



**MEETING OF THE
TEXAS WORKFORCE COMMISSION**

DATE

FEBRUARY 15, 2022

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Tuesday, February 15, 2022

CHAIRMAN DANIEL: Good morning, everyone.

The meeting is called to order. Mr. Trobman, has anyone signed up for public comment?

LES TROBMAN: No, sir.

CHAIRMAN DANIEL: Thank you, very much. Good morning, Ms. MS. Miller.

MS. MILLER: Good morning, sir.

CHAIRMAN DANIEL: Thank you. This brings us to the end of Agenda Items 3 through 7. We'll take a short recess. All right, we're back with Agenda Item 8. This is the WIOA, CSP for program years 2020 through 2023 modifications.

JOEL MULLINS: Good morning, Chairman Daniel, Commissioner Alvarez, Commissioner Demerson, Mr. Serna. For the record I'm Joel Mullins with the Workforce Development Division. In June of 2020, the U.S. Department of Labor approved TWC's WIOA combined state plan for program years 2020 to 2023. WIOA requires states to submit modifications to their state plans at the conclusion of the first two-year period of any four-year plan to reflect changes in labor market and economic conditions or other factors affecting the implementation of the plan. Today for your consideration is the required two-year modification to the WIOA combined state plan for program years 2020 to 2023. Along with various minor updates, this plan modification includes the following: A general summary and

1 economic analysis of the impact that the COVID-19 pandemic has
2 had on TWC operations and the Texas economy, updated labor
3 market information and economic and workforce analyses,
4 information related to the implementation assessment and
5 evaluation of programs, requests for programmatic waivers, and
6 specific program updates to the vocational rehabilitation, adult
7 education and literacy, agricultural outreach, and senior
8 community service employment programs sections of the plan. This
9 morning staff recommends approval of the proposed WIOA state
10 plan modifications for posting for a 30-day public comment
11 period. At the end of the public comment period, staff will
12 bring back those comments and any additional modifications for
13 your review and consideration, and I'm happy to answer any
14 questions that you've got.

15 CHAIRMAN DANIEL: Any comments or questions?

16 COMMISSIONER ALVAREZ: None here, chairman.

17 COMMISSIONER DEMERSON: None.

18 CHAIRMAN DANIEL: Is there a motion?

19 COMMISSIONER ALVAREZ: Yes, sir. I move that
20 we approve the WIOA combined state plan two-year plan
21 modifications for posting for a 30-day public comment period.

22 COMMISSIONER DEMERSON: Second.

23 CHAIRMAN DANIEL: Moved and seconded. We're
24 unanimous. Thank you. We have nothing under Agenda Item 9. This
25 is Agenda Item 10, Statewide Initiatives. I move to take down

1 from the table the two initiatives that we placed on the table
2 last week for further consideration. If there's no objection,
3 we'll do that. Hearing no objection, I will consider both
4 proposals. If we would, let's just consider them simultaneously.
5 The way I think the debate left off last time was there was not
6 much disagreement on the what, it seemed to be the available
7 dollars. Staff reported back the balances. As I understand the
8 balances, there's about nine million dollars in available money
9 from the apprenticeship expansion, and just a little over 12
10 million dollars in money in WIOA statewide reserves. In looking
11 at it, understanding what can happen with various funding, for
12 example, I think we can spend the apprenticeship money on some
13 of the nursing training that Commissioner Alvarez had outlined
14 which is why WIOA money is needed. You sort of bounced back and
15 forth just the different considerations for the money. I think
16 it takes a little bit of both pools of money to make these
17 particular programs or these initiatives really work out. I kind
18 of looked at it, tried to understand how this would get laid
19 out, and I would offer the following amendment for
20 consideration. My view of my own initiative to do a statewide
21 state-directed apprenticeship program for some key areas that
22 are outlined in the paper is a little bit of a new way to look
23 at it. I think it provides a lot of innovation but sometimes
24 when you're being innovative, you don't want to tie up all your
25 resources. Here's what I would recommend for consideration. I

1 would willingly reduce my project to two million dollars in
2 apprenticeship expansion money, two million dollars in WIOA
3 money for a total of four million dollars. That would leave two
4 million dollars for an RFP that was originally planned for three
5 million. I'm assured by staff that two million can definitely
6 get the job done. That leaves five million dollars for
7 Commissioner Alvarez's health care professions apprenticeship
8 program. I think that's important. This health care professions
9 program, this has been a key area of concern even pre-pandemic
10 in terms of the number of nurses in the state. On the WIOA side,
11 I'm asking for two million for that, and that leaves 10 million
12 for other purposes. I do think that Commissioner Alvarez had
13 requested 10 million for his and so both of those could be done.
14 It would leave the coffers empty for this year although I think
15 in summer we approach next year. There is another two and a half
16 million in WIOA funds. It has a fairly short timeframe on it. I
17 believe June is when that money has to be spent. There's a
18 couple of good ideas that staff has for spending that. I'm not
19 considering that money in our totals here today. I think that
20 staff's proposed use for that money that we'll consider here in
21 a week or two, I think is solid and lets us get that money
22 spent. So, with that amendment, it would be two million and two
23 million for the paper I advanced last week. That would be the
24 only change to my paper. That would leave two million for the
25 RFP that had been previously contemplated, and would leave five

1 million and 10 million I believe available for the nursing
2 apprenticeship program. That amendment would need a second for
3 us to proceed on.

