

**GOVERNOR'S WORKFORCE COUNCIL**  
**January 30, 2020, 12:00pm-5:00pm**  
Sheraton Hartford South  
100 Capital Boulevard, Rocky Hill, CT 06067

**MINUTES**

**Present:**

**Council Members:** Governor Ned Lamont, Chair Garrett Moran, Vice-Chair Kellie Marie Vallieres, C. Bigelow, O. Chukwu, M. Ferguson, Senator T. Hwang, R. Kumar, R. Levy, J. Olian, D. O'Neill, P. Salovey, E. Smith, L. Torres-Rodriguez, Representative T. Walker, J. Williams

**Designees:** C. Murphy, M. Guay, J. Howard, G. Anderson, K. Myatt, P. Clark; C. Leach

**Ex-officio Members:** B. Bye, M. Cardona, C. Cooper, P. Denious, S. Gaul, J. Geballe, D. Gifford, T. Katsouleas, T. Larson, D. Lehman, M. Ojakian, M. Pirro-Simmons, A. Porter, J. Scheff, K. Westby, J. Widness

**Designees:** M. Walsh, T. Davis

**Partner Committee Members:** A. Johnson, A. Pritchard, W. Villano, Mark Argosh, Courtney Fero, Patrick Hackett, Jennifer Gerber, Sylvia Shepard, Susan Adamsen, Shannon Marimon, Alycia Angus, Joe Smialowski, David Allon

**Designees:** M. Hill

**Plenary and Welcome**

Chairman Moran called the meeting to order and welcomed everyone to the first of four 2020 GWC Board meetings. Chairman Moran explained the meeting objectives which include the successful launch of the GWC Committees, to review the state of play in Connecticut, and to identify strategies to close workforce gaps in the state. Chairman Moran reminded everyone why the Governor asked to form this group and identified the core mission. The Chairman focused on a number of topics/concepts including the need to reimagine the workforce system in Connecticut, keeping pace with the advancement of technology that has fundamentally changed opportunities and threats in the workforce, and the associated requirements for work. Awareness of these changing work requirements need to be understood by children at an earlier stage than in the past if they are to thrive. The Chairman stressed the need for educators to be trained to stay current in this new environment and to learn to engage with businesses to keep up with their students' needs. Businesses need to lead the way in engaging training and educators to help them understand the new skills environment.

### **Board structure, By-Law Amendments, Governance and Expectations**

Chair Moran asked for a motion to approve the minutes of the November 21, 2019 Governor's Workforce Council meeting. Minutes were approved by the GWC. Chair Moran also asked for a motion to approve the new by-laws of the Commission which was made by K. Vallieres and T. Walker. The by-laws were unanimously approved. The Chairman stated that staff were preparing the WIOA State Plan on behalf of the Governor and the GWC. The plan will be posted online for public comment and submitted to USDOL. The plan will be amended next year following the strategic plan developed by the GWC per Governor Lamont's Executive Order No. 4.

### ***Connecticut's Sector Strategies - McKinsey & Company – Jonathan Law (10 minutes)***

Mr. Law discussed the Connecticut economy and stated that although the overall economic health of Connecticut is sluggish, growth continues in specific industry sectors that the state can build off of. These sectors include Advanced Manufacturing (76,000 workers), Bio-Sciences (17,000 workers), Insurance Services (47,000 workers) and Financial Services (37,000 workers). Connecticut is home to a very productive and highly educated workforce. The number of individuals in CT possessing a Bachelor's or Associate's degree ranks 3<sup>rd</sup> in the country behind Massachusetts and Virginia.

Mr. Law's research supports that Connecticut has a strong Pre-K to 12 education system, however a wide disparity exists between the best and poorest performing school districts. College graduates from CT public universities average \$38,500 of student debt, which is too high. Also, it should be known that the state's Community Colleges have low graduation rates. Connecticut continues to lose its workforce for a variety of reasons including retirement and outmigration. With this loss of experienced workers, the state is not replacing them with younger workers. A further decrease of 4.8% is projected by 2025. Connecticut ranks 41<sup>st</sup> among all states in retaining its college graduates with only Rhode Island (among New England states) doing worse. The state is experiencing an outmigration of 1.4 people per 1,000 inhabitants. Since the outmigration is not being replaced, the result is a population and workforce decrease. It should be noted that community college students and graduates tend to remain in the state.

