

PA WDB Quarterly Board Meeting

Wednesday, November 15th, 2023

10am-2pm

Meeting Minutes

Attendance

Members:

- Chair Terry Wiltrout
- Thomas Foley for Secretary Akbar Hossain and Governor Shapiro
- Philip Jaurigue
- Andrea MacArthur
- Darrin Kelly
- Dennis Pagliotti
- Gregg Riefenstahl
- Karen Masino
- Secretary Dr. Khalid Mumin
- Mark Pasquerilla
- Eric Kratz for Senator Camera Bartolotta
- David Miles for Secretary Jason Kavulich
- Malik Majeed
- Roy Rosin
- Mark Thaler
- Secretary Nancy Walker
- Dorenda Hamarlund for Secretary Laurel Harry
- Joseph Welsh
- Marguerite Kline
- Jennifer Wakeman
- Mike Shirk
- Representative Ryan Mackenzie
- Zachary Zobrist for Matt Yarnell
- Sara Gligora for Secretary Russell Redding
- Shea Zwerver
- Carniesha Kwashie
- Representative Morgan Cephas
- Chekemma Fulmore-Townsend
- Nicholas Gilson
- Brian Funkhouser
- Angela Ferritto
- Tim James
- Robert Bair
- Executive Director Ryan Hyde
- Deputy Secretary Dan Kuba
- Gwen Ross for Secretary Rick Siger
- Brianna Ludwig for Secretary Valerie Arkoosh
- John "Ski" Sygielski

Committee Chairs:

- 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
- Zachary Zobrist for Chair Matt Yarnell, Healthcare Committee
- Kristina Gonzalez for Chair Brian Campbell, Agriculture Committee
- Chair Tim James, Education Workforce Committee
- James Martini for Chair Mike Wojewodka, Manufacturing Committee
- Chair Karen Masino, Construction Committee
- James Martini for Chair Debra Caplan, Reentry 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 Wilttrout began the meeting and sought a motion to approve the October 10th meeting minutes.

MOTION: Brian Funkhouser made the motion. Angela Ferritto seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

Chair Wilttrout highlighted that James Martini and his team will be setting the 2024 meeting dates shortly. He also noted that they will be asking for volunteers from the board to help with strategic planning related to workforce development in Pennsylvania.

Pennsylvania Early Learning Investment Commission Presentation

Executive Director Andrea Heberlein gave the presentation on the Early Learning Investment Commission. She began by highlighting that the commission was started in 2008 and they now have around 50 business leaders charged with advancing quality early learning and quality childcare. She noted that there are many benefits in longitudinal outcomes for kids when they have quality early learning and emphasized the need that working families have for childcare. In 2021, the commission partnered with the Pennsylvania Chamber of Business and Industry to conduct a statewide survey on employer experiences with childcare. 70 percent of employers who responded stated they wanted to do more with childcare but did not know the resources available. From that, the commission created the Investments in Caring PA website as a resource for both employers and employees. Executive Director Heberlein highlighted their employer toolkit and employee toolkit that helps navigate state benefits and referrals. She also highlighted that they have sample surveys for employers, pages on HR benefits/policies and tax credits, and that they provide technical assistance. She ended her presentation by highlighting one of their successes with the Housing Authority of Pittsburgh. The Housing Authority was able to open a 24-hour childcare center in their apartment building that is operated by a previous home-based provider. Residents are able to receive workforce development training while their children receive quality childcare and the center is staffed by students from Duquesne University who are able to get real-life professional experience in early childcare. Executive Director Heberlein thanked the board for allowing her the time to come speak to them.

Chair Terry Wilttrout asked Executive Director Heberlein if there was an age limit for childcare. She explained that when referring to childcare, it is typically birth to age five. She highlighted that a lot of providers also provide before and after school care because that care is also critical. That is often offered up to age 12.

