

DRAFT Meeting Minutes

JUNE 9, 2021 3:30 P.M. – 5:30 P.M.

GOOGLE MEETS CALL (DUE TO CORONAVIRUS)

JOIN WITH GOOGLE MEET: MEET.GOOGLE.COM/VOJ-WZEY-YVW

JOIN BY PHONE: 1-574-307-5537 PIN: 216 929 224#



MEMBERS PRESENT

Louis Dubin (Chair)
Chris Sachse (Vice Chair)
Mick Arnold
John D. Barber, Jr.
Joanne C. Benson
Alice Blayne-Allard
Gary Bockrath
Michelle Day
Scott Dennis
Katarina Ennerfelt
Terry R. Gilleland, Jr.
Wanda Smith Gispert

Steve Groenke
Kevin D. Heffner
Stacey Herman
W. Marshall Knight, II
Sandra Kurtinitis
Andrew B. Larson
Larry Letow
Carl Livesay
Amie Long
Roya Mohadjer
Alexander Núñez
Charles Ramos

Edward C. Rothstein, Col. Ret.
Lisa Rusyniak
Marty Schwartz
James A. Sears
Gerald "Jerry" Shapiro
Leslie R. Simmons
Michelle B. Smith
Teaera Strum
Michelle J. Wright
Charnetia V. Young

MEMBERS ABSENT

Sam Abed
Vanessa Atterbeary
Carol Beatty
Jennifer Bodensiek
Gavin Buckley
Andrea Chapdelaine
Veronica A. Cool

James D. Fielder
Robert L. Green
Rona E. Kramer
Gary Murdock
Chad Nagel
Stephen K. Neal
George W. Owings, III

Lourdes R. Padilla
Tiffany P. Robinson
Karen Salmon
Kelly M. Schulz
William E. Simons
Charles T. Wetherington

GWDB STAFF

Mike DiGiacomo
Darla Henson

Ken Lemberg

Molly Mesnard

GUESTS *

AFC Company3
Molly Abend
Gary Antonino
Tiara Booker-Dwyer
Barry Boseman
Emily Branchaw
Build Your Path
Dwight Carr

Olivia Ceccarelli
Gary Cohen
Kevin Craft
Tim Darby
Jessica Dinterman
Brian Dulay
Judi Emmel
Bruce England

John Feaster
Grace Fielhaue
Laura Flemm
Elizabeth Foster-Melwood
Marcella Franczkowski
Dayne Freeman
Andrew Fulginiti
Jade Gingerich

Rishan Habte	Meka McNeal	Alma Roberts
Kimberly Hahr	Dwayne Myers	Ed Roberts
Stephanie Hallowell	Brian Morrison	Erin Roth
Whitney Harmel	Marsha Netus	James Rzepkowski
Mark Hudson	Denise Nooe	Brooke Shivers
Ryan Johnson	Cheryl O'Connor	Ryan Smith
Jeanine Jones	Kendra Parlock	Bruce Spector
Karwolo	John Papagni	Steve Spector
John Kashuba	Heather Powell	Jenn Sproul
Heather Lageman	Sandy Pruitt	Elijah Troxell
Brian Lynch	Gary Richardson	Rebecca "Becca" Webster

**Please note that these guests RSVP'd for the Google Meets call, but roll call was only taken for board members, so guest attendance could not be confirmed.*

INTRODUCTIONS AND WELCOME OPENING REMARKS:

The meeting started officially at 3:30 PM, June 9, 2021, via Google Meets platform. Governor's Workforce Development Board (GWDB) Executive Director Michael DiGiacomo turned the meeting over to Chairman Louis Dubin, who provided welcome and opening remarks. Chairman Dubin noted that Maryland has reopened, and is one of the most diverse and tourist oriented states. He was pleased with jobs and other statistics and was upbeat about the recovery.

Vice Chair Chris Sachse observed that on the Cybersecurity side, there were 25,000 open jobs in Maryland – no shortage of jobs. The Cybersecurity Association of Maryland, Inc. (CAMI) is trying to figure out how to fill those jobs.

Chair Dubin indicated that Maryland Department of Labor Secretary Tiffany Robinson was in a meeting with the Governor and would not be able to attend this meeting. He introduced Dayne Freeman, Assistant Secretary at the Division of Unemployment Insurance, to provide updates and information about the recent announcement by the Governor to discontinue the pandemic unemployment benefits.

