ski" Sygielski
- Jessica Trybus
- Mike Wojewodka
- Gwen Ross
- Acting Secretary Rick Siger
- Dorenda Hamarlund for Acting Secretary Laurel Harry
- Commissioner Robert Harvie, Jr.
- Sara Gligora for Secretary Russel Redding
- Hoa Pham for Acting Secretary Val Arkoosh
- David Miles for Acting Secretary Jason Kavulich
- Jennifer Pyc for Representative Melissa Shusterman

#### Committee Chairs:

- Chair John "Ski" Sygielski, Industry Partnership & Employer Engagement Committee
- Chair Richard Bloomingdale, Career Pathways & Apprenticeship Committee
- Chair Chekemma Fulmore-Townsend, Youth Committee
- Chair Jeffrey Abramowitz, Reentry Ad Hoc Committee
- Chair Matt Yarnell, Healthcare Workforce Ad Hoc Committee
- Chair Sarah Hollister, One-Stop Service Delivery System Committee
- James Martini for Chair Brian Funkhouser, Continuous Improvement Committee

**Staff:** Executive Director James Martini, Deputy Director Josh Towzey, Mary Dougherty, Michelle Lengel, Rick Levis

### **Chair's Updates**

Chair Brown sought a motion to approve the November 15, 2022 meeting minutes.

**MOTION:** Matt Yarnell made the motion. Richard Bloomingdale seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

### **New Staff Introduction**

Chair Brown introduced Mary Dougherty as a Policy Coordinator with the Workforce Development Board. Mary offered remarks indicating her gratitude for serving on the Board's staff and her excitement to carry the work forward.

### **Agency Official Introductions**

Chair Brown indicated that Pennsylvania has experienced a smooth transition of power in democracy with the new Governor and elected officials that he took some time to introduce.

- **Akbar Hossain, Secretary of Policy and Planning:** Secretary Hossain began by thanking the Board for their commitment to the Governor and the Commonwealth. He noted that workforce development has been and will continue to be a priority for the Governor, with the Board's work helping to define the trajectory of important workforce-related issues. Secretary Hossain mentioned that the Governor and himself are looking forward to finding solutions to workforce challenges by serving on the Board and thanked them for all their work.
- **Nancy Walker, Acting Secretary of Labor and Industry:** James Martini offered remarks in place of Secretary Walker. He noted that she sent her apologies for not being able to join the meeting but that she looks forward to meeting with the group at the May quarterly meeting.
- **Ryan Hyde, Executive Director of the Office of Vocational Rehabilitation:** Mr. Hyde offered some updates from OVR, beginning with their My Works Program that will run again this summer. Between 300-400 students with disabilities will be offered paid work-based learning experiences throughout the commonwealth. He noted listeners may reach out to him if they are interested in learning more about the program or are interested in hosting a work site. OVR is also implementing two summer academies this year at Penn State, one for students who are deaf and hard of hearing and another for those that are blind and visually impaired. Mr. Hyde mentioned that these academies assist students with disabilities transitioning from high school to college, as they give insight into college life, how to request accommodations, working with professors, and using technology. He noted that the Commonwealth Summer Internship Program will be expanded this year, with 30 interns from colleges working in Philadelphia, Pittsburgh, Johnstown, and Harrisburg. OVR continues to focus on getting referral and staffing numbers back up to pre-pandemic numbers. He also noted that OVR recently partnered with Mathematica to develop a grant to enhance the number of people with disabilities participating in the Job Corps Program.

