
STATE WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT BOARD
Draft Meeting Minutes Pending Board Approval
GENERAL BOARD MEETING

DATE: Thursday, April 10, 2025
TIME: 1:00 p.m. - 3:00 p.m.
LOCATION: DWS South County Employment Center
5735 South Redwood Road, Taylorsville, UT 84123
Google Meet: meet.google.com/enu-ixea-vko
Phone: (US) +1 516-268-6796
PIN: 240 363 432#

**MEMBERS
PRESENT:**

Deanna Hopkins
Gary Harter
Greg Paras
Lucio Gallegos-Notario
Megen Ralphs
Michael Lanoue
Rich Fullmer
Sara Dansie Jones
Sarah Brenna
Shawn Milne
Shawn Newell
Sherry Stevens
Stacey Taylor
Stephanie Patton
Steven L. Olson
Tannen Ellis Graham
Whitney Harris

EXCUSED:

Casey R. Cameron
Debra Fiori
James Jackson, III
Matt Loo
Michelle Hill
Syndee Dickson
Tonya Hales

ABSENT: Jeff Worthington

QUORUM: Yes

**MEMBERS
PRESENT
(VIRTUAL):**

Celina Sinclair
Jeremy Haslam
Jordan Leonard
Kendall Thomas
Laurel Timmons Almstedt
Lauren Navidomskis
Spencer Loveless
Stacey Taylor
Vic Hockett

BOARD STAFF:
 Elizabeth Carver
 Heather Mousley
 Kimberley Bartel
 Lindsay Cropper
 Natalie Garrett
 Nycole Tylka
 Amira Mijic (virtual)

OTHER ATTENDEES:
 Aaron Thompson
 Amie Graff
 Chris Williams
 David Busk
 Helen Hanson
 Kayle Smith
 Mike Miller
 Ronda Kelly
 Weston Miller
 Zac Whitwell

OTHER ATTENDEES (VIRTUAL)
 Allison Keller
 Christina Guevara
 Janette Hernandez
 John Talcott
 Leah Lobato
 Tashina Williams (ITEC)

BOARD STAFF EXCUSED:

Alexia Murphy

1. Welcome and Opening Business

Megen Ralphs

- a. Acknowledgements and Introductions:
 - i. The meeting was called to order at 1:04 P.M. Chair Ralphs verified that the sound system was working properly for those individuals who were participating online.
 - ii. Chair Ralphs introduced and welcomed newly appointed board members who attended the New Board Member Orientation that was held from 10:00-11:00. The new board members introduced included: Celina Sinclair, Laurel Timmons Almstedt, Rich Fullmer, Tyler Low, Whitney Harris, Lucio Gallegos-Notario, Michelle Hill (excused) and Vic Hockett.
 - iii. Michelle Hill was excused for this meeting, and Garrett Updike from Clyde Companies attended as a representative in her place.
 - iv. Chair Ralphs informed the board that Jennifer Saunders is no longer with Salt Lake Community College, which will result in some transitions within the Career Pathways Committee.
 - v. Steven Olson will transition as the new chair of the Services to Individuals with Disabilities Committee, replacing Deanna Hopkins.
 - vi. Chair Ralphs discussed a few housekeeping items regarding the annual board service project and upcoming State Workforce Development Board meetings. The July meeting will be held at the Metro Employment Center. It is possible that the October meeting may coincide with the One Utah Summit in Cedar City, and a virtual option will be available with a satellite location in South County.
- b. Approval of Minutes from the SWDB General Board Meeting held on 01/09/2025:
 - i. A quorum was present, allowing for voting to proceed.
 - ii. Motion to approve the meeting minutes: Deanna Hopkins
 - iii. Second: Shawn Newell
 - iv. Discussion: None
 - v. In favor: All
 - vi. Opposed: None