Assistant Secretary Freeman referenced the Governor's decision on June 1, 2021, that Maryland would discontinue four of seven federal COVID plans: a) Federal Pandemic Unemployment Compensation (FPUC), providing an additional \$300 per week; b) Mixed Earners Unemployment Compensation (MEUC); c) Pandemic Emergency Unemployment Compensation (PEUC); and d) Pandemic Unemployment Assistance (PUA). Three programs would remain: first compensable week; emergency relief for government and nonprofit organizations; and federal reimbursement of the Work Sharing program. There would be reactivating of the active search for work requirement, where the unemployed customer engages in three employment search activities per week. There would be a robust communications plan to make sure all are aware of the changes. GWDB member Senator Benson asked for a handout on these changes, since she was getting lots of phone calls.

Chair Dubin asked if any other board members had announcements – none responded.

He asked if the Board would entertain a motion to approve the March 10th GWDB meeting minutes. Lisa Rusyniak made a motion to approve, and Larry Letow seconded the motion. The minutes were approved.

Chair Dubin thanked, on a personal and professional level, Superintendent Karen Salmon for her service to the Board, especially in the earlier years with Career and Technical Education, and congratulated her on her retirement effective June 30, 2021. He said that the Board would welcome the new Superintendent, Mohammed Choudhury, at the next quarterly meeting.

Chair Dubin was pleased to welcome two new Board members:

- Marshall Knight, Associate at Kimley-Horn and Associates – Kimley-Horn is a premiere planning and design consulting organization with offices throughout Maryland.
- Teaera Strum, CEO at Strum Contracting – Strum Contracting is a custom welding and light fabrication business with headquarters in Curtis Bay.

Mr. Knight indicated that he was very excited to serve on the board. He works in Telecommunications and is actively looking to hire nine people on his team. Ms. Strum said that it was an honor and privilege to serve on the Board. Workforce development is dear to her heart. Strum Contracting has been around for 37 years, as a family owned business.

Chair Dubin turned it back over to Mr. DiGiacomo for updates and announcements. First, Mr. DiGiacomo wanted to acknowledge local workforce board directors at the meeting and asked them to introduce themselves: Bruce England of Susquehanna board, Becca Webster of Lower Shore board, Michelle Day (GWDB Board member and President of the Maryland Workforce Association) of Frederick County board, and Heather Powell of Carroll County board.

Mr. DiGiacomo made reference to meeting materials sent out to participants before the meeting. The first flyer was from the Maryland Workforce Association, hosting their workforce development conference Raising the Bar virtually this summer on June 15, July 20, and August 17, 2021. The second flyer showcased Maryland student success in the CyberStart America competition. CyberStart America is a free national program for high school students to play in a series of cyber games, and the GWDB has partnered with them to promote this competition for a number of years.

Mr. DiGiacomo referenced that at the previous GWDB meeting that the GWDB hosted the Benchmarks Data and Dashboard Committee chairs who presented a snapshot of the current state of Maryland's workforce system by providing data and trends on enrollment demographics. The data in the provided attachment has been updated with the most recent quarter.

Executive Director DiGiacomo referred to Vehicles for Change and its Transportation Symposium the next day. He turned the meeting briefly over to GWDB member Marty Schwartz, President of Vehicles for Change. Mr. Schwartz indicated that the lack of transportation was a barrier to eliminating generational poverty for many individuals and families. He spoke briefly about the Transportation Symposium on June 10, which is a national event, with prominent speakers and shared best practices from across the country.

Mr. DiGiacomo mentioned that there was a Goodwill bill that recently passed and was signed by the Governor. The bill authorizes certain vendors who are qualified job training organizations to claim a credit for the expense of collecting and paying the sales and use tax. He turned the meeting briefly over to GWDB member Lisa Rusyniak, President and CEO of Goodwill in Maryland, who spoke about the bill (tax credit up to \$100,000 and to be administered by the GWDB) and the status of the Goodwill organization and its 33 stores, including the need to fill 80 positions in the retail stores. Mr. DiGiacomo also mentioned about Junior Achievement of Central Maryland recently announcing a partnership with the Maryland State Department of Education (MSDE) on a CTE summer camp.

Mr. DiGiacomo indicated that staff had submitted the GWDB 2020 Annual Report to the Governor's Office and Maryland's General Assembly. Staff has been working closely with partners at the Maryland Labor Division of Workforce Development and Adult Learning (DWDAL) to review all 13 local workforce development board plans. Furthermore, staff has submitted Memoranda of Agreement to each of GWDB's partner agencies for funding reimbursement for fiscal year 2022.

Executive Director DiGiacomo presented an update on House Bill 1300, the Blueprint for Maryland's Future, which establishes a Career and Technical Education (CTE) committee within the GWDB. In short, the GWDB is waiting for the Accountability and Implementation Board (AIB) to be established to determine funding for supporting GWDB's implementation of the legislation.