Agency Official Updates

- **Dr. Khalid Mumin, Secretary of the PA Department of Education (PDE)**
Secretary Mumin began by noting that he and his team have had visits around the Commonwealth focused on planning and strategizing around workforce. He highlighted a visit they did to McDowell Career and Tech Center in Erie, PA where they got to see the students engage with manufacturing and noted that some were even working as paid interns with jobs lined up after

graduation. He noted that about 50 percent of the students in this program are planning to work in manufacturing within their local area after graduation. He expressed his excitement with this and noted that they are engaging in similar discussions around the state. He also highlighted that he was able to meet most of the Commonwealth's career and technical education professionals at their annual conference at Penn State. He emphasized that it was exciting to see that the professionals knew they were critical figures in resolving workforce issues. He noted that ultimately it is their goal to create a blueprint for school districts to promote access to different career pathways. He noted that education is just one piece of workforce but that with all the pieces together they have the capability to really address these issues. He ended by noting that the workforce issue is also a competitive issue and as a state, we are tired of losing workers to neighboring states. He highlighted that it is his goal that Pennsylvania could be a blueprint nationally for addressing these workforce issues.

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

Secretary Walker began by apologizing for joining the meeting remotely due to the annual stuffed toy donation day. She thanked the board and L&I's partner agencies for their help and support with their workforce initiatives. She also noted that the department is close to publicly posting guidelines for the Governor's Workforce Transformation Program (CWTP). That program uses federal dollars to incentivize contractors to hire new employees. Contractors are able to receive \$40,000 per employee for up to 10 employees. Secretary Walker also thanked James Martini and his team for their work in preparing the state plan. She also highlighted that at her first meeting with the board she noted that they had about 40,000 backlog claims in Unemployment Compensation (UC). She noted that at the end of August, they had no backlog claims and were answering calls under 11 minutes. She ended by thanking Deputy Secretary Maria Macus and her team for their work in making that happen as well as stakeholders who have given feedback and support.

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

Deputy Secretary Dan Kuba began by noting that issues like childcare and transportation, are issues across workforce development. He also noted that adaptability is a key issue when it comes to the workforce. Particularly, when it comes to the younger generations (millennials and Gen-Y), he highlighted that there is a difference in the way they receive information and that they want to know what the value is towards specific projects. He emphasized that for employers, it is important to not speak to all of your employees the same way. Deputy Secretary Kuba also noted that there has been a lot of questions around where is the workforce? He explained that they fall into four different buckets: reentry, recovery, immigration, and those who just disappeared. He emphasized that the last bucket, those who disappeared, only make up about 25 percent of the workforce and if employers refuse to work with those other groups, they don't have much to work with. Deputy Secretary Kuba also noted that UC has partnered with Workforce Development on a couple initiatives. Working with UC and data from 2020-2022 as well as wage and record and new hire data, they were able to come up initially with around 280,000 individuals who are no longer showing up in the workforce system. Since then, that number has grown to around 420,000. Their project focuses on looking at how they can get those individuals to respond and figuring out what is happening with those individuals through a survey and outreach programs. They have hired a consultant to compile the data from that survey and Deputy Secretary Kuba noted that the board will be given a copy of that report.

He also highlighted that another major partner of the Deputate is JobCorps. He noted that he and Secretary Walker were able to go up to the Keystone Campus and take a tour of the facility as well as see the graduation. He noted that half of the individuals that went through the program were scooped up and had employment opportunities as soon as they graduated. He emphasized that as a partner, their goal is to make sure PA CareerLink® staff are registering those individuals so that when they leave the program, their journey doesn't stop there. Lastly, he highlighted some of the grants the Workforce Deputate currently has out. They are putting an additional \$800,000 towards veteran services and this year they received a new line item in the state budget for the School to Work Grant. He ended by emphasizing that right now, there are more job openings than individuals ready to work so employers are in a critical position.

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

Executive Director Ryan Hyde began by emphasizing Deputy Secretary Kuba's statement about talking differently to employees from different generations and noted that that could also be said for some people with disabilities. He also noted that people with disabilities could be added to the buckets that Deputy Secretary Kuba mentioned with the untapped workforce. He emphasized that OVR is always looking for more ways to partner and they will pay for internships, wages, and on the job training reimbursements. He highlighted that this fall, OVR offered \$13 million in post-secondary education support for over 2,000 individuals. He noted that fall is a busy time for OVR and they are currently in a big planning phase for summer 2024. For their MY Work program, he noted that they are expecting to serve a thousand students next summer and that they hope to be in all 67 counties. He also highlighted that they plan to be back in Penn State for their summer academies for students who are blind or visually impaired, or deaf or hard of hearing. He also highlighted that they are expanding their partnership with the Department of Conservation & National Resources (DCNR) on Outdoor Corps. Executive Director Hyde also highlighted that they just authorized \$13 million for their Commonwealth Internship program. Last year they had about 30 students in various agencies across the Commonwealth and they are looking to expand that for this year. He noted with that, that they don't just pay for interns within Commonwealth entities and that if anyone is interested in having an intern, OVR will pay their wages.

