

PA WDB Quarterly Board Meeting

Tuesday, October 10th, 2023

12pm-2pm

Meeting Minutes

Attendance

Members:

- Chair Terry Wiltrout
- Thomas Foley for Governor Shapiro and Secretary Akbar Hossain
- Andrea MacArthur
- Roy Rosin
- Chekemma Fulmore-Townsend
- Senator Amanda Cappelletti
- Representative Ryan Mackenzie
- Malik Majeed
- Dan Lavallee
- Kait Gillis-Hanna
- Gregg Riefenstahl
- Eric Kratz for Senator Camera Bartolotta
- Angela Ferritto
- Brian Funkhouser
- Matt Yarnell
- Brian Campbell
- Darrin Kelly
- James Harper
- Mark Thaler
- Tim James
- Mike Wojewodka
- Karen Masino
- Rob Bair
- Shea Zwerver
- Marguerite Kline
- Mark Pasquerilla
- Debra Caplan
- Gerardo Interiano
- Mike Shirk
- Commissioner Robert Harvie Jr.
- Secretary Laurel Harry
- Nicholas Gilson
- Vincent Tutino
- Executive Director Ryan Hyde
- Philip Jaurigue
- Dennis Pagliotti
- Bernie Hall
- Secretary Nancy Walker
- Jennifer Wakeman
- Deputy Secretary Dan Kuba
- Eric Levis for Secretary Dr. Khalid Mumin
- Jolene Reid for Secretary Valerie Arkoosh
- Gwen Ross for Secretary Rick Siger
- Sara Gligora for Secretary Russell Redding
- David Miles for Secretary Jason Kavulich
- Joseph Welsh

Committee Chairs:

- Michelle Lengel for Chair John “Ski” Sygielski, Industry Partnership & Employer Engagement Committee
- Chair Chekemma Fulmore-Townsend, Youth Committee
- Chair Angela Ferritto, Apprenticeship & CTE Committee
- Chair Brian Funkhouser, Continuous Improvement Committee
- Chair Matt Yarnell, Healthcare Committee
- Chair Brian Campbell, Agriculture Committee
- Chair Tim James, Education Workforce Committee
- Chair Mike Wojewodka, Manufacturing Committee
- Executive Director James Martini for Chair Karen Masino, Construction Committee
- Chair Shae Zwerver, Barriers Committee

Staff: Executive Director James Martini, Deputy Director Michelle Lengel, Dan De Lellis, Belinda Nester, Erin Donohoe, Shannon Austin, Kristina Gonzalez

Chair’s Updates

Chair Terry Wiltrout began the meeting by thanking everyone for joining the call. Chair Wiltrout sought a motion to approve the May 24th meeting minutes.

MOTION: Matt Yarnell made the motion. Tim James seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

Chair Wiltrout thanked everyone who participated in the new members orientation and started by discussing his vision for workforce. His first item, was to share across Pennsylvania the great training programs that have been successful within Workforce development and the PA CareerLink® and specifically to come up with a list to share with the 22 workforce boards across the state. He also noted that he would like to focus on the incumbent worker programs across the state as well as keeping open communication between the Department of Labor & Industry and the Department of Education. He emphasized the importance of keeping youth aware and prepared for current jobs in the market. Lastly, he highlighted that he would like the Board to be ambassadors for workforce, the PA CareerLink® and that they engage with other employers.

New Staff Introduction

James Martini introduced Kristina Gonzalez as a new staff member to the board. Kristina Gonzalez expressed her excitement towards the working with the board.

