

- a. Ken Osborne shared that the United Association of Plumbers and Pipe Fitters added fifteen new apprentices to their apprenticeship program, and celebrated Labor Day with a catered dinner for members with guest speaker and newly elected General President Mark McManus of the 360,000 members of the UA.
- b. Lottie Ryans thanked this board, area chambers, and economic development entities for their support as sponsors of the E2E Summit. She noted the feedback received has been tremendous. Experts shared information through cross-sections of business, industry, government, and community leadership as well as K-12 and education leaders. The FTDD will be putting the presentations on their website. Brian Decker seconded that Lottie's event was fantastic.
- c. James Osborne shared that JA Street has a pre-apprenticeship program with TN High School and just signed a new student into the carpentry program and will be signing four more apprentices into their carpentry and metal building programs.

4. **Approval of Minutes - July 15, 2021 - Vote Required**

James Osborne called for a motion to accept the Minutes of the NETLWDB July 15, 2021, meeting as distributed to NETLWDB members before the meeting.

MOTION – Jay Richardson made a motion to approve the Minutes of July 15, 2021, NETLWDB Meeting as presented. Second by Martin Frye. Discussion was called for, there was none. Objections were called for, there were none. Motion passed.

James turned the meeting over to Kathy to introduce the guest speaker for today's meeting.

5. **Hard Rock Bristol Project Overview – Lindsey Holman, Community Relations Liaison, HR Bristol**

Kathy introduced the guest speaker, Lindsey Holman, Community Relations Liaison, HR Bristol, who will give an overview of the Hard Rock Hotel and Casino Bristol Project.

Lindsey gave a presentation of the Hard Rock Bristol Project with impressive pictures of the future Hard Rock Hotel & Casino Plans. The project will have an economic impact on both Southwest Virginia and Northeast Tennessee. The hotel and casino are located in Virginia, but the Tennessee state line backs up to the property. Key points of the presentation were:

- Annual Guests: 4 million guests, projecting 80% will be out-of-state visitors
- Employees: 2050 direct jobs, 1485 indirect and induced jobs
- Employee Wage & Benefits: Average income \$46,500 per year.
- Phase 1: Tower 1 with 300 rooms
- Phase 2: Tower 2 with 450 rooms
- Convention and Conference Center: 50,000+ square feet
- Outdoor Performance Venue – projected to hold 15-20,000 people
- Indoor Performance Venue – projected to hold 2000-2,500 people
- Amenities: Pools, Fitness Center, Spa, Shops & Boutiques, Multiple Restaurants, Business Center, Wedding & Event Venues, Local Artisans & Craftsmen
- Casino
- Restaurants: Higher-end and unique, including Hard Rock Café
- Shopping experiences not currently in our region
- Virtual Sports Events including auto racing and golf
- Highlight Area Attractions with excursion packages
- Approval Process: 5 of 6 processes complete, Lottery Board to complete the vetting process to approve gaming license within one year
- Temporary Casino projected to open in the first part of 2022 in a part of the old Bristol Mall building
- Using Local Artisans' and Craftsmen's wares at other Hard Rock properties in the United States
- Local Vendor & Community Partnerships - \$5 Million and Above: Fresh beef, pork & chicken, Liquor/Wine/Beer, Local Media, Promotional Items, and Telephone & Internet Service

- Local Vendor & Community Partnerships - \$2.5 Million - \$5 Million: Bakery/Pastry Items, and Bands, Entertainment & DJ's
- Local Vendor & Community Partnerships - \$1 Million - \$2.5 Million: Billboards, Building Cleaning/Carpet Installation, Building Maintenance & Roofing, Contract Labor, Fresh Flowers/Plants, Fresh Produce, Fresh & Frozen Seafood, HVAC, Landscaping Services, and Laundry Services
- Local Vendor & Community Partnerships – Up to 1 million: Custom Millwork, Deli Meats & Cheese Purveyors, Electrical Services, Equipment Supplies, Locksmith Services, Painting Supplies, Pre-Construction Services, Equipment Rental & Trade work, Plumbing Supplies, Safety & Fire Protection Services, Signs & Printing, Snow Removal Services, Taxi's, Limos & Shuttles, and Upholstery Services

Lindsey asked for any Questions/Comments –

- Is Hard Rock looking for businesses just in Bristol or all around the region? Ms. Holman replied that the impact will be regional in both Virginia and Tennessee.
- Dr. Bethany Bullock, NeSCC President, stated Lindsey makes her college and region proud and that Northeast State and Virginia Highlands Community Colleges are excited about all the workforce opportunities through partnership with Hard Rock.
- Jay Richardson asked if Hard Rock is working with Rhythm & Roots? Ms. Holman replied that they did sponsor the Piedmont Stage at Rhythm & Roots in September and are working with the Birthplace of Country Music Museum which will be included in the list of excursions.
- Ken Osborne asked after the temporary casino is built, how soon do you expect the rest of the construction to start, and have you selected a general contractor? Ms. Holman replied that Hard Rock hopes to make announcements about that in the coming months. Once the Temporary Casino is built, they will start on Phase 1. With the Temporary Casino completed they will start generating revenue as they start the new construction. Ken asked if a general contractor has been considered and if they have a shortlist? Ms. Holman explained that a vetting process has been established.

Lindsey provided her contact information: lindsey@yesforbristol.org or (276) 608-2026 and invited anyone who would like additional information to contact her.

6. **OSO Report/Scorecard - Dana Wilds**

Dana Wilds, OSO, reviewed the Northeast TN Local Workforce Development Area (NETLWDA) Report Card of statistical information from partners in the American Job Centers. Dana noted visits to the AJCs are up with a little more than 1,096 visitors from July to September. Dana noted that it is hard to compare numbers to last year because of COVID, but we had only 323 visits to the AJCs at the end of September 2020 and 797 by the end of October 2020.

Our AJCs are active, and we have a great team in all of our centers trying to help individuals navigate through the current conditions. One service provided by the Business Services Team is our job fairs, we have had several this year. We have one scheduled today at the Lynnview Community Center in Kingsport with 31 employers scheduled to attend and hope to have a lot of job seekers attend.

Dana drew the board's attention to the scorecard provided in the packet. Although the scorecard focuses on numbers, the true success stories are the individuals behind those numbers. Our team is really focused on doing the best they can to help any individual who comes into a center. Co-enrollment with partner agencies is a key goal going forward. Dana asked for any questions; there were none.

Kathy thanked Dana and mentioned that as of the end of August our Minimum Participant Cost Rate (MPCR) was at 43%, above the 40% target. We appreciate the work of the subrecipients in making that happen. County mayors have tasked us to develop a more formalized marketing process. That will be one of our goals in the coming months, led by the One Stop Operator, the Business Services Team, and Board Staff to develop and distribute materials to build an awareness of the services available through our public workforce system.

James asked Kathy to continue with the next agenda items.

7. Annual Report – Kathy Pierce – Vote Required

Kathy presented the Annual Report which is quite lengthy and appreciated all the work that went into the report from all the different partnerships who are highlighted in the Annual Report. We are especially proud of all of our success stories. Behind all the numbers there is an individual or an employer who has benefited from the work that has been done. Kathy thanked James for the work he has done in leading the Board this past year as well as all of the board members. Kathy stated that it has been a challenging time. We continue to rise to those challenges and be aligned with the Governor's goals and the goals of the TDLWD. Chairman Osborne asked for a motion to approve the Annual Report as presented.

MOTION – Lynn Tully made a motion to approve the Annual Report as presented. Second by Dr. Bethany Bullock. Discussion was called for, there was none. Objections were called for, there were none. Motion passed.

8. Performance Report – Kathy Pierce

Kathy presented the Performance Report. Kathy noted that the Northeast Tennessee Region did attain or exceed all of its performance goals. Individual metrics are in the report provided in the packet. Kathy thanked our subrecipients and partners who helped to achieve and attain those goals. Kathy asked for questions or comments. There were none.

9. Eligible Training Provider Renewal Request – Tammy Sluder – Vote Required

James asked Tammy Sluder to present the Eligible Training Provider Renewal request.

Kathy recognized Tammy for the work she has done on the Eligible Training Provider List (ETPL) noting that she is an example of superior customer service for our Training Providers. It has been a challenging time for them lately as they have put together their performance reports that required information on not only WIOA students but all of their students. Tammy worked closely with the staff at the State to the point that she received a handwritten thank you card from Rebekah Brummett, ETPL Assistant Director.

Tammy presented the list of 123 training programs that require a vote to remain on the ETPL for Northeast TN for the next two years, as per policy. The Training Providers were contacted to determine which programs they want to keep on the ETPL, and recent performance data was reviewed to determine if their completion and employment rates were within the desired ranges to continue on the ETPL. Kathy added an explanation for new board members and guests attending, the ETPL is a statutorily mandated database that consists of all training programs that have requested and been approved by the Board to receive funding under the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA). Before we can enroll a participant and send them to one of these schools to attend one of these programs, the Provider must come before the Board to request to be put on this list. A vote is required to keep these programs on the ETPL for the Northeast TN area.

MOTION – Jay Richardson made a motion to accept the Eligible Training Provider Renewal List as presented. Second by Jeff Frazier. Discussion was called for. Jay Richardson noted that the Board has turned providers down in the past, noting that this is an important responsibility of the Board. Jonathan Van Bremen, Tri-Cities Electrical JATC stated, as a Provider on the list, he would abstain from the vote. Dean Blevins, TCAT Elizabethton, and Dr. Bethany Bullock, Northeast State Community College, abstained from the vote. Objections were called for, there were none. Motion passed.

10. Budget Review – Report from Executive Committee – Vote Required

Chair James Osborne reported that the Executive Committee had reviewed and approved the budget. Mr. Osborne asked for a vote to ratify the Executive Committee's approval of the Budget

as presented. James asked for a motion to approve the Budget.

MOTION – Robin Pritchard made a motion to accept the Budget as presented. Second by Jay Richardson. Discussion was called for, Brian Decker asked if there had been an amendment to the contract with ETSU fully funding them. Kathy responded that we have not and that the Board vote is required before that happens. Fiscal staff is working with ETSU on their budget proposal and a review of the estimated final expenses and availability of funding as of July 1 before we complete the official modification. We did award them on an interim basis funds to operate for a sufficient period of time. Once we gather additional information and this Board approves the budget, we will move forward with their modification, reminding the Board that participant direct training requirement that must be at least 40% of the funding. In addition, as part of the line-item budget, we do continue to support and fund the infrastructure of the American Job Centers and other non-WIOA special grants that we receive.

Lottie Ryans asked if there were any areas of concern as we go into this next year. Kathy responded that we did take a significant reduction in WIOA funds of almost half a million dollars. It is challenging and we are trying to be conservative and reduce costs where possible.

Lottie asked Kathy if she could provide any detail around why the reductions were handed down by the State. Kathy responded she could not and asked if Mr. Playl might add additional information. Steve Playl stated the local areas funding is dictated by what the State receives. The State received a reduction in its WIOA funding, so the local areas received a reduction. The allocation is based on population, participants served, and other significant factors. Jay Richardson stated board staff also helped the budget by reducing rental costs of the AJCs by finding new locations and asked Kathy if that was correct. Kathy stated that two of the AJCs were relocated, the Erwin/Unicoi County Center and the Rogersville/Hawkins County Center to save money. James asked if there was any more discussion, there was none. Objections were called for, there were none. Motion passed.

11. Election of Officers – Vote Required

James moved the meeting to the election of 2021-2022 NETLWDB Officers.

Chair	James Osborne
Vice-Chair	Gabrielle Buchanan
Secretary/Treasurer	Martin Frye
Committees:	
Chair, Integrated Planning & Operations	Amanda Boyer
Chair, Individuals with Disabilities & Targeted Populations	Brian Wilhoit
Chair, Youth/Young Adult	Gabrielle Buchanan
Past Chair	Jay Richardson

MOTION – Dean Blevins made a motion to accept the slate of 2021-2022 NETLWDB Officers as presented. Second by Robin Pritchard. Discussion was called for, there was none. Objections were called for, there were none. Motion passed.

12. Director's Report – Kathy Pierce

Kathy presented her Director's Report:

- Proposed Regional and Local Plans Timeline was provided in the report. We will be developing new Regional and Local strategic plans to meet the Governor's goals and to meet the needs of our region.
- Unemployment by County report comparing July 2020 to July 2021 for Northeast LWDA
- Labor Force Participation by County report comparing July 2020 to July 2021 for Northeast LWDA. The focus will be to increase labor force participation in our area and will be the State's focus across Tennessee. Employers are having a challenging time filling job openings. We want to look closely at strategies for our region.
- Apprenticeship Training – The State awarded us additional funding of almost \$120,000 to serve 200 new apprentices.

- AJCs are open and operating at full capacity. We want to promote masking and screening requirements due to an increase in cases locally.
- Development of a marketing plan. Promote the use of the AJCs but funding may be limited in areas such as OJT. Will be working with Domtar to see how we can meet their needs.
- State not approved cost allocation plan. We are continuing to work with them and providing documentation as requested. Plan due next Wednesday.

Kathy asked Steve Playl if he would like to share any comments or information on the State's goals and objectives. He stated his appreciation for the opportunity to listen in on the meeting. He reinforced the State's goals, direction, and focus evolves around the objective to increase the Labor Force Participation Rate. 60.9% of the population in Tennessee participates in the labor force. Ages 16-64 who are actively working, looking for work, or laid off are counted in the Labor Force Participation Rate. 39.1% of the population in Tennessee is not engaged in the labor force. East TN Grand Division 55% of the population is not engaged in the labor force. We have a goal and a directive to increase the labor force by 10% over the next several years. We are looking to improve that in our distressed counties first. Set a 2% growth goal over the next year in those counties. We need to tap into short-term and long-term pipelines. Rethink employment pipelines that may be more non-traditional such as work-based learning opportunities for younger individuals and high school students. Lottie Ryans, FTDD, has done a tremendous job with career exploration and targeting middle school and high school students with Career Quest, and supporting different work-based learning initiatives in Northeast Tennessee. JA Street mentioned in their eagle story their pre-apprenticeship programs working with high school students. That is another area we are going to grow as a State in apprenticeship and pre-apprenticeship programs. Another strategy/pipeline we are wanting to support involves Justice-Involved Individuals returning to the workforce. Excited about upcoming information to be shared in the Northeast TN area involving an opportunity with the Sullivan County Jail, Sullivan County Sheriff's Department, and Corrections and Sullivan County employers in doing work release. We need to determine how we can support individuals who are Justice-Involved and how we can help them have every opportunity to be successful long-term. Another area we are going to prioritize focus is with Veterans. There is not a military installation in Northeast TN but there are several in Tennessee as a whole and there are a lot of individuals transitioning out of military service yearly. We want to keep them in Tennessee and help them find civilian employment. Veterans are highly trained and highly skilled individuals who are motivated and have a very strong work ethic. We want to keep them here to help fill that pipeline and to meet the demand of our employers statewide. Economic development is booming in middle and west Tennessee. The Ford announcement in West TN with help Tennessee as a whole and expect other Tier 2 and Tier 3 suppliers that will follow them and expect Northeast TN to benefit from this massive investment in economic development in West TN. The E2E event yesterday was great, really appreciated the opportunity.

Jay Richardson asked, does TN have any plan to accept any of the immigrants that have recently been brought into the US and how will that impact our area and your numbers on being able to get the percentage of the workforce employed? Steve stated he could not address this question; Homeland Security might answer it. Jay asked Steve if he had heard of any immigrants coming to Tennessee because it would impact Steve's numbers. Steve agreed it would impact the labor force participation rate, if they are documented they would count, and if they are not documented they would not impact the numbers and are not captured systematically. Jay stated he was not worried about the legal or illegal but was wondering if we were going to see more unemployed people in our area. Jay asked, are the people incarcerated counted in the Labor Force Participation Rate? Steve stated that individuals aged 16-64 and institutionalized do not count in the labor force participation rate.

Jay asked what is the biggest tool the State is using, is it Job Fairs, or what tool does the State plan to use to get people back into the job market? Steve stated that was a great question and that is what the State is trying to figure out. There are different strategies and as a State, there are two main levers. One is we can help develop an infrastructure and highlight different things and support different frameworks that are working in other parts of the State. Second is the State could try to get out of the way let local areas be more flexible. There are concerns as to why

people are not participating, a lack of childcare and a lack of affordable childcare especially for 2nd and 3rd shifts, and transportation issues. Jay asked Steve to add a third concern. Currently, there is no vehicle for people with substance abuse issues and who are not able to pass a drug screen, there are HIPPA issues that keep an employer from helping someone. These people become non-employable with this issue on their permanent record. Steve agreed and this is not only a Northeast Tennessee/Southwest Virginia issue but a nationwide problem.

Kathy thanked Steve for his participation and for adding so much to our meeting. Kathy stated that was all the business she had and turned the meeting over to James.

13. Other Business/Adjourn

James asked for other business, there was none.

James moved to adjourn the meeting, second by Jay Richardson, the meeting adjourned.

14. Next Meeting – Thursday, January 20, 2022

James noted the next NETLWDB meeting will be on January 20th. He thanked everyone for taking time out of their busy schedules and for helping the region grow.

Kathy thanked everyone for their participation and thanked James for his leadership.

Brain Decker asked if everyone saw the message in chat from Dr. Bethany Bullock about childcare. The chat message from Dr. Bullock stated Northeast State (NeSCC) has a grant that can provide funding for childcare for NeSCC students at a childcare provider of choice, as long as they are a TN quality provider. NeSCC is running a pilot project this semester where they are paying for evening slots at a Blountville provider for working students in night classes with children.