



# State of Tennessee

## State Workforce Development Board Meeting

### MEETING MINUTES

Friday March 22, 2024 - 10:00 AM – 12:50 PM CT

#### Board Members Present

Martha Axford Assistant Commissioner Jay Baker	Marshall Graves (Southeast)
Joe Baker	J. Paul Jackson
Jason Bates	Stuart Price
Tim Berry	Jason Schmitt
Lynda Botsch	Commissioner Deniece Thomas
Designee: Deputy Commissioner Cherrell Campbell-Street for Commissioner Clarence Carter	Jeff Vance
Billy Dycus	Ron Wade (Greater Memphis)
Michelle Falcon	Assistant Commissioner Kevin Wright
Ben Ferguson (Southwest)	

#### Board Members Present by Proxy

Commissioner Stuart McWhorter -  
Commissioner Deniece Thomas, Proxy

Assistant Commissioner Deborah Knoll for  
Commissioner Lizzette Reynolds –  
Matthew Spinella, Proxy

Kevin Vaughn - Marshall Graves, Proxy

#### Members Absent

Natalie Alvarez

State Senator Paul  
Bailey

State Representative  
Clark Boyd

Bill Godwin

Mayor Tim Kelly

Policy Director Michael  
Hendrix for Governor  
Bill Lee

Sandra Long

Mayor Mike Pogreba

*Location in parenthesis represents the state board member's membership on a local workforce board.*

#### Call to Order and Welcome

Tim Berry, Board Chair

Chairman Berry called the meeting to order at 10:00 AM. His preliminary welcome remarks and reminders preceded the following updates: 1) Congratulations to the TDLWD Adult Education division and Assistant Commissioner Jay Baker for getting alternative pathways approved which allows different ways for Tennesseans to get their high school equivalency diploma. Implementation begins April 3. Also, this week a new policy began which allows public comment for meetings like this in an open forum.

#### Roll Call

Iler Bradley conducted the roll call and established the presence of a quorum.

#### Workforce Update

Deniece Thomas, Commissioner – TN Department of Labor and Workforce Development (TDLWD)

Commissioner Thomas presented several updates:

Youth Employment Program - We were fortunate to get the support of the Governor and the General Assembly with a \$15 million investment for summer youth. This year, it has developed into the Tennessee Youth Employment Program. TDLWD is looking to ensure that any youth who wants a job has an opportunity to get one this summer as well as year-round in work-based learning. This will probably be the most aggressive campaign they've done thus

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far. Commissioner commended their Communications team for the work they've done to ensure the distribution of tool kits, one-pagers, and other marketing materials across the community.

Federal Legislation – The Stronger Workforce for America Act was the bipartisan proposal coming out of the House at the federal level. It was not a comprehensive review of the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act, but it was really going to embolden some pieces of that legislation for some things that were needed. It's been very quiet lately. The same is true for the Workforce Pell Act, the proposal for the Pell Act to cover short-term training. Both acts are going to work in coordination with each other. Commissioner Thomas will keep us updated.

Funding – A graphic was presented which showed the change in the episodic nature of their federal funding. Commissioner Thomas noted that it's very hard to have a consistent, sustained strategy for Workforce in our state when we don't know from one year to the next how funding is going to be impacted. She was granted the opportunity to meet with Congressman Fleischmann in DC about a month ago, and he and his team were very gracious as this was brought to their attention. As she has mentioned before, the funding model used for Workforce is grossly antiquated: although business activity is concentrated in the Southeast, the model does not favor our region or rural communities. We cannot ask for an appropriation at the federal level, but we can ask for program modification to review/change the formula. This will provide funding to help us maintain our competitive edge.

Facilities Tour with Governor Lee – Commissioner Thomas, Commissioner McWhorter and others joined Governor Lee to tour Babynov, a French baby food company in Macon County. Commissioner Thomas is excited about the partnership between TDLWD, Economic and Community Development (TECD), and our Governor. Workforce is incredibly important to him, and this was an opportunity to really get into those rural counties and distressed counties to really hear what they need for workforce. Challenges, opportunities, and successes don't look the same across Tennessee, so they must be able to have the uniqueness and the ability to cater a Workforce plan and implementation based on what communities need.

