

Durham Workforce Development Board of Directors Meeting

July 22, 2021

Members and Staff Present: Chair Jeffrey Frederick, Vice Chair Rebecca Axford, Scott McGregor, Nicole Thompson, Ernie Mills, Kenneth Angeli, Geoff Durham, Julie Pack, Kevin Griffin, Elaine Madison, Councilmember DeDreana Freeman, Commissioner Nimasheena Burns, Commissioner Nida Allam

Staff: Executive Director Andre Pettigrew, Deputy Director Adria Graham Scott, Jennifer Fox, Russell Ingram, James Dickens, Courtney McCollum, Chuk Manning, Sandra Lassiter; Eckerd Connects: Matt Fields, Terry Johnson, Yolanda Chisolm

Guests: There were no invited guest speakers present for this meeting.

The meeting was called to order by Board Chair Jeff Fredrick who welcomed everyone and acknowledged guests. Formal roll call was taken by Adria Graham Scott, the number of attending voting members did not reach a quorum.

In his opening remarks, Andre Pettigrew talked about the current momentum of the Board and how he would like to see that energy used to make specific policy and programmatic connections that will really make a difference in the work that the DWDB does. He expressed his excitement about the challenge, and he knows that “the community and Board can step up to it.”

No quorum was present at this meeting for approval of March minutes. Adria Graham Scott informed Board members that March and May minutes will be packaged and sent to them before the September meeting. The approval of minutes was tabled until the September meeting.

Board Chair Jeff Fredrick shared agenda items that he and the Executive Committee pre-planned for today’s meeting and mentioned how this meeting, with new officers and Board members present, would be a good opportunity to “reset” in the following ways:

1. Take a look at how the Board is established as an entity and how we sit within the community; who the constituents are that the Board serves and the support we provide to them and other organizations we engage with; what our existing strategy is; and how to make sure we have a firm foundation.
2. Have reintroductions of new and old members to all who are present at this meeting.
3. Spend a few minutes talking about how the new Board Chair can best serve the Board members and how the Board can best serve its interests in the community and with each other as Board members.
4. Discuss what things the Board would like to accomplish, collectively, as members.

Adria Graham Scott presented a detailed report (with graphics) of the structure and flow of the City’s Workforce Development system and funding from the federal government down to the Durham Workforce Development Board. She explained how the funding flow reflects “what we do, how we move forward, how we set our priorities, what our partnerships look like and what their roles are.” The DWDB is one of 23 workforce boards in the State of North Carolina, and one of the smallest. The DWDB serves only the City and the County of Durham, while most

other Boards serve multiple cities and multiple counties. However, the DWDB has the benefit of receiving State workforce funding from both the county and the city of Durham while funding of other North Carolina workforce boards flows directly from the federal government to the city. State funds support WIOA Youth services including the Youth Career Center and the Business Services Program. These funds also support the WIOA Adult and Dislocated Worker Programs and the One Stop Career Center. Durham City funds support the Justice Involved Program, Youth Program and the Economic Development Incentive Program.

Mr. Fredrick thanked Ms. Graham Scott for providing such a clear synopsis on how the system works and encouraged Board members to reach out to him, Adria or Andre for more information on this topic.

Ms. Graham Scott reviewed priorities that were set at last year's Board retreat, pre-covid. Four major strategic focus areas were:

- Increase paid internships for Durham youth.
- Increase support of successful transition of justice involved residents.
- Increase awareness and participation in Durham's certified career pathways.
- Increase participation and engagement with DWDB activities in support of the identified strategies.

Covid has created a systems shift across the board for employers and employees, and DWDB had to completely rethink everything at one time. She thanked staff for rising to the challenge to try to create opportunities. "We took what we had and created other opportunities with what we had." Following are examples of those efforts as reported by Ms. Graham Scott:

- Durham YouthWorks Program: Removed the word "Internships" from the program name, and it is now the Durham YouthWorks Program. This program has been running from June through August; and removing the term "internships" will serve the program better, moving forward.
- Justice Involved Program: This program reports there are 700+ returning residents, annually, into the Durham area. Many jobs that would normally be for those residents (pre-covid) have been given to other job seekers due to the competing demand for work.
- Certified Career Pathways – Many jobs now are no longer requiring certificates through formal certified pathways. We are now looking at the economic dynamics with employers to identify opportunities that can provide career progression without certification.

Durham Workforce Development has exploded in terms of its regional impact due to an increase in partnerships across the board.