- **Rick Siger, Acting Secretary of Community and Economic Development:** Acting Secretary Siger opened with expressing his excitement to join the team around the key issue of workforce development that impacts Pennsylvania's and local economies. He noted that he would have to leave the call early, but would be represented by Gwen Ross.
- **Dr. Khalid Mumin, Acting Secretary of Education:** Dr. Mumin thanked the Board for allowing him to be part of the meeting and the work moving forward. He noted that PDE is already a liaison to workforce development and he looks forward to making the work even more seamless and connected with the Shapiro Administration. Dr. Mumin referenced the Governor's clear passion around workforce development, with education playing a key role. PDE is looking at cultivating and motivating untapped potential within the Commonwealth as they work side by side with the Board to build a stronger workforce.
- **Valerie Arkoosh, Acting Secretary of Human Services:** Hoa Pham offered remarks in place of Secretary Arkoosh that sent her regrets for not being able to join the meeting. She noted that they are looking forward to connecting with the board members in the months to come to continue the work.
- **Russell Redding, Secretary of Agriculture:** Sara Gligora, Special Assistant for Workforce Development at Agriculture, offered remarks in place of Secretary Redding. She noted that they are excited to have Secretary Redding back with the Department to continue all of the great work around apprenticeship, other training opportunities, and workforce development in general.
- **Jason Kavulich, Acting Secretary of Aging:** David Miles, Program Manager at the Department of Aging, offered remarks in place of Acting Secretary Kavulich. He noted that they are looking forward to working with the Board and in partnering however they can.
- **Laurel Harry, Acting Secretary of Corrections:** Secretary Harry began by thanking the Board for welcoming her, as she has served in the Department of Corrections for 24 years. She looks forward to furthering the great work of the Board. She then turned it over to Dorenda Hamarlund, the workforce development specialist with the Department of Corrections. Dorenda noted that their team is excited to continue the partnership with other state agencies, community partners, and the Board. She also indicated the Corrections is looking to expand vocational services in state correctional institutions in the coming years.

### **Workforce Development Board Committee Updates**

- **Career Pathways and Apprenticeship Committee, Chair Richard Bloomingdale**  
Chair Bloomingdale turned it over to James Martini to offer the update. James noted that they have heard that apprenticeships are important to the new Governor and Administration, so the committee looks forward to working with the new Administration to increase those opportunities for all Pennsylvanians.
- **Youth Committee, Chair Chekemma Fulmore-Townsend**  
James Martini offered an update on behalf of Chekemma Fulmore-Townsend, noting that the Youth committee has been looking to find ways to implement a validation mechanism for individuals learning STEM credentials in their schools and how to signify school districts that are high functioning STEM teaching institutions. Mr. Martini also mentioned that the committee included their 2023 priorities in the briefing book for reference. Chair Fulmore-Townsend later shared that one of the biggest challenges for employers is finding, attracting, and retaining talent, so the Youth committee has been focused on preparing the next generation of talent and coordinating a seamless integration of the systems involved. She mentioned that the committee's research and evidence shows that their programs are being successful and they have made some recommendations to further improve the research and evaluation methods. The committee has looked at STEM engagement and what needs to happen inside and outside the classroom for programs to connect with the STEM-based field in order to prepare a more equitable

education for young people. The committee has also been considering the new high school graduation standards and what it means for the system to support students holistically as they prepare for future careers. Chair Fulmore-Townsend noted that a summary of the committee's recommendations is in the briefing book, with one of the themes being holistic and inclusive support for a population that has endured a pandemic and developed resiliency but also set backs in mental health and learning delays.

- **Healthcare Workforce Ad Hoc Committee, Chair Matt Yarnell**

Chair Yarnell noted that the committee has been focused on skills nursing facilities given the impact of COVID on the direct care workforce. The committee has advocated on behalf of the facilities and developed recommendations to lift wages to a livable wage. Chair Yarnell indicated that the briefing book includes a CAN dashboard that captures the number of certified nursing assistance working across the state, those that are going through CNA training and testing programs, as well as the passing rate. Chair Yarnell noted that the dashboard indicates a real CNA staffing crisis. He also mentioned that the committee has also been looking at ways they can be more publicly visible around career pathways for healthcare workers. This will include an analysis of best practices on workforce strategies to address the nursing and direct care staff shortage. In the next year, the committee hopes to convene around all sorts of healthcare sectors so they can work with other departments to bring more training opportunities to those pursuing a health care career. Chair Yarnell concluded by noting the committee's eagerness to enter into this new year with a broader scope of addressing the healthcare workforce crisis as it relates to all different kinds of healthcare.

