

**VERMONT APPRENTICESHIP ADVISORY BOARD MEETING MINUTES
5 Green Mountain Drive, Montpelier, VT 05601 (or Microsoft Teams)**

- **Recording: [Vermont Apprenticeship Advisory Board Meeting - 9.30.2024](#) -
September 30, 2024; 10:00 AM to 12:00 PM**

***This was the first meeting of the Vermont Apprenticeship Advisory Board.**

The Apprenticeship Advisory Board Meeting began at 10:04 A.M. and was attended by the following individuals in person:

- Jeff Wimette – IBEW Local 300
- Greg Gove – UA Local 693
- Pam Benoit – Benoit Electric
- Derek Williams – River Valley Tech Center
- Rhoni Basden – Vermont Works for Women
- Gerald Schartner – VT Department of Corrections
- Michael Harrington, Commissioner (Board Chair) – VT Department of Labor
- Sarah Knight, Apprenticeship Director (Board Secretary) – VT Department of Labor
- Cindy Robillard, Assistant Director of Workforce Development – VT Department of Labor
- Jay Ramsey, Director of Workforce Development – VT Department of Labor
- Rowan Hathorne, Principal Assistant to the Commissioner – VT Department of Labor

Joined by Microsoft Teams:

- Jerry Baake – The University of Vermont Health Network
- Andrew Prowten – Agency of Education

ADDITIONS OR DELETIONS TO THE AGENDA

N/A

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

N/A

WELCOME

Commissioner Harrington welcomed the Board members and gave an overview of the agenda. He shared that there is a new Open-Meeting Law which we will be following in terms of warning the meetings in advance, providing the agenda, allowing time for public content, and recording the meetings to make available to the public on the VDOL website. The Commissioner gave some background on this new Apprenticeship Advisory Board and how under the new ACT 55 of 2023, it has replaced the previous Apprenticeship Council which last met in 2020.

INTRODUCTIONS

Commissioner Harrington shared that the make-up of the Board consists of:

- (A) the Commissioner of Labor or designee, who shall serve as the Chair;
- (B) the Director, who shall serve as the Secretary;
- (C) the Secretary of Education or designee;
- (D) a member of the State Workforce Development Board, appointed by the Chair of the Board;

- (E) two representatives of a recognized union organization representing occupations with an apprenticeship program, appointed by the Governor;
- (F) two representatives of employer program sponsors, appointed by the Governor;
- (G) one representative of related instruction or training from an adult or secondary career technical education program, appointed by the Governor;
- (H) two representatives from underserved communities, appointed by the Governor.

The Board Members introduced themselves, the organization they represent, their role/s, and their current and previous experience/knowledge of Registered Apprenticeship in Vermont.

OVERVIEW OF WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT & REGISTERED APPRENTICESHIP IN VT

Jay gave a presentation and shared slides to provide:

- (A) Statistics on numbers for unemployment and participation in the workforce in the State
- (B) History and changes in State and Federal Apprenticeship policies
- (C) Changes and the current federal funding for apprenticeship: the State Apprenticeship Expansion Formula (SAEF); formula grant funding vs. competitive grant funding
- (D) Current VT grants = SAEF1 focused on teacher apprenticeship development; SAEF2 focused on construction sector apprenticeship development and growth
- (E) Administration of ACT 55; new team members; expansion shift to industry partnerships/intermediaries
- (F) Current numbers in the state of program sponsors, employers, and apprentices. The various occupations in the state with current RAP's, and some of the demographics for current registered apprentices.

BOARD DISCUSSION & QUESTIONS

Jay shared about the modernization of they system with the move to RAPIDS two years ago. Jeff noted that RAPIDS has been difficult to use, does not always work correctly, and the administration by employers/sponsors is sometimes seen as a burden when managing a Registered Apprenticeship Program. Jay shared that VT State University is a multi-employer sponsor who handles the administrative tasks for electrical and plumbing companies who have four or fewer apprentices. Pam added that keeping track of apprentice's hours and not having an easy method to track and record those hours in RAPIDS is difficult. It was also noted that apprentices often move from employer to employer thus making it a challenge to get past hours documented.

The Commissioner shared that VT signed a Memorandum of Understanding with the Republic of Austria in November 2023 concerning cooperation in advancing apprenticeships, vocational and professional education and training, and other work-based learning. Austrian Ambassador Petra Schneebauer has visited Vermont, and Jay and the Commissioner will be traveling to Austria later this month to learn more about their systems and programs.

Greg mentioned that there are likely many more apprentices who are not yet registered yet due to moving between employers, employers not being signed up yet, or just have not registered

those apprentices yet. It was noted that we need to help educate employers about RAP's, the requirements for them, the process for using RAPIDS, and the importance of tracking and reporting their OJT hours. Gerald mentioned that we need to all be clear and narrow-down the use of the terms "Apprenticeship" and "Pre-Apprenticeship" that are often used incorrectly (or not according to the current definitions in ACT 55).

Sarah shared that some states are using online applications that allows apprentices to "own" their apprenticeship program on their cell phone, input their on-the-job training hours, send to their supervisors for approval, and submit to the state to add to their RAPIDS account. Pam noted this may be difficult to teach apprentices to do this reliably. Rhoni suggested that for those programs with pre-apprenticeships, training and practice using that system be incorporated into the system early so they get in the habit.

Greg asked if the apprentice cards are still being created by VDOL as some inspectors on worksites are still looking for these. Jay shared that these are no longer provided, and that inspectors should be able to look up in the database those registered apprentices. Sarah suggested that some apprentices take a picture of their signed RAP Apprentice Agreement to keep with them. Greg shared that the cards are valuable and may even provide apprentices discounts at a local store. VDOL said this should be discussed further in terms of a process if we want to consider bringing back the cards.

Rhoni suggested we compile a list of VT initiatives and work being done by other workforce development partners, agencies, organizations, etc. so that we have the knowledge and can possibly collaborate and integrate VDOL's programs, including Registered Apprenticeship.

REVIEW OF BOARD DUTIES

The Commissioner reviewed the language from ACT 55 around the duties and responsibilities of the Apprenticeship Advisory Board:

- (1) Receive and review reports from the Department regarding provisional and registered apprenticeship programs, including programs under development and program deregistration proceedings.
- (2) Advise the Department on the creation of new apprenticeable occupations.
- (3) Advise the Commissioner on requests for ratio variances
- (4) Advise the Department on policies and procedures developed by the Department and on adoption of rules.
- (5) Provide technical guidance for identifying and promoting best practices in operating apprenticeship programs, talking about best practices in occupations working well, how to expand, and communicate this work.
- (6) Create and convene working groups that are tasked with specific activities related to improving the quality, safety, diversity, and alignment of apprenticeship programs. Working group membership is not limited to appointed members of the board and shall be selected and serve at the discretion of the Chair. Can create smaller working groups, we can include other experts from outside the board to offer recommendations on program improvements and operations.

DISCUSSION OF NEXT BOARD MEETINGS / MILEAGE REIMBURSEMENT:

The Board will meet at least quarterly. The meetings will be hybrid (in-person or online), but the Commissioner requests that members let us know so that we may prepare for those who will be attending in person. Sarah will reach out to members shortly with form/s required to request mileage reimbursement to these meetings.

The Board agreed to set the next meeting for Thursday, November 14, 2024, from 10:00 AM – 12:00 PM.

PUBLIC COMMENT:

No members of the public were in attendance

ADJOURN

Upon motion by Jeff Wimette and seconded by Greg Gove, the Advisory Board unanimously voted to adjourn the meeting at 11:57 A.M. – PASSED.