New TDLWD Assistant Commissioner - Jason Cecil, TDLWD's newest assistant commissioner, was promoted to lead their new Office of Transformation to help the department modernize and transform.

Customer Focused Government (CFG) - Whitney Flatt, Deputy Director of the state Customer Focused Government (CFG) team was in the audience and recognized for her incredible work along with Director Chris Fears and the CFG team. They keep state departments very connected on their planning and execution. Deputy Director Flatt will help solidify what we are expecting from our state partners.

Commissioner Thomas commended the team at TDLWD, noting that her department needs this board's voice and support as they develop a very practical but hopefully a very successful strategic vision on workforce development in partnership with our local areas. More information will be posted in SharePoint on what's happening at the federal and state level.

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## American Job Centers & Adult Education Program Assessment

### KPMG Team

Ms. Stephanie Gore presented highlights from a very lengthy report. Key findings were presented along with a road map that included some implementation timeline options and recommendations. KPMG's goal was to identify service gaps or potential areas of opportunity for Tennessee to improve our Workforce systems. This involved drilling down beyond the typical data elements that are used for federal reporting or state reporting to provide a multi-dimensional analysis from a numerical and qualitative standpoint. Although TDLWD is performing very high and high functioning in many areas, KPMG's goal was to uncover areas of opportunity. All the insights they found were tied to a recommendation and tied to key elements of TDLWD's plans.

Data sources included Title I and Title II data, direct feedback from participants who have been in the AJCs, and stakeholder feedback from staff, business partners, and employers. Data beyond these areas included broadband by county and childcare to see how the whole person was served, in addition to unannounced visits in various AJC and adult education centers to bring a multi-dimensional in-depth analysis together. This ensured that the recommendations were sound and defensible.

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Dr. Alice Yu presented selected results from the Quantitative Analysis that covered the following areas: Demographic analysis (looking at service utilization patterns and employment outcome among different demographic groups); Geographic analysis (the alignment of resources and service needs); Job posting data (from September 2022 to September 2023 in Jobs4TN); and Service Efficiency and Effectiveness. Ms. Gore presented the Qualitative Analysis results which included the Local Workforce Board, our Board, AJC and AE Workforce, Employers, and AJC Customers.

KPMG has drilled down on the data and completed the needs assessment. The roadmap from this point includes strategic planning, program design and development, stakeholder engagement, implementation, monitoring and evaluation, and continuous improvement. It was also noted that Title IV (VR program) data was not included in this analysis. The contract executed with KPMG only focused on Titles I thru III - not to ignore the other partners and programs that are integrated in our Workforce system - to assess the programs that the Department of Labor and Workforce Development (TDLWD) has immediate purview over. TDLWD intends to fill any gaps by partnering with the Department of Human Services (that oversees VR) and other partner programs.

The board was asked to look at these recommendations to determine the best way to prioritize the next steps. Immediate feedback included focusing on Jobs4TN: marketing awareness to ensure that job seekers and employers know that this tool exists, and making Jobs4TN easier to navigate so job seekers and employers will use it.

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### Approval of Minutes

Chairman Berry requested a motion to approve the November 3, 2023 minutes. It was moved by Jason Bates and seconded by Ben Ferguson to approve the minutes as presented. The motion passed.

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### Board Certification Process

#### Tamera Parsons, UTCIS Performance Consultant

Ms. Parsons gave us an update on our certification process as a board to ensure we are operating at the highest efficiency possible and meeting all of our objectives. She began with a quick reminder of what the certification program is, followed by the results of the assessment survey taken a couple of weeks ago. The presentation ended with a quick reminder of next steps. Ms. Parsons noted that for any organization of any size that wants to go through transformation, innovation and improvement, there's no better message than to see senior leadership and the governing board taking the same action.

#### Goal of Board Certification:

- Creates systematic processes & essential skills
- Demonstrates credibility & commitment to excellence
- Ensures legal responsibilities of the boards are integrated into board operations
- Promotes accountability
- Recognizes competence and expertise
- Identifies priorities for professional development

#### Elements of Certification:

- Board structure, roles, and relationships
- Board and board member responsibilities
- Governance system
- Strategic Insight
- Performance Management
- Customer & Partner engagement

The foundation of the elements of certification are standards drawn from two primary sources: the Baldrige Framework for Performance Excellence and different components of WIOA that specifically mention the board.