- **Industry Partnership & Employer Engagement Committee, Chair John "Ski" Sygielski**

Chair Sygielski began by welcoming the new Administration and thanking Chair Brown and Executive Director James Martini who have done a great job in navigating the Board. The committee spent 2022 talking to five industry sectors to better understand their landscape and how state government can serve as a resource to them. Chair Sygielski noted that the common theme that appeared was how the state can help them focus on attracting and retaining talent, with some ideas to address this in the briefing book. Chair Sygielski offered kudos to James Martini and the Department of Labor and Industry for finding ways to deliver on the state's intention to better serve employers and their workers.

- **One-Stop Service Delivery System Committee, Chair Sarah Hollister**

Chair Hollister noted that the One-Stop committee is one of the newer committees on the board and they have spent the past two years thinking about how to bring alignment between the various departments and initiatives proposed by the committee. She also indicated that there has been a focus on supporting the practitioners on the ground who are doing the work and career advising for customers and employers. Chair Hollister pointed to the recommendations update included in the briefing book and how the committee is entering 2023 thinking about the customer service abilities of the one stop systems. They are also focused on integrating with the many systems across the Commonwealth for a coordinated effort.

- **Continuous Improvement Committee, Chair Brian Funkhouser**

James Martini offered remarks in place of Chair Funkhouser, starting with the digital intake project that committee has been working on in collaboration with L&I and other partner agencies. The goal of the project is to have one intake system for all 62 comprehensive PA CareerLink® offices around the commonwealth. The project team intends to modernize the intake process for customers, ensure that consistent information is collected from folks, and increase the efficiency and ease of connecting customers to services. James also noted that the updated Pennsylvania Workforce Development Act required the Board to advise the Governor on membership for all local workforce development board partners. After consultation with local boards and workforce partners, the committee decided to not

recommend additional requirements for members, but to leave the option open for local boards and chief elected officials to add additional members of their own. James noted the reasoning for this as allowing the local boards to fulfill their duties without overly burdening them with compliance issues.

- **Reentry Ad Hoc Committee, Chair Jeff Abramowitz**

Chair Abramowitz noted that the reentry committee has been moving forward with robust initiatives they are recommending to the Board once the new administration has a chance to review. The three recommended initiatives to support returning citizens are outlined in the briefing book. Chair Abramowitz mentioned that the committee's web pages are linked to the PA Workforce Development Board's webpage to provide resources to employers in Pennsylvania. The committee is also targeting the upcoming Digital Equity Act that will have a real impact on those in correctional settings and returning to the community. Chair Abramowitz noted the committee's eagerness in working with the new administration and pushing these initiatives forward in a timely manner considering the urgency of the issues at hand.

Chair Brown recognized the upcoming retirement of Pat Eiding, to which Mr. Eiding noted his appreciation for those that attended his reception.

### **Workforce Development Board Member Updates**

- **Denise Andahazy, Chief Human Resources Officer for IG Design Group**

Ms. Andahazy introduced herself from the IG Design Group, which is a global manufacturer and distributor of consumer products with over 3,000 employees worldwide. They employ 700 individuals in Northeast Pennsylvania, most of which are in manufacturing and distribution roles. She noted that the health and well-being of their employees is a critical component of her job, as is the ability to attract and retain talent in their organization. Ms. Andahazy indicated that being a member of the Board and the Continuous Improvement Committee has allowed her to provide the employer perspective in how the state workforce development system can support employers and the challenges they face. Moving forward, she would like to see the Board continue to help address skill gaps and labor shortages in manufacturing, especially in rural areas. It can range from supporting continued funding of web net for training needs to increasing funding for apprenticeship programs to help build the talent employers need, which the Governor is supportive of. She also indicated that reentry programs are important to develop to support workers not only in cities, but rural areas as well that becomes challenging with transportation and housing. While many jobs may be available, the infrastructure needs established to support the workforce in rural Pennsylvania. She noted that it is critical to find more ways to get high schoolers excited about careers in manufacturing by engaging at the high school level. She thanked the Board for the opportunity to share and offer her employer perspective in the work.