4 COMMISSIONER ALVAREZ: Chairman, I like what
5 you've laid out. This is good. I appreciate what you put
6 together here. It makes a lot of sense. So, I have two things
7 that I'd like to add to that though. We have an active RFA out
8 there right now and I'd really like to keep that active if
9 possible, and I think what you laid out here allows us to still
10 put two million dollars, to reduce that three-million-dollar RFA
11 to a two-million-dollar RFA. The other thing is on your
12 discussion paper you laid out automotive service technicians,
13 mechanics, production machinists, assemblers, fabricators,
14 logistics management, and supply chain analysis. I got some of
15 this information from LMCI to see what the projected jobs were.
16 I appreciate what you've put forward. The only thing that I ask
17 in what you've laid out again, I'm leaning towards agreeing with
18 it with just an exception to two things just not to cause any
19 confusion in the health care industry. Yesterday I was in
20 Hidalgo County where Richard Cortez gave South Texas College two
21 million dollars through the CARES money to expand capacity
22 building by hiring instructors to teach the class which is a
23 direct recommendation from the committee that was put together
24 in the report that we shared with the offices. The only thing I
25 would ask is if we could omit your nursing assistant and patient

1 care technician and move those over because those are very
2 similar to a medical assistant and what I have in my layout. So,
3 with that said, I would be OK with that but nursing assistant,
4 patient care assistant, if we could remove those from your
5 discussion paper, move those over to ours or to the other
6 discussion that we had that we laid out, it would just eliminate
7 any confusion but other than that, I'm pretty comfortable with
8 what you've laid out. I do tend to want to still keep the RFA
9 active. We have an RFA out there for three million dollars. I'd
10 like to keep that active if possible if you would be in
11 agreement to that.

12 CHAIRMAN DANIEL: I don't know of any active
13 RFAs. We had a proposed RFP but that's the only thing I'm aware
14 of.

15 COMMISSIONER ALVAREZ: I am looking, and
16 you're right, chairman. We do have an active RFA of three
17 million dollars that was stated last week by Courtney.

18 CHAIRMAN DANIEL: Proposed but not active,
19 right?

20 COMMISSIONER ALVAREZ: Yes, proposed. If
21 Courtney is here, she can go into detail about that but you're
22 right, it was proposed.

23 COURTNEY ARBOUR: Good morning,
24 commissioners, Mr. Serna. Courtney Arbour with the Workforce
25 Division for the record. That's correct. Commissioners, at last

1 Wednesday I believe we were set to publish an RFA with expansion
2 dollars for three million in total, and we delayed that until
3 the discussion today so it sounds as though you would have us
4 move forward with publishing that with the two-million-dollar
5 amount if what you've discussed is approved.

6 CHAIRMAN DANIEL: Is it your belief that two
7 million would still leave that a viable kind of RFP process?

8 COURTNEY ARBOUR: Yes, we believe so.

9 CHAIRMAN DANIEL: I could compliment you on
10 your choice of Red Raider colors today. I appreciate that.

11 COMMISSIONER ALVAREZ: Or a day late on
12 Valentine's.

13 COURTNEY ARBOUR: I'll bet the others don't
14 like the Red Raider colors.

15 CHAIRMAN DANIEL: Everyone has to like the
16 Red Raider colors.

17 COMMISSIONER ALVAREZ: Unless Commissioner
18 Demerson, you have anything to add but I do like what you're
19 laying out, chairman.

20 COMMISSIONER DEMERSON: I think language has
21 been laid out. It seems like it accomplishes what we were trying
22 to accomplish, and I want to thank staff for going back and
23 really digging deep and getting solutions for us. I did want to
24 say that I did hear from Mark Sherry with Baylor Scott & White,
25 Tamara, the CEO of Capital Area Workforce Solutions board, and

1 also Aida with DHR as well. Those employers are pretty excited
2 about the opportunities that have been presented so I think
3 what's been laid forward is pretty plain and simple and gets us
4 to where we want to go.

5 CHAIRMAN DANIEL: Is there a second on the
6 amendment so we can move forward with consideration.

7 COMMISSIONER DEMERSON: Second.

8 CHAIRMAN DANIEL: It's been moved and
9 seconded. Is there any further discussion?

10 COMMISSIONER ALVAREZ: I just want to make
11 clear that we did exclude the nursing assistant, patient care-

12 CHAIRMAN DANIEL: We'll pull that out and
13 push it to yours. In doing that I would ask that staff-first of
14 all, that's fine.