Certification will be determined by an assessment team made up of experienced national examiners from Baldrige. They're undergoing some training development specific to this certification program now. The survey is one component to determine a baseline. UTCIS will conduct a survey again at the end. The biggest part of the certification content comes from interviews and then document review, i.e. reviewing bylaws or policies or WIOA and

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then having discussions with board members and staff to determine competency, compliance, and then potential role model practices.

Ms. Parsons shared survey results. The response rate was 60%, and its intent was to establish a baseline of where the board performs as a whole in key areas. Survey questions were adopted from best practice research focused on assessing board perspective on the vital elements of governance.

As a key next step, we will be receiving some communication from UTCIS for interviews with the assessment team. The assessment interviews around the certification elements will consist of very clearly defined questions following the Baldrige criteria and WIOA components. UTCIS will be reaching out to us for scheduling. The assessment interview findings will be compiled, and a report and executive summary will be prepared. We will then move toward board certification from the UT Institute for Public Service (IPS) and deployment to the LWDBs.

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## Rural Enterprise Management

Nora Johnson and Katherine Rinkenberger

Customer Focused Government Management Fellows Nora Johnson and Katherine Rinkenberger presented information on the Rural Toolbox. Ms. Johnson and Ms. Rinkenberger are on a project team called Rural Enterprise Management which is tasked with supporting the Governor's Executive Order 1 to drive prosperity across Tennessee's rural communities. They have the support of many partners including state agencies and have gathered feedback about how the state could better serve rural customers.

While there is a lot happening in Tennessee to drive rural prosperity, it can be difficult to find and access some of the information about state resources. Ms. Johnson and Ms. Rinkenberger developed the Rural Toolbox as a step in the solution process. The toolbox is a comprehensive, one-stop resource that they are continuing to build out. It includes a searchable grants database which currently has approximately 150 funding opportunities. Other resources include partnership opportunities, success stories from different counties all over the state, and a rural economic dashboard provided by ECD. Access is via QR code, rack cards, or going to [tn.gov/rural](http://tn.gov/rural).

Ms. Johnson and Ms. Rinkenberger can be contacted at [rural.tn@tn.gov](mailto:rural.tn@tn.gov) if we can provide any assistance or share success stories.

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## Financial Reporting

Brian Eardley, Fiscal Service Director - Tennessee Department of Labor & Workforce Development

Mr. Eardley presented a brief, three-part FY2024-Q2 presentation consisting of:

1. A Fiscal Review of overall funding and expenditures for Titles I thru IV, followed by a deeper dive into Workforce Services (Titles I and III), Adult Education (Title II), and Vocational Rehabilitation (Title IV);
2. A Performance Review of Federal measures and State KPIs; and
3. A State Reserve Funds PY2024 budget proposal that required a vote.

### Fiscal Review

Total authorized funding for Titles I thru IV [for Workforce Services (WFS), Adult Education (AE), and Vocational Rehabilitation (VR) programs] was \$203 million. Total Expenditures for core programs were about \$44 million for Workforce Services, \$9 million for Adult Education, and \$41 million for Vocational Rehabilitation.

- WFS - Title I is the bulk of the authorized funding, and there has been a declination over the past 10 years. Ten years ago, the figure was about \$60 million: this year it's about \$41.2 million and next year it's going to be in the low \$40 million range. To find more discretionary alternatives to invest in Workforce Development, WFS applied for a \$5,000,000 National Dislocated Worker grant. Additionally, \$15 million for Summer Youth (which is being rebranded as Tennessee Youth Employment Program) has been added to the funding. Total authorized funding was \$147.4 million, and expenditures are at \$ 44.4 million. With some obligations outstanding they will likely exceed \$95 million at the end of the fiscal year. A detailed breakdown of other programs (previously requested in a board meeting) was also presented which included formula grants and discretionary grants. WFS has looked elsewhere and applied for other funding that can be utilized for these programs too.
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- AE (Title II) - Funding has remained relatively consistent from year to year and there was a little bit of carryover from last year into this year. Total authorized funding was \$14.8 million through Q2 and \$9.5 million in total expenditures. They'll likely exceed their total expenditures of \$14 million last year but should still be in line with budgets and eliminate any projected returning of funds to the federal government.
  - VR (Title IV) - Total authorized funding and expenditures through Q2 were \$41.1 million. VR runs on a federal schedule (October 1 through September 30) which is little different from some of the other programs. A couple of issues with VR that were discussed briefly in the Oversight committee included a lot of the funding restrictions from the federal government, and a match requirement.

