



**MEETING OF THE
TEXAS WORKFORCE COMMISSION**

DATE

AUGUST 31, 2021

1
2 TUESDAY, AUGUST 31, 2021

3 CHAIRMAN DANIEL: Good morning, everyone.
4 The meeting is called to order. Mr. Trobman, has anyone signed
5 up for public comment?

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7 LES TROBMAN: Good morning, commissioners,
8 Les Trobman, general counsel. We have no general comment this
9 morning. We have one individual who would like to address the
10 commission on Item Number 11, and so we'll hear from them at
11 that time.

12
13 CHAIRMAN DANIEL: All right. Thank you. Good
14 morning, Ms. Miller.

15 MS. MILLER: Good morning, sir.

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17 CHAIRMAN DANIEL: Thank you. Let's take a
18 short break. We'll come back with Agenda Item 8 in a few
19 minutes.

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21 CHAIRMAN DANIEL: All right. Let's come back
22 with Agenda Item 8; Discussion, Consideration, and Possible
23 Action Regarding Approval of Local Workforce Development Board
24 Nominees.

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SHUNTA WILLIAMS: Good morning, Chairman,
Commissioners, and Mr. Serna. For the record, Shunta Williams,
with the Workforce Development Division. And we have Workforce
Board nominations for Workforce Solutions Capital area, Greater-

1 Dallas, the Coastal Bend and Permian Basin before you for
2 consideration today. Staff recommends that all nominations be
3 approved. And I'm here to answer any questions you may have.
4

5 CHAIRMAN DANIEL: Questions or comments?

6 COMMISSIONER ALVAREZ: None here, Chairman.

7 COMMISSIONER DEMERSON: None.

8 CHAIRMAN DANIEL: Is there a motion?
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11 COMMISSIONER ALVAREZ: I move that we
12 approve the Board Nominees for Capital Area, Greater Dallas, the
13 Coastal Bend and Permian Basin.
14

15 COMMISSIONER DEMERSON: I second.

16 CHAIRMAN DANIEL: It's been moved and
17 seconded. The motion carries. This is Agenda Item 9; Discussion,
18 Consideration, and Possible Action Regarding Subsequent
19 Certification of Local Workforce Development Boards under the
20 Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act.
21

22 SHUNTA WILLIAMS: Again, good morning,
23 Chairman, Commissioners and Mr. Serna. For the record, Shunta
24 Williams, with the Workforce Development Division. And before
25 you for consideration are the 2021 Subsequent Certifications of
all 28 Local Workforce Development Boards. In accordance with 29
U.S. Section 3122(c)(2), the governor shall, once every two

1 years, certify one board for each local area in the State.
2 Subsequent certification is focused on the extent to which local
3 boards are composed according to state and federal law. The
4 statute requires board to insure that workforce investment
5 activities are carried out in the local areas to meet the
6 corresponding performance accountability measures. Based on
7 staff's review of the boards' composition according to their
8 local agreements and continued improvement on services delivered
9 to meet local performance measures, it is our recommendation for
10 the commission to recommend subsequent certification to the
11 governor of 28 Local Workforce Development Boards. This
12 concludes my request and I'm available to answer any questions
13 you have.
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16 CHAIRMAN DANIEL: Any comments or questions?
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18 COMMISSIONER ALVAREZ: None here, Chairman.
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20 COMMISSIONER DEMERSON: None.
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22 CHAIRMAN DANIEL: Is there a motion?
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24 COMMISSIONER ALVAREZ: Chairman, I move that
25 we accept staff recommendations and approve the Local Workforce
Development Boards for submission to the Governor for
certifications as required by the Workforce Innovation and
Opportunities Act.

COMMISSIONER DEMERSON: I second.

