



The Chair convened the meeting at 9:01 AM.

Approval of the agenda & minutes, moved by Nicole Swanson, seconded by Tammy Stark, 8 Ayes, 0 Nays.

### **Priorities**

- Legislative updates, questions for discussion, and next steps (Cate)
  - Cate walked through various state and federal legislative updates and work of the association.
- Marketing updates, questions for discussion, and next steps (Cate)
  - The Community of Practice continues to meet. Chair Jaster will meet with MAWB staff on future planning. The toolkit is being used and discussed.
- Leadership development/technical assistance updates, questions for discussion, and next steps (Elena/Catrice & Mark)
  - An update will be forthcoming

### **Committee Reports**

- Highlights & Critical Updates
  - None provided.
- Action Item: JSS Committee Co-Chair
  - A follow up on this item will be forthcoming.
- Action Item: Bylaws Committee Member
  - Marie will replace Nicole on this committee.

### **Successes/Challenges/Questions**

- Action Item: AMC Affiliate Rep – Cate
  - Mark is the current rep. If anyone else is interested please contact Cate.
- Action Item: New NAWB CEO, NAWB Forum – Cate
  - NAWB has named a new CEO.
  - Request for Jinny to attend NAWB Forum on behalf of MAWB. The chair called for a motion to approve the budget request. The motion was made by Nicole Swanson, seconded by Deb Bahr-Helgen. 16 Ayes, 0 Nays.
- State DW Obligations #s – Cate, Heather, Jinny, Erik
  - Cate discussed the DW requests timeline process and how to best work with MJSP on these requests.
- History Question - Elena
  - Elena and the committee discussed a workforce system history item.
- Anoka County Director Update – Nicole
  - Last day in the office is 2/6. Announcement is coming soon for the new director.
- Cap on DW Requests (mass layoffs) – Tammy
  - The committee discussed the cap on DW requests.
- MN OHE exemption list - Dina and Jinny
  - The committee discussed the MN OHE exemption list.

- ROI Efforts - Follow up on pro bono request – Jinny
  - The committee discussed ROI efforts.
- WIOA Waivers - Jinny
  - The committee discussed WIOA waivers. Please see Jinny’s email for more information.
- Economic Dev/Business Attraction Connection with Workforce Dev – Erik
  - The committee discussed business attraction work.
- FutureWorks Update – Cate
  - This item was tabled.
- Basecamp Overview – Bob
  - Bob provided an overview of the new Basecamp tool. Please await your invitation that is forthcoming.

#### **GWDB Update – Katie McClelland, Director**

- State Plan Updates
  - Work is underway on the state plan. There is no Federal guidance on the state plan at this time.
  - 30-day public comment and board vote are required to finalize the state plan.
  - State plan modification & contribution updates are underway.
  - February 11<sup>th</sup> will be the GWDB vote on opening to public comment.
  - Reach out to Katie with ideas/thoughts/suggestions regarding guidance, etc. on Regional & Local Plans
- Minnesota’s Approach to Moving Forward
  - Due to uncertainty, Minnesota is proceeding based on the existing ICR requirements.
  - State partners have been asked to:
    - Submit only updates reflecting actual operational changes
    - Modify language only where activities or structures have changed
    - Avoid comprehensive rewrites or proactive language revisions
  - Clarified that this is not a full-scale plan overhaul — only factual updates are being incorporated.
  - Example provided: GWDB updated committee structure (from five committees to three) because that information is no longer accurate.
- Local & Regional Plans – Status
  - Confirmed no formal timeline yet for local and regional plan updates.
  - Indicated that local/regional plans will likely follow a similar approach:
    - Update only what has materially changed
    - Correct outdated information
    - Avoid comprehensive rewrites
    - Expressed openness to feedback from MAWB regarding timing and convenience.
    - Suggested potential timing alignment with:
      - Planning grants
      - Employer engagement discussions
      - Broader regional processes
- Employer Engagement & Potential Metrics
  - Shared that the state is exploring development of employer engagement metrics.