Executive Director Hyde also mentioned that OVR has a large portion of the combined state plan and that their public comment period is coming up soon and they will be holding their meetings for that soon. He lastly, spoke about the two large Disability Innovation Fund (DIF) grants that they received. The first one they received last year for competitive integrated employment and the first year of that was focused on writing agreements and contracting. They are now at the point where they are starting to onboard customers and employers and they already have an employer designated for one of their first sites. The second DIF grant they received is the \$9.9 million Pathways to Partnership grant. That grant was just received in late September and is a collaboration between OVR, the Bureau of Special Education, the Office of Development Programs, the Center for Independent Living, the Pennsylvania Training and Technical Assistance Network (PaTTAN), and others. Since it is in the first year, they are working on writing agreements and contracting but will then move on to implementing training and created work-based learning opportunities for students.

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

Brianna Ludwig spoke on behalf of Secretary Arkoosh and began by highlighting that since the last board meeting, Pennsylvania's State System of Higher Education (PASSHE) hosted their 2023

Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Summit at Shippensburg University. The theme of the summit was power of the community united to amplify voices and foster well-being. The DEI summit was aimed at highlighting the importance of collective work to improve campus experiences and promote well-being for all. Ms. Ludwig also highlighted that the Office of Child Development and Early Learning (OCDEL) has been utilizing funds from the pre-school development grant for rapid response teams. These teams assist early childhood education programs with children who are at immediate risk of expulsion. She noted that 82 grant applications were submitted and are currently being reviewed. For the Office of Children, Youth, and Families (OCYF), Ms. Ludwig noted that they have recently teamed up with partners with the Public Financial Management to develop a three-phase county children and youth agency recruitment and retention project. This project began in July 2023 and is anticipated to be completed in January 2024. For this project, OCYF has partnered with 10 county children and youth agencies. Ms. Ludwig also noted that the Office of Income Maintenance has given American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) funds for tuition assistance. She highlighted that this funding will help people stay enrolled in community colleges and has also helped increase GPAs and the likelihood of graduation. Lastly, she highlighted that within the Office of Long-Term Living, they are in the process of developing new Managed Care Organization (MCO) performance measures for 2024 agreements. These would require MCOs to reach a supportive employment level of 5 percent for competitive integrated employment. She ended by apologizing for Secretary Arkoosh not being able to attend the meeting.

- **Rick Siger, Secretary of the PA Department of Community and Economic Development (DCED)**
Gwen Ross spoke on behalf of Secretary Siger. She highlighted that they included some updates since the last board meeting in the briefing book and did not have any additional updates to give besides what was presented in the book.
- **Laurel Harry, Secretary of the PA Department of Corrections (DOC)**
Dorenda Hamarlund spoke on behalf of Secretary Harry. She began by highlighting her recent trip to Mercer County in mid-October where she spoke to employers and staff at the Mercer PA CareerLink® about the benefits of hiring reentrants. After that event, she noted that Mercer County has reached back out and asked for her to come back and do a bigger event. She noted that they are looking to do that sometime in 2024. Ms. Hamarlund also noted that DOC has partnered with the Department of Banking & Securities and Cross State Credit Union Association to hold a Reality Fair in Harrisburg on October 20th. She highlighted that they had 72 reentrants attend and the fair was focused on helping reentrants learn budgeting and plan out their bills and what they can do with their extra income. Ms. Hamarlund noted that Philadelphia and Pittsburgh have expressed interest in holding similar fairs in their areas and they plan to move forward with that in 2024. She also highlighted that DOC now has a partnership with Alline Salon Group to hire those coming out of prison with barber and cosmetology licenses. Ms. Hamarlund noted that DOC is handling this partnership in two phases. The first phase is already in effect and is reaching out to their reentrants currently on parole to let them know that they can apply to Alline Salon Group. She noted that right now they have one person going through this process and she is waiting to hear if they have started or not. The second phase is going to be building a prison to work pipeline with the idea of getting people hired pre-release. Ms. Hamarlund noted that she hopes by the next quarterly meeting she will be able to report that this phase is moving forward and they have people hired.
- **Russell Redding, Secretary of the PA Department of Agriculture (PDA)**

