



## **Vermont State Workforce Development Board**

Meeting Minutes

May 26, 2022

9:00 am – 11:00 am

2178 Airport Road, Conf Room #135, Berlin, VT

Virtual Option

**Physical Attendees:** Michael Harrington, Adam Grinold, Victoria Biondolillo, Abby Rhim, Kate Ashe, Rachael Stephens, Kendal Smith, Shawn Rouleau, Kelly Putnam, Elizabeth Frascoia, Abigail Waite, Mary Anne Sheahan, Patrick Leduc, Michael Posternak, Michael Stack, Tom Cheney, Tom Longstreth

**Virtual Attendees:** Nathan Piper, Teresa Robert, Hannah Goldman, Pat Elmer, Rick Bugbee, Hazel Brewster, Nate Demar, Joyce Judy, John Young, Kathi Terami, John Burnham, Kiersten Bourgeois, Maria Latinville, Maureen Hebert, Archie Hodgdon, Ellen Kahler, Anna Telensky, Mathew Barewicz, Alison Clarkson, Dave Culver, Carla Wuthrich, Patricia Stovall-Lane, Chris Loso, Joe Lemnah, Margaret Pinello-White, Hal Cohen, Brian Carpenter, Deborah Wright, Sarah Buxton, Jill Olson, Elizabeth Cote, Jenney Samuelson, Austin Davis, Karla Coleman, Brian Kerns, Sophie Zdatny, Ruth Durkee, Brian Emerson, Robin Bador, Frank Cioffi, Kim Bushey, Janette Bombardier, Meghan Abrahamovich, Monica Greene, Matt Mckenney, Rebecca Kapsalis, Zach Hatch, Patricia Giavara

### **Old Business:**

Chair Adam Grinold called the meeting to order just after 9:00 am. He shared that the Board aims to take a more proactive stance in the workforce space, moving forward, including the development of a strategic plan. He then introduced Governor Scott and his pre-recorded remarks.

Governor Scott welcomed the Board back to in-person meetings. He highlighted the demographic crisis and the pandemic's exacerbating effects. He stressed the need to grow both our population and economy, working together towards the same goals.

Chair Adam Grinold then filed a motion to approve the March 9<sup>th</sup>, 2022 meeting minutes and hearing no corrections, moved to accept the minutes as written. Motion was unanimously approved.

### **New Business**

Executive Director Victoria Biondolillo reflected on the last 8 months and the Board's progress. This included getting back into federal compliance (outside of the selection of the one-stop operator), regular meetings and engagement with board members, visiting 10 out of the 14 state counties and speaking with business owners, creating and meeting with sector-based committee groups and significant workforce legislative progress. She then stressed that moving forward, while there is great

work happening within the workforce space, most of it is siloed. The Board's goal moving forward will be to coordinate and collaborate to make a more efficient system. She noted that the Board has great potential, there just needs to be better coordination. This includes identifying what it means to be successful. In this meeting, the stage will be set for a strategic plan that will, ideally, be completed and approved in the fall. She then introduced Katherine (Kate) Ash and Rachael Stephens of the National Governors Association (NGA).

Rachael Stephens, Program Director, Workforce Development and Economic Policy, NGA Center for Best Practices, gave a broad overview of who the NGA is and what they do as the only nonpartisan organization of the nation's governors. She noted that within her branch of NGA, the Center for Best Practices, she provides assistance to executive leaders, including program areas like workforce development and economic policy. Within the Workforce Development Technical Assistance Program at NGA, the program provides state workforce system leaders with research, strategic planning, access to experts and other support related to workforce development policy and program administration issues. She then brought up the NGA's high-performing state workforce board framework, an actionable framework for Governors to empower state workforce boards to achieve strategic vision. She then asked the group why they think a high performing board matters.

Michael Stack noted supply chain issues and the need for domestic manufacturing. He wants to ensure that Vermont can keep up with current times and that the state's workforce remains qualified to remain relevant and competitive.

Tom Longstreth stressed the unification of the Administration, Legislature, employers and providers of different training and educational services. If we can provide recommendations that represent the entire Board, it would be very helpful.

Commissioner Harrington noted the importance of identifying end goals. He also mentioned having the right people around the table so when recommendations are made, the Board has credibility.

