



Alaska Workforce Investment Board (AWIB) Business Meeting

February 20, 2025

8:30 a.m. – 12:30 p.m.

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MINUTES

Thursday February 20, 2025

Board members and designees in attendance

First Name	Last Name	Representation	Attendance
Nancy	Dahlstrom	Lt. Governor	Absent
Catherine	Muñoz	DOLWD Acting Commissioner (AC)	X
Deena	Bishop	DEED Commissioner	Absent
Brad	Billings	DEED Commissioner Designee	X
Heidi	Hedberg	DOH Commissioner	Absent
Christine	Marasigan	DOH Commissioner Designee	X
Julie	Sande	DCCED Commissioner	Absent
Robb	Sylvan	DCCED Commissioner Designee	X
Michelle	Rizk	University of Alaska Rep.	Absent
Beki	Toussaint	Postsecondary Voc. Education	X
Patricia	Zugg	Public Education	Absent
Tony	Delia	Native E/T Org	X
Brenda	Pacarro	Business/Industry	X
Larry	Bell	Business/Industry	Absent
George	Murray	Business/Industry	X
Nicholas	Owens	Private Sector	X
Patrick	Rose	Chair, Private Sector	X
Keith	Manternach	Private Sector	Absent
Corey	Baxter	Organized Labor	X
Kenn	Johnson	Organized Labor	X
Glenda	Ledford	Non-Voting Elected Official	Absent

AWIB staff in attendance

- Dirk Craft, Executive Director (ED)
- Jeffrey Steeprow, Assistant Director (AD)
- Rut Ocasio-Lopex, Program Coordinator
- Xavien Phillips, Grants Administrator
- Leslie Vines, Program Coordinator
- Sean Pierce, Program Coordinator
- Susan Hunter, Program Coordinator
- Laurence Gaines, Grants Administrator
- Max Micks, Grants Administrator
- Breanna Cooper, Administrative Assistant



February 20, 2025

DOLWD staff in attendance

Dan DeBartolo, Director, Division of Administration Services (ASD)
Paloma Harbour, Director, Division of Employment and Training Services (DETS)
Dan Robinson, Research Chief, Research & Analysis (R&A)

Office of the Governor staff in attendance

Rebecca Clay, Special Assistant, Office of Lt. Governor Nancy Dahlstrom

Guests in attendance

Tara Palmer, University of Alaska (UA)
Cari-Ann Carty, Alaska Safety Alliance
Wendi Kannenberg, Vice President, McKinley Research Group LLC
Katie Berry, President, McKinley Research Group LLC

8:30 Introduction

- Call to Order..... Chair Patrick Rose
Chair Rose called the meeting to order at 8:32pm. Executive Director Dirk Craft took roll.
Other participants introduced themselves.

- Welcome Chair Patrick Rose
Chair Rose welcomed AWIB members and guests to today's board meeting.

- Agenda Approval..... Chair Patrick Rose
MOTION to approve the meeting agenda by Brenda Pacarro
Second by Tony Delia
Discussion - none
Vote taken
MOTION carries

- Welcome DOLWD Commissioner Muñoz
Acting Commissioner Muñoz addressed the board and provided a brief overview of The Alaska Workforce Future Document and Workforce Career Needs Assessment. Commissioner Muñoz also highlighted current Legislative activity pertaining to AWIB:
 - DOLWD is working on Draft legislation to increase funding for the State Training and Employment Program (STEP) for individual grants and competitive training grants
 - HB61: proposal to allow for flexible work schedules to offer a 3/12 schedule. Also includes provisions around child labor: proposal to do away with work permits for 16yo workers and provide a blanket approval for employers employing 14yo and 15yo.
 - FY26 budget looks to increase AVTEC's industrial electricity program and plumbing
 - HB76 and SB82 both target additional funding for secondary education in the base student allocation (BSA) towards career and technical training
 - Working on a regulatory package to improve the Certificate of Fitness (COF) process. One would allow Alaska to accept licensures from additional states. Also proposing to



February 20, 2025

provisionally accept licensures from all states while they go through the COF process in Alaska.

8:45 New Members' Introductions & Welcome..... Chair Patrick Rose
Chair Rose presented the newest board members, who provided brief introductions: Sylvan Robb, George Murray, Nicholas Owen, and Kenn Johnson.

Members and staff discussed filling vacant board seats and restructuring the statutes that established AWIB.