- vii. Motion passed unanimously
- c. National Governors' Association Winter Meeting
 - i. Chair Ralphs and Board Liaison Elizabeth Carver attended the National Governor's Association Winter Meeting held in March in Washington D.C.
 - 1. Key discussion points included: WIOA law and policies, business practices across states, apprenticeship initiatives, economic updates, strategies for sustaining programs and funding post-pandemic, responsiveness to layoffs, supporting military families, the implications of AI technology, and interstate collaboration and idea sharing.
 - 2. For more information, please contact Megen Ralphs.
- 2. **One Stop Recertification: Ogden Employment Center** **Megen Ralphs**
 - a. Board members who participated in the recertification of the Ogden One Stop included: Steven Olson, Kendall Thomas and Shawn Newell. Chair Ralphs invited each of these board members to share their experiences.
 - b. Steven Olson presented a brief overview of his job shadowing experience with the Ogden Employment Center staff. He observed their customer triage process and how they assist individuals, including sitting with staff members to understand their methods for helping customers and assisting with setting career goals. He also admired the staff commitment and desire to serve the people of their community.
 - c. Shawn Milne observed that the Ogden staff demonstrated commendable compassion and humanity in assisting customers navigating uncertain times and financial instability. He commented that he enjoyed observing the employees interact with customers and how they treat them in one-on-one situations.
 - d. Gary Harter asked attendees in the room to raise their hands if they had participated in a recertification from a staff or board perspective. It was noted that recertifications have been conducted for 8 years.
 - e. Kendall Thomas shared that his participation was insightful and expressed his appreciation for the opportunity.
 - f. Recertification:
 - i. Motion to recertify the Ogden Employment Center: Shawn Milne
 - ii. Second: Steven Olson
 - iii. Discussion: None
 - iv. In favor: All
 - v. Opposed: None
 - vi. Motion passed unanimously.
 - g. Ogden Employment Center Manager, Ronda Kelly, was introduced to the group by Helen Hanson, Service Area Director for the Bear River & Wasatch Front North Economic Service Areas.
 - h.

3. **Legislative Updates** **Kevin Burt**

- a. Deputy Director Kevin Burt presented a summary of amendments, proposed bills, and changes from the recent Legislative session, covering areas such as Refugee Services, Child Care, Unemployment Insurance, Homeless Services, Housing Affordability, Medicaid, and Food Assistance (SNAP).
- b. Questions can be directed to Kevin Burt at kburt@utah.gov.
- c. Shawn Milne asked for the slide show to be made available to the group.

4. Veterans Program

Mike Miller, David Busk and Kayle Smith

- a. Gary Harter introduced the Veterans Program presentation, featuring David Busk from the Department of Workforce Services (DWS), and Mike Miller and Kayle Smith from the Utah Department of Veterans and Military Affairs (UDVMA).
- b. **Department of Workforce Services (David Busk):**
 - i. David Busk provided an overview of DWS services for active military personnel, veterans, and their spouses, including connections to training resources. Approximately 6,000 veterans are served annually, with around 200 connected to training through the Accelerated Credentialing to Employment (ACE) program. The website jobs.utah.gov/veteran provides relevant information.
 - ii. DWS prioritizes services for veterans. Eligible veterans are screened and connected with Employment Counselors under the Disability Veterans Outreach Program (DVOP). Assistance is also available through the Accelerated Credentialing to Employment (ACE) program. Employment Plans are created to assist the veteran with their job search and the counselor works to help them translate their valuable military experience into civilian terminology.
 - iii. LVER (Local Veterans' Employment Representative) and CVSR (Career and Transition Services Representative) focus on promoting veteran employment to employers and facilitating their engagement with veterans through initiatives like the Utah Patriot Partnership Program.
 - 1. **Utah Patriot Partnership Program:**
 - a. In response to a question from Chair Ralphs, David Busk explained the Utah Patriot Partnership Program. Employers pledging to hire veterans receive a letter from the governor and a special icon next to their business name on jobs.utah.gov.
 - iv. A partnership exists with the Veterans Readiness & Employment (VR&E) program that refers job-ready veterans to DWS for coordination with DVOPs. Strong partnerships also exist with justice-involved programs and Utah Department of Veterans and Military Affairs (UDVMA) under Chapter 31 of Title 38 law.
- c. **Utah Department of Veteran and Military Affairs (Mike Miller):**
 - i. Mike Miller highlighted the Department of Defense's (DOD) emphasis on military family programs. Utah is one of four states with a dedicated Military Family Program Manager.
 - ii. Utah has approximately 16,000 military members (both active and reserve), 27,000 veterans, 16,000 DOD employees, and over 200,000+ family members, including 17,000 military children. A monthly meeting is held to strategize on improving services for these families. The Utah veteran community and their families have roughly a \$20B economic impact on the state of Utah.
 - iii. UDVMA is developing a comprehensive military resource guide. Recent Utah legislation removed preference for veterans or their families, but in-state tuition is now available for DOD employees in Utah.
 - iv. **Military Family Support Initiatives:**
 - 1. **Military Spouses:** A workgroup is being formed to help support employment for military spouses. UDVMA is working closely with DWS to help support ideas for military spouse employment. Retirement change of station is also being reviewed for portability within 2-3 years of change of assignment.
 - 2. **Housing Opportunities:** First Time Homebuyer grants are issued with about 225 grants issued annually to assist military families.