The future of work will lead to a large displacement of physical and manual labor through the introduction and advancement of automation. By 2030, Connecticut's employers will demand workers with technological and non-cognitive skills. A recent 2020 survey of Connecticut residents (900 sample size) indicated that thirty percent possessed outdated experience, twenty six percent lacked required certifications/credentials, thirteen percent had the incorrect technical skills, and that sixty five percent responded that learning new skills through on-line trainings are helpful. Information technology, data analytics, and communications are in-demand skill sets. Mr. Law stressed the importance of business engagement and the need for business to tell the workforce system what worker requirements/skills are in need. Connecticut's education system needs high quality outcomes to meet needs of employers and employers need to recognize and hire people who have the required skills. At this time, 15,000 openings in Information Technology are unfilled.

Mr. Law mentioned a few exciting workforce initiatives around the country that Connecticut should take a look at. *CareerWise – Colorado* is a system that matches high school juniors to three-

year apprenticeship programs. Funds are provided for community colleges to provide training. At this time, 250 participants are engaged with 70 employers in the state with over 50% of the participants requesting a 2<sup>nd</sup> apprenticeship opportunity. *FutureHealth – California* addresses the future of home health care and tackles some of the anticipated 500,000 participants needed for careers in Allied Health. This includes the training of 10,000 medical coders. Lastly, *San Jose Tech Hire – California* provides a skills progression ladder for careers in information technology. This effort focuses on individuals possessing lower/middle-skills. Through this initiative, 1,000 participants have been trained, 4,000 job placements have been provided with 1,300 employers nationwide.

### **Skilled-Based Approach to Workforce Development - *Skillful* - Beth Cobert (50 minutes)**

Skills-based approach addresses many of the needs of a rapidly changing business environment and the many talented workers who have been marginalized. This approach provides for conversations between businesses and trainers while opening doors for those who seek better work opportunities, but have been excluded by credential requirements. By appropriately valuing work experience or latent talent, the state's ready labor force is expanded. Ms. Cobert stated that skills-based training is imperative as 7 in 10 adults do not possess an advanced degree (associate's or bachelor's). Eighty percent of today's jobs require a good grasp of digital skills. Employers should change their focus to a prospective job seeker's acquired skills built throughout their career. Job seekers should focus on continuous learning as skills become the common currency in the discussions of qualified individuals. Focus should be on skills and not necessarily the attainment of a college degree. Employers need to uncover the skills and talents that job seekers possess, rather than simply educational attainment. The efforts to promote an individual job seeker's skills and abilities could result in the discovery of a previously unknown talent pool.

Ms. Cobert discussed various opportunities for Connecticut including support for business. Ms. Cobert stated there is a talent loss in pedigree hiring where the focus is only on educational attainment. Employers need to focus on industry-specific experience and should be specific identifying when education attainment is required, if at all. Emphasis should be on transparency to certificates and transferrable skills with a focus on the competencies and skills of an individual and how it translates to a job. This strategy eliminates bias and identifies qualified candidates. Connecticut's employment and workforce system needs to work collaboratively with employers to focus on job seeker skills.

Ms. Cobert mentioned the Rework America Business Network which was launched in 2018 with 11 founding member, large U.S. companies, which collectively employ approximately 2.2 million Americans. These companies seek to deepen their talent pools of qualified candidates and expand opportunities for people of diverse backgrounds by recruiting and hiring with a focus on individuals' skills. Member companies also seek to explore how companies can better utilize a skills-based approach when it comes to learning and development. The Network works to share effective practices and encourage more U.S. companies to adopt them, as well as advocate for resources and policies to support these practices. Ms. Cobert mentioned a community of practice webinars that can be helpful to improve skills and credential transparency and explain skills received from a job seeker. Ms. Cobert stressed the importance of leadership from the Governor

and the need to try and incorporate new strategies and techniques until the optimum system is identified. Ms. Cobert also emphasized the need to lean on other states, ask them what successful strategies are being used and replicate them where possible.