#### Performance measures

- Federal - Overall total enrollments for Title I have been trending downwards because Title I funding has been decreasing over the years which puts more budgeting and financial constraints on local boards and service providers. Despite the downward trend, as of Q2 all their federally negotiated performance measures have been met or exceeded so Tennessee is a perfect example of doing more with less. An additional attachment highlighted these measures. There are 18 in total for Adult, Dislocated Worker, Youth, and Wagner Peyser programs. Tennessee is one of the highest performing States in terms of federal performance measures.
- State key performance indicators - There are 13 KPIs currently in place for program year 2023 to track new and co-enrollments for participating programs. For Q2 ending December 2023, eight (8) of the thirteen (13) KPIs have met or were approaching their negotiated target. For the programs that need improvement, a lot of that is due to the seasonality of the program.

#### State Reserve Funds PY2024 budget proposal

About \$5.8 million is anticipated to be carried into the next fiscal year. Approximately \$8.2 million in State Reserve Funds is anticipated to be used for next year's operating costs for a total anticipated budget of \$14 million. \$3.2 million of that will be reserved for strictly administrative costs so the remaining amount of \$10.7 million will be used for 1) Agency priorities (15.4%), 2) Economic Development (49.3%), 3) Programmatic evaluations (9.3%), and 4) Systems Administration and Maintenance (26.0%). Mr. Eardley gave a breakdown of these four areas.

Commissioner Thomas noted that the economic development portion of the budget is in response to training needed to fulfill the workforce pipeline for some of the global companies moving to Tennessee that need thousands of workers. These companies are in line with the Governor's vision and have been earmarked with the TN Department of Economic and Community Development (ECD). This portion of the budget is also used for small- and medium-sized companies that are expanding. These funds are tracked via performance measures and in collaboration with ECD to ensure that those who complete the training program are working.

Chairman Berry called for a motion to approve the State Reserve Funds PY2024 Budget proposal as presented. It was moved by J. Paul Jackson and seconded by Kevin Wright. Chairman Berry called for the vote and the motion passed.

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#### Committee Updates

##### Oversight Committee – Michelle Falcon, Chair

Highlights from Ms. Falcon include the following:

1. The Oversight Committee welcomed Amy Maberry, TDLWD WFS Assistant Administrator for the TOSS unit, as another staff liaison for their committee.
2. WFS Program Integrity Director Justin Attkisson will assist the committee with overhauling our policies, specifically reviewing 29 policies, understanding the requirements, and determining if they are up to date and/or if they need to be moved to guidances. This committee will also assess whether the policies' impact is positive or negative and bring recommendations for changes. This will be a big overhaul which may happen by May 17.
3. The fiscal presentation by Brian Eardley was reviewed in their committee and they were looking for efficiencies on spending expenditures and benchmarked best practices. This was promised by May 17.
4. VR Fiscal Director Brittney Pipkin did a really good job of presented a deep dive on those expenditures. The committee was able to ask questions for a better understanding of the VR program. Ms. Pipkin will look at best practices for their August meeting.

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5. TDLWD WIRED Assistant Administrator Ryan Allen provided a brief overview of performance metrics, and he will be looking at performance measurements of all participants using the AJCs.

### Operations Committee – Stuart Price, Chair

The Operations committee had four presentations highlighted by Mr. Price.