- 3. Child Care: A workgroup is being formed to address childcare challenges for military families, including shift work and deployments.
- 4. Medical Affordability: Hill Air Force Base (HAFB) is developing an approach for military children with special needs. A workgroup is being established to help families access provider lists during transfers to HAFB.
- 5. Purple Star Schools: A new website will promote Purple Star Schools, fostering awareness, patriotism, resilience, and belonging. Board members were previously invited to wear purple on April 14th to support military members.
- d. **Veteran Suicide Prevention** (Kayle Smith):
 - i. Kale Smith from UDVMA discussed his role in veteran suicide prevention, emphasizing the partnership with DWS and how transition and financial insecurity can be key contributing factors. He advocated for the benefits of hiring veterans, noting their tendency to support each other. Information on suicide prevention training is available by contacting Kayle Smith.
 - 1. Kayle Smith: kaylesmith@utah.gov or (801) 326-2372
- e. Gary Harter directed attendees to veterans.utah.gov and military.utah.gov for further information and contact details. Board members were encouraged to reach out to contacts listed on these websites.

5. Employer Survey

All

- a. Chair Ralphs reminded the board that Unemployment Insurance sends a survey to employers with their quarterly paperwork and that the board helped to create the survey.
- b. Board Liaison Elizabeth Carver explained the employer survey to the board, noting that a parallel job seeker survey also exists to gather feedback from job seekers.
- c. The employer survey focuses on businesses' experiences with the Department of Workforce Services (DWS) and the services they have received, as well as their engagement with DWS. Board members were asked to participate in the survey and provide feedback.
 - i. Following completion of the survey, board members were asked to invite members of their network to take the survey in order to provide valuable feedback to the Department of Workforce Services (DWS).
- d. Chair Ralphs raised concerns that if the survey were sent to someone in accounting, a CFO, or payroll contacts, those individuals might delete the survey or be unable to provide relevant feedback. Board members were encouraged to ask the initial recipient within their companies to forward the survey to them directly for completion.
- e. Deputy Director Kevin Burt stated that the feedback is appreciated and reviewed regularly.
- f. Tannen Ellis Graham commented regarding the lack of a specific "medical" category in the survey, noting her preference to include "medical" over being listed as "other." Elizabeth Carver suggested that the operations committee could review the survey to make changes and propose a motion to amend the survey during the July meeting for a board vote.
 - i. Board members with additional feedback were encouraged to contact Gary Harter or a member of the Operations Committee.

6. Workforce Development Outreach Report

Zac Whitwell

- a. Service Area Director Zac Whitwell provided a high-level overview of the Workforce Development Outreach, highlighting the recent job fairs on page 1 and the rural outreach efforts on page 2.

- b. Zac and Leah Lobato highlighted the recent Work Ability Career Exploration and Job Fair, which was a career exploration and job fair focused on individuals with disabilities. For more details on the Work Ability Career Fair, Board members were encouraged to contact Leah Lobato.
 - i. Leah Lobato: leahlobato@utah.gov or (801) 887-9538
- c. Upcoming Events:
 - i. April 28: San Juan County Employer Basecamp: Workforce Services Presentation
 - ii. April 29: Uintah Basin Business Symposium: Workforce Services Presentation
 - iii. April 30: Apprenticeship Summit at the Salt Lake Community College, Gail Miller Campus
 - 1. Healthcare Apprenticeship Webinar: Employer Panel, 10:00-11:00
 - 2. Apprenticeship Summit Job Fair: 10:00-2:00
 - 3. Scott Romney: sbromney@utah.gov or (801) 628-4051
 - iv. May 1: Workforce Services Statewide Virtual Job Fair
 - v. May 7: Uintah High School Career Fair
 - vi. July 10: Workforce Services Statewide Virtual Job Fair
- d. Board members were encouraged to read and review the report in its entirety. For more information on outreach and upcoming events, members were referred to the map and contact information on the back of the report.