Sara Gligora spoke on behalf of Secretary Redding. She began by highlighting that PDA has been continuing to work to connect the industry and workforce system and they have been doing a lot of great work with the Department of Labor & Industry, the local workforce development boards, and PA CareerLink®. She thanked everyone who has been involved with that. Ms. Gligora also noted that the department currently has a total of eight agriculture related apprenticeship programs and two pre-apprenticeship programs. She noted that they are currently working on a third pre-apprenticeship program which is the dairy herd manager program. She also highlighted that the Pennsylvania Commission for Ag. Education will be releasing their annual report sometime in December and their next meeting is December 6th. Ms. Gligora also noted that the department also just recently announced the opening of their Veterans in Ag grant which will award up to \$200,000 to veteran organizations to support individuals veteran farmers and noted that they will be accepting applications until December 15th for that program. Lastly, Ms. Gligora highlighted the upcoming PA Farm Show which is set to take place January 6th to January 15th in 2024. She expressed their excitement at working with a number of people at L&I who will be setting up tables and exhibits at the farm show and she emphasized that anyone interested should attend the Farm Show.

- **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.

Third Sector WIOA State Plan Presentation

Angelica Garcia, Naudia Porter and Chelsea Haley began their presentation by introducing themselves and their company, Third Sector. They began by highlighting that in October, they partnered with the PA Workforce Development Board staff to facilitate listening sessions across the state and emphasized that the point of their presentation was to share out the insights collected through those public listening sessions. They highlighted that over the three in-person sessions and the one virtual session, they had over 200 participants from a variety of organizations. They noted that in these sessions, participants were in small groups that each focused on one of the strategic goals within the WIOA state plan. They highlighted that these small groups allowed them to dive deeper into the goals and discuss actionable strategies. They began their review of the insights with the Barrier Remediation group. They noted that the discussion held in this group elaborated how the inaccessibility and lack of flexibility of supportive services poses a critical challenge to training program completion and employment. The barriers highlighted included child-care, transportation, housing (access and affordability), and digital literacy. A common theme also highlighted in this group was the lack of awareness and understanding of the existing resources. The group discussed the role the workforce development system has in helping employers understand the barriers that jobseekers face and getting employers to empathize with employees through trauma-informed training & management. The group also discussed the need for family friendly policies and hybrid schedules. The group also had some strategy ideas for addressing the barriers noted above like providing on-site childcare centers.

The second group they noted, was Worker Shortages in Critical Industries. This group also emphasized the importance of improving access to supportive services and encouraging employers to pay a living wage. Chelsea Haley highlighted that there were two main things that emerged from this group. First, was that these industries are having trouble finding entry-level people with basic job readiness. It was noted that there is a misalignment of social value and pay with some of the jobs needed the most also being some

of the lowest paying jobs. Second, for some of the harder to fill positions, participants had some degree and credentialing requirement concerns. This included concerns around staff availability for shadowing requirements and less frequent credential testing windows. Some of the strategies suggested by the group was to align job responsibilities and job quality so that there are higher wages for work that provides a benefit to society, to adopt childcare like they do in Kentucky, adjust qualification and licensure requirements, and more.

For the Apprenticeship & Career and Technical Education (CTE) group, there were three main themes. First, the lack of student awareness about registered apprenticeship (RA) opportunities and registered pre-apprenticeships (Pre-RA). It was also noted that there is a stigma around apprenticeships and CTE that they are for lower achieving students. Second, was that the application process for RAs and Pre-RAs can be confusing and frustrating for employers. Lastly, it was noted that there is a misalignment between education and employers in the industry which results in people receiving credentials that don't adequately prepare them for the employer needs. Some of the strategies discussed was to increase awareness of RA and CTE opportunities as early as middle school, provide more support for employers establishing RAs and Pre-RAs, streamlining the application process, and more.