### **Committee Briefing (5 minutes)**

Chairman Moran instructed each of the six industry committees to conduct brainstorm discussions, identify best practices in each industry. Each Committee will identify a mission, goals, opportunities and approach for developing their work plan. Chairman Moran explained that the six committees will work together to develop career pathways however with a separate ad-hoc emphasis. He also emphasized the importance of incorporating work-based learning and providing visible on-line communication of all GWC committee work so everyone can view its progress.

### **Gallery Walk (20 minutes)**

The gallery consisted of six stations with three to five posters providing an overview of key workforce efforts/initiatives across the country. The gallery provided a foundation for talking points for each committee prior to the brainstorming activities.

### **Full Board Re-Convene (1 hour, 20 minutes)**

Chairman Moran reconvened the meeting by referencing the pre-reads sent out to the GWC from the Colorado workforce website that describe how to build and maintain strong sector partnerships and career pathway systems.

He underscored some of the key tenets and fundamental assumptions underlying the work plan to keep the group aligned and to allow for questions or disagreement on these points:

First, workforce needs vary significantly by business sector and by geography so it is best to organize our efforts in regional sector initiatives. We can convene on statewide issues for an industry when necessary, but most of the problem solving requires regional view. In CT, manufacturing is different in the East and the West and the healthcare services market also varies and is served by different companies in Stamford and Hartford. An exception to this in CT might be in IT where there seems to be less regionalization and this is as much a strategic competency that cuts across all businesses as it is an industry. Companies with similar stresses and needs often see a common interest in tackling these problems together.

As we define these commonalities, different industry subgroups will be formed and define their own agenda. All partnerships will be workforce and education focused, but depending on input, they might also include transportation, childcare or other concerns. Business has to lead the conversation and define the agenda. Educators, trainers, non-profits and state agencies need that leadership and partnership to design their programs. This also means that company leaders need to buy into the idea of working together with their competitors to support the broader mission of building a healthy, dynamic workforce.

The regional business groups will be charged with selecting a neutral intermediary, a convener who can assure that steady progress is made. This might be a workforce board, a chamber of

commerce or a local nonprofit, but it's critical that the group of business leaders select the central convener. Trust is essential.

Career Pathways is the key complement to a regional sector partnership. This is where companies, educators and public partners create a "dynamic map" for an industry that illustrates how workers can enter an industry through education and training programs and show where they can find support services such as school finance and mentorship. The map must be updated frequently to be a useful tool for everyone from a high school student to a HR professional or a nonprofit case manager. All of the support players derive a clear sense of direction from their regional sector partnership via relevant career paths, skills, competencies and coursework. They build teams that can meet that need in an integrated manner. Just like the sector partnerships, this means that the educators, trainers and social service providers need to sit together and work out plans to tackle these shared opportunities.

This is a process that all of the participants need to commit to through regular, data driven meetings that set and test goals, check on progress and seek continuous improvement. Building a new group like this takes a fair amount of trial and error, norming the group dynamic continuously so that you really get something that is useful and that people can rely upon. Leadership needs to clearly sponsor this activity so the team knows that they should persevere through the growth phase and drive toward a successful partnership.

Chairman Moran further stated that he believes that the pre-reads provide a very useful roadmap, a how-to "cookbook" approach. It should be the work of this council to understand these processes better and to think about where we stand vis a vis the building blocks required for a high functioning set of sector partnerships and pathways committees. Identifying some logical sector groupings, some of their pain points and opportunities and beginning to identify business leaders who can support a launch would be a good start.

Chairman Moran asked the Council for feedback and suggestions on the work he outlined above. The GWC will build on successful models that have been proven viable in other states in addition to those that exist in various shapes and sizes in Connecticut.