- Conversations are underway about piloting employer engagement measures, potentially incorporated into:
  - Planning grants
  - Local/regional planning processes
  - Emphasized this is still under discussion and not finalized.
- Guidance on Federal Priorities (AI, Apprenticeship, etc.)
  - Clarified that there is no formal federal guidance requiring incorporation of presidential or secretarial priorities (e.g., AI, apprenticeships) into state plans.
  - Noted that WIOA statute centers state plans around advancing the Governor’s priorities, not federal administration priorities.
  - If local areas are incorporating topics such as AI or apprenticeship expansion, that is welcomed — but not required at this time.
- Plan Update Mechanics
  - State plan updates are being made using track changes.
  - A summary of changes (section-by-section bullet points) will be provided for public review to make the updates more digestible.
  - No changes were made to existing WIOA goals within the plan.
  - Indicated this track-changes + summary model may serve as a helpful framework for local/regional updates.
- New Statewide Workforce Goals & Metrics
  - GWDB has approved a new statewide workforce development framework (approved in November).
  - The Board will vote in February on formal metrics tied to this framework.
  - Overarching focus:
    - Labor force growth
    - Identifying gaps and addressing workforce participation barriers
    - Five statewide priority pillars:
      - Equity and access
      - Sector partnerships
      - Work-based learning and registered apprenticeships
      - High-quality jobs
      - Simplified, integrated “no-wrong-door” service approach
  - Plans to:
    - Establish measurable timelines and targets
    - Publicly track progress
    - Develop a communications strategy following February approval
    - Encouraged MAWB engagement and feedback on goal implementation and communication.
- Interagency Workforce Alignment
  - Provided update on the Interagency Workforce Alignment Task Force, convened by commissioners to improve cross-agency coordination.
  - Goal is to create a durable, long-term coordination structure that continues beyond current leadership transitions.

- Acknowledged broader leadership transition dynamics (Governor not seeking third term), but affirmed continued movement toward proactive statewide strategy alignment.
- Interagency Roadmap
  - Interagency Workforce Alignment (IWA) – Two Key Products
  - Shared that, in planning for the transition to a new administration/legislature, GWDB is working toward two major “products” by the end of the year:
  - IWA Roadmap Document: A workforce “roadmap” demonstrating a plan for interagency coordination and support for Minnesota’s workforce development system.
  - GWDB Legislative Report: A report for external stakeholders that will include recommendations for:
    - How the workforce development system should function
    - What priorities the system should focus on
    - Opportunities and recommendations for improvement
  - Noted that GWDB committees will be the primary venue for developing and advancing the recommendations that will appear in the legislative report.
  - Encouraged continued MAWB participation and engagement through GWDB committees, describing these documents as transition-style resources intended for the next governor and legislature.
- Workforce Pell – Implementation Status & Planning
  - Funding & “Unfunded Mandate” Reality
  - Provided an update on Workforce Pell implementation, characterizing it as an unfunded mandate.
  - Stated that Minnesota did not receive administrative funding in HR1 to support implementation, which typically accompanies new program authorization.
  - Timeline & Two-Pronged Implementation Approach
  - Noted the July 1 deadline is an unrealistic timeline for having full policies and program approval processes in place.
  - Described Minnesota’s approach as two-pronged:
    - By July 1: Implement a bare-minimum / limited-access version to meet the deadline.
    - Longer-term: Build a more robust program that improves coordination and quality (with multiple system improvements that cannot be completed by July 1).
  - Program Design Considerations (Longer-Term)
    - Identified areas that Minnesota wants to do well over time, including:
      - Better coordination between WIOA and Perkins
      - Incorporation of broader data sources (including economic development data) into the occupations-in-demand list
      - Strong student protections
      - Thoughtful design to ensure the program functions effectively statewide
  - Planning Meeting & MAWB Engagement
    - Reported an upcoming Workforce Pell planning meeting on February 2, focused on:

- Establishing timelines and priorities
  - Identifying steps needed to meet the July 1 “minimum”
  - Mapping what must happen over the next several years to create a program the state is proud of
- Noted a future need (by approximately 2028–2029) for enhanced wage records that include occupational data, which may require legislative changes.
- Invited MAWB participation; stated Kevion Ellis is the primary point of contact.
- Specifically extended a call for interest from Bob to participate in the February 2 planning meeting.
- Technical Assistance & Support
  - Shared that the Joyce Foundation has offered assistance to support implementation.
  - Reported that Minnesota will receive technical assistance through:
  - Education Strategy Group (supporting multiple states on Workforce Pell implementation)
  - National Governors Association Workforce Pell cohort
- Roles & Responsibilities (Governance and Administration)
  - Clarified roles in implementation:
    - GWDB/State Board: Will set the eligibility criteria for Workforce Pell.
    - Office of Higher Education (OHE): Will manage:
      - Application processing
      - Program review
      - Program approval
  - Noted that eligibility criteria are a major lever, since programs cannot be approved for funding unless they meet eligibility requirements.
  - Indicated the state may initially place more responsibility on institutions to demonstrate they meet requirements (“onus on institutions” early on).
- Occupations-in-Demand Criteria (Early Direction)
  - Suggested that those seeking early insight into likely eligible occupations can reference DEED’s Occupations in Demand tool.
  - Stated eligibility will likely be narrow and focused on occupations that:
    - Provide family-sustaining wages
    - Are rated 3–4 stars of demand or higher
  - Raised an outstanding policy question for consideration:
    - How to account for high-demand occupations that may not meet family-sustaining wage thresholds but offer significant public benefit (example: nursing).
  - Noted these issues will be part of the February 2 planning discussion.
- North Star Promise Alignment
  - Asked about the status of North Star Promise and how it may impact Workforce Pell.
  - Asked whether processes/lessons learned from North Star Promise could be leveraged to support Workforce Pell implementation.
  - Confirmed alignment opportunities.

- Explained that OHE administers North Star Promise and will also manage Workforce Pell's application processing because of their expertise.
- Clarified a key difference:
  - North Star Promise: State-run program established through state legislation.
  - Workforce Pell: Federal program, with rulemaking and guidance still developing.
- Noted uncertainty remains because:
  - U.S. Department of Education is still completing negotiated rulemaking
  - Final federal guidance is not yet available
  - Potential additional guidance from the U.S. Department of Labor is also unknown
  - Emphasized that despite unclear federal guidance, the understanding remains that states are expected to be ready by July 1.
  - Reiterated OHE's capacity as the state's Title IV (federal financial aid) administrator, reinforcing why OHE is positioned to lead administration.
- Partnership, Governance, and Engagement
  - Shared a positive development that Workforce Pell planning has strengthened GWDB's working relationship with the Office of Higher Education (OHE/OHI), describing it as a strong and productive partnership that GWDB hopes to continue building.
  - Noted upcoming decision points and engagement structure:
    - GWDB vote on Workforce Pell eligibility policy planned for the May meeting.
    - GWDB Sector Partnership Committee will review the implementation plan/process prior to the May vote, with discussion planned across the next two committee meetings.
    - Emphasized GWDB is actively seeking opportunities for engagement and feedback as the program develops.
- Perkins CTE & WIOA Alignment – Opportunity for Improved Coordination
  - Stated that Workforce Pell implementation presents an opportunity to better coordinate Perkins Career and Technical Education and WIOA.
  - Reflected that when Perkins was reauthorized (referencing her prior experience working on federal policy), the intent was that four-year planning cycles would create stronger alignment and local coordination—particularly:
    - More coordination at the local level
    - Perkins comprehensive local needs assessments conducted in partnership with local workforce boards
    - Noted that this level of alignment has not materialized nationally, and Minnesota is not unique in facing these challenges.
    - Framed the current moment as a meaningful opportunity to make progress over the next year.
    - Requested that MAWB members share examples of strong local Perkins–workforce board partnerships so GWDB can identify and elevate best practices for broader use statewide.
- Workforce Task Force – Status and Next Meetings
  - Provided a brief update on the Workforce Task Force:

- GWDB is currently down two staff members (one position lost due to grant funding; one staff member returned to VRS).
  - Multiple parallel efforts are ongoing that affect federal funding access and timelines.
  - Noted she will not be the primary point of contact for the Workforce Task Force in the near term due to workload and staffing constraints.
  - Encouraged members to still reach out as needed, but indicated her inbox is currently overwhelmed.
  - Identified Devin Bowdry (Government Relations Director) as stepping in to lead and coordinate.
  - Confirmed the Task Force is continuing with the established plan; noted the January meeting was postponed.
  - Shared upcoming meeting schedule and topics:
    - February 6 meeting: Focus on funding
    - February 23 meeting: Focus on metrics
- Explained the purpose of the first set of meetings is to establish a baseline/status of what the workforce system is currently doing.
- Shared that the Task Force will pause during the legislative session and reconvene in the summer to begin developing recommendations.
- Encouraged members to complete the Task Force survey:
  - Survey results will be used to identify where the Task Force should focus attention.
  - Areas widely viewed as working well will receive less focus; areas identified as struggling will be prioritized.
  - Asked whether there were any remaining questions, noting limited time remaining in her update.
- Subsequent Designation Letters
  - Requested update on subsequent designation letters (noting a perceived deadline of January 31):
    - Send subsequent designation letters to Commissioner Varilek.
    - CC Katie McClelland and Deputy Commissioner Majors on the email.
  - Noted that at least one letter has already been submitted using that approach, and members should follow the same process.
  - Indicated the state will sort the process internally and follow up as needed.

#### **DEED Updates – Mike Lang, Director of Workforce Strategies & Innovation**

- Employment & Training Program – Work Authorization Guidance
  - Reported questions have come up regarding work authorization and what to do if it expires while a participant is being served.
  - Confirmed the approach mirrors standard practice:
    - If eligibility becomes a question, the participant should be placed on hold.
    - Local areas should reach out to state teams for guidance as needed based on the specific situation.
- Data Validation / Federal Guidance (Table 1023-19, Change 3)
  - Provided an update on data validation guidance (referencing Table 1023-19, Change 3).

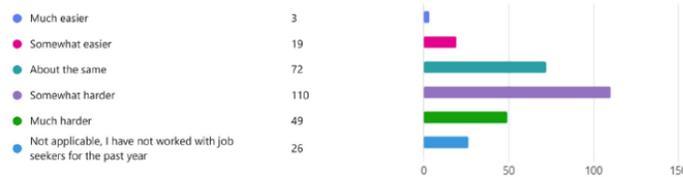
- Noted adjustments may be required, including changes around:
  - Disallowing certain data validation elements related to new birth (as referenced in transcript)
  - Low-income status for individualized career services (as referenced in transcript)
- Shared that:
  - The Adult team is in communication with USDOL seeking clarification.
  - DEED/DM teams are assessing what it would take to implement required changes.
  - The state is exploring whether to request an extension for implementation of this guidance, currently anticipated to take effect July 1.
- State Plan Coordination
  - Noted DEED is continuing work with Katie McClelland and the GWDB team to prepare and submit state plan updates.
- FFATA Reporting
  - Introduced an update on FFATA reporting
  - Explained FFATA reporting is a required federal report related to federal funds that are sub-granted/sub-awarded, and is not directly tied to USDOL program reporting.
  - Shared that the state has realized FFATA reporting has not been completed for several years and is now in the process of getting caught up.
  - Noted Mike and staff will be working with local areas soon to complete reporting requirements.
  - Clarified outreach will occur to any entity that has received a federal subaward of \$30,000 or more.
  - Anticipated data requests may include items such as:
    - UEI / DUNS-style identifiers (as applicable)
    - SAM registration-related information (as referenced in transcript)
    - Committed to communicating additional details as the state team continues learning the reporting requirements and process.
- Upcoming Meetings & Key Dates
  - MJSP Board meeting: Monday, March 2
    - Requests due by February 2.
  - RETAIN Summit: April 24, 2026 (date clarified during Q&A).
- Youth Team – Business as Usual
  - Reported Youth team updates remain largely routine:
  - Continuing state plan update work
  - Preparing for performance negotiations
  - Preparing reports for review and distribution
- ACP / Grant Programs – CanTrain & Grantee Onboarding
  - Provided ACP team updates including CanTrain:
  - CanTrain applications are in the review stage; noted timeline urgency (as referenced in transcript).
  - Reminded members about ACT grantee onboarding, which will occur in person at multiple locations:
    - St. Paul
    - Blaine
    - Brainerd
    - Rochester
  - Strongly encouraged in-person attendance, including for experienced grantees, noting:

- Policies and procedures change annually
  - Updates occur every year
  - Noted onboarding sessions will cover:
    - Program components and requirements
    - Fiscal responsibilities
    - Monitoring expectations
- Register for the Adult Career Pathways Grantee Onboarding at: <https://forms.office.com/g/gGN3WH567H>
- New Requirement – Grantee Contact Information Posted Online
  - Reported a new requirement that all grantees must have contact information posted on the Grantee Workplace/website (as referenced).
  - Directed members with questions to reach out to their program teams for details.
- Monitoring / Pending Federal Guidance
  - Noted the state is monitoring emerging federal guidance (including TEGL-related items), and that some items remain on hold due to ongoing legal developments.
  - Encouraged members to reach out with questions for clarification and noted the state will relay information as it becomes available.

**CareerForce MN Update – Jeanna Fortney, Director of CareerForce MN**

- CareerForce Updates
  - Security Concerns
    - More discussions on this coming next week on Thursday.
  - Employer Engagement
    - Scheduled meetings with the new D45 grant recipients
    - Collaborating with WSC team to develop menu of services we can offer to employers
    - Hired new EE Specialist for the Metro, Betsy Helmeke. She came to us from Twin Cities Rise and will be housed at the South Minneapolis CF location
  - Business services employment metrics discussion
- Job Search Experience Survey

**On average compared to 1 year ago, how would you rate the ease with which your job seeking clients are finding employment?**



**63% say harder than 1 year ago**

- **Have you provided services to clients who are unhoused or at risk of becoming unhoused?**



-

- Ease of which job seekers are finding employment compared to 1 year ago  
Considerably harder:
  - IT and Math Experts
  - Creative Professionals and Media Workers
  - Managers and Leaders
- Considerably easier:
  - Food Service Workers
  - Healthcare Support Workers
  - Cleaning and Maintenance Workers

**OKRs Update – Laura Oliven, Senior Advisor**

- Please see the written update [here](#).

**MOU/IFA Update – Juanita Borton, CareerForce Systems Operations Coordinator**

- Juanita provided a comprehensive update on the status of MOUs (Memorandums of Understanding), IFAs (Infrastructure Funding Agreements), and OSO (One-Stop Operator) agreements across local workforce development areas.
- MOU & IFA Status Overview
  - Of the LWDAs:
    - 9 currently have active MOUs
    - 7 have expired MOUs
  - However, due to the addition of DEED CSEP as a required partner, several “active” MOUs require revision.
    - 5 active MOUs appropriately include CSEP.
    - 4 active MOUs require revision to add CSEP.
  - Overall:
    - 5 LWDAs are fully complete
    - 11 are in process
  - Juanita noted that status remains fluid. For example, one LWDA is currently on its third IFA revision within six months due to changing circumstances.
- CSEP Clarification
  - Local CSEP providers must be included in both:
    - The MOU
    - The IFA (as financial contributors)
  - DEED CSEP (state-level) must be included in the MOU but does not contribute financially to the IFA.
  - If a national provider (e.g., MET, National ABLE) is delivering services locally, they must be included and contribute as appropriate.
- Common Barriers Slowing MOU/IFA Completion
  - Juanita outlined several recurring issues:
    - Legal Review Delays
      - Changes to DEED template language require DEED legal review.
      - Modifying template language can significantly extend timelines.
      - Disagreements between local and state legal counsel may cause prolonged back-and-forth.
    - Partner Negotiations