- **Timothy Bean, CFO and Managing Partner of Control Chief Corporation**

Mr. Bean began by noting that his organization has approximately 47 employees and they manufacture wireless remote controls and work with forestry and railroad systems throughout North America. After 5 years serving on the Board, Mr. Bean continues to be impressed with the passion and energy shown in developing solutions to those entering the workforce and advancing in careers through skill development. He noted that as a business owner and employer, he has seen great challenges in employment disruptions, a shrinking workforce, and fewer potential employees applying or having pre-pandemic expectations concerning employment. Mr. Bean explained that his organization has been accepting less new recruits as they increase their internal training to ensure their workplace culture is customer focused. They are also

focused on increasing an emphasis on soft skills training and work ethic in the K-12 school system. He remarked that there needs to be more education and awareness of support to employers as they are adapting to the changing workplace, such as hiring an employee with potential rather than waiting for an ideal candidate. He referenced that the University of Pittsburgh at Bradford just completed their new engineering and tech facility that is loaded with the newest technology and equipment to provide hands-on learning opportunities for students studying mechanical and IT engineering. Mr. Bean and his team has found this to be an invaluable financial investment for their company, especially in rural Pennsylvania.

- **Wendie Dimatteo-Holsinger, CEO at Ask Foods**

Ms. DiMatteo-Holsinger introduced herself as CEO of Ask Foods, located in Hershey, Pennsylvania. She noted that they have two manufacturing facilities that are USDA facilities. They produce ready to eat products, frozen products, and private label a lot for grocery chains on the east coast, shipping into about 24 stores with about 180 employees working at Ask Foods. Last year, Ms. Holsinger and her team did a deep dive into some of the recruiting efforts to understand applicant concerns. They found that employee and new recruit concerns included childcare, especially for single parents to be able to afford the escalating cost of care for multiple children. She noted that they have used the workforce support grants to support the availability of childcare so it does not disincentivize individuals to enter the work force or move up in their career. She recommended that the Board continues to address childcare issues. She mentioned that Lebanon County has a very low unemployment rate with many job openings, yet a high rate of people who have not reentered the workforce over the last three years. Ms. Holsinger also thinks the Board should focus on how to get nontraditional workers trained and into open positions. She noted that there could be more aggressive WIB measurements along with best practices to ensure continued success.

- **Nicholas Gilson, CEO of Gilson Snow**

Mr. Gilson introduced himself as the CEO of Gilson Snow, a snowboarding manufacturer in rural PA that ships all over the world. He previously served in a middle school in which his company was launched, making the case for engaging early child development in driving careers. Mr. Gilson stated that employment is not only about a paycheck, but excitement for the future, a sense of purpose, building connections, and mental health. He noted his excitement for the Board's opportunity to increase the jobs that pay in historically underserved rural areas.

- **Gerardo Interiano, Center for Automotive Research**

Mr. Interiano opened by thanking the Board for having him and welcoming the Secretaries in attendance. He noted that he works for a self-driving car company based in Pittsburgh with about 800 employees. His company has been working with Pittsburgh Technical College on a jobs program to consider training needs for the jobs of the future.

- **Commissioner Robert Harvie, Chair of the Commissioners in Bucks County**

Commissioner Harvie noted that prior to serving as a commissioner, he was a high school social studies teacher for 26 years at Bucks County Technical School. His experience led him to become aware of the amount of young people that exited school without a plan for the future or an awareness of the resources available. Comm. Harvie indicated that as he matured in his career, he increased his emphasis on the wide variety of career pathways beyond higher education. He noted that more focus needs to be placed on helping young people match their skills with their interests, including changing the overall perspective and stigma on technical work. Comm. Harvie has worked with students that went on to college and became electrical engineers along with those that went into the unions and bought their first home at a young age with no debt. He recommended that institutions need to be connected to educate students about how to maximize their skills, interests, and resources to live their best life.