Workforce Development Board Housekeeping Updates

James Martini highlighted some housekeeping items for board members to be aware of coming up. He first noted that the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) Combined State Plan will be presented to board members ahead of time and will be voted on at the November 15th board meeting. That vote will be to move the plan into a draft for the public comment period. He highlighted that members are welcome to read the entire plan if they would like but that they are only asked to review the vision and goals sections. After the feedback from the board is incorporated in, the plan will move

into public comment. At the February meeting (which is to be determined once all 2024 meeting dates are decided), the public comments will be reviewed and the WDB team will make sure that collectively everyone is on board with any changes that will be made as well as any responses to those comments. The WDB team will also continue to engage with the board's committees on the goals and vision for the plan. Second, he highlighted that the WDB team had upcoming listening sessions on the plan and invited members to attend those sessions. Third, he reminded all members to fill out their ethics forms and return those to the Governor's office. He then highlighted that the next board meeting will be held at HACC's York Campus and that meeting will be hybrid. Towards the end of this year, he noted that dates will be set for the 2024 board meetings. Those typically are held in February, May, August, and November and they hope to also look at holding those meetings in different locations around the state. He welcomed any members to let the team know if they would like to host a board meeting. Lastly, he highlighted that the WDB team would like to make a nicer webpage for the list of board members and possibly include a headshot and a short description of each board member.

Agency Official Updates

- **Nancy A. Walker, Secretary of the PA Department of Labor and Industry (L&I)**

Secretary Walker began by noting that the last meeting was pre-confirmation and she is happy to be on the other side of that confirmation. She started her update by going over unemployment compensation (UC). In the months between the board meetings, they were able to hire about 300 people into the intake interviewer position which allowed them to move more people into the examiner role. They had about 40,000 backlogged pandemic claims in January and Secretary Walker happily announced that those claims were at zero. She also noted that they have sent texts/emails in real time and added additional ports for call-in services which has helped get their wait times down to less than 30 minutes. They also have been able to add UC staff to the PA CareerLink® across the state and are looking to hire additional people to the Philadelphia area to help meet some of the language challenges. Secretary Walker also gave a shout out to the PA CareerLink® across the state that held open houses for job seekers between August 28th and September 15th. She specifically shouted out the Pittsburgh team for their job fair which was the largest with over 100 employers, 20 community organizations and over 300 job seekers.

- **Dan Kuba, Deputy Secretary of Workforce Development for L&I**

Deputy Secretary Dan Kuba began by welcoming all the new members to the board and highlighted the importance of the work being done through the board. He explained that the Workforce Development Deputate has 4 bureaus and at each board meeting they give a report out of each of the components being worked on within those bureaus. He began with the Apprenticeship and Training Office (ATO) and noted that the office oversees and supports grant opportunities and offers assistance on a variety of levels in the creation of pre-apprenticeship and apprenticeship models. He also noted that this office started a few years ago with one to two staff members and has now grown to 13 members and they are continuing to work their way up to 18-20. They have also expanded their pre-apprenticeship area and now have a supervisor there and they are looking to include more staff. They also hope to do more with CTE across the state.

He next gave the report for the Bureau of Workforce Partnership and Operations(BWPO). He highlighted for anyone unaware, the PA CareerLink® use the Commonwealth Workforce

Development System which is the state's federally mandated system of record for job postings, case management, etc. He also highlighted that they are a proud partner of the overall structure of the local workforce development boards and the PA CareerLink® across the state. He noted that they are working on a project called UI outreach. He explained that during the timeframe of the pandemic, numerous people signed up for unemployment compensation and either went back to work or kind of disappeared. Through this project they have made an outreach effort through looking at UI data and comparing that to unemployment data and new hire data and wage and record. From that, they identified around 380,000 people that filed, received one claim and then no longer received a claim but also stopped showing up in the workforce. He highlighted that that number has now grown to 420,000 and they are looking at 4 major pockets when it comes to workforce development: reentry, recovery, immigration, and those who just disappeared. He emphasized that their goal with this project (UI Outreach) is to tackle some of the issues that caused these people to fall off.

He then gave the report for the Bureau of Workforce Development Administration (BWDA) who manage the majority of the financial dollars coming into the state for workforce development, are the grant recipients of the WIOA grant, and handle the basic administration and monitoring of the workforce development system.