9:05 Break

9:10 Final Regional Needs Assessment Report.....McKinley Research Group, LLC
Windy Kannenberg, Vice President, and Katie Berry, President, of McKinley Research Group, reviewed the findings of the Alaska Workforce Career Needs Assessment report. The focus of the report was identifying opportunities for statewide outreach, relationship building, aligned stakeholder engagement through listening sessions across all six economic regions, and an Alaskan employer survey. Businesses reported challenging operating, socioeconomic environments as well as capacity and financial constraints resulting in limited resources. Current trends show less workers are traveling to Alaska. 2/3 of employers surveyed across all regions indicated having difficulty hiring. Employers are contending with broad barriers to housing, childcare, public education, public transportation, a changing workforce, and salaries and benefits in both urban and rural communities. It was discussed statewide that a strong public school system is a critical workforce development pipeline.

The recommended next steps from the Final Regional Needs Assessment Report include clearly defining AWIB's role within Alaska's workforce development and how that role impacts employers, students, and workers, prioritizing key relationships, and creating a communication strategy.

10:08 Break

10:30 Research and Analysis Q&A..... Dan Robinson, Chief
Dan Robinson, Chief of Research & Analysis (R&A), provided a brief overview of R&A. R&A puts out a monthly Alaska economic trends magazine, as well as annual reviews on how much Alaska is relying on non-residents to fill jobs being produced in the state. R&A primarily focuses on housing research, cost of living research, general economic research: jobs, wages, population. Alaska is currently in a negative .6% migration. There is also a decline in the number of working-age people in Alaska. Discussion regarding upcoming projects around the state and the challenges associated with getting workers. Mr. Robinson reviewed the challenges Alaska is facing due to past decisions made across the state.

10:45 Public Testimony

No one was present for public testimony.



February 20, 2025

11:00 AWIB Grants Unit Update..... Jeffrey Steeprow, AD
Assistant Director Jeff Steeprow provided an update on all the grants AWIB oversees: Alaska Construction Academy (ACA), State Apprenticeship Expansion, Equity and Innovation (SAEEI), State Training and Education Program (STEP), The Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act Youth (WIOAY) and Alaska Technical Vocational Education Program (TVEP). Board members and staff reviewed how each grant is structured and discussed ensuring that opportunities are available to all Alaskans across the state.

11:30 Action Item(s) AWIB Staff

- RESOLUTION 25-01 Supporting the Alaska Workforce Future Plan
MOTION to approve RESOLUTION 25-01 Supporting the Alaska Workforce Future Plan by Tony Delia
Second by Brenda Pacarro
Discussion – Members discussed supporting the plan, as well as coming up with goals and next steps. The plan is an outline that can be updated moving forward.
Vote taken
MOTION carries

- 2025 AWIB Legislative Priorities
MOTION to approve 2025 AWIB Legislative Priorities by Christine Marasigan
Second by Tony Delia
Discussion – ED Craft reviewed a few priorities that AWIB will be focusing on during the FY25 legislative session: increased investment in STEP; continued support for TVEP; and protecting Unemployment Insurance (UI) funds from the reverse sweep. ED Craft will share additional documents following the meeting. Board members were encouraged to reach out with additional thoughts regarding Legislative priorities.
Vote taken
MOTION carries

12:00 Other Business

- Alaska Adult Education Grant Applications Approval
AWIB staff requested volunteer board members to help score the grant applications for the Alaska Adult Education Grant. The proposed reviews will occur between March 24 – April 4.

One-Stop Operator Certifications are needed this spring for the Kodiak Job Center, Sitka Job Center, and Bethel Job Center. Every three years, AWIB must certify that the One-Stop Job Centers in the state meet the criteria of a comprehensive job center or an affiliated job center. Additional information will be sent out following the meeting.

Discussion regarding the subcommittees available for the new board members.

Chair Rose shared a brief overview of AVTEC’s FY2026 programs and requested more information on the different funding streams for AVTEC. Director Dan DeBartolo and Commissioner Muñoz provided some additional clarification on the information shared.



February 20, 2025

ED Craft mentioned the next meeting in May will likely occur over two days to allow board members to review all the grant applications in-person.

12:30 Wrap Up and Adjourn

MOTION to adjourn by Christine Marasigan

Second by Tony Delia

Discussion – none

Vote taken

MOTION carries

The meeting was adjourned at 12:36pm.