## Other Comments

- **Sarah Hollister, Director of Education Policy and Strategic Initiatives in Philadelphia**

Ms. Hollister began by noting that she works in the city of Philadelphia's Office of Children and Families, with extensive experience in the education and workforce sectors. She noted that silo busting is one of the most valuable things to address in government, as it affects education and workforce systems alike. She offered technology as a tool to be leveraged in connecting individuals to helpful programs and benefits and also recommended that the Board focus on investing in the practitioners on the ground, from schools to local boards and PA CareerLinks®. Customers experience better outcomes when the practitioners are equipped with the tools and emotional supports to do their work. Ms. Hollister also noted that improvements can be made to emphasize and support the good work that is already being done in communities across Pennsylvania, whether it be through contracts or streamlining navigation through systems.

- **Richard Bloomingdale, Chair of Career Pathways and Apprenticeship Committee**

Mr. Bloomingdale added to the discussion that he appreciates the Board's diverse representation from different industries in Pennsylvania, including skiing and snowboarding manufacturing. He mentioned Governor Shapiro's effort to allow those without college degrees to fill positions that their skills make them competent for. He affirmed apprenticeships as a tool to get individuals into well-paying careers with benefits and minimal to no debt. Mr. Bloomingdale also noted that there are great opportunities to expand the apprenticeship model into the healthcare sector and other high demand fields.

- **Pat Eiding**

Mr. Eiding noted that students need to be educated and prepared for a variety of career pathways. He referenced the First Bid Program in Philadelphia that transitioned students into apprenticeship programs that ended up dropping out because of insufficient reading levels or lack of other basic education. By reaching students earlier and working closely with the schools, Mr. Eiding said that outcomes can be improved in cognitive competency that is necessary to succeed in any career.

- **Representative Ryan Mackenzie**

Representative Mackenzie introduced himself as the Republican Chair for the House Labor Committee. He noted that he looks forward to working with the new administration and senate on topics affecting the workforce. Rep. Mackenzie stated that it is important to have steady, reliable funding for workforce development programs and that these programs need to be offered to students early on in their education before they start thinking about careers. He emphasized his intention to work with the new administration to brainstorm more steady, sustainable, and reliable funding to build into the budget or tax credit programs. He indicated that bringing awareness of workforce programs into the schools is inconsistent across the state, as East Penn has fantastic internship programs and is a leader for STEM fields, while it may not be the case for other districts. He would like to work with PDE to integrate best practices into curriculums across the state.

## Public Comments

- **Austin Cawley, Director of Leading Age PA**

Mr. Cawley began by thanking the Board for the great work that they do. He noted that Leading Age represents 370 service providers in the state and has witnessed the impact of the pandemic on the present workforce crisis. He mentioned that a major priority for Leading Age is to create career ladders and multiple

pathways to recruit and retain long-term care employees. He also noted his support of securing sustainable funding to meet workforce needs, as mentioned by Representative Mackenzie.

- **Carrie Amann, Executive Director of the Pennsylvania Workforce Development Association (PWDA)**

Ms. Amann began by mentioning her excitement about the Governor's priority of workforce development. She noted her appreciation of the partnership with the Board and various agencies, as PWDA addresses workforce issues with a number of workforce boards, service providers, community colleges, career technical centers, and others. Ms. Amann applauded the Board's high functioning nature and hopes to hear about innovations around career technical education, sector strategies, and apprenticeships. She noted Pennsylvania as a lead in registered apprenticeships with opportunities to expand youth apprenticeships and indicated that the labor shortage exacerbated by the pandemic and aging population has projections to last for years to come. However, data processes need to be improved so workforce boards can work towards evidence-based programs and informed outcomes. She noted that innovation and flexibility are the keys to eliminating silos and driving new results. While agility can be exercised at the state level, Ms. Amann emphasized that it needs to be incentivized at the local level with workforce boards and their partners. She extended the invitation to participate in PWDA's annual conference in May that involves workshops and networking that reveals the impact that Pennsylvania's Workforce Development system has.

Chair Brown welcomed any further public comments to be shared with James Martini that can circulate the feedback to the Board.

#### **Final Remarks and Adjournment**

Chair Brown noted that the Board will reconvene to engage in planning for the future, so individuals with input to be considered can share it with the Board. He discussed the great work that has been accomplished in the last eight years that the next eight years can entail with tapped opportunity.

**MOTION:** Terry Wilttrout made a motion to adjourn. John "Ski" Sygielski made a second. The meeting was adjourned.