15 COMMISSIONER ALVAREZ: OK.

16 CHAIRMAN DANIEL: I understand your interest
17 in avoiding confusion. I would ask that staff though in some way
18 emphasize in the application process for the initiative that
19 I've advanced that this is particularly useful for employers
20 with multiple locations, and where an employer with multiple
21 locations can work across multiple boundary lines. I just want
22 to make sure that emphasis is in place.

23 COMMISSIONER ALVAREZ: Chairman, with those
24 amendments added and with Commissioner Demerson's remarks, I
25 will agree to that as well.

1 CHAIRMAN DANIEL: Is there any objection?
2 Hearing no objection, that's what we'll do. Thank you, Ms.
3 Arbour. Agenda Item 11, no. Legislative report? Oh, man. It's
4 the A team today. When is the last time you presented in front
5 of the commission?

6 CHRISTOPHER GRUNING: October [inaudible].

7 CHAIRMAN DANIEL: October? He remembers the
8 day and the time.

9 CHRISTOPHER GRUNING: Roughly. I can dig
10 deeper if you would prefer.

11 CHAIRMAN DANIEL: You've been hiding.

12 CHRISTOPHER GRUNING: Good morning, Chairman
13 Daniel, Commissioner Alvarez, Commissioner Demerson, Mr. Serna.
14 For the record, Christopher Gruning, Government Relations. As
15 was reported to you last week, U.S. House and Senate leadership
16 have reportedly reached an agreement on topline funding levels
17 for the remainder of the fiscal year although nothing has been
18 released. Because that process will take some time to work on
19 the full appropriations package, Congress plans to pass a
20 continuing resolution for the current funding. Federal
21 government funding ends this Friday, February 18th. Last Tuesday,
22 February 8th, U.S. House passed HR6617, Further Additional
23 Extending Government Funding Act. This measure extends federal
24 government funding until March 11, 2022. The Senate is expected
25 to take up the CR this week. We will continue to monitor and

1 report any developments from Congress. This concludes my
2 remarks, and I'm happy to answer any questions you may have.

3 CHAIRMAN DANIEL: Any comments or questions?

4 COMMISSIONER ALVAREZ: None here, chairman.

5 COMMISSIONER DEMERSON: When does session
6 start?

7 CHRISTOPHER GRUNING: Next January.

8 COMMISSIONER DEMERSON: Next January, thank
9 you.

10 CHRISTOPHER GRUNING: We're refraining from
11 any specific day in our mind yet.

12 COMMISSIONER DEMERSON: Thank you.

13 CHAIRMAN DANIEL: Like next January? Like
14 the one that's coming?

15 CHRISTOPHER GRUNING: We have 11 months.
16 We'll be seeking your input.

17 CHAIRMAN DANIEL: No more questions?

18 COMMISSIONER ALVAREZ: None here, chairman.

19 CHAIRMAN DANIEL: We'll let him off easy
20 today. Thank you, sir.

21 CHRISTOPHER GRUNING: Have a great day.

22 CHAIRMAN DANIEL: Executive director's
23 report?

24 ED SERNA: Having been out—

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1 CHAIRMAN DANIEL: I'm sorry. Bryan Daniel,
2 Texas Workforce Commission.

3 ED SERNA: Yes, sir. I recognize the name
4 underneath you [inaudible]. Having been out for the past two
5 weeks, I just wanted to recognize the great work that Randy
6 Townsend did and the rest of the executive staff. As usual, I
7 expected nothing less, and I do appreciate you all's support as
8 well. It's good to be back home. I have nothing else.

9 CHAIRMAN DANIEL: Mr. Serna, I would say
10 that Mr. Townsend performed well in your absence. He seemed to
11 work around the clock, and his witty repartee during the
12 commission meeting was very much appreciated. I personally have
13 no interest in seeing a replacement but your substitute I
14 thought really added a dimension to the meetings. Thank you very
15 much. It's good to see you back. I'm glad you're feeling well
16 and it's good to see you back up on your feet, absolutely.

17 COMMISSIONER DEMERSON: Chairman, did Mr.
18 Serna greet you guys with he was the Valentine walk coming back?
19 That's how he greeted me. He told me that he was the Valentine
20 coming back to the agency.

21 CHAIRMAN DANIEL: I talked to Mr. Serna
22 yesterday and he did not advance that theory to me.

23 ED SERNA: I thought I would do that after
24 Valentine's Day.

25

1 CHAIRMAN DANIEL: Makes perfect sense. Is
2 there any other order of business to come before the commission
3 today?

4 COMMISSIONER ALVAREZ: None here, chairman.

5 COMMISSIONER DEMERSON: None.

6 CHAIRMAN DANIEL: Is there a motion to
7 adjourn?

8 COMMISSIONER ALVAREZ: Chairman, I move that
9 we adjourn.

10 COMMISSIONER DEMERSON: Second.

11 CHAIRMAN DANIEL: It's been moved and
12 seconded to adjourn, and we're adjourned.

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