1. WFS Assistant Commissioner James Robertson spoke about the timeline for the procurement of a new Jobs4TN platform. They are currently assembling local stakeholders to evaluate the case management system and intend to set requirements and send out an RFP by this summer. During the break, Mr. Price spoke with James to confirm they are going to take the KPMG study and pause to evaluate it and the guidance it offers. Their effort preceded the study, so the study thankfully came in enough time to allow them to pivot and design it in accordance with some of the study outcomes. In short, their plan to have an RFP out this summer is tentative based on what they learn and decide they need to acquire. They hope to make some decisions by early next year. They recognize that the Jobs4TN site is antiquated and doesn't have a user-friendly interface.
2. Matt Murphy gave a presentation on the Tennessee Youth Employment Program. They're going to have a communication blitz to rebrand messaging and revamp marketing and outreach efforts to youth and employers.
3. John Guethlein presented an update on cybersecurity training. Although it's required for all state workers, it will be expanded to our local boards that have not previously been expected to participate. This one-hour training covers a variety of threats.
4. The Operations committee joined the Innovation committee for the last half of their meeting for a KPMG presentation.

Matthew Spinella mentioned that from the Department of Education's (TDOE) perspective, compliments were given to Troy Jenkins and the entire team that oversees the Tennessee Youth Employment Program because they've done excellent outreach not only to TDOE but also local districts and students. They also plan to reach out to parents to inform students. Compliments were also given to James [Robertson] because he mentioned giving 14- and 15-year-olds access to those funds if possible. TDOE will be working jointly with James [Robertson] to ensure this outcome.

### Innovation Committee – Marshall Graves, Vice Chair

Mr. Graves gave the following synopsis of their meeting.

1. The Innovation Committee welcomed Matthew Spinella as an additional staff liaison to their committee.
2. The committee heard from TDLWD Unemployment Insurance Assistant Commissioner Rusty Felts regarding placing his staff in our comprehensive AJCs to improve the interface for people who are seeking unemployment insurance and add support to the overall navigation of service seekers.
3. Assistant Commissioner Jason Cecil gave an update on the UI system that went live in February. Two of the highlights include the reduction in the time to file claim which is about a third as long as it was in the past, and less false positives for people who are actually eligible for unemployment insurance.
4. As an ongoing part of their committee, they like to hear about innovative ideas/programs that are being delivered throughout the state. Ms. Marla Rye and Ms. Jaylene Younge reported on a multi-part program to place state staff at the Housing Authority to get closer to their customer base and to work with the local AJC to help navigate people to the right services. Another interesting piece of that is a relationship with the Titan One Foundation and a 100-hour training program that's been developed to certify people in construction trade. On an interesting note, they found a way to pay people who are participating in this training program which lowers the barrier for people to get involved.
5. Ms. [Jennifer] Thacker talked about the Hospitality Tourism Industry Council which is focusing on looking at state data and determining areas where we could find opportunities to focus on high impact/high need areas within our economy. Hospitality and Tourism is a very significant part of our economy but the wages in this sector are low. They're going to be working with the local areas on ways to provide better service to that sector. Over time, this kind of program framework will be replicated across other sectors.

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### Local Workforce Development Board Update

#### Amber Covington - Greater Memphis Local Workforce Development Board

Ms. Amber Covington, Interim Executive Director of the Greater Memphis Workforce Development Board gave us an update on Greater Memphis. She began by giving Ms. Sondra Howell and Mr. Meka Egwuekwe time to briefly introduce themselves. Ms. Howell, Vice President of Talent Innovation and Community Development with the

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Greater Memphis Chamber, gave remarks on behalf of President and CEO Ted Townsend. She expressed their gratitude for being able to assume the responsibility of the interim fiscal entity and administrative agency for their workforce area. She also thanked Commissioner Thomas and her staff for their support, guidance, and patience as they've gone through this transition. Mr. Egwuekwe, Board Chair for the Greater Memphis Local Workforce Development Board, expressed his gratitude on behalf of the board for this opportunity to take Greater Memphis to a new level. He also acknowledged TDLWD WFS staff Justin Attkisson, Ivan Greenfield, and many others who have worked with them to deliver their constituents the quality of services they deserve. The board's goal is to be model for this state and this country with respect to workforce development. Mr. Egwuekwe and Ms. Howell both noted the great job Ms. Covington has done since becoming the Interim Executive Director.