For the Youth group, participants noted that youth's lack of awareness about workforce development programming as well as the types of jobs available to them were the biggest challenging in engaging this population. Participants offered a variety of strategies to improve youth awareness and outreach efforts but highlighted more funding to market to youth and their families as most important. There was also a concern around basic needs for some youth especially those who are justice involved or young parents. One strategy to address this that was noted was to provide funding for follow-up services that allow youth to maintain their progress in whatever program they are participating in.

For the Industry Partnership & Employer Engagement group, participants noted that employers have been less engaged with local workforce development boards because many don't see the value the boards have in connecting them to jobseekers. It was noted that while the state could help in explaining the value, it may take specific incentives to get employers to engage with the workforce system initially. Participants suggested that the state make incentives for employers clear, expand and improve business engagement efforts, and work all of that into a larger industry partnership strategy.

The last group, Continuous Improvement of the PA CareerLink®, identified three main challenges: staff attrition, ongoing perception of PA CareerLink® being the unemployment office, and lack of other on-site providers. Some of the strategies identified by participants in addressing these challenges were increasing efforts to improve staff retention, improving awareness of the PA CareerLink®, and more. For all of these groups, the presenters noted that their report provides a more detailed breakdown of the challenges and recommendations that came out of the sessions.

Executive Director James Martini noted that public engagement is required for the WIOA State plan but the Governor's Office and Governor Shapiro have also requested that the information found here be used to build out an actionable strategic plan for workforce development across the Commonwealth beyond the four-year requirement for WIOA. He noted that they will be asking for volunteers from the board to be a part of those discussions.

Shea Zwerver asked the Third Sector presenters how the workforce development action plan will connect with the economic strategy being made by DCED. Executive Director James Martini responded and noted

that the Shapiro administration has been a lot more intentional about connecting workforce development and economic development. He also noted that Deputy Secretary Dan Kuba, himself and others from Labor & Industry have been meeting with DCED's Office of Transformation and Opportunity to make sure those strategies are informed by each other and aligned.

Commonwealth Workforce Transformation Program (CWTP) Presentation

Deputy Director Autumn Anderson of the Office of Critical Investments gave the presentation on the CWTP. She began by noting that the program was signed via executive order by Governor Shapiro on July 31, 2023 and signifies when this program is officially open for applications. The CWTP will allocate up to \$400 million in funding over the next five years to create 10,000 new jobs. Deputy Director Anderson highlighted that PA currently has an unemployment rate around 3.4 percent and that the industries that the IJJA and IRA work within, like clean energy, land remediation, etc., are emerging industries that are dealing with skills gaps between what skills currently exist and the skills that will be needed to get these projects done. The CWTP was designed to address these challenges for these industries as well as create employment pathways for those who have experienced barriers and not had as accessible access into some of these industries. Deputy Director Anderson highlighted that eligible organizations for this program are entities that have received an Infrastructure Investments and Job Act (IJJA) or Inflation Reduction Act (IRA) contract, subcontract, grant, or subgrant from a Commonwealth agency. She emphasized that CWTP funds can only be used on IJJA or IRA projects that are funded through the Commonwealth not projects directly funded by the federal government. Entities that receive federal tax credits on a project where they put in a capital investment of at least \$10 million are also be eligible under CWTP. She also noted that each eligible organization can apply for up to \$40,000 total per new employee with a total of up to \$400,000 per project. She highlighted that while the amount per project is capped, there is not a cap on the number of projects that an eligible organization can apply for. These funds can be used to pay for wages and supportive services such as transportation. She highlighted that there are three criteria that new employees must meet under CWTP; they must live in Pennsylvania, must be hired full-time and eligible for full benefits on an IRA or IJJA project for at least 6 months, and must have completed or be enrolled in on-the-job training (OJT) for at least 6 months. She noted that there are five more criterion but employees only need to meet one of those on top of the other three. She also emphasized that CWTP is a reimbursement program and the funds will only be given once the OJT is completed and the reimbursement application has been approved.