1 CHAIRMAN DANIEL: It's been moved and
2 seconded, and we're unanimous. Motion carries.
3

4 SHUNTA WILLIAMS: Thank you.

5 CHAIRMAN DANIEL: This is Agenda Item 10;
6 Discussion, Consideration and Possible Action Regarding
7 Submission of Purchasing from People with Disabilities Program
8 Advisory Committee Report.
9

10 JUAN GARCIA: Good morning, commissioners.
11 Good morning, Mr. Serna. Juan Garcia with the Voc. Rehab
12 Division. The Purchasing from People with Disabilities Advisory
13 Committee was established by the Worker's Commission under Texas
14 Human Resources Code Section 122.005. Both, that section, and
15 the Texas Administrative Code Section 806.21(b)(1) required the
16 committee to set specific objectives for the program. In keeping
17 with that requirement, the committee has developed objectives
18 that align with the purpose of Chapter 122 of the Human
19 Resources Code, which is to further the State policy of
20 encouraging and assisting persons with disabilities to achieve
21 maximum personal independence by engaging in useful and
22 productive employment activities. Commissioners, the Advisory
23 Committee's Chaired by Ms. Linda Logan. She is currently Senior
24 Public Policy Analyst for the Texas Council of Developmental
25 Disabilities and has been a longtime advocate for people with
disabilities. Ms. Logan is with us today via Zoom and will

1 present the objectives as adopted by the committee. So, with
2 that, I will turn it over to Ms. Logan.
3

4 LINDA LOGAN: Good morning. Thank you, Mr.
5 Garcia. Chairman, Commissioners, and Mr. Serna, it's been an
6 honor to serve on the Advisory Committee and I wanted to take
7 this opportunity to thank you for appointing me Chair this year.
8 I'm going to quickly walk through the four objectives that were
9 selected by the committee. You have, I think, the report in
10 front of you. Objective one is to promote the employment
11 potential of people with disabilities. One way to do this is by
12 educating potential employers using evidence and data
13 demonstrating the success of people with disabilities in a range
14 of community-based occupations. Another way is to reach out to
15 organizations representing people with disabilities and to
16 enlist their help in advertising job openings. Objective two is
17 to optimize and enhance the career advancement of people with
18 disabilities through vocational assessment and job training. And
19 the way to meet this objective is to use the same techniques and
20 supports that are used for people without disabilities.
21 Information about these training opportunities needs to be
22 easily accessible to people with disabilities, as well as
23 employers. Objective three is to expand opportunities for
24 competitive integrated employment for people with disabilities.
25 And that requires focus at the program level, but it can be
supported and encouraged by the agency. Objective four is to

1 define and promote living wages for individuals with
2 disabilities in their community. As you know through your work
3 and the work of Texas legislatures and advocates, the State law
4 has changed to require people in TPD Program to be paid at least
5 a Federal Minimum Wage of \$7.25 an hour. This is an important
6 improvement; but in some communities even that, \$7.25 an hour,
7 is not a living wage. Developing a method for understanding what
8 constitutes a living wage in the various urban, suburban and
9 rural communities will help Texas and the State-Use program to
10 plan for the eventuality of an increase in the Federal Minimum
11 Wage. And, by the way, \$7.25, which was the adopted Federal
12 Minimum Wage 12 years ago, that same amount now requires almost
13 \$2.00 more, \$9.23. So, also, an adjustment for that would be
14 helpful. In closing, I do want to emphasize that these
15 objectives reflect TWC's current and ongoing commitment to
16 providing employment services to people with disabilities. They
17 are not new ideas. They are good ideas that are the bedrock for
18 the program improvements we've seen in recent years. And that
19 will be needed in the future. Thank you for the opportunity to
20 share these objectives. Mr. Garcia and I, would be happy to
21 answer any questions you may have.

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CHAIRMAN DANIEL: Thank you very much. Are
there any comments or questions?

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2 COMMISSIONER ALVAREZ: Chairman, all I'd
3 like to say is, I'd like to thank Ms. Logan for her volunteerism
4 and all the great work that she's doing. And, also, thank you,
5 Mr. Garcia, for the great report.