Lastly, he reported on the Center of Workforce Information Analysis (CWIA) which is responsible for the data on the Commonwealth. He highlighted that they have worked hard to conduct labor market workshops across the state to help people understand the data and better serve the people coming into our centers. He also highlighted the Commonwealth Workforce Transformation Project (CWTP) and noted that they are working on guidance and support of that program. He gave a brief overview of that project and emphasized that this project is to help incentivize people and get them into new occupations. He also noted that Pennsylvania has an aging workforce and highlighted the issue of digital literacy. He highlighted that addressing digital literacy is a major priority for the governor as well as for the department. He ended by thanking everyone for their time.

- **Ryan Hyde, Executive Director for the Office of Vocational Rehabilitation (OVR)**

Executive Director Ryan Hyde began by providing an overview of OVR. He highlighted that OVR is made up of four bureaus, two field bureaus, central operations, and a comprehensive rehab center located in Johnstown. He noted that OVR serves about 50,000 individuals across their programs and they serve between 15-18,000 students with disabilities transitioning from high school to work or to a post-secondary opportunity. He then highlighted some of the programs going on through OVR. He noted that OVR administers the MY Work program and this past summer they placed 857 students with disabilities in local municipalities, businesses, and nonprofits for paid work-based learning experiences. They plan to continue that project next year and Executive Director Hyde noted that they believe they will be able to get in every county next year and their goal is to exceed over 1,000 individuals. This past summer they were in roughly 50 counties. He also shared that OVR received two large Disability Innovation Fund grants over the last two years. Last fall they received \$13.9 million for their project called Project Invest. That grant is to help individuals with disabilities either stay out of or get out of sub-minimum wage

employment opportunities and they have just finished the year 1 implementation of that grant. They are now working on enrolling employers who will partner with OVR to place individuals in 2024. The second grant they received about 4-5 weeks ago is called Pathways to Partnership and is a collaboration between OVR, the Bureau of Special Education, Centers for Independent Living and Office of Developmental Programs under DHS and will be rolled out in 2024. He also highlighted that OVR pays for internships and that they are always looking for other employer partners to take interns or offer work-based learning experiences. He noted that for those experiences, OVR will pay the salaries of the students or customers participating as well as offer any additional support as needed. He ended by encouraging anyone to reach out to him if they are interested in learning more about these programs.

- **Dr. Khalid Mumin, Secretary of the PA Department of Education (PDE)**

Deputy Policy Director Eric Levis spoke on behalf of Secretary Mumin and extended his apologies for not being able to attend. He began by highlighting the teacher shortage across the state and noted that PDE is implementing a number of programs to address that. He noted that they launched a new website, Teach In PA, to provide information for individuals thinking about being teachers. He also noted that there is a large focus on expanding opportunities in the career and technical education field and that PDE is working closely with L&I and the Board to make changes where they can in that area. The last issue he highlighted was the nursing shortage and he noted that they have people who are interested in launching programs in PA schools to train students but they are struggling to recruit instructors. He noted that PDE is working with those people to see where they can make changes so that they can get those instructors in the classroom.

- **Laurel Harry, Secretary of PA Department of Corrections (DOC)**

Secretary Laurel Harry began by highlighting that DOC is training incarcerated individuals to become certified recovery specialists as well as peer support specialists. She also highlighted that in the beginning of January, PA CareerLink® began services at five community correction centers in Philadelphia and those have been very popular and helpful. She also noted that DOC is doing career fairs for inmates at all of their correctional institutions across the state and they plan to continue doing them due to their success. She then turned it over to DOC's workforce development specialist, Dorenda Hamarlund.

Dorenda Hamarlund began by highlighting the First Step Act grant that was received by the Goodwill of Southern Alleghenies which requires them to conduct pathway to success training with federal inmates. DOC went out and helped train their staff in mid-September to do that and they are now moving forward in the planning phase of the grant. Lastly, she announced that they have a William Penn Fellow who will be evaluating what they are doing inside the prisons to get inmates job ready and making sure that aligns with the public employers' needs.