Chair Terry Wiltrout asked Deputy Director Anderson when this program will start. She explained that as of July 31st, 2023, the program was open and they are currently working on program guidelines that should be released to the public by the end of the year. Organizations that have received IJJA or IRA funds for projects since July 31st and are interested in this program can reach out to Deputy Director Autumn Anderson.

Joseph Welsh asked how employers can apply for IJJA or IRA funding since that is separate from CWTP. Deputy Director Anderson noted that there are lots of different programs across multiple agencies and encouraged those who have a specific project to reach out to her and she can connect people to the right agencies.

Dorenda Hamarlund asked if there was any requirement for organizations to retain the new employees after the 6 months. Deputy Director Anderson explained that there is no requirement for them to retain the employees however that would be preferable. She also noted that the program was meant to act as

an entry point for those not traditionally in these industries. Deputy Secretary Dan Kuba also added that the skill sets that will be gained from the OJT will be transferrable skills.

Shae Zwerver asked if the funds could be retroactively applied. Deputy Director Anderson explained that at this point it cannot be given retroactive because the training would need to be approved and the new employees would need to be verified that they meet the criteria.

Workforce Development Board Committee Updates

- **Apprenticeship & CTE Committee, Chair Angela Ferritto**

Chair Angela Ferritto began by highlighting that the committee has had a lot of collaborative conversation around getting grounded on where Pennsylvania is with apprenticeships. She added that she has gotten to discuss more with the Apprenticeship and Training Office (ATO) Director Tara Lowe as well as Deputy Secretary Kuba to answer some of the questions the committee had and get an idea of the work they can be doing collaboratively. She noted that some of the things the committee is looking at is around the back end work of the data collection and things like what are the success rates, what are the graduation rates, etc. She highlighted that every committee meeting they have had new people join and they have a nice mix of business, board members, CTE educators, and people from Labor & Industry. She noted that the next committee meeting is in January and that they plan to have a recommendation for the board at the next quarterly meeting.

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

Chair Ski briefly went over two main points for the committee moving forward. First, he noted that the committee will be looking at the discussion points that came up at the WIOA listening sessions and using those to come up with ways to better serve employers. Secondly, he highlighted that at their next meeting they will have a discussion about how to market and enhance business engagement with PA CareerLink®.

- **Education Committee, Chair Tim James**

Chair Tim James highlighted that this is a new committee that has only met once so far. He noted that they have a big group so far and they are expecting it to grow to around 30-40 people. He highlighted that they want to make sure they have different voices on the committee from teachers, administrators, union members, and more. He noted that at that meeting they spent time identifying some of the problems that exist with the teacher workforce right now and they have categorized them into ten different areas. The first is administrative issues; he noted that some candidates are being filtered and there are some information systems issues that might be contributing to this. The second was barriers to entry and he highlighted that they are currently no community colleges in Pennsylvania that allow students to be certified as a teacher which limits the teaching profession to those that can afford and navigate the process of becoming a teacher in the state. He also highlighted that they will be looking at information and data specifically what is out there and the speed of collection. Job competition was also an area of focus and he noted that they are losing potential teaching candidates when jobs at Sheetz pay approximately the same amount of money as teaching. He further emphasized that the qualification process for teaching is extensive and difficult to navigate. Chair James also noted that the quality of the job has become difficult and is a bit cyclical because when there are fewer teachers, the current teachers are overburdened. He also noted that regional disparity was another area of focus since Pennsylvania is a geographically diverse state. Diversity, incentives for

teaching, and the perception of teaching as a profession were also listed as areas of focus. Chair James highlighted that they will be forming subcommittees around these different areas and those subcommittees will most likely be meeting more frequently than the committee. He ended by noting that their next committee meeting will be held on December 8th.

John "Ski" Sygielski thanked Tim James for his committee report and noted that the community college system is working on teaching certifications and hope to have some type of proposal by the early part of the year that will help them certify instructors. He did note that they do currently have a degree for early elementary up to K4.

Deputy Secretary Kuba noted that the workforce deputate has put out a statement of work around teacher apprenticeship and they are bringing on an institution that will help write the template for the creation of a teacher certification apprenticeship.

