

Minutes of the  
**Workforce Development Council**  
**Friday, April 24, 2020**  
**Via Teams Meeting**

**Members present:** Dave Farnsworth, Pat Bertagnolli, Tifanie Gelinske, Cindy Griffin, Jan Kamphuis, Janelle Klinke, Perry Lubbers, Keith Lund, Guy Moos, Don Shilling, Cindy Schreiber-Beck, Tony Grindberg, Jason Ehlert, Landis Larson, Wayde Sick, James Upgren, Kasper Ziegler, Stan Schauer, Bryan Klipfel, Robyn Throlson, Matt Marshall

**Staff present:** Phil Davis, Katie Ralston, Ruth Lacher, Tammy Barstad, Sherri Frieze

**Guest:** Shawn Wenko, Matt Gardner, James Leiman

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### **WELCOME AND INTRODUCTIONS**

Dave Farnsworth called the meeting to order at 10:00 a.m., welcoming members and guests and introduced Matt Marshall as a new WDC member.

### **APPROVAL OF MINUTES**

**Motion:** It was moved by Perry Lubbers, seconded by Cyndy Griffin to approve the February 27<sup>th</sup> minutes. Motion carried.

### **JOB SERVICE**

**Phil Davis**

Phil gave an update to recent action that has taken place with the nine ND Job Service office locations during the COVID-19 pandemic.

- March 24 – Last day open for public entrance into ND Job Service sites and transitioning of state employees to work from home.
  - State employees continue to handle claims, phone calls, and administering grant programs from home.
  - Employers are still looking for employees, and Job Service has been promoting through social media along with the NDJob Service Board.
- March 25 – Applied for Emergency Dislocated Worker grant; 1 week later was awarded \$510, 000.
- In the last 3 weeks, the nine workforce centers have been averaging 9,000 calls a week, and 12,000 a week in the unemployment center.
- March 16 – As of, taken in 61,593 Unemployment claims. An average is 17,000 – 20,000 in a year.
- March 16 – As of, paid out \$106 million in benefits, rising every day.

No timeline has been set for opening the workforce centers, but when they do open, it will be by appointment only.

### **WIOA UPDATE**

**Katie Ralston**

At the last meeting in February, the Governor's set aside WIOA funds were discussed to use toward the Last Mile Program; a web training program that would be used at the Department of Corrections & Rehab (DOCR). This program is moving forward with the help from ND Job Service, DOCR, and ND Information Technology Department. This program will serve the populations with barriers, an important tool for those entering a job market soon.

### **ECONOMIC BRIEFING**

**James Leiman**

James discussed the COVID-19 pandemic results; a double black swan event; beyond what is normally expected of a situation and has potentially severe consequences. It has affected the two largest non-Ag sectors simultaneously; energy, and hospitality. The other top industries affected were, agriculture; (supply chain constraints), construction; (real estate), retail, manufacturing; (up & down stream issues), and healthcare (mass cancellations of appointments).

James also discussed the ND Department of Commerce's reaction in identifying a needed plan to action to move forward, state macroeconomic outlook, state projections, and funding economic development.

## COVID 19 ROUNDTABLE DISCUSSION

Katie Ralston

Katie asked for members responses to the following questions.

- **What are the gaps in support for ND businesses?**
  - Help with mortgage payments
  - How to attract manufacturing plants with jobs
  - Forgiveness on taxes, possibly make quarterly
  - Redirect people in retraining of careers
  - Employee Assistance Program
  - Collaborating with others to work in new ways
  
- **How do you see your workforce requirements changing?**
  - Reducing overhead and working from home more
  - A look to more renewable energy markets
  - More skilled individuals in technology fields
  - Retraining of nurses for in broader nursing fields; lab technicians needed for LPNs
  - Education requirements changing, hands on training with social distancing
  - CTE Scholarships, open to certificate programs
  - More online education for high demand jobs
  