Rachael Stephens then shared that a high-performing board serves as a connector, conductor and convener. She also mentioned that creating both a vision and goals, mapping existing assets, examining existing data and data limitations and establishing a board governance and committee structure has been seen to work well with other high-functioning boards.

Kate Ashe, Consulting Director, Workforce Innovation Network, NGA Center for Best Practices, then focused on the vision for the Board's strategic plan. After acknowledging the great work that has already been done in the workforce system, including WIOA and the development of the State Plan, she highlighted how the group must distinguish the separate, operational role of the Board. Taking into account relocation and recruitment, education and training, system alignment and workforce supports, she asked how the Board can play an operational role in each of these key areas of focus. She then asked the group what they see as the Board's greatest opportunity to make change in any of these key areas.

Michael Stack suggested action, including any tools that we can provide to collaborate with businesses and key players to strengthen the economy. He stressed job creation and standard of living increase as 2 measurable metrics for success.

Chris Loso noted things that the Board potential can't change directly. This includes childcare, housing and transportation. He urged the group to identify what they can personally change as a Board but also consider other elements that impact workforce. Many components need to come together, not just the Board's efforts.

Kate Ashe summarized the idea of realistically thinking about what is within the Board's purview.

Mary Anne Sheahan stressed the idea of keeping end goals in mind. She wants the Board to identify the needs of communities in order to support Vermont, long-term.

Kate Ashe then asked Mary Anne what she sees as the ideal role of the Board.

Mary Anne Sheahan noted identifying the most critical industries in Vermont and what they individually need.

Senator Clarkson referenced a previous bill which aimed to eliminate barriers and stigma surrounding CTE centers, with the support of one of the Board's sub-committees. Although derailed during COVID, it looked to provide meaningful change and serves as a good example of what the Board can do, related to legislative progress.

Kate Ashe mentioned that highlighting those examples is important.

Commissioner Harrington stressed that while we tend to talk big picture within the workforce, we need to focus on the Board's role.

Kendal Smith added that a common theme discussed regarding scope of impact is right scaling of commission.

### **Breakout Sessions**

Kate Ashe then instructed the group to convene in individual breakout sessions.

Group 1 – Kate Ashe

Group 2 – Rachael Stephens

Group 3 – Adam Grinold

Group 4 (virtual) – Victoria Biondolillo

Victoria Biondolillo then prompted an individual from each group to summarize each individual breakout session and the content discussed.

Kendal Smith shared that her group discussed identifying gaps within the system (ex. resource mapping) and amplifying best practices for both workers and employers.

Commissioner Harrington noted his group wanting to identify the Board's role in each key area of focus (relocation and recruitment, education and training, system alignment and workforce supports). His group also focused on the Board serving as a connector across partners.

Adam Grinold said that his group felt system alignment was the number one priority. With that, everything else would likely improve in the system. If the Board were to become the center of the workforce system, it would make progress easier.

Victoria Biondolillo stated that her group wanted to identify how the Board could serve to help in issue areas related to workforce, for example housing. She also stressed her group's desire to ensure that the Board is nimble, regardless of the workforce landscape at the time.

### **Next Steps**

Rachael Stephens shared that NGA would continue to support the Board moving forward.

Victoria Biondolillo then shared the timeline for the strategic plan and next steps, including working with the Operating Committee.

Phase One: Setting the Stage (May-June)

Phase Two: Framing and Review (July-August)

Phase Three: Plan Development and Refinement (September-October)

Tom Longstreth voiced the idea of putting a deadline in the timeline of when the Board will provide concrete suggestions. Having this as an end goal, within the timeline of the strategic plan, will be of use. Adam Grinold agreed with this goal. He also stressed that this is an incredible time to be involved with workforce development. The Board simply needs to bring everyone together to take advantage of this opportunity. He stressed the idea of looking forward and not just reacting in the Board's new chapter.

Victoria Biondolillo then distributed a reflection survey for the meeting.

Adam Grinold then asked for a motion to adjourn. The motion was moved, seconded and approved unanimously by voice vote.

Respectfully submitted by Abby Rhim

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Abby Rhim, Executive Assistant, Vermont State Workforce Development Board