

**Minutes of the
Q4 Workforce Development Council
Heritage Center
Thursday, December 5, 2024**

Members present: Michelle Axtman, Mandie Begin, Patrick Bertagnolli, Heather Allard Kotask (proxy for Josh Blackaby), Kellie Carlson, Erik Christenson, Michael Fridolfs, Cindy Griffin, Alicia Halle, Katie Ralston Howe, Jerry Rostad (proxy for Chancellor Hagerott), Adam Kidwell, Howard Klug, Jay Kost, Landis Larson, Raquel Nachatilo, Emily O'Brien, Tom Ross, Sara Mitzel (proxy for Stan Schauer), Wayde Sick, Jim Upgren, Kasper Ziegler, Carrie Zubke
Guests present: Governor Doug Burgum, Jessica Thomasson, Jerry Rostad, Jane Vangsness Frisch, Lynette Flage
Staff present: Phil Davis, Ruth Lacher, Tammy Barstad, Janna Pastir, Sherri Frieze

CALL TO ORDER/WELCOME/INTRODUCTIONS

Cindy Griffin, Chairperson, called the meeting to order at 9:00 a.m. welcoming members and guests to the ND Heritage Center and those via the TEAMS video/audio conferencing platform. Member introductions were conducted in lieu of Roll Call.

ADMINISTRATIVE MATTERS

Approval of Minutes

Motion: It was moved by James Upgren, seconded by Kasper Ziegler to approve the August 22, 2024, minutes. Motion carried.

GOVERNOR'S OFFICE REMARKS

Governor Burgum

Via TEAMS connection

Governor Burgum discussed North Dakota's workforce strategy that addresses the challenges for economic growth; housing, infrastructure, childcare, education, research and economic development. He highlighted on the WDC Recommendations that he thanked the council for bringing forth, suggesting their influence they will have this legislative session.

RECOMMENDATIONS FROM PARTNERS

Childcare, Housing Task Force – Jessica Thomason

Discussion points included:

- ND Child Care Initiative
- The State of Child Care in ND
- Executive Budget Request '25 – '27
- Housing – prerequisite for workforce growth
- Grants and Incentives for Providers

State Board of Higher Education

Jerry Rostad

- Envision 2035 Process
 - Nine Study Groups – 70 Findings and Recommendations
 - 6 Strategic Goals
 - Drivers of Change
- RUN – ND – Retool and Upskill now for ND
- Urban – Rural Workforce
- AI in Energy, Agriculture, Healthcare, and National Security Corridor
- ND AI Capacity – Data Centers
- 2025 - 2027 SBHE Envision Requests

K12 Coordination Council
Wayde Sick

On behalf of the K12 Coordination Council, Wayde discussed the Recommendations that are being brought forward through the council.

Recommendations include:

- Provide the K12 Coordination Council the authority to spend funds.
- Create a small grant program to incentivize local teams (teachers) to apply and to be trained to create policies and systems to implement mastery frameworks.

Food Systems Adapted for Resiliency and Maximized Security (FARMS)

Dr. Jane Vangsness Frisch

Dr Lynette Flage

Mission – Solving for local food security using scalable technologies that drive equitable workforce and economic opportunities.

- National Science Foundation Award Grant – 1 of 10 awarded – Type 2
- FARMS emphasis = advanced agriculture technology
- \$160 million over 10 years
 - Innovative capacity
 - Sustainable Ecosystem
 - Inclusive Economic Growth
- FARMS is seeking to power ideas that feed the world, leverage our region’s resources and expertise to address both local and global agricultural challenges.
- Strategic Objectives
- Workforce Development Objectives
- Ecosystem partners
 - Community Workforce Partnership

LMI & WIOA UPDATE

Phil Davis

ND Job Service Labor Market Report for November 2024:

- ND Unemployment Rate for October = 2.4% vs. 4.1% nationwide.
- ND Labor Force Participation Rate = 68.8% vs. 62.6% nationwide.
- Top 5 Occupational Groups
 - Healthcare, Sales and Related, Management, Transportation, Installation, Maintenance, and Repair
- Open jobs in ND = 12,268

Upcoming Job Fairs, Webinars, and JSND Job Pod (Podcasts) were also discussed, these are located on the [Jobs ND](#) Website.

WORKING LUNCH

Around The Room Updates

Members gave a brief overview of current issues in their industry.

WORKFORCE ECOSYSTEM UPDATE

Edgar Padilla
Deloitte

Department of Commerce submitted an RFP for a vendor to conduct a statewide Ecosystem Study. The Study will include:

- Statewide employer survey
- Map current workforce system, how partners interact, share data, etc.
- Identify what role(s) local organizations, colleges and universities can play at the local and/or regional level to enhance or expand state-level strategies that address workforce.
- Facilitate strategic planning with the WDC to produce a statewide strategic plan.
- Assess the current structure of statewide workforce systems and programs/services and provide recommendations to create efficiencies and/or improve collaboration.

The timeline for review of RFPs will occur in September and the contract will be awarded in October 2025.

Edgar gave a high level regarding the scope of the project, vision, best practices, funding, legislative requirements. That data will be married with ND priorities. The WDC Recommendations will used to speak to trends and challenges that are being seen across the country.

Employers, service providers, stakeholders, focus groups, along with council members will be contacted during the research development stage to understand the educational landscape.

WDC RECOMMENDATIONS and LEGISLATIVE SESSION PREVIEW

Katie Ralston Howe

WDC Recommendations:

Katie talked about the WDC Recommendation booklet that all council members received at the meeting and is also available online through the [Commerce website](#).

The document has built-out recommendations that are listed in ranked order and endorsements are listed on the last two pages.

Katie then spoke on the preview for the 2025 Legislative Session.

Legislative Session Preview:

- Session Begins = January 7
- Deadline for Rep. to introduce bills – January 20
- Deadline for Senators to introduce bills – January 27
- Crossover for bills – February 28
- Day 80 – May 2

NEXT STEPS

Katie Ralston Howe

WDC 2025 Meeting dates have not been set due to possible calendar conflicts with legislative session. The first quarter meeting will be scheduled as soon as possible for the Q1 meeting to be held in March.

ADJOURNMENT

With no further discussion, the meeting was unanimously adjourned at 2:00 p.m.