- **Valerie Arkoosh, Secretary of the PA Department of Human Services (DHS)**

Jolene Reid spoke on behalf of Secretary Arkoosh and sent her regards. She began by highlighting that the Office of Childhood Development and Early Learning (OCDEL) has received approval to extend their professional development organization grants with Shippensburg University and Public Health Management Corporation (PHMC) for an additional year through June 30th, 2025. In

the 23-24 budget, OCDEL received additional funding through the Preschool Development Grant which will provide some workforce support through translating professional materials into multiple languages, mental health supports for staff, and creating childcare startup grants with a focus on childcare deserts in Pennsylvania. OCDEL is also hosting an early childhood conference March 25th & 26th. She then highlighted that the Office of Income Maintenance (OIM) had a lot of changes surrounding the passing of the Fiscal Responsibility Act (FRA) of 2023 back in June. This provided SNAP and TANF changes but most notably was the age range change of able-bodied adults without dependents (ABODS) from 18 to 49 to now 18-52. The FRA also made new federal exemptions for SNAP, homeless individuals, veterans, and former foster youth ages 18-24. DHS did receive approval to waive ABOD work requirements for all PA counties with the exception of Adams, Center, and Chester from 9/1/23 through 8/30/24. Although those counties are not waived, they are using rollover state discretionary exemptions so individuals in those counties will not have a SNAP work requirement through 8/30/24. At that point, they will be analyzing how they will move forward with their ABOD waiver. DHS is continuing to provide heightened outreach and awareness for voluntary SNAP employment and training programs while they work to grow additional offerings around the state. In July, DHS introduced new SNAP student exemptions for students participating in state or local government operated employment and training equivalent programs. She highlighted some programs that fall under these criteria and encouraged anyone who knew of other programs to reach out to DHS. Lastly, she highlighted the work done with their Pennsylvania Refugee Resettlement partners and the southeast workforce development boards. She noted that if there are any other workforce board areas that are interested in setting up similar collaborations to feel free to reach out to the OIM Refugee Resource account.

- **Rick Siger, Secretary of the PA Department of Community and Economic Development (DCED)**
Gwen Ross spoke on behalf of Secretary Siger. She began by highlighting that in the fiscal year 2022/2023, they invested \$10 million of training into their Workforce and Economic Development Network (WEDnet) incumbent worker training program and trained almost 24,000 employers and served 706 companies. She also expressed their excitement that the governor increased the line item for WEDnet for the current fiscal year and it is their plan to help with more incumbent worker training. They also received a funding line item for their Foundations in Industry Training Grant program which was formerly known as the pre-apprentice and apprenticeship program. She noted that DCED is looking forward to helping sponsors of pre-apprenticeships or apprenticeships with the classroom training portion of their program. She highlighted that DCED has also been working on developing a comprehensive economic development strategy which will be the first strategy the Commonwealth has seen in almost two decades. Workforce will be a component of that plan and weaved throughout it. Lastly, she highlighted that the five-year Broadband Equity Access and Deployment (BEAD) action plan was submitted to the National Telecommunication and Information Administration in August and part of that will be looking at strategies around workforce. The Broadband Development Authority is working with L&I on focusing on the goals for the sub-grantees when it comes to workforce.
- **Russell Redding, Secretary of the PA Department of Agriculture**
Special Assistant Sara Gligora spoke on behalf of Secretary Redding. She began by emphasizing that the department has been working hard to elevate their different workforce initiatives within

agriculture. She highlighted that in collaboration with the Chester County Economic Development Council and Penn State Extension they have held on the farm training events in Chester County and State College following the PWDA symposium. She noted that these events served as professional development opportunities for workforce professionals and that the department is working hard to replicate these events across the state. She encouraged anyone interested in collaborating or hosting an event to reach out. She also highlighted that a number of agriculture occupations have been added to the High Priority Occupation (HPO) list for the southeast. She noted there has been a lot of activity around the H2A visa program and there are currently two proposed rules open for public comment; one is through the US Department of Labor and Industry (USDOL) and the other through DHS. She noted that they have been encouraging employers to participate in this public comment period. Lastly, she highlighted a new pilot program through the US Department of Agriculture called the Farm Labor Stabilization and Protection pilot. She noted that this program will award up to \$65 million and specifically help support H2A employers and their workforce. The Department is working hard to provide technical assistance as many of the state's growers and employers have not applied for federal grants. She encouraged anyone to reach out with questions.

