## SPECIAL OVERSIGHT COMMITTEE ON WORKFORCE EXPANSION AND DEVELOPMENT MINUTES

**Meeting Date and Location:** Thursday, September 29, 8:30 am – 12:30 pm, State House, Room 10 and virtually via Microsoft Teams

**Members Present:** Sarah Buxton, Kendal Smith, Rep. Michael Marcotte, Sen. Alison Clarkson, Adam Grinold

Guests in attendance: Cameron Wood, Ellen Kahler, Patricia Moulton

Guests in attendance virtually: Michael Harrington, Abby Rhim, Dustin Degree

Minutes By: Abby Rhim

- 8:40 am meeting called to order.
- Introductions
- Review and approval of August 30, 2022, meeting minutes.
- Sarah Buxton, Director of Workforce Development, Vermont Department of Labor
  - Stressed the idea that while the Workforce Innovation Opportunity Act (WIOA) is traditionally looked at as restrictive, the One-Stop system and state planning requirements do leave opportunity to embrace the federal structure while redesigning Vermont's governance structure to gain workforce alignment.
  - Noted that there is an option for federal waivers for certain requirements. She suggested the consultant investigate waiver options used by other states.
  - One-Stop American Job Center
    - Required partner network agreement described in Memorandum of Understanding (MOU), recently updated effective July 1, 2022.
    - Federally required, individually funded network of service partners, including workforce development, education and other human resource services.
    - The One-Stop system in Vermont includes one comprehensive center where all services are represented. It is in Burlington. There are also six affiliate sites (hub offices) and several places where satellite services are provided.
    - There is an opportunity within the MOU to edit the system to specifically fit Vermont's needs (ex. specialized service center where all refugees have their specific needs met through American Job Center via One-Stop Operator).
    - Current system is created and maintained by the State Workforce Development Board (SWDB), required One-Stop partners and Vermont Department of Labor (VDOL) on behalf of the Governor (no single leader).
    - Business services to local employers are provided as well (labor exchange activities, industry partnerships, customized business services).

- The One-Stop Operator is the coordinator of the service delivery system, selected by the SWDB through a competitive process at least once every four years.
  - This is the person or entity who is the required partner to do this work. VDOL previously held this role, however, the contract is expired, and Vermont is currently out of compliance.

## Federal Planning Requirements

- Responsibility of the SWDB to complete.
- Includes required descriptions of alignment of workforce systems to achieve purposes of WIOA, including vision, goals and assessments of core programs.
- There is an opportunity with the required State Plan, to combine the document with other federally required programs' plans (ex. TANF, SNAP, etc.) to promote better alignment and better understand business needs.
- The One-Stop Operator can't engage in state planning.
- o Single vs. Multiple Workforce Development Areas
  - There is a process to establish local areas/regions, acknowledging certain places may have different challenges, including the creation of local state workforce development boards.
  - Vermont is a single region state.
  - There is no difference in the amount of federal funding received, regardless of single or multiple area state.
  - Rep. Marcotte noted that this idea could be examined by the consultant, although the group does not have much appetite for the idea due to the added complexities it would introduce.
- Federal Funding for Workforce Programs
  - When asked to list their program operating budget for the One-Stop MOU, programs only list the portion of their federal funds dedicated to workforce. It only includes the funding contemplated by WIOA to create the federal workforce system.
  - It was noted that there is misalignment between what the federal government selects as being the required one-stop partners and the funding versus the actual integrated system in Vermont.
  - For the One-Stop system, it is important to note that significant responsibility is given to the Governor to decide which programs contribute what amount to the system, if no agreement is made by the system partners and the Board.
  - Of the WIOA Title I and III funding, percentages are deducted and allocated to the Governor's Reserve for statewide activities.
    - Unlike other states with larger funding, this percentage does not provide a significant amount of money to support required statewide activities.

- VDOL conducts these activities currently, although, others (ex. SWDB) could conduct activities to help come in compliance.
- Rep. Marcotte suggested Sarah present the above information to the federal delegation at some point to address certain federal issues.
  - Sarah recommended the group have an expert review waivers prior to that meeting.
- Kendal Smith, Director of Policy and Legislative Affairs, Office of Governor Phil Scott
  - Update on RFP for workforce governance consultant
    - \$250,000.00 to Agency of Administration (AOA) to contract out for whatever support work the group might need. AOA will hold the contract.
    - The RFP is currently live and was posted on Friday, September 23<sup>rd</sup>, 2022.
    - Buildings and General Services (BGS) is currently pushing the contract out to various sources, to notify that the opportunity is live in order to maximize bidders.
    - Key highlights of the contract include the review of comparable states'
      workforce system governance structures and the suggestion of at least
      three organizational structure scenarios to consider for reorganizing
      Vermont's workforce system.
      - The consultant will *not* evaluate performance of specific programs.
    - Sarah Buxton noted that the group must agree on scope of work for the consultant. While the consultant will be conducting interviews with stakeholders, the group must identify boundaries so the process does not get too timely and costly.
    - Questions on the RFP are due Friday, October 7, 2022. The deadline for final proposals will be on Friday, October 21, 2022.
- For next steps, the committee will wait to see if questions are submitted regarding the RFP. If there are questions, the group will meet the week of October 10, 2022 to answer questions.
- Meeting adjourned by 12:37 pm.