- **What do you believe are the most immediate needs of your industry and/or community?**
  - Continued education on COVID-19
  - Lost revenue
  - Lagging sales
  - Vaccine for the whole country
  - Workforce needs continue
  - Diversifying economy – maintain motivation
  - Smart, soft openings for hospitality, retail industries
  - Supplies needed to open
  - Criteria to be met before industry opens
  - Perception from general public for safeness to shop again
  - Raise visibility by website for virtual job fairs
  - Raise awareness with farmers and Dept. of Agriculture for H2A Visa
  - Career Builders Program – displaced workers

### Review of Subcommittee Recommendations

Subcommittee members gave an overview of priorities/recommendations, that will be narrowed to a final list.

#### Don – Career and Explorations & Skills Gap

1. Support Career Academies and CTE hubs
  - ✓ Important element to bring to ND, needed in rural communities
2. Uniform Career exploration and delivery of software
  - ✓ Current software in high schools are needing a way to create more participation by students and counselors; technology must change to be presented in a better format.
3. Clearing house tool
  - ✓ To connect career opportunities with career seekers. Employers looking for tuition sponsorship and apprenticeship programs.

Don commented that members felt their priorities/recommendations have not changed due to COVID–19, but other opportunities may have been created in response to the virus; a shift in workforce needs, producing a surge of high demand jobs.

1. Find funding for Career academies and hubs, changing the delivery method of hands on training in a safe effective manner.
2. Convince lawmakers to fund areas of needed transformation, within the career academies and technical centers, online training, integrating business partnerships to connect our youth to high demand jobs.

**Bryan – Populations with Barriers**

1. Information Technology Skills program for Department of Corrections & Rehab
  - ✓ Provide enhanced skills that provide relevant residential skills to successfully move from incarceration to employment.
2. Regional Job Services – enhancements needed to meet for COVID -19 standards
  - ✓ Scanning of temperature
  - ✓ Separate entry way
  - ✓ Virtual software for client meetings
  - ✓ Limit working spaces
  - ✓ Touchless door handles
  - ✓ Hand sanitizers
  - ✓ Touchless handwashing
  - ✓ Wearing of facemasks
  - ✓ Sneeze Guards
  - ✓ Extra cleaning times

Currently putting a plan in place to meet the June 30, 2020 WIOA set-aside funding deadline.

**Pat – Recruit and Retain**

1. Recruitment
  - ✓ Leverage university alumni organizations and partner with business/economic development to recruit for specific industries.
    - Alignment with Career exploration
    - Nursing - loan repayment program.
    - Military
      - Tax exemption for active military personnel
2. Retention
  - ✓ Cross-discipline mid-level leadership training.
    - Potential for TrainND, BSC, etc. to develop/provide training.
  - ✓ Help distressed businesses
    - Work from home opportunities
    - Jobs still abundant; host job fairs
    - Host video calls with state leaders and students interested in high demand jobs.
    - Alignment of displaced worker to an in-demand job.

**WDC ROLE IN COVID – 19 RESPONSE STRATEGY**

**What should council recommend over the next 12 months with strategically implementation**

1. Help with displaced workers move to jobs of high demand; ex.; warehouse, transportation – CDL drivers
2. Education and business to work collaboratively, integrating partnerships
3. Find funding for CTE hubs
4. Focus connection with high demand jobs and youth
5. Look at furloughed jobs and what are permanent
6. Strong data on immediate impacts
7. Opening up certificate programs; not limiting the scholarship program for two- and four-year programs
8. Allow more online distant educating, dovetail with high demand jobs
9. Research on home-based jobs
10. Convince Legislators to allocate more funding in new areas

## **TERMS AND NEXT STEPS**

Michelle and Katie will visit with members soon, regarding expiring terms.

Katie will engage Michelle short term vs. long term strategies and real opportunities needed to leverage the priorities/recommendations.

## **ADJOURN**

**It was moved by Cindy Schreiber-Beck, seconded by Keith Lund to adjourn the meeting. Motion carried.**