- **Jason Kavulich, Secretary of the PA Department of Aging**
David Miles spoke on behalf of Secretary Kavulich. Mr. Miles did not have any additional agency updates other than what was presented in the briefing book.

Workforce Development Board Committee Updates

- **Apprenticeship & CTE Committee, Chair Angela Ferritto**
Chair Angela Ferritto began by noting that the committee has met twice since the last board meeting and they are looking to get one more meeting in before the November meeting in the hopes that they can come to the board with a recommendation. If they are not able to do that by the November meeting, she noted that they will definitely have that done for the next. She highlighted that a lot of the work of the committee has been around apprenticeships and CTE work happening in Pennsylvania. They have talked as a group about the experiences they've had and have also been looking at the best way to collect some of the data they still have questions on. She noted that they are working on putting a poll together to send out to their committee encompassing what they have already discussed as well as for feedback on what their priorities should be moving forward and what data is still needed. She also noted that they had a Doodle poll to schedule the next committee meeting and are still working on finding the perfect day and time. She encouraged anyone interested to join the committee and to reach out to her if there are any questions.
- **Youth Committee, Chair Chekemma Fulmore-Townsend**
Chair Chekemma Fulmore-Townsend began by noting that the committee has met once since the last board meeting and at that meeting they welcomed some new board members to the committee. She highlighted that the committee has made a couple recommendations and are now looking at the best area to tackle next. She noted that one of the areas they are looking at is exploring how schools are responding to mental health needs and what this means for their preparation for employers. The committee has also spent some time discussing undocumented

workers but majority of their time has been spent defining what success looks like for a workforce program post COVID so that when they are engaging with employers, everyone has a mutual understanding of the expectations. She noted the committee is also looking at ways for employers to grow and attract Gen Z talent. She highlighted that the committee meets bimonthly and that their next meeting will explore what the recommendation would look like for defining successful programs and they will discuss whether or not a consultant should be recommended to collect information from other perspectives (parents, employers, community members, etc.).

- **Industry Partnership & Employer Engagement Committee, Chair John “Ski” Sygielski**
Deputy Director Michelle Lengel spoke on behalf of Chair Sygielski. She highlighted that in 2022 the committee spent time talking to employers from identified industry sectors to get a feel for how their businesses were doing and what their workforce needs were. She emphasized that the committee learned a lot during that experience and at the May board meeting the committee recommended goals around the PA Industry Partnership program that is overseen at the state board. Those goals were passed unanimously. She highlighted that the committee is looking forward to exploring the supply chain and looking at how businesses interact with the PA CareerLink® system and how they can bolster that support. She ended by noting that the committee meets bimonthly on every third Wednesday at 2:00pm.
- **Continuous Improvement Committee, Chair Brian Funkhouser**
Chair Brian Funkhouser highlighted two primary goals of the committee. The first was making PA CareerLink® more accessible and usable for employers and jobseekers. The second was increasing the number of users. To aid in meeting these goals, the committee has been evaluating the technology advances and the use of mobile devices. He highlighted that they did not have a meeting since the last board meeting but it is their goal to have a meeting before the next meeting.
- **Healthcare/Direct Care Workforce Committee, Chair Matt Yarnell**
Chair Matt Yarnell began by expressing his appreciation for past board members for the action they were able to take as a board around streamlining and improving training access and a number of actions they had done during the pandemic for direct care workers. He noted that the committee met most recently on September 19th and focused on going back to the basics. In a prior meeting they reviewed what they had done in the past and in the last meeting spent some time brainstorming and a common theme from that meeting was figuring out where the state is at right now with the care-giving crisis and what will the future look like. The committee plans to look at data to figure out where the state is at. The committee also previously did some work around nursing homes and Chair Yarnell noted that there is still work to do there. He also highlighted that there was a lot of energy around challenges with EMTs. He encouraged anyone interested to join the committee. He noted that there are real barriers between state agencies and the access to training and the testing infrastructure needed. He ended by highlighting that the committee will be looking at working with PDE, and other agencies to dig in on these issues and more and the next committee meeting will be held on December 19th.
- **Agriculture Committee, Chair Brian Campbell**