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

Chair Brian Funkhouser briefly noted that the committee met last on October 30th and highlighted that their primary goal moving forward is to establish goals for 2024 and look at how they can improve the use of PA CareerLink® and how to better market it. He highlighted that they had about 20 people participate on that call and that he was the only board member of that call. He noted that he is working to recruit board members to join this committee and anyone interested should reach out to Executive Director James Martini. He ended by noting that their next meeting will be held on December 20th.

- **Youth Committee, Chair Chekemma Fulmore-Townsend**

Chair Chekemma Fulmore-Townsend began her report by emphasizing Secretary Mumin and Deputy Secretary Kuba's comments earlier in the meeting and noted that their comments and the comments from the listening session reinforce the direction that the youth committee is going. She noted that the committee had not met since the last board meeting but would be meeting at the end of November. She then briefly summarized the three areas that the committee will be focusing on. First, the committee will be exploring and defining high quality programming for youth. Second, they will focus on closing the gap between youth preparation activities and workforce needs, and lastly, working to ensure that education and workforce readiness are aligned. She ended by highlighting that they plan to have a more formal recommendation within the next two months or so around defining and endorsing a single definition of quality so that all of the state's programs can begin to work towards the same standard of excellence.

- **Barriers Committee, Chair Shae Zwerver**

Chair Shae Zwerver began by highlighting that the barriers committee is a new committee and they are still adding and recruiting members. She highlighted that there are 16 sub-goals listed under the barriers remediation goal in the WIOA state plan so the committee has endless opportunities to make an impact. She ended by noting that they are looking to establish a meeting within the next month and they will probably determine which of those 16 sub-goals should be prioritized.

- **Construction Committee, Chair Karen Masino**

Chair Karen Masino began by noting that they are still currently recruiting people for this committee and she thanked Dan De Lellis for his help. She noted that they are looking to hold their kickoff meeting in the first week of December and they expect the committee to be made up of educators, construction, building trades, and apprenticeship training directors throughout the state. She emphasized the need to get the message out to young people especially in middle

school but also elementary school and high school about careers in construction. She highlighted that it is not the lack of information but rather the ability to access the information about sustaining careers in construction. She also noted that there are misconceptions about construction jobs and that people in that field are often looked down upon. She highlighted that it is their goal to look at how they can introduce kids to the industry at a younger level and emphasized that even if kids don't take this career path, they at least know it exists. She ended by noting that they hope by the next board meeting to have more to share.

- **Agriculture Committee, Chair Brian Campbell**

Kristina Gonzalez spoke on behalf of Chair Brian Campbell. She highlighted that the committee met for the second time on November 7th and discussed some of the action items that came out of their first committee meeting. In that meeting, she noted that they identified two main areas of focus to start with the committee: H2A/H2B workers & the language accessibility of state exams, and training & awareness around agricultural careers. She highlighted that they plan to have a list of potential project ideas by the next committee meeting so that they committee can begin prioritizing where they would like to focus their work. She ended by noting that the next committee meeting will be held on December 5th.

- **Healthcare/ Direct Care Workforce Committee, Chair Matt Yarnell**

Zach Zobrist spoke on behalf of Chair Matt Yarnell. He began by shouting out Dan De Lellis for his work on supporting the committee and noted that the committee has met one time and have a second meeting coming up in December. He highlighted that a key theme for the committee is recognizing that the healthcare workforce crisis is still here. He noted that last year the committee spent a lot of time on nursing home work and had a lot of recommendations and outcomes thanks to the Board's support. He highlighted that this year, they are trying to refocus and zoom back out. He noted that this committee is particularly challenging because of the wide range of positions and different care settings and they are trying to think about how they can impact thousands of people while also thinking about the vital smaller roles. He specifically mentioned emergency medical staff in rural areas as well as the emerging field of community health workers. He highlighted that the next move for the committee will be looking at workforce data and figuring out what the barriers are for getting people the credentialing they need. He ended by emphasizing that they want to be data driven moving forward and build a comprehensive plan rather than bringing a lot of recommendations quickly.

- **Reentry Committee, Chair Debra Caplan**

Executive Director James Martini spoke on behalf of Chair Debra Caplan. He began by noting that the committee had been dormant for a little while with the turnover of the Board's chair Jeff Brown who had previously been the chair of this committee. He highlighted that the last meeting was used to get to know everyone on the committee and talk about where the committee had been. Moving forward, the committee is going to put together a poll to rank some priorities for the committee. He noted that there are a ton of things that they can do in the reentry space so figuring out which ones to go after first is important. He ended by highlighting that the committee is also working on developing a mission statement that focuses the work in that committee.

