

APPROVED

THE VIRGINIA APPRENTICESHIP COUNCIL MINUTES

The Virginia Apprenticeship Council met on Thursday, June 29, 2023

COUNCIL MEMBERS PRESENT:

Dudley Harris, Chairman
Patrick Dean, Vice Chair
Dr. Latitia McCane
Dr. Jameo Pollock
J. Doug Straley
Dr. Jason Williams
Michael Okuley
Grant Shmelzer
Christopher Cash

STAFF PRESENT:

Patricia Morrison, Director
Tamson Six, Grant Alignment Director
James Edmunds, Program Support Technician
Richard White, IT Director
Ryan Goldsberry, Tech Support

CALL TO ORDER AND INTRODUCTIONS:

Chairman Dudley Harris called the meeting to order at 10:00 am.

PUBLIC COMMENTS:

Charles Skelly from IBEW Local 666: Mr. Skelly says that instead of using a traditional apprenticeship, these employers are attempting to create a subset that will be less valuable to the apprentice and to society. Solar installer does not have skillset to move onto other electrical industry jobs. The Bureau of Labor Statistics lists the medium wage of electricians at \$60,040 (May 2021), while a solar installer has medium wage of \$47,860 (May 2021). He believes that this difference is due to a lower level of skill. To ensure that these workers can go onto have a successful career, it is imperative that an apprenticeship be an electrical apprenticeship so that students of today are not pigeonholed into a narrow section of work for the convenience of a few contractors. Virginia should be encouraging training of workers that are able to install solar, battery storage systems, electrical vehicle chargers, and building and repairing the homes, offices, and factories of this state.

Lorne Seay from IBEW Local 26: Mr. Seay has been doing electrical work for 35 years. When he started, everything was hardwired but it has since migrated to PLC (Programable Logic Controllers). We did not create a new apprenticeship when it was switched from hardwired to PLC,

we adapted. Mr. Seay does not believe there should be a solar technician role since it already exists with the electrician apprenticeship.

Joseph Brinley from IBEW Local 26: The electrician Registered Apprenticeship is a five-year program that encompasses everything. Two years is not enough time to teach someone the work of a solar technician safely. Solar Technician is a skilled labor, and it would be a mistake to make try and make it a two-year program.

COUNCIL COMMENTS:

None.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES:

March 2023 meeting minutes were approved through a roll call vote.

CORRESPONDENCE:

None.

OLD BUSINESS:

None.

NEW BUSINESS:

Chris Page is the President and Founder of Commonwealth Power LLC, which is a Richmond based small business that specializes in commercial and industrial solar energy. Mr. Page is here to advocate for the importance of a solar technician role in the apprenticeship program. A solar technician apprentice role is critical to this industry because of the volume of work and the scopes of work that are required to get these solar projects built. To get solar projects completed, different types of trades are needed (electricians, landscapers, civil contractors, etc.). A solar technician should be well rounded in general safety hazards associated with PV installations, electrical safety, materials handling, equipment awareness and protection, tool hardware organization and maintenance, and housekeeping/cleanliness. Mr. Page presented a work process for a solar technician. In this work process, there is no live electrical work because he feels that should fall to electrician apprenticeship program. Mr. Page also shared some of the Related Technical Instruction that would meet the requirements of a solar technician. Lastly, Mr. Page stated that he was open to negotiation about the Relation Technical Instruction and the works processes, but he believes that the solar technician role is critical to handling the volume of work and giving us the numbers of the total amount of hours worked on projects over one megawatt. He also anticipates 300-400 of these projects coming to Virginia withing the next five years, which will require somewhere between 5,000 and 10,000 workers.