Chair Brian Campbell began by thanking Sara Gligora and Kristina Gonzalez for their help in launching the first meeting. He highlighted that they currently have 34 people on the committee and started their committee with some introductions. He noted that they are planning to meet the first Tuesday of every month to get started and their first focal point is to identify 4-5 action items/focus areas. He ended by expressing his excitement at working with the committee and reporting out in the future.

- **Education Committee, Chair Tim James**

Chair Tim James began by expressing his excitement about the committee. He highlighted that there are a lot of big issues to address around the teacher workforce and emphasized that they are looking to recruit more members for the committee. He noted that he has been talking to teachers, nonprofits, and others to get a variety of perspectives. He emphasized that there are only a few states in the country not dealing with this issue and that the committee has an opportunity to look at bright spots across the U.S. and see what they can replicate and incorporate.

- **Manufacturing Committee, Chair Mike Wojewodka**

Chair Mike Wojewodka began by noting that the committee had their first kick off meeting in August. He highlighted that because they are a new committee and want to build momentum, they have decided to meet monthly on the third Thursday of the month at 10am. Chair Wojewodka noted that at the kickoff meeting they had some introductions of the group and one of the primary focuses that came out of the group was how to best promote manufacturing among Commonwealth youth. The committee plans to spend a lot of time focused on meeting with industry leaders and identify/prioritize challenges that a lot of businesses are currently facing. He emphasized that it is a goal of the committee to figure out how to make recommendations for grants and incentives. He also highlighted that it is their goal to look at how to make some recommendations for policy as well. He ended by highlighting that the committee has just gotten started and that they welcome anyone interested in joining.

- **Barriers Committee, Chair Shae Zwerver**

Chair Shae Zwerver began by emphasizing that this committee is also brand new to the board. She expressed her hope at having some of the board members contribute and join this committee. She highlighted that there is a lot of great work happening in Commonwealth departments to address barriers related to childcare, transportation, and reentry into society after incarceration. She also added that she is excited to discover ways to create a workforce system that is dynamic and inclusive.

- **Construction Committee, Chair Karen Masino**

Executive Director James Martini spoke on behalf of Chair Karen Masino. He noted that they are currently building the membership out for that committee and have discussed covering issues like spreading awareness about the trades to younger people before they've already decided their path to show the opportunities for rewarding careers in those spaces. He also highlighted that they discussed looking at how they can reach populations traditionally not represented in the trade space particularly women and people of color.

Additional Committee Comments

Executive Director James Martini highlighted that part of the Workforce Development Board bylaws requires every board member to sit on at least one committee but are welcome to sit on more if they would like. He noted that there are currently 10 committees and two others that do not currently have chairs. One of those committees is the Reentry Committee that has been operating for awhile but he noted that they hope to give some more information on that committee soon. He noted that the other committee is a new committee dedicated to workforce issues surrounding individuals with disabilities. He ended by encouraging anyone who has additional thoughts or questions to reach out.

Public Comments: There were no public comments.

Final Remarks & Adjournment

Chair Wiltout thanked everyone for being part of the meeting. He highlighted that there was a lot of great participation and encouraged participation and sharing for the future. He also noted that he has been joining a monthly call with the 22 local workforce boards and his goal is to visit the boards either in person or over Teams within the next year. He then sought a motion to end the meeting.

MOTION: Joe Welsh made the motion to adjourn. Debra Caplin seconded. The motion was passed unanimously.