Mr. DiGiacomo recognized Assistant Secretary Rzepkowski, who spoke about how the Division of Workforce Development and Adult Learning (DWDAL) has served over 50,000 participants as of June 1, with reopening of American Job Centers and facilities – state owned buildings are to open to the public by July 6, 2021. He said: "As we prepare ourselves to be available to our customers, we are asking our employees to return to centers in mid-June." Work search begins post July 6, so July will be a busy month.

PRESENTATIONS:

Mr. DiGiacomo introduced DWDAL Chief Learning Officer John Feaster, who presented a short video on the roles and responsibilities of the GWDB (module three of a series). This video presented a high level view of the GWDB and could help orient new members of the Board. Mr. DiGiacomo thanked Mr. Feaster for sharing the video and asked if there were any questions from board members. There was a robust conversation among board members relating to numerical metrics for the Board, matching jobs and workers (not enough quality workers for jobs), and so-called "soft skills" and insufficient work ethic among job seekers available.

GWDB member Mick Arnold questioned what the numerical metrics are of the Board. He said that there were many jobs and not enough people to fill these jobs. Mr. Feaster said it was his understanding that there were no numerical metrics, rather overall goals of the Benchmarks of Success. Deputy Assistant Secretary of DWDAL Erin Roth indicated there was lots of data and was happy to pinpoint data questions. There was ongoing work to have metrics for Maryland's workforce system. There are Data and Dashboard metrics available.

GWDB member Carl Livesay indicated that only a small number of job seekers work out for his business. Only a limited number of his job applicants have the appropriate work ethic. This is a systemic problem – preparing people for work. Mr. DiGiacomo mentioned connecting with specific programs, such as through the Kirwan Commission.

Other GWDB members shared their observations. Charles Ramos was concerned about work etiquette and had a sheet titled “25 Things Your Boss Wants You to Know.” Michelle Bell Smith said that while soft skills are important, transferable skills are needed; workers are needed who can pivot to other jobs. Assistant Secretary Rzepkowski spoke about local workforce directors and how they could help with achievement of the Benchmarks goal of life management skills. There could be continued partnering with local nonprofits and community based organizations.

GWDB member Wanda Smith Gispert referenced her company’s extensive outreach efforts to acquire needed talent, such as to the Army, high schools, and community colleges. Montgomery County workforce board chair Mark Drury said that “soft skills” are really “essential skills,” and spoke about investing in training equipment and virtual reality labs. Mr. Arnold would like to see the state aggregate the talent acquisition process, such as for CAD in manufacturing. GWDB member Gary Bockrath stressed the importance of linking up with the local workforce director. GWDB member Schwartz thought that tracking of talent could be done. Chairman Dubin commented about DC organizations that can support lower and middle income high school students toward the world of work. He proposed forming a committee to deal with the “soft skills” issue and helping prepare people for the workforce.

The next presenter was Assistant State Superintendent Marcella Franczkowski of MSDE, Division of Early Intervention and Special Education Services. She would share commendations to outgoing Superintendent Salmon. She relayed that schools are open. There were untapped opportunities for those with disabilities. The goal was to match students with competencies of the workforce. The first day of adulthood should be the same as the last day of high school. Paid work experiences was a most compelling predictor of success. Maryland needs endorsements and credentials, in addition to high school completion. Certificates of program completion endorsements are desirable and anticipated. She asked three to five business leaders to help in these efforts. GWDB member Carl Livesay communicated that he had hired folks with disabilities in his manufacturing work, and they were very productive.

The last presenters were Cheryl O’Conner and Ryan Johnson of the Enterprise company, who help get unserved workers to their places of work. Enterprise arranges for van pools that help get 4-15 people to work; participants share the driving. There is a sense of accountability, and the program helps employers reduce absenteeism and increase productivity. This is an effort to change the work commute, while enhancing employee retention, going green, and saving in cost. There were 315 van pools in Maryland before COVID. Mr. Johnson works with employers (“choice employers”), and Ms. O’Conner works with partners in the public sector. She indicated that van pooling is considered public transit. Van pools complement existing fixed rate service public transit. This effort helps generate sustainable funding for Maryland.

GWDB member Marty Schwartz said that he was a huge proponent of the van pool program and had tied it in with his national grant program application, but he pointed out there were challenges, which could be overcome.

Mr. DiGiacomo thanked everyone at the meeting and indicated that the next GWDB quarterly meeting would be September 29, 2021, and would continue to be virtual. For the December meeting, there will be an effort to have a hybrid of in-person and virtual. Vice Chair Sachse closed out the meeting by referring to the great topics covered of unemployment, transportation, and soft skills. Motions were made to adjourn, and the meeting adjourned at 5:20 PM.

Submitted by:

Kenneth Lemberg