As work is progressing, he stated that we are seeing more clearly the need for cross-committee working groups to pursue projects that we expect will be reflected in our final strategic plan. As all of our committees will coalesce around designing effective sector partnerships and pathways — industry groups, education, supportive services and data and performance are all critical to any of them. In addition we have initiatives like incumbent worker training, work based learning or skills based hiring initiatives that cut across industries and might merit a significant initiative that could be sponsored by this group beyond what might otherwise result if each were just a line item on several different committee agendas. The same can be said of some other functional requirements of the Council, one example would be our communications strategy and the other is our obligation to monitor compliance and sponsor best practices among our workforce development boards. Chairman Moran stated that his team will be reaching out to the GWC for help on some of these items in addition to others beyond this group.

The Chair asked the membership for feedback on this discussion and Representative Toni Walker stated the Committee needs to focus on addressing the barriers that ex-offenders experience when entering the workforce. Representative Walker mentioned the Department of Corrections' efforts to identify an individual's skills while incarcerated. These efforts also include the development of additional skills to better prepare the individual upon release. The removal of a licensure restriction for ex-offenders would be a useful step in improving their ability to re-enter the workforce. Commissioner Westby from the Department of Labor suggested leveraging resources through the American Job Center system and its various partners. They are available and willing to provide assistance.

### **Committee Findings and Recommendations (30 minutes)**

#### Manufacturing: (5 minutes)

Spokesperson Colin Cooper introduced the committee's mission statement, "Retain what we Train". Mr. Cooper provided a recent history of the state's manufacturing employment and mentioned Connecticut's fifty percent reduction in the industry's total workforce over the past twenty-five year period. The good news is the workforce numbers (employment) appear to be stable and the future looks bright. Mr. Cooper indicated that thirty-five percent of the industry's workforce is over the age of 55, and Connecticut will need 6 to 8,000 new entrants annually for the foreseeable future to address a projected workforce gap. In recent history, Connecticut's education system was frozen with little demand to include manufacturing related education and training programs in traditional curriculum. It is important for Connecticut's leaders to understand that Connecticut's comprehensive high schools graduate approximately 9,000 individuals that are not going to college or the military. These graduates could be part of the state's manufacturing workforce. Mr. Cooper stated the state can bridge the talent gap by expanding its talent training pipelines, leverage best practices, and even look to other neighboring states for workers.

#### Healthcare and Bio-Sciences: (5 minutes)

The committee focused on the supply and demand issues facing this industry. At present, healthcare makes up sixteen percent of the state's workforce. Home Health Aides are becoming more and more important as the shift to home care continues. However, these positions are low paid and extremely physical. The need for skilled Nurses exceeds 34,000 to address expected retirements and fill new openings. Surgical Technicians are in great demand. These individuals assist surgeons when performing surgery, possess an average annual salary of \$60,000, and require only an associate's degree. The current issue is that no Connecticut colleges offer surgical technician training programs which contributes to the lack of supply. Imaging, sterilization, and pharmacy technicians are also in demand. The Bio-Science sector has many (17,000 to 39,000 openings) in high-profile, high-paying occupations. These occupations require extensive training and education. Yale New Haven Hospital is experiencing a fair amount of activity in this sector. The committee emphasized the coordination between employers and education institutions to address faculty shortages.

#### Information Technology and Business Services: (5 minutes)

The committee agreed that there is no way to match supply to current demand in Information Technology. Focus must remain on the state's talent supply and associated pipelines to retain

companies and meet the workforce needs of companies contemplating relocation from Boston and/or New York. The committee mentioned the need to broaden pool of available talent especially through its inner cities where they could be an untapped supply of workers. The development of “on-ramps” into Information Technology and Business Services through apprenticeships and internships is desperately needed. The quality of training across the state’s community colleges and the implementation of a business-driven curriculum is important. The committee also stresses the need to continually monitor the quality of the state’s training programs to address the talent gaps.

#### Education and Training: (5 minutes)

Connecticut’s education system must do a better job of keeping students and graduates in the state. There appears to be a lack of coordination/consistency across training programs in this industry. Connecticut needs a seamless transition from education to industry (business involvement). Connecticut currently does not have a coordinated database of training programs. Urban and rural districts have large disparities in curriculum. The committee supports a seamless transition from schools and industry through the consistency of education and curriculum. The current achievement gaps needs to be addressed. The committee believes a priority should be a Unified Statewide goal of breaking down silos and internal alignments among school districts. A group effort to examine schools connections to manufacturing should be implemented as well as the continued investment in education for the needs of industry.

#### Supportive Services: (5 minutes)

The various support services touch all platforms across the state. The committee recommends the creation of solutions that impact multiple populations while identifying areas of overlap. The committee understands the need to better publicize the various assistance programs for communities. The committee agrees to address the “low-hanging fruit” – those issues that are easiest to improve. The task of each committee member is to return to their “work space” and identify two to three examples of “low-hanging fruit” which could have the greatest impact. The committee is also tasked with finding best practices (Illinois) and bringing them back to the committee for analysis. The need for data is important to ensure goals that make sense. The data committee will provide great assistance to the committee. The committee also examined the role of business in addressing the needs of the state’s immigrant and refugee populations. The committee also raised the issue of individuals rejecting a raise in salary because of the potential of losing state-provided health benefits.

#### Data and Performance: (5 minutes)

The committee mentioned the importance of ensuring an infrastructure of data that is localized. The data should “fit” skills to job openings rather than simply education and/or credentials. This would expand the pool of qualified candidates for an opportunity and possibly provide livable wages for additional families. The committee needs to focus on education and how it meets the demands of the employer community. Intuitive electronic products such as Indeed and Burning Glass could identify oversupply and undersupply to drive workforce development policy. The committee believes there is a need for a repository to identify workforce issues and a data warehouse with standard query capabilities to address the needs of business.

**Summary and Wrap Up (15 minutes)**

Chairman Moran commented on the need for immigration policy change to help address supply/demand needs. Chairman Moran stressed the interplay of the committees and the identification of when and where to communicate/handoff the “low-hanging fruit”. Chairman Moran will send a report out on today’s meetings and asks for committee member feedback. Each committee will identify overlap and best practices and begin sector partnership discussions regionally. The committees will take a look at data issues and along with the assistance of staff from Social Venture Partners, will identify tasks not completed. The committees are encouraged to engage CEOs in conversations when possible.

**Governor Lamont Comments**

Governor Lamont thanked the Committee for their hard work. Governor Lamont stated that sometimes sees the reluctance of state partners to talk to each other and work together. This effort to get all of the disciplines together is remarkable and should be commended. The Governor explained that Connecticut is home to Indeed, the largest on-line job site. Indeed has insight from the business community on the type of jobs, skills and job requirements in demand as well as the length of time a specific job takes to fill with a skilled worker. This information should be shared with the state’s education institutions and partners so that they can train individuals in the appropriate skills. The Governor mentioned that Connecticut is open for business and stated that a new company, Galaxy is moving to the Hartford area. Galaxy is interested in the Hartford region because it is home to the best hospitals in the country, not for a government handout. Galaxy’s platform works with big pharma and addresses rising healthcare costs which are unsustainable. Galaxy can also work with Infosys to provide information technology skills for existing and future workers. Governor Lamont emphasized the need to tell the story of Connecticut and what it has to offer such as our education system including colleges/universities. The state needs to attract people while they are still in Connecticut. It is important to get business in front of college seniors with potential job opportunities. The Governor also emphasized the need to get business job openings and advertisements to the state’s college seniors prior to graduation so that they may consider remaining in Connecticut. The state is doing a good job of diversifying its support offerings such as entertainment, restaurants, etc. to address a diversified workforce. The Governor thanked the Committee for staying connected for more than four hours.

**Adjourn**

Chair Moran adjourned the meeting at 4:47pm.