Ms. Graham Scott continued her presentation with a review of the strategic focuses for the following Workforce and WIOA programs: Youth, Justice Involved, Adult and Dislocated Workers, and Business Services. OEWD staff was available at the meeting to answer questions

and provide additional information, and Ms. GrahamScott addressed chat questions and comments from members in follow up to her presentation. (Slides from this presentation are available online.)

The State is bringing on a new data system (other than Future Works). Ms. Graham Scott will bring information to the Board within the next couple of months. Mr. Pettigrew reminded the Board that last month's meeting ended with a discussion on Durham-specific data around the hospitality industry, the hardest hit industry during covid. He used this industry and the data collected related to it as an example of how important it is to be connected to industry and issues that they are addressing, in a consistent way through the use of data, which is so fundamental to our work. He informed the Board that the Durham Chamber is currently working with the region to do regional studies around workforce and employment.

Mr. Fredrick thanked the Board for a great discussion and echoed the importance of data collection. He pointed out that there is no shortage of data, but the challenge is "what sources of data should we use, how does it inform, how do we measure when we've made an influence or impact on those things." He affirmed that there are a number of entities that provide the data we need. It's a matter of identifying it and asking for it.

Councilmember Freeman reminded the Board that longitudinal data is a little different than industry data and the Board should be aware of that as we seek data. She recommended that the Board have a forum for some type of coordinated conversation on this topic, so members are not working in silos, and she volunteered to coordinate that effort if the Board so desires.

The next item of business was introductions of Board members and staff present in the following order:

- Rebecca Axford, Director of Raleigh-Durham Electrical JATC, Vice Chair of Board and member of the Executive Committee.
- Geoff Durham, Durham Chamber of Commerce
- Ken Angeli, Contracted Center Operator for NCWorks Career Center, DWS staff
- Adria Graham Scott, Deputy Director of DWDB and Senior Workforce Development Manager for the City of Durham
- Andre Pettigrew, Executive Director of the Durham Workforce Development Board and Director of the City of Durham Office of Economic and Workforce Development
- Kevin Griffin (new member) Owner and CEO of Avant Group and Board VP of Family Exchange Center of Durham
- Elaine Madison (new member), Duke University Office of Community Affairs

- Julie Pack, Durham Public Schools Career and Technical Education
- Jennifer Fox, DWDB Business Services Manager and OEWD Workforce Development Analyst
- DeDreana Freeman, Durham City Council Member and Durham Children’s Initiative
- Yolanda Chisolm, Contracted Program Manager for NCWorks NextGen Youth Program
- Nicole Thompson, Downtown Durham Inc., President and CEO
- Russell Ingram, DWDB staff over WIOA Adult and Dislocated Worker Programs
- James Dickens, DWDB staff over WIOA NextGen Youth Program
- Nimasheena Burns, Durham County Commissioner and Department of Public Safety employee
- Jeff Fredrick – Board Chair. Mr. Fredrick shared that he was a former workforce development youth program participant and is now chairing the Board. He expressed how important he feels it is for all members to be connected as one body and wants to make opportunities available to all people.

Following introductions, the final order of business was a brief set of questions posed by Chairman Fredrick, who asked members to reply to the following questions via Chat (answers are available online):

1. What is the most effective way for you to work with the DWDB to meet the priorities of the DWDB?
2. As a member of the DWDB, what do you want to accomplish personally and collectively this year while serving on the Board?
3. What is best way for staff to convey to members what we’re doing, how we’re doing it and how it aligns with you? How do we make sure that we are integrating the things we are doing with the priorities of the Board? (question presented by Adria GrahamScott)

Following this Q&A session, Mr. Pettigrew shared with the Board that he would like to hear more from program participants around what’s working, what’s not, and other direct input from them; and he added that he and Adria will create those forums if the Board so desires. He would like the DWDB to become much more intimate and closer to the community.

In closing remarks, Chairman Fredrick stated that he enjoys the report-outs at the meetings but wonders if those numbers are indicative of the Board’s progress. He asked the questions: What is the impact of those numbers? As a body what conversations do we want to

have regarding our strategies for being equipped to support our community in 3 years, 5 years? Are we poised to react and respond to needs of the community?

Geoff Durham added that the Board needs to make sure our youth know that advertised opportunities are for them, knock down barriers and demystify these opportunities, as many of these jobs do not require degrees but only certificates, etc. We should make sure our youth are aware of these opportunities and realize they are for them.

Chairman Fredrick expressed his appreciation for the Board's engagement in this meeting and added that it's always good to reflect on how we can evolve our work – not to throw out tradition but to enhance it.

The meeting was adjourned.