- Difficulty reaching consensus among required partners.
  - Recommended best practice: structured, recurring meetings with clear agendas and small review sections to streamline negotiation.
- Leadership Turnover
  - New directors face varying learning curves.
  - Encouraged reaching out early for support to avoid unnecessary delays.
- Errors & Last-Minute Revisions
  - Late-stage changes, incorrect signatory names/titles, and incomplete review by partners often cause significant delays.
  - Juanita emphasized shared responsibility for catching errors before signature routing.
  - A revised MOU template is in development to streamline contact and signature information (negotiator, signatory, billing contact, emails).
- Facility & Co-Location Changes
  - Execution can be delayed while waiting for space changes (moves, downsizing, partner transitions).
  - Juanita encouraged treating the IFA as a “snapshot in time” and executing based on current conditions.
  - Suggested using:
    - Expiration dates aligned with anticipated moves
    - Flexible language to accommodate potential subleasing or square footage changes
  - This approach allows billing to continue correctly while longer-term updates are developed.
- OSO (One-Stop Operator) Update
  - There is no new OSO policy at this time.
  - A new policy development process is underway; OSO will be addressed first once the process is finalized.
  - In the interim, local areas must continue using the existing OSO policy.
- Legal Review & Agreement Delays
  - Several LWDAs reported OSO agreements stuck in legal review for extended periods (in some cases multiple years).
  - Concern was raised about systemic delays and compliance risk during potential federal monitoring.
- Competitive Process & Consortium Model
  - OSO selection is primarily governed by WIOA/DOL competitive process requirements.
  - However, DOL previously indicated that if LWDAs can demonstrate repeated lack of response to competitive RFPs, they may justify moving to a consortium model.
  - Many Minnesota LWDAs use consortium models; at least one area uses a different structure.
- Consortium Participation Questions Raised
  - Local areas requested clarity on:
    - Whether VRS and Job Service must both participate.
    - Whether one partner is sufficient.
    - Whether local workforce boards can serve as part of or lead a consortium.
    - Whether DEED programs are willing and able to participate consistently.
  - Juanita committed to:

- Bringing these questions to DEED program leadership.
- Convening a small working group (including Carrie) to clarify expectations and develop more consistent statewide guidance.
- Exploring whether certain OSO elements could be integrated into MOU/IFA structures to streamline the process (pending legal/DOL review).
- Request for OSO Training
  - Directors requested an “OSO 101” overview due to confusion and lack of clarity around requirements.
  - Juanita agreed to:
    - Work with a small group to clarify framework options.
    - Potentially return to MAWB with a short training session to explain OSO requirements and process.
- Key Takeaways
  - MOU/IFA delays are largely procedural and structural — not due to lack of effort.
  - Most common barriers: legal review, template modifications, partner negotiations, turnover, and waiting for ideal facility changes.
  - OSO agreements remain a compliance requirement and require clearer statewide guidance.
  - DEED follow-up and small-group coordination are planned to move OSO discussions forward.

**Department of Children, Youth, and Families Update - Kari Ouimette, Kristen Shouman, Pam Majkozak, Laura Ellis, Amy Anderson, Ashley Snyder, Ann Meyers, Jeanna Fortney, and Mike Lang**

- The full presentation can be viewed [here](#).
  - <https://mn.gov/dhs/snap-e-and-t/provider-dashboard/>

**Department of Human Services Update - Jessica O’Brien & Parmananda Khatiwoda**

- The full presentation can be viewed [here](#).

**The meeting concluded at 2:00PM.**

**Next Meeting: Thursday, February 26<sup>th</sup>, at AMC & via Zoom**