- **Manufacturing Committee, Chair Mike Wojewodka**

Executive Director James Martini spoke on behalf of Chair Mike Wojewodka. He noted that that committee has had a couple meetings so far and had a lot of discussions particularly around barriers to employment. He highlighted that they have talked about many of the barriers

mentioned earlier in the meeting like childcare and transportation but also things like housing insecurity and engaging with refugee and immigrant populations. He ended by highlighting that the committee is going to be scheduling a presentation from Gwen Ross and the team from DCED on WEDnet and work on putting together a list of services available regarding English as a second language, transportation, housing, and tax credit resources for those in the manufacturing industry.

Executive Director James Martini also reminded the Board that committee membership is not limited to Workforce Development Board members and if anyone has people they think might be interested in joining a committee they can reach out to him or any other board staff member.

WIOA Combined State Plan

Executive Director James Martini briefly gave some background on the WIOA state plan and explained that the Board was only being asked to move the plan forward into public comment. He noted that in February, the Board will be asked to vote on approving the plan for submission to the federal government but up until then there will be plenty of opportunities through the public comment process and engagement through the committees to provide input on the plan. He highlighted that the plan has six strategic goals: youth, sector strategies and employer engagement, continuous improvement of the one-stop system, investments in critical industries, apprenticeship and career and technical education, and barriers. He also noted that there have been a few new requests from the Shapiro Administration that will need to be added to the plan. First, is a regional approach and increased focus on regionalism not only in recognizing the differences throughout the Commonwealth but also charging all 22 local workforce development areas to work together and collaborate to impact their regions. The second being the CWTP and alignment between economic development and workforce development through the relevant agencies and departments. He also noted for Board members that new additional guidance was sent out two weeks ago after the plan had already been routed to the Governor's office and L&I leadership for approval to present to the Board. He noted that there will be some technical adjustments made to the plan to meet this guidance and that the Board will be kept informed of those changes. He also noted that the Board would also be notified of any adjustments made after the public comment period.

Chair Terry Wiltrout sought a motion to move the WIOA Combined State Plan to public comment.

MOTION: John "Ski" Sygielski made the motion. Tim James seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

Public Comments

Tim Barker from the York County District Attorney's Office and the Co-chair of the York County Reentry Coalition expressed their honor at having the Board in York County for their meeting. He noted that from the meeting it was clear that the board has identified the critical role of criminal justice involved individuals and how they relate to workforce engagement. He highlighted that in York County they have a collaborative approach around accountability and redemption and emphasized the importance of having both of those to have a functioning criminal justice system. He noted that workforce engagement was important to reduce recidivism and increase public safety. He emphasized that many of the barriers spoken about throughout the meeting apply to reentrants and noted that last year in York County they saw a 26 percent rise in first time homelessness. He highlighted that two things that the Board should

look at. First, was to look at and experiment with best practices and look at how counties are doing their initiatives and engage with the traditional barrier agencies (prosecutors, prisons, and probation). Second, he highlighted that they encourage as a recommendation for the Board to encourage fast tracking with early district attorney's reviews and work with counties to have that be accomplished. He noted that district attorneys are typically the ones responsible for public safety and take care of victim communication, and going through the different requirements. If they are willing to sign off on an agreement and they get the front-loaded ability to review and are able to send that up for a fast track, he recommended that those applications should receive extra consideration. He noted that they are not looking to supplant the Board of Pardon's independent determination but emphasized that the key threshold ends up being the vetted review from the local individuals. He ended by thanking the Board for being in York and welcomed them to the area.

Final Remarks & Adjournment

Chair Terry Wiltrout noted that his goal moving forward is to try to narrow the time down for the board meetings. He noted that he will work with Executive James Martini and his team to try to get the meetings down to two hours for the future. He ended by wishing everyone happy holidays. He then sought a motion to adjourn the meeting.

MOTION: John "Ski" Sygielski made the motion. Gwen Ross seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.