Ms. Covington began by giving special thanks to their CLEO Mayor Lee Harris and his staff who have been very involved to ensure they get through this transition to get Greater Memphis back on track. Greater Memphis Executive Committee members Angela Massey (Business Services Committee Chair), and TDLWD staff person Jackara Jones were also recognized and in attendance. Their workforce board has been very involved throughout this transition beginning in November 2023. As they rebuild the board, the org chart was presented to show current, pending, and future positions they hope to fill by June 30.

Regarding fiscal operations, the Greater Memphis Chamber is the Fiscal Agent, and they have formed the Greater Workforce Development LLC which is a subsidiary of the Chamber to ensure that the books are clean from a financial standpoint. The cyber breached Equus payment has been resolved, and Ms. Covington thanked the State for working with them. All the contracts have been transferred to the Chamber which enables them to fully provide services in the Greater Memphis area. The fiscal team is almost complete with one remaining vacancy.

Admin/Program Updates included their One-Stop Operator reestablishing their functional teams. Within their AJCs, their partners are collaborating to function as a unit within the system. They now have a 24-member workforce board vs. the 13 members in November 2023. They are back in compliance now as a workforce board and continuing to expand: their CLEO is looking to add a few additional members. The board is continually building and resetting community relationships and is collaborating more with faith-based and community-based organizations. Service delivery has moved from being suspended to fully functional: all services that a participant would receive through an AJC are now being offered.

Soon an RFP will be released. All the service provider contracts must come up for bid. Right now, they are extending all the providers through September 30, 2024 to give them time to do a correct and thorough RFP process. Their new website, [greatermemworkforce.com](http://greatermemworkforce.com), is still being updated but the public will be able to find out what they're doing in the greater Memphis Area and more information about the board and their AJCs.

The Greater Memphis local plan is up for public comment on their website with great participation from their stakeholders. Their high focus areas are business engagement, youth, and rural engagement.

General notes included the following:

1. Their One-Stop Operators did an excellent job of working with the entire AJC ecosystem for *Pathways to Possibilities*, an event held in their rural areas targeting eighth graders who are in public private and home schools. Their theme this year was *Workforce Avengers* and they were well-received by the kids.
2. Communities in Schools, a Title I youth partner, received Slingshot Memphis' MPROVE Award which recognizes organizations for significant improvements in their poverty-fighting effectiveness as measured by the Slingshot Impact Study. Communities in Schools Memphis was one of seven organizations to receive this award for 2023. The CISM team also took some students to New Orleans on a Spring Break tour of Xavier and Dillard Universities.
3. Equus is doing more to expand their access points by serving more, harder to reach populations. They are working more with the homeless population, justice-involved individuals, and transitional housing for youth ages 18-24.

Greater Memphis is also in the midst of an AJC relocation due to many challenges they have faced with the current center's building conditions. To provide a better, morale boosting environment for constituents and staff, they have identified a site within Shelby County that is four minutes north of their current location. It is a multi-development, fully furnished complex that has a high school, YMCA, church, health center, and other nonprofits.

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Now that they have been through the hardest part of this transition, Ms. Covington and her team are really excited about what's to come in Greater Memphis and how they're going to serve participants as they continue to innovate, elevate, and accelerate.

Chairman Berry thanks Ms. Covington for the great in-person presentation that addressed a lot of the issues that we discussed at our last meeting. He noted that the turnaround in such a short amount of time is commendable. Chairman Berry also mentioned that our board structure works: we're not afraid to address issues and hold people accountable, and when we do, we see results. Commissioner Thomas also commented on the turnaround. She publicly thanking Board Chair Meka Egwuekwe for stepping into a role that no one else wanted to take, for flipping the leadership to get the board focused on what needed to be done, and for being here to stand with the transformation. She also commended Ms. Covington for bringing hope back in the workforce system in Greater Memphis. Commissioner thanked Ivan Greenfield, Chandra Pleas, Brian Eardley, the WFS fiscal team, and Justin Attkisson for the hours spent on this effort as Greater Memphis moves toward a sustainable model.