6 LINDA LOGAN: Thank you.

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8 COMMISSIONER DEMERSON: I echo those
9 sentiments. And, Ms. Logan, thank you for the work that you're
10 doing. The committee's been meeting on a number of different
11 occasions and a lot of work in that regard. And we've had the
12 opportunity to spotlight. I love objective one, where we're
13 actually spotlighting employers in our State that are making a
14 difference in the disability space. And so those individuals
15 that have over 10 percent of their population hiring in the
16 disability space, we're bringing attention to that in big, big
17 ways. And so thank you for the work that you're doing.

18
19 LINDA LOGAN: Thank you.

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21 CHAIRMAN DANIEL: Thank you very much.

22
23 JUAN GARCIA: Thank you.

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25 CHAIRMAN DANIEL: All right.

LINDA LOGAN: Thank you.

1 school age children would remain at the 75th percentile. We
2 anticipate that these will increase our costs by approximately
3 20 percent statewide. We're also seeking your direction on
4 increasing the Board Contract Year '22 childcare allocation by
5 \$87 million in order to help address these increased costs in
6 care. And those allocations are an attachment in your meeting
7 material. At this time, we continue to work with Operational
8 Insight on the exact BCY '22 performance targets. We're updating
9 those calculations with new, more recent data and will have
10 those for you in the near future. And with that, I'd be happy to
11 answer any questions that you have?
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14 CHAIRMAN DANIEL: Comments or questions?

15 COMMISSIONER ALVAREZ: None here, Chairman.

16 Thank you, Reagan.
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18 COMMISSIONER DEMERSON: None. Thank you,
19 guys, for the briefings.
20

21 CHAIRMAN DANIEL: I have a couple questions.
22 So, for parents, what does--if this change goes into effect,
23 what does this mean for parents? Like, what's the bottom line
24 for parents on this?
25

REAGAN MILLER: For parents, the intent is
that we're offering a competitive rate that would encourage more
childcare providers to participate in the subsidy program.

1 Increasing parent choice and access to childcare providers
2 across the state.
3

4 CHAIRMAN DANIEL: And the \$87 million that
5 we kind of need to, sort of, hold our own; where is that money
6 coming from?
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8 REAGAN MILLER: We've had year over year
9 increases to the federal allocations to Texas over at least the
10 past five years. We have some balances at the state and so we
11 would be using those state balances to cover the \$87 million
12 increase.
13

14 CHAIRMAN DANIEL: And so for parents to have
15 a more meaningful benefit, we can use \$87 million that we, in
16 some ways, didn't spend on this particular purpose. Move it
17 forward. Does that enable us to serve approximately the same
18 number of families that we've been serving?
19

20 REAGAN MILLER: It will. We're projecting
21 that we may--and again these are all preliminary numbers. There
22 may be a slight reduction of about 2,000 on what we could have
23 served, versus what we would serve with this new money and these
24 new rates.
25

CHAIRMAN DANIEL: But, there's natural
attrition. No one would lose their particular benefits. So, if
there were 2,000 fewer families because we have a more

1 meaningful benefit, anybody who would not be receiving would
2 have already been slated to come off of those benefits.
3

4 REAGAN MILLER: That's correct. No children
5 would ever be terminated from care. We handle adjustments and
6 the number served through natural attrition in the program.
7

8 CHAIRMAN DANIEL: So, the \$87 million,
9 that's not all we've kind of saved back. We have some additional
10 money to carry us for a few years into the future on this
11 particular exercise; is that correct?
12

13 REAGAN MILLER: We do. We've worked with
14 finance and we think that at this level of a board allocation,
15 we could sustain this amount for three years. Assuming no
16 additional increases to the federal grant.
17

18 CHAIRMAN DANIEL: And this is an action that
19 TWC has taken in an effort to sort of find the reasonable spot
20 for the amount of benefit to ensure that we have quality care.
21 At the same time, parents can work, you know, in whatever job it
22 is they're working on the Texas Workforce.
23

24 REAGAN MILLER: Well said. It is.

25 CHAIRMAN DANIEL: You know, three years is a
long time, and it's a short time. And I agree with you. I mean,
while the past is no predictor of the future, particularly where
the Federal Government's concerned, it would appear that the