7. Committee Report Out

Committee Chairs

- a. Youth Committee (Committee Co-Chair Jordan Leonard)
 - i. A career fair was held in Kane County. During the next meeting, this committee will discuss ways to attract more career fairs to rural areas.
 - ii. They will also be testing out virtual reality in rural areas for the high school students.
- b. Serving Individuals With Disabilities (Committee Chair Steven Olson)
 - i. Committee Chair Steven Olson provided information about upcoming events, including Autism and Neurodiversity Awareness month (April) and Mental Health Awareness month (May).
 - ii. An employer workshop will be held again in September. The last employer workshop was held in March at the Utah Center for the Blind and Visually Impaired. Steven encouraged board members to attend if possible.
 - iii. Steven reminded the group that a Flash Mentoring event is held annually in February and is a great opportunity for employers to engage for one hour and assist customers with mock interviews or job coaching or assistance with cover letters.
 - iv. Scholarships (up to \$1000) for individuals are provided under the Golden Keys and the information is included in the packet.
 - v. The 51st Annual Golden Keys awards will be held in September. Board members were encouraged to nominate. To make a nomination past the deadline, please contact:
 - 1. Leah Lobato: leahlobato@utah.gov or (801) 887-9538
 - vi. Upcoming Events:
 - 1. April: Autism & Neurodiversity Awareness Month
 - 2. May 8: Mental Health Awareness Event (May is Mental Health Awareness Month)
 - 3. June 5: Educational Opportunity at the National Ability Center in Park City
 - 4. June 13: Deadline to apply for Golden Keys Scholarships (for individuals)
 - 5. Sept 25: 51st Annual Golden Keys, Save the Date
- c. Apprenticeship Committee (Committee Chair Michael Lanoue)

- i. The Apprenticeship Summit day event will be held on April 30th at the Salt Lake Community College (SLCC) Gail Miller Campus from 10:00 AM to 2:00 PM, with a webinar preceding it from 10:00 AM to 11:00 AM. Approximately 250 attendees are expected.
- ii. The teacher apprenticeship program has resulted in 14 hires, with 2 individuals having already started. The remaining hires are expected to onboard within the next 1 1/2 weeks.
- iii. This committee is working on an apprenticeship program for hospitality and tourism.
- iv. Talent Ready Utah is working with Snow College on a manufacturing apprenticeship.
- v. There are six (6) potential students for Apogee Works.
 - 1. Scott Romney commented that Apogee Works is located in Davis County.
- d. Career Pathways
 - i. No report was provided by this committee.
- e. Operations (Committee Chair Gary Harter)
 - i. Upcoming One-Stop Recertifications (tentative dates):
 - 1. June 2025: George Employment Center
 - 2. September 2025: Spanish Fork and Lehi Employment Centers
 - ii. Board members that would like to participate in an upcoming recertification should contact:
 - 1. Kim Bartel: kbartel@utah.gov or (801) 824-7524

8. Virtual Reality Presentation

TransfrVR

- a. Clint Kelson, Regional Vice President from TransfrVR, provided an overview of the virtual reality services provided by TransfrVR. The goal is to help people be excited about and exposed to different types of careers through a classroom to career pathway, helping to gain understanding and discover and experience a variety of career opportunities.
- b. 6.4M people are unemployed in the US. 38% of adults have a 4 year college degree and 40% of high school students are not college bound (2024 data).
- c. Students can engage in a virtual reality simulation, followed by opportunities to research the position for more information. They can then return to further explore the career pathway through additional virtual reality experiences that highlight necessary certifications and education.
 - i. A dashboard is available for tracking progress and success.
 - ii. Twelve new career simulations have been added since the beginning of 2025.
- d. Training can also be provided via the Virtual Reality headsets and can last from 10 to 50 minutes long.
- e. The system tracks data on the number of participants, simulation completion rates, and success in progressing through various learning levels in virtual reality and career exploration.
 - i. Simulations are available in both English and Spanish and also have closed captioning available.
 - ii. Simulations can be conducted in both seated or standing positions.
- f. Lindsay Cropper explained that these virtual reality headsets are being provided in various centers across the state and the focus is currently on Youth ages 14-24, and that any board members are invited to participate in virtual reality by contacting a local center.
 - i. The Department of Workforce Services is looking forward to creating exciting ways to engage with youth customers and partnering with Commissioner of Apprenticeships Scott Romney and his team and finding ways to utilize the headsets in apprenticeships as well.

9. Public Comment & Closing Business

Megen Ralphs

- a. The July meeting will be held at the Metro Employment Center and will include a brief tour and job shadowing opportunities. The Metro Employment Center is located at 720 S 200 E, Salt Lake City, UT 84111.
- b. No public comment
- c. Adjournment at 2:45 PM

UPCOMING SWDB MEETING: Thursday, July 10, 2025, 1:00 PM - 3:00 PM

Note change in location:

Department of Workforce Services, Metro Employment Center
720 South 200 East

Salt Lake City, Utah 84111

jobs.utah.gov/edo/statecouncil/index.html

draft