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### Employment Security Update

[Jason Cecil, Assistant Commissioner - Tennessee Department of Labor & Workforce Development](#)

Mr. Cecil gave an update on the new Unemployment Insurance (UI) Benefits System that launched February 20, 2024. One of their primary goals with the system cutover was to ensure that claimants who were actively receiving benefits didn't have any break or delay in benefits. The metrics they monitored during the first week were claimant registrations, new claims filed, weekly certifications completed, and employer registrations. These metrics were used to determine the success of the launch. They had 84,000 weekly certifications completed since they went to the new system and over 15,000 claims. Mr. Cecil was excited to report that these numbers track with what they would expect for this time of year and what they had seen in the weeks leading up to the implementation.

Another primary reasons they wanted to go to a new system was to improve the user experience. With the new system, it takes 17.5 minutes to file a claim, down from 40 to 45 minutes in the prior system. Additionally, 51% of those claims were filed using a mobile device, and the average time to file the claim drops to a little less than 16 minutes so the site is very mobile friendly.

Screenshots from the new landing page were shown which keeps the Jobs4TN branding for both Unemployment Insurance and Workforce Services.

The new UI Tax System is next, and it will replace a 45-year-old mainframe. They went through the RFP process and secured the same vendor that developed their Benefits System. Development of the tax system will begin in May with an anticipated launch in June 2025. Once it launches, employers will be able to use one site for all things related to unemployment insurance. Some key features of the tax system include a quick and easy online application (that will replace the current paper process), quick and easy quarterly reports submission and bill pay, and monitoring charges in real time.

Mr. Cecil is excited about his new position and working on modernization efforts with other TDLWD divisions.

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### Rehabilitation Services

[Kevin Wright, Assistant Commissioner-Rehabilitation Services - Tennessee Department of Human Services](#)

Mr. Wright gave updates about Rehabilitation Services. He and Commissioner Thomas have had a couple of conversations over the last few months about what partnership means for TDLWD and VR and how they can take the great partnerships between all the Titles in the Workforce system to the next level. They think they can address two specific areas and really make a difference.

- 1) Training: They have discovered that they don't necessarily know what each other does, even though they have great partnerships, their teams work together, and the AJCs are participating in strategic planning conversations. Training would provide more understanding of what each of their programs truly do because they still tend to be a little siloed. AC Wright noted that a job seeker, employer, or community who interacts with one of our teams doesn't care which Title it is or who has the federal funding: all they want is a job or an employee. TDLWD and VR should be able to at least give enough information about what they do to help
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them reach this goal. AC Wright has engaged with his training coordinator to start looking at teaching their teams what Titles I-III really mean and more importantly, how they can work as a collaborative team.

- 2) Local Board Involvement: The other area they discussed is how to take what they're doing with the local boards and in local areas to the next level by looking at improvement and potentially what an AJC could look like in the future. Local board input would be invaluable in this process. TDLWD and VR have talked to their own teams and identified an area or two for improvement, but on a larger scale, local board input would be invaluable in this process to ensure that job seekers are equipped with the skills they need to do the work and employers get qualified employees. They will be reaching out soon to see which local boards may be interested in taking on this kind of project to look at what they're doing as a team even more collaboratively than they already do.

Commissioner Thomas commended AC Wright for being a phenomenal partner who brings solutions to the table. She added that this a good starting point to have more dialogue and conversation from this board and think about how we can sort of stand up a couple of pilots, evaluate them, and decide what it looks like in the future. Chairman Berry also commented that he always likes when we're unifying our efforts rather than duplicating them, and he thanked AC Wright for the focus he identified for us.

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### Closing Remarks and Adjourn

Tim Berry, Board Chair

In May we will be hearing local and regional plans. This is something we do every four years and it requires a good investment of our time. The plans will require a quorum and votes from our board. A survey will be sent to determine whether we want to meet Thursday and Friday or have one long Friday meeting. Members were also asked to look for additional sessions between meetings that we have virtually that give us an opportunity to connect, ask questions, and get clarification. The meeting adjourned at approx. 12:50p.

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Note: An audio recording of this meeting is on file at the Tennessee Department of Labor and Workforce Development. All meeting minutes and dates are provided on the State Workforce Development Board website.

  
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Tim Berry, Chairman  
State Workforce Development Board

5-17-24  
Date