

SPECIAL OVERSIGHT COMMITTEE ON WORKFORCE EXPANSION AND DEVELOPMENT MINUTES

Meeting Date/Location: Monday, June 5, 2023, 10:00 – 3:20 pm, Room 35, Vermont State House, 115 State Street, Montpelier, VT, 05633-5301 or virtually via Microsoft Teams

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

Guests in Attendance: Victoria (Tori) Biondolillo, Cameron Wood, Alysia Ordway, Robin O’Brien, Abby Rhim

Virtual Guests: Candace Phinney, Michael Lawrence, Nancy Snyder, Dustin Degree, Linda Lambert, Ryan Laychak, Ronald Painter, Porsche Tyson

Minutes By: Abby Rhim

Meeting Recording: [SOCWED - Working Session 6/5/23, Part I - YouTube](#), [SOCWED - Working Session 6/5/23, Part II - YouTube](#)

- Meeting called to order.
- Introductions from all present.
- Review and approval of minutes from the [May 8th, 2023 meeting](#).
 - Motion made to approve the minutes as drafted. Motion made by Sen. Clarkson, seconded by Kendal Smith and approved unanimously.
- Overview
 - Alysia Ordway reviewed the agenda for today. This includes identifying goals for the day, reviewing each workforce component and synthesizing with the group for next steps.
- Goals for Today
 - Alysia Ordway shared that for today, the group would look at several workforce components within workforce systems and gather feedback from SOCWED members and attending guests on what seems most relevant to Vermont in order to guide PCG’s future research and drafting of suggestions in order to deliver a successful final product. Her colleague, Robin O’Brien, is in attendance today to help facilitate the conversation.
 - Robin O’Brien noted that SOCWED members would be prioritized for comments, however, there would be room for guests in attendance to voice their thoughts too.
- Updated Context
 - Alysia Ordway briefly level-set with the group, highlighting the elements of the “workforce model” including key players like the State Workforce Development Board (SWDB), employer services, career centers, etc. She went on to highlight that SWDB members recently approved their 2023 strategic plan.
 - Tori Biondolillo provided a brief overview of the SWDB’s strategic plan, highlighting the desire for board members to have one clear vision, identified in a document.
- Presentation of Models/Approaches
 - Alysia Ordway began to discuss individual workforce model components, including where each model might have the most impact (governance, alignment/coordination, service delivery, accountability/performance or infrastructure). She then noted that PCG looked at multiple peer states to compare workforce models.
 - Model 1: Outsourced Services
 - Candace Phinney explained the opportunity to outsource most of or all services to a provider. This includes a variety of levels like single outsource provider,

multiple outsources provider or multiple outsources providers distributed geographically. This option promotes strong accountability by the service provider(s).

- Model 2: Sector Strategies
 - Michael Lawrence explained that sector strategies essentially means emphasizing or aligning priority occupations and priority sectors. This includes prioritizing occupations, aggregating demand and aligning resources to meet demands of employers. This effort can have a regional focus that still aligns with state priorities.
- Lunch break from 12:04 to 12:45 pm
- Presentation of Models/Approaches (continued)
 - Model 3: Workforce Skills Cabinet
 - Nancy Synder explained the composition of a Workforce Skills Cabinet. This model addresses leadership and vision while generally going in partnership with a sector strategies approach. The Workforce Skills Cabinet generally consists of the Governor, leadership in departments/agencies and legislators who operate to fund workforce development. This group sets the framework for strategies within the workforce system.
- Discussion
 - Analysis of Enablers and Barriers
 - Robin O'Brien asked the group about enablers and barriers that could create change in Vermont.
 - Adam Grinold noted the size of Vermont. The group then added that this could be seen as a positive in terms of manageability but a challenge in terms of funding and capacity.
 - Robin O'Brien asked which structures discussed so far could potentially be successful?
 - Sen. Clarkson and Rep. Marcotte suggested the idea of a single person/lens who could serve at the Cabinet level, responsible for all workforce, who is trusted. This would be a person, rather than an entire department.
 - Jay Ramsey noted the importance of not only creating a plan but making sure we are able to execute on it.
 - Kendal Smith noted that there is already a clear vision, through the Governor's statewide strategic plan. Agencies and departments are expected to align policy proposals with his strategic plan.
 - Tori Biondolillo noted that regardless of who this person or entity is, the SWDB is federally required, so they will need to work closely with the Executive Director and board members.
 - Rep. Marcotte noted that this one person or entity would not necessarily take on the work of the SWDB or other workforce initiatives, but that all workforce related information would flow through that person or entity, to then provide guidance for legislators. They would be "air traffic control" for all players within the system.
 - Sen. Clarkson highlighted the problem of current duplication. Resources are not used effectively or efficiently because there is a lack of coordination.

- Adam Grinold asked how do we know what we build, then has the ability to actually execute on our vision? Does this entity or person have the ability to tell other agencies, partners, etc. to align?
 - Jay Ramsey asked if we would create a situation/structure that future governors/legislators aren't ok with?
 - Tori Biondolillo highlighted the importance of agreed progress indicators. It might not be realistic to think that this one person/entity will be trusted by all, but if all groups have agreed upon language/goals, progress can be measured.
 - Rep. Marcotte added that he needs data when requests are made to then make informed decisions. Entities looking for money need to flow through a vetting process, with data to back up requests.
 - Robin O'Brien summarized that the group is looking for an emphasis on data that is then brought forward by a trusted, agreed upon sole source.
- Action Steps toward Successful Completion of the Work
 - Alysia Ordway summarized that actionable next steps include customer mapping (following individuals on how they experience the workforce system), single states and the role of tax leverages, understanding states where labor and commerce are housed in the same agency (adding RDCs to a more formal workforce position) and how other states are using the governor's reserve fund. She then added that coming out of the initial review of model examples, there is no one example that looks like the best fit for Vermont, rather, a combination.
 - Robin O'Brien noted that the group seemed interested in a workforce czar, a Workforce Cabinet that stems out of formalizing the SWDB's Operating Committee or a Workforce Cabinet created out of an entirely new group. He added that regardless of the model, there can be outsourcing for specific functions.
 - Jay Ramsey stressed that as we move forward, we need to be cautious of those not at the table. For example, nobody from the Agency of Education is here today.
- Future Meeting(s)
 - Rep. Marcotte reminded everyone that the SOCWED meetings are open to the public. Anyone is welcome to attend.
- Meeting adjourned

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