REPORTS:

Virginia Employment Commission (VEC):

Michael Okuley reported the following on behalf of Commissioner Roth:

- Virginia's seasonally adjusted unemployment rate in May decreased by 0.2 percentage points to 2.9 percent, which is 0.4 percentage points above the rate from a year ago.
- Virginia's seasonally adjusted unemployment rate is 0.8 percentage points below the national rate, which increased by 0.3 percentage points to 3.7 percent. (Averaging around 2,500 – 3,000 initial claims per week - remaining at the typical pre-pandemic volumes experienced in 2019 - and around 12,000-13,000 continuing claims per week).
- The labor force participation rate increased by 0.3 percentage points to 66.5 percent in May—the highest rate since July 2013.
- The number of employed residents increased by 29,462 between April and May to 4,440,015. Since the beginning of the Youngkin Administration, **178,459** more Virginians have been employed (4.2% increase).
- In May, six industries experienced over-the-month job gains, and five experienced a decline. The largest job gain occurred in Professional and Business Services (+3,900) to 815,200. The second largest job gain occurred in Construction (+2,600) to 215,100. The third largest job gain occurred in Education and Health Services (+1,700) to 577,700.
- The largest job loss occurred in Other Services (-1,700) to 193,900. The second largest job loss occurred in Manufacturing (-700) to 245,300. The third largest job loss occurred in Financial Activities (-200) to 216,200.
- From May 2022 to May 2023, the VEC estimates that total nonfarm employment in Virginia increased by 91,500 to 4,146,900, private sector employment increased by 76,300 to 3,418,000, and employment in the public sector increased by 15,200 to 728,900 jobs.
- For the eleven industry sectors in Virginia over the year, ten experienced over-the-year job gains, and one experienced a decline. The largest job gain occurred in Education and Health Services (+24,900) to 577,700. The second largest job gain occurred in Leisure and Hospitality (+23,300) to 409,700. The third largest job gain occurred in Government (+15,200) to 728,900.
- An estimated 99,000 workers quit jobs from Virginia employers in April. The number of quits decreased by 20,000 from March's revised figure of 119,000. That was a twelve percent reduction over-the-year and a 27 percent from the record-breaking high set in December 2021.
- Reflecting the decrease, the quits rate in the Commonwealth fell by half of a percentage point to 2.4 percent but remained at the elevated levels seen over the last two years. In April 2023, there was one unemployed worker per two job openings in the Commonwealth, the range that it had hovered around since 2021.

Virginia Community College System (VCCS):

Dr. Jason Williams, (VCCS) reported on the behalf of Dr. Angela Lawhorne (VCCS)

The following was reported:

- As a member of the Career Champions Module Workgroup initiative for SCHEV/VTOP, in preparing and shaping Internship programs. The workgroup began in March and concluded this month. Now we are soliciting our final feedback and suggestions.
- Since the launch of the Teacher Registered Apprenticeship Program, I am working with Dr. Tamson Six in conjunction with Caly Emerson, as well as our colleges to provide the RTI and explore this as a valuable option to fulfill the teacher shortage. A webinar/informational session is scheduled for July, invitees will be Employers, Business, Partnerships, and our colleges' A&WBL personnel, to include the CAO's/CWO's.
- Yesterday, I held a webinar/informational session presented by Dr. Tamson Six and Caly Emerson from VDOLI to share key points and resources in creating/developing already established Medical/Nursing fields such as Central Sterile Technicians, Phlebotomists, and Certified Nursing Assistants in creating an Apprenticeship to Employers, Business, Partnerships, and our colleges' A&WBL personnel, to include the CAO's/CWO's.
- In a combined workgroup effort, which includes VCCS, SCHEV, V-TOP, WSUT, and the Mike Rowe Foundation on Friday June 23rd, issued instructions for community colleges and higher education centers to submit a Letter of Interest to establish the Mike Rowe Works – Work Ethic Certification Program. SCHEV expects to award nine grants across Virginia. **A virtual information session is scheduled for Wed., July 12th from 9:00 to 10:30am.** Jennifer Roe, from Wichita State University Tech, will provide information about the Mike Rowe Foundation Work Ethic Curriculum and SCHEV staff will provide information about the budget and the instructions for the Letters of Interest.
- NASA Roadshow is on hiatus for the summer and will recommence in Fall. As to date, we have presented to 8 colleges/campuses and organizations, with another 13 scheduled beginning late August.
- I have and I am scheduling meetings and vetting vendors for a Digital Asset Management (DAM) System that will serve as repository for all VCCS A&WBL related information, data, and colleges matrix to have the ability to query, extract data, and way to pull down ad-hoc reports specifically per college/region along with Employers and Businesses.