1 available amount of dollars for childcare has continued to
2 raise. It's a reasonable proposition for this commission to say,
3 okay, we'll try this for three years. And then we'll try to
4 understand the situation. There are a lot of other dollars that
5 are swirling about with regard to childcare as a result of
6 pandemic--the four pandemic relief packages that we've seen come
7 out of the Federal Government. We're not tapping any of those
8 dollars for this effort. This is our core childcare program that
9 we've had for years and we hope to continue to have for years.
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12 REAGAN MILLER: That is correct. This money
13 does not consider at all any of the one-time stimulus funds that
14 we--
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16 CHAIRMAN DANIEL: And so those one-time
17 stimulus funds, we've been trying to direct those to actual one-
18 time projects. And we'll continue to do that now in the coming
19 weeks as we continue to allocate those dollars to some very
20 useful one-time projects.
21

22 REAGAN MILLER: We have. We're trying to be
23 mindful that those are one-time funds. And anything we do, you
24 have to scale to the fact that the funding will not be around
25 forever.

CHAIRMAN DANIEL: Yeah. I do appreciate that
line of thinking on you and your staff's behalf. Because, you
know, I would hate to create an expectation for large numbers of

1 parents, only to see that go away. I like the sustainability of
2 this. I certainly like the thought that goes into this. This
3 seems like a reasonable benefit. It's one that enables parents
4 to go back to work. We've got a little over a million jobs on
5 WorkInTexas, right now. We have way fewer folks than that still
6 receiving unemployment benefits. Which, even--I was a
7 communications major for a reason, but I can do the math and see
8 that there's a gap of about six or 700,000 open jobs out there.
9 And I don't want childcare to be an impediment for someone to
10 get a job. Particularly, a middle skills job that may lead to a
11 greater career path and increased wages for that family. This is
12 the kind of benefit that can really help us bridge that middle
13 skills gap. I really do applaud the work that went into this.
14 And the management of the money to enable us to do this. Thank
15 you. Is there any other questions or comments?
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19 COMMISSIONER ALVAREZ: None here, Chairman.

20 COMMISSIONER DEMERSON: None.

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22 CHAIRMAN DANIEL: All right. Is there a
23 motion?

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25 COMMISSIONER ALVAREZ: We do have one individual who is registered to speak on this item. We have Brooks Jones. Mr. Jones, if you could unmute yourself and proceed.

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MR. JONES: Hi, can you hear me?

CHAIRMAN DANIEL: Yes.

MR. JONES: We are in South Plains and panhandle regions of that. We have a total of 12 childcare facilities and we're very excited about the proposal that Ms. Miller just presented. This will actually keep us keeping with children on subsidiary care. And so we really look forward to that rate increase and hopefully that that happens quickly. I'm hoping to see it this year. The 30 percentile has made it where we started limiting the number of potential spots that we have for our children. So, we hope to see those increase. So, thank you.

CHAIRMAN DANIEL: Are there any other additional questions or comments?

COMMISSIONER ALVAREZ: None here, Chairman.

CHAIRMAN DANIEL: None?

COMMISSIONER DEMERSON: None.

CHAIRMAN DANIEL: Is there a motion?

COMMISSIONER ALVAREZ: Chairman, I move that we approve setting the minimum threshold for childcare reimbursement rates as presented by staff. Allow staff to make any necessary adjustments to ensure compliance with 40 TAC

1 Section 809.20 and increase the board's BCY '22 Childcare
2 Allocation by \$87 million.
3

4 COMMISSIONER DEMERSON: I second.

5 CHAIRMAN DANIEL: It's been moved and
6 seconded. The votes unanimous. Thank you. Do we have anything
7 under Agenda Item 12? Agenda Item 13?
8

9 CLAY COLE: Good morning, Chairman Daniel,
10 Commissioner Alvarez, Commissioner Demerson, Mr. Serna. For the