

SPECIAL OVERSIGHT COMMITTEE ON WORKFORCE EXPANSION AND DEVELOPMENT MINUTES

Meeting Date/Location: Thursday, December 28, 11:00 a.m., virtually via Microsoft Teams

Members Present: Adam Grinold, Kendal Smith, Rep. Michael Marcotte, Sen. Alison Clarkson, Jay Ramsey

Guests Present: Amanda Wheeler, Michael Harrington

Minutes By: Amanda Wheeler

Video Recording: <https://aoa.vermont.gov/content/special-oversight-committee-workforce-expansion-and-development>

- Meeting called to order, introductions by committee members and guests present.
- Senator Clarkson moved to approve agenda, seconded by Kendal Smith, unanimously approved.
- Senator Clarkson moved to approve minutes, seconded by Adam Grinold, with discussion, unanimously approved.
 - Adam moved to provide an amendment (below) to the 12/18/23 minutes, which was seconded by Senator Clarkson and unanimously approved.
Amendment: Adam Grinold requested the 12/18/23 minutes reflect his comments that the current funding allows federal dollars to be used for more of the work of the SWDB. Historically, we have chosen not to do that for known and good reasons. There are funds out there that the State, so far, has not chosen to invest in supporting the system with and has chosen to allocate those funds differently. It is important for the legislature and others to know that it has been by choice to date.
- The Committee began discussing what information they would like to include in legislation as part of the final report from the Committee.
 - Jay Ramsey provided an update to the group about the Executive Director qualifications and was able to connect with PCG. Should have more information by the end of the day on Friday 12/19/23 and will share with the group.
 - Discussion about how to handle the workforce expansion pilot that was authorized in 2022. May need to be some clean up language added to the BAA to extend the money one year, since it was a two-year pilot sunsetting in 2024. Chair Marcotte will work with House Appropriations to make sure there is language.
 - Committee reviewed tasks assigned to it in the 2022 legislation and noted the Committee was able to cover a majority of the tasks charged which will be reflected in the draft language.

- The committee began discussing budget and agreed they need to land on exactly what the budget will consist of. Commissioner Harrington suggested that if the Committee could identify what exactly the budget should include, the Department of Labor could come back with what it may cost to achieve that. This exercise would be exploratory in nature.
- Kendal Smith noted that if the Board remains under VDOL, that would change where the funding allocation goes if it becomes an independent entity.
- Chair Marcotte noted that he doesn't see a reason why the money can't/shouldn't flow through VDOL. The SWDB would sit under VDOL but that the new ED would serve in a dual role to serve both the Board and also oversee the coordination of workforce with a staff of two.
- Committee discussed whether the ED should be under Labor or just receive fiscal support from Labor. It was agreed that the reporting structure and fiscal support structures may be different. Chair Marcotte noted that if we create a stand-alone entity for the Board, it may eventually require a team of people to administer the work rather than leveraging an existing agency with resources.
- Adam Grinold noted that there needs to be a difference between Jay's role and VDOL's Workforce Development Director. He posed some questions for the group to consider including what are the ED's duties, where it aligns within state government, what level the ED is (cabinet member, division leader, etc.) and what type of scope/power/book of work do they have as a result of that level?
 - Chair Marcotte noted that will be spelled out in the draft language and would be modeled after the Office of Racial Equity, so there would be a direct line to the Governor.
 - Commissioner Harrington noted this will be formalizing what has always been in place administratively.
- Committee discussed where the new ED and staff will be physically located. VDOL was suggested as well as an idea to have the ED rotate among partners. This will continue to be discussed along with the ED qualifications.
- Adam Grinold asked if the Committee should comb through the tasks/items the group was charged to report out on and flag anything that has been missed?
 - Chair Marcotte noted that there are some duties assigned that aren't up to the Committee and should be the responsibility of the new ED (e.g. strategic planning) once it has evolved. It can be explained to Committees what the SOCWED focused its attention on and why.
- Public Comment
 - N/A
- Next Steps: The Committee will reconvene on Thursday, December 28th at 11:00am via Microsoft Teams.