JUNE 2023 VCCS UPDATES

- In FY23, G3's first year, the VCCS served 11,000 students with \$13 million in G3 funding. Close to 5,000 of those were enrolled in healthcare programs, 2,300 in Manufacturing and Skilled Trades, another 2,300 were in IT, and the remaining students were enrolled in Public Safety and Early Childhood Education at 517 and

485 respectively. 44% were minorities. 51% were non-traditional. 31% were age 25-35. 19% were over the age of 35. And 62% were female.

- Closing out this year, we are looking forward to measuring our outcomes and successes, but we are happy to report that as of 6/20/2023, we awarded 8,717 credit students and 4,363 workforce students with G3 funding, for a total of 13,080 so far.
- For regular academic (credit) enrollments, the VCCS is still experiencing increases in both headcount and FTEs, with Summer 2023 FTE enrollments at 613 (2.72%) higher and headcount of 60,439 (1.98%) higher than last year. Fall 2023 FTE enrollments of 31,319 are 1,870 (6.35%) higher, and headcount of 47,641, which is 2,376 or 5.25% higher than last year.
- VCCS' FastForward (workforce credential program) enrollments total 14,574, 11.55% or 1,509 students higher than this time last year.
- We are also planning for the 2023 Hire Education conference December 6-8 at The Hotel Roanoke. The VCCS desires more employer-partner involvement, so I encourage everyone here to consider attending and possibly submitting a proposal regarding Registered Apprenticeship Programs and best practices, and how employers and community colleges can work together to build successful partnerships and recruit a talented workforce.

ONGOING INITIATIVES

- Talent Pipeline Challenge/Infrastructure: to fill high quality jobs that will help rebuild our infrastructure and supply chains by synergizing employers, education, and training providers, at the state and local levels. VCCS has responded by the formation of the Virginia Infrastructure Academy (VIA), aligning business leaders to existing training programs by addressing urgent community needs while forecasting future requirements. Business sectors: heavy construction, maintenance, and tunnel construction, broadband expansion, on/offshore wind, and solar energy.
- As a VCCS A&WBL Business and Outreach Initiative, many colleges have increased their hosting's of Job Fairs, Career Fairs, and Employer engagement, which will increase internships, apprenticeships, and student employment.
- The VCCS' A&WBL Quarterly Newsletter provides news, updated, related information, and guidance on A&WBL topics to our 23 colleges. Each quarterly newsletter is accompanied by a meeting hereby guest speakers, presenters, and A&WBL subject matter experts can delivery important information which provides growth and expansion of the VCCS' A&WBL programs.

Division of Registered Apprenticeship (DOLI):

Director Patricia Morrison reported the following.

The USDOL Apprenticeship State Expansion grant, known as the Commonwealth Registered Apprenticeship Future Talent grant, officially ends tomorrow. Shannon Crooks, Juanita Harrison, Tamson Six, Rosalinda Solis, Sean McCusty, Monica Long all played roles in the execution of this grant over the four-year timeframe, and we are grateful that they saw this to the finish line with admirable success. Our Finance team Laura Vermillion and Jano Cymes also played a big

role in crossing the t's and dotting the i's to hopefully keep us fully legit in the Employment and Training Administration's allowable activities.

Also as of Saturday, it appears that the Virginia Department of Workforce Development and Advancement will be active, and Commissioner Pan will speak more on that.

In May, a small team from DOLI went to the Eastern Seaboard Apprenticeship Conference (ESAC) in Niagara New York. We took 2 partners from the Department for Rehabilitative Services/PATHWAYS Grant and were given an agenda slot. To my knowledge, this is the first time Virginia has been invited to speak at ESAC. The presentation was very well received and our counterparts at DARS benefitted a great deal from the conference.

Another team from DOLI will be going with me to Alabama for the NASTAD annual conference where we mesh with a large majority of the states both in the State Apprenticeship Agency side and the Office of Apprenticeship side.

From the Town Hall presentation recently held by the Secretary's office, the date of November 2023 was floated as the date that the Division of Registered Apprenticeship would be physically moving to the new agency.

Two significant changes to one industry go into effect July 1. Going forward 16- and 17-year-olds will be able to be apprentices in a properly registered program for cosmetology or barbering. Also, DPOR announced significant changes in the ratios for the four occupations: cosmetology, barbering, nail technology and esthetics. Those new standards are posted, and we will need to refresh all the Employer/Sponsor's paperwork to reflect the changes.

Finally, as usual, our metrics track by the Federal Fiscal Year.

The Division of Registered Apprenticeship relies on the National database for apprenticeship registrations - RAPIDS. The period used is federal fiscal year. From October 1, 2022, through June 28, 2023, our numbers are as follows:

Active Apprentices:	11,486
Completions issued:	1,014
Registered Employer/Sponsors:	1,541
New Sponsors:	162

2899 New apprentices have been brought on since October 1, 2022.

Department of Labor and Industry (DOLI):

Commissioner Pan reported the following:

The Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) is in the process of adding Fall Protection to the National Emphasis Program (NEP). The Virginia Occupational Safety & Health (VOSH) will update our policies and regulations in keeping with the federal guidelines.

In April, the Pharmacy Tech Inter Agency Work Group held a meeting to solicit public comment on the program. Multiple speakers associated with pharmacies, school divisions, and labor provided their opinions on the program and suggested improvements. The Inter Agency Work Group continues to make strides in improvements that allow for the protections of youth while not inhibiting their participation in the industry.

On June 27, 2023, the Safety and Health Codes Board met in Richmond. DOLI staff members provided briefings on regulations relating to Asbestos, Boiler & Pressure Vessel Operator Certification, Confined Space Standards for the Telecommunications Industry, Reverse Signal Procedures, and the Construction Industry Standard for Sanitation. Due to recent legislation, the Board is required to create new regulations regarding cranes and derricks for an active load stabilization mechanism or a passive load stabilization mechanism to prevent a hazardous rotation.

The Labor and Employment Law is currently implementing various new laws impacting Virginia's law and employment laws.

Individuals employed under Section 14(c) Certificates, which permits employers to pay subminimum wages to workers with disabilities, will no longer be exempt from the Virginia Minimum Wage Act, if the certificate was issued on or after July 1, 2023. Individuals employed under certificates issued prior to July 1, 2023, will continue to be exempt until July 1, 2030.

Senate Bill 1086 requires employers within the Commonwealth, including the Commonwealth, its agencies, and its political subdivisions, to provide unpaid organ donation leave to eligible employees. The law creates the requirement that employers provide eligible employees with up to 60 business days of unpaid organ donation leave to serve as an organ donor and up to 30 business days of unpaid organ donation leave to serve as a bone marrow donor.

Senate Bill 1040 amends the Code to prohibit employers from using an employee's social security number as an employee identification number or as part of an identification card/badge.

Employers of more than 100 employees are required to develop a workplace violence policy no later than January 1, 2024. Requirements include procedures and methods for reporting incidents and post-incident investigations. An employer that violates the provisions of the bill shall be subject to a civil penalty of not more than \$1,000 per violation. The bill prohibits retaliation from an employer based on reporting a workplace incidence and provides that any employee who makes a report of workplace violence shall be immune from civil liability.

Yesterday, on June 28, 2023, the Boiler and Pressure Vessel Safety Division held their annual Statewide meeting of inspectors and stakeholders at the Virginia War Memorial. The meeting was successful with over 50 attendees from across the Commonwealth. The event featured presentations from agency staff as well as some of our government partners such as the Department of Fire Programs and the Department of Housing and Community Development.

Kimberly Adkins, Acting Chief Boiler Inspector, has been appointed to the National Board of Boiler & Pressure Vessel Inspectors (NBBI). She is the first woman from Virginia and currently,

the only woman from the U.S. serving on the board. The NBBI is the global leader in pressure equipment safety. Ms. Adkins will work in committees that write and update inspection codes.

In closing, I want to thank you for your service and support to Virginia's Apprenticeship Council and Registered Apprenticeship.

Thank you, and Mr. Chair that concludes my report.

ANNOUNCEMENTS:

Vicechair Patrick Dean motioned to continue the solar advisory subcommittee to have a public meeting. The intent of this meeting will be to provide a recommendation about the solar technician role to the Virginia Apprenticeship Council for the September 21 council meeting. This motion was approved through roll call.

Chairman Harris announced that the next Council meeting will be September 21, 2023.

Chairman Harris thanked the Council, and all in attendance.

The meeting adjourned at 11:50 am.

Mr. Dudley Harris, Chairman
Mr. Gary G. Pan, Secretary