

Minutes for the
Northeastern Workforce Development Board
January 15, 2019

- I. **Call to Order:** Chairman Zach Bray called the meeting to order on January 15, 2019 at 6:00 p.m. The meeting was held at the Albemarle Commission in Hertford. The presence of a quorum was determined with **thirteen (13) members present:** Zach Bray, Steve Bryan, Dave Carroll, Larry Donley, Wanda Fletcher, Tameka Gibbs, Phillip Stovall, Michael Twiddy (arrived late), Sean Lavin (arrived late), Anthony Pollard, Tim Ivey, Janet Russ, and Loretta Williams. **Members Absent with Notice:**, Vernon Brinkley, Debra Keenan, and Jean Taylor. **Members Absent without Notice:** Melanie Ashe, Lee Scripture Rex Anderson. **Guests/Partners/Staff:** Lora Aples, Annette Barnes, Kenny Kee, Paige Griffin, Sheryl Stevens, Matthew Fowler, Marcus Cutrell, Randy Foreman, Carolyn LaDow, Emily Nicholson, Cindy Gossage, David Whitmer, Edith Evans, Cortney Simpson, Amber Joseph, Roxanna White and Charity Davenport from the Telamon Corporation and Lynn Hurdle Winslow, VP of Student Success and Enrollment Management, COA.
- II. **Welcome/Introduction:** Chairman Bray welcomed everyone. He introduced new NWDB Career Advisor, Paige Griffin and Administrative staff Cindy Gossage as well as welcomed new NWDB Board member Janet Russ.
- III. **Approval of Minutes for November 13, 2018 (Vote):** Chairman Bray asked for a motion to approve the minutes from the November, 2018 board meeting. It was moved by Tameka Gibbs and seconded by Loretta Williams to approve the minutes as written. With no further discussion, the motion carried unanimously.
- IV. **Approval of Agenda (Vote):** Chairman Bray asked for a motion to approve the agenda. It was moved by Wanda Fletcher, seconded by Anthony Pollard, to approve the agenda as presented. With no further discussion, the motion carried unanimously.
- V. **Mission Moment: -Success Stories: NC Career Pathways:** Director Whitmer explained that he was offering something a little different tonight. He explained that after NWDB

received a grant for outreach and marketing of services, they hired a company to do some professional “success story” videos. He introduced the videos that told the successful stories of 4 individuals; Melissa Wilson, Joshua Wilson, Rakenza Whitaker, and Daysha Spencer. Chairman Bray stated the videos were very professional and told a great story.

VI. **Presentation: Roxanna White and Charity Davenport, Telamon Corporation:**

Chairman Zach Bray opened the floor to Ms. White and Ms. Davenport. Ms. White presented a PowerPoint presentation explaining the services of Telamon, a private, non-profit organization that seeks to improve the lives of farm workers, their spouses, and dependents.

VII. **Presentation: Finish Line Grants – Lynn Hurdle-Winslow, VP of Student Success and Enrollment Management, COA and Annette Barnes, NWDB Program Manager:**

Ms. Hurdle-Winslow and Annette Barnes present and update on the Finish Line Grants. Ms. Hurdle-Winslow explained that this is an excellent partnership between NCWorks and COA to assist students in achieving their degrees despite facing an emergency that might arise to prevent them from graduating. The Finish Line Grant that is being offered is for assisting COA students with unforeseen financial emergencies that interfere with their ability to complete their academic program. It offers grant funds of up to \$1,000 per student to address situations such as medical needs, course materials, transportation issues, auto repairs, child care, housing assistance and utility bills.

Ms. Barnes reported the Finish Line Grant activity has increased since they started offering the grant in November. She reported that in November, there were 16 inquiries with 2 grants awarded; December there were 5 inquiries, 0 grants awarded; and, in January there have been 11 inquiries with 5 grants awarded. The funds awarded have been used for rent, tire purchases, fuel, tuition assistance and temporary private transportation. Just since last Friday there have been 15 new applications received that they are working on at this time.

Chair Bray commented that it is really great to see the work going on between partners and this is a much needed program.

VIII. **Administrative Reports:** Chairman Bray asked Director Whitmer to review his report. Director Whitmer reported that the Finance Officer, Ms. Carolyn LaDow has submitted her resignation so as soon as the new Director of the Albemarle Commission is on board, there will be a search begun for a new Finance Officer. He also reported that Board member Jean Taylor has submitted her resignation from the NWDB board.

Director Whitmer announced that the positions of Career Center Manager and Assistant Career Center Manager have finally been filled and asked Mr. Donley to introduce Mr. Matthew Fowler and Ms. Sheryl Stevens to the Board. Mr. Donley stated that he wanted to first thank the search committee members; Tameka Gibbs, David Whitmer, and Annette Barnes for their assistance in this process. He also wanted to sincerely thank all of the center staff for really stepping up and pulling together to keep everything moving forward. He thanked Emily Nicholson, Annette Barnes, David Whitmer and Kenny Kee for all of their time spent managing the center as we went through what ended up being a very lengthy process.

Mr. Donley introduced Sheryl Stevens, Assistant Center Manager, who had previously worked for NWDB as a Youth Program Manager, going on to earn two Master's degrees and now returning to Workforce Development. Ms. Stevens thanked the Board for the warm welcome and stated that her main focus is customer service and has already begun implementing changes in the office to that end.

Mr. Matthew Fowler, new Career Center Manager was introduced. Mr. Donley said that he is very excited to have Mr. Fowler on board as he has very impressive accomplishments and is looking forward to what he can bring to his new position. Mr. Fowler thanked everyone and said he was excited to start work. He too felt that customer service is the most important factor in a successful Career Center. He said that it is an honor to be able to serve the community in his capacity as the Manager of the Career Center.

Director Whitmer told the Board he did the monthly live radio broadcast that morning at WRVS along with Ms. Tameka Gibbs and Ms. Sheryl Stevens. He reported that we have submitted our application to have the career center recertified. The next step is for the

certification team to make a site visit. Director Whitmer said that there have been several hiring events at the career center in Elizbeth City, nine just in the month of December. He told the Board that Washington County has become the third county in our Region to earn their Work Ready Certification and staff is currently working with Gates County to get their certification completed.

Director Whitmer reported that NCWorks Outreach Coordinate, Heidi O'Neal, is continuing her work with the libraries where she is training library staff on NCWorks Online and conducting workshops for library customers. To date, 69 sessions have been held with 94 job seekers assisted. He stated that staff was asked to submit a proposal for a workshop at the Southeastern Employment and Training Association and the North Carolina Employment and Training Association spring conference. Their proposal titled "Whose Box are You Living In? Best Practices for Innovative Approaches to WIOA" has been accepted.

Director Whitmer reported that all signatures have been obtained on the Career Center MOU and Infrastructure Funding Agreement and it was submitted and approved by DWS. NWDB was awarded an Enhancement Planning Grant in the amount of \$17,894. This grant provides funding to plan our larger Enhancement Grant Project. We have an opportunity to apply for up to \$200,000 for that effort. He asked Assistant Director Nicholson to talk a bit about this new grant. Ms. Nicholson said that one of the focuses of our grant actually co-aligns with an initiative started by Human Resources at Jimbos. Some time ago Jimbos contacted COA about starting a new program at COA Edenton called "Career Essentials", a 20 hour curriculum program. We want to gauge employer feedback on that program so surveys are out to employers in Edenton to provide us with that feedback.

Director Whitmer reported that it is once again time to bid out our Adult/DW and Youth Services. The RFP process is overseen by the Leadership Committee. If any proposals are received they are scored by the Leadership Committee and a member of the Consortium. Their recommendations will go to the full board for a vote at the May meeting. The resubmission for the bid on One-Stop Operator Services is also coming up. He stated it is very important that we have a quorum at the May meeting. Even if we do not get any bids,

the board will have to vote on doing the work in-house.

Finally, Director Whitmer reported that DES revamped their unemployment insurance system, which has caused some pretty significant wait times. People are pretty upset and they have been coming in to the Dare Center, with some taking it out on the staff. Director Whitmer said that there are times when the staff have become very uncomfortable with the anger displayed. Since safety of our employees is essential, a request was made to DWS for an armed security guard. Assistant Security, Danny Giddens, approved this request immediately and within a couple days, there was a security card in the center. He reported that he asked Ms. Stevens if this was an issue in the Elizabeth City office and she said not at this time but if anything changes, she will request the assistance.

IX. **Committee Reports:**

a. **Leadership Committee:**

Chairman Bray reported that the committee will be overseeing the RFP's that Director Whitmer spoke about for Adult/DW and Youth services and they are working on crafting the agenda for the Board Retreat. Chair Bray said that this year we will have Mr. David Hollers from Centralina Workforce Development Board as a facilitator. The Retreat will be again held at the Hilton Garden Inn and dates are March 15th and 16th. Director Whitmer said an email will be sent out to the board asking for specific information the hotel needs in order to secure the correct number of rooms no later than February 15th.

Chairman Bray reported that the NWDB Bylaws are being reviewed and changed come into compliance with WIOA and the Leadership Committee is working with Director Whitmer on the changes. He stated that the bylaws are technically controlled by the Consortium, but we felt it was important that the board have a voice in the changes. Chair Bray said he has been working with Director Whitmer on the language and he will be attending the Consortium meeting to present it. Since these are mainly technical changes, he does not anticipate any issues.

b. **Career Center Committee:**

Chairman Bray opened the floor to Career Center Committee Chairman Michael Twiddy for the report. Chair Twiddy reported that throughout the process of selecting and hiring the Center Manager and Assistant Center Manager, the Career Center was kept abreast and involved, albeit at arms -length distance. Chair Twiddy extended a special welcome to Ms. Stevens and Mr. Fowler, stating the he is certainly looking forward to seeing everything move forward. He reported that the Career Center Committee did not meet in December, but at their January 9th meeting they improved and finalized a new template for the Center managers to use for reporting to the NWDB Board. They will begin using it at the March NWDB Board meeting.

Chair Twiddy stated that the committee has completed two of the three action items in the strategic plan. They are beginning work on the final action item, developing and implementing comprehensive Center monitoring guidelines now. Chair Twiddy reported that the committee worked for over a year on developing a performance dashboard that focuses on performance measures that are considered critical to the performance of the Center by the State. The dashboard gives attention to areas we need to work on and identifies key performance areas. Chair Twiddy reported that Heidi O’Neal, NCWorks Outreach Coordinator, completed an assessment on the job search stations in Gates and Currituck DSS offices and provided the committee with a report and video along with her suggestions for improvement. The committee approved implementation of the changes as suggested.

Chair Twiddy asked Mr. Donley to report on where we are in terms of the building leases of the Career Centers in Edenton and Elizabeth City. Mr. Donley reported that the lease with COA-Edenton has been completed and is in place for the next 3 years. The RFP process for the Elizabeth City office is completed and the only proposal received was from the current property owner. He stated that negotiations are underway in regard to proposed renovations and modernization to the property.

c. **Business Resources and Opportunities Committee (BROC):**

Chairman Bray opened the floor to BROC Chairman Loretta Williams. Chairman Williams reported that the committee had a very productive meeting before the board meeting. She

asked Randy Foreman to share some highlights of the meeting. Mr. Foreman said that in November, the committee was provided some ideas on how to bring in more traffic into the Centers. He said that there were fourteen hiring events and twenty-two education events held in December and January to date. He reported that they try not to hold any events on Mondays because Center traffic is so high. He said there is something happening at the Center every day but two in the month of January. Based on a recommendation from the committee, they have increased their presence on social media over the last few weeks about the hiring events and have begun including the events on the weekly e-mail blasts as well. Mr. Foreman said that Assistant Manager Stevens has been working very hard getting things done in her first few weeks, already holding a partners meeting. This was an issue that BROCC wanted to put together and now all of our hiring events will be shared with our partners. Mr. Foreman said that OJT has been progressing very well over the past 10 months; reporting that twelve OJTs have been completed and finalized with employers in four of our 10 counties, which has resulted in reimbursements totaling \$87,000 to the employers. Mr. Foreman said that we currently have another three participants in the final OJT review process as well.

d. **NCWorks NEXTGEN Committee:**

Chairman Bray opened the floor to NextGen Chairman Wanda Fletcher. Chairman Fletcher reported that Eric N. Banks has been hired as the Youth Career Advisor for Perquimans, Chowan, and Gates County and that Youth Program Manager Cassandra Peele resigned on January 4th to pursue a new career path. Chair Fletcher stated that currently the NextGen Program is serving 63 participants as well as an additional 87 active and follow-up participants. The goal is to serve 75% OSY and we are currently at 73%.

Chair Fletcher reported that we have three participants in Work Experience located in Perquimans, Hyde and Gates Counties; five youth are in our Sylvan Tutoring program and one participant in OJT in Hyde County, which is a permanent full-time position. The NextGen Committee is working on the next Real World simulation. Chair Fletcher said that the 13th Annual Youth Summit is coming up. This is where we take 10-20 students to a college, a business, hotel and nice restaurant and give them an opportunity to experience something they may have never experienced before and to network with others who are

just like them. It gives them the opportunity to see that anything is possible with the help of NextGen. She finished her report stating that the Committee's primary focus is on their strategic plan and the development of a more centrally and fine-tuned mentorship program.

e. **Workforce Transportation Taskforce:**

No report.

x. **Career Center Manager Reports**

Chair Bray opened the floor to Kenny Kee, Dare Career Center Manager for his report. Mr. Kee said that they have been working hard to support the Elizabeth City Center during the recruitment and hiring of their new leadership in addition to serving the participants at their Center. Mr. Kee stated that it has been a little tense in the Center with the unemployment issues. Having the security guard has definitely helped. The furlough has affected them some from people who are furloughed and live in Dare County wanting to apply for unemployment insurance and the staff directs them on what they need to do. He also reported on staff training.

Chair Bray opened the floor to Ms. Sheryl Stevens, Assistant Center Manager. Ms. Stevens reported that she has indeed hit the ground running. She said the Center has seen a large increase in traffic with furloughed employees as well as DRS employees. She said that they have implemented a new customer service protocol, explaining that when a participant comes into the office, the front desk staff will immediately stand up, welcome the participant to the Center and ask how they can help them. This has already made a big difference. She said that she has implemented afternoon workshops for participants which she is currently teaching but eventually she will be asking staff members to take on this task. She encouraged the board members to get involved as well, possibly coming in as a guest speaker. She distributed copies of the training schedule and encouraged everyone to attend a workshop and to see what's happening at the Center. She introduced Career Center staff Amber Joseph, Cortney Simpson and Edith Evans who were in attendance and added that they and fellow Advisors Latoria Roundtree and Heidi O'Neal are all phenomenal people and represent the Career Center very well. She distributed the minutes from a recent Partners meeting and a calendar of events for the Center that she created. Ms. Stevens said

that she intends to begin a major business outreach effort at the end of January.

XI. **Environmental Scanning:**

Chair Bray said that he wanted to spend some time discussing transportation and drug abuse issues and whether these are issues that the board felt was something they could address. He suggested there might be a way to provide a participant with access to resources to help them continue to move forward instead of having participants go through several steps to get the assistance they need. For instance, in transportation, could we put together a Rideshare app that would assist people with traveling to their jobs? Vice-Chair Bryan related that the transportation service operating between Tyrrell and Hyde County is operating very effectively and they are servicing the same clients that we serve here. Chair Bray asked if the Transportation Committee could take a look at some “out of the box” ideas in the next meeting or two and come back to the board with some suggestions.

Chair Bray asked the board’s opinion on the substance abuse issue. Vice-Chair Bryan said there is a definite need and that we would be doing something that local County Commissioners are not doing. Mr. Lavin agreed that there is a definite need in every county we serve but is the NWDB really able to do this? Chair Bray said he envisions NWDB’s role to be to provide a participant with a menu of resources, not as an agency that would be able to directly affect the solution, more like a focus group that would research what programs are available and point people to the right path. After further discussion, the Chair said that he and Director Whitmer will take a look at what was discussed at the Leadership Committee and come back to it at the March or May NWDB meeting.

Ms. Gibbs distributed a flyer regarding the upcoming Room in the Inn project being held January 6-February 17 in Elizabeth City. This program provides free nightly shelter for homeless individuals and families and is supported by the churches and other community organizations.

XII. **Other Business:**

No other business.

XIII. **Adjourn (Vote):**

With no further discussions, Chairman Bray asked for a motion to adjourn the meeting at 8:00 pm. Anthony Pollard made a motion to adjourn. His motion was seconded by Chair Bray and, with no further discussion, was carried unanimously.

XIV. **Next Meeting:**

The next meeting will be held at the annual Board Retreat in Kitty Hawk on March 15, 2019. An emailed notification will be sent out.

NWDB Chairman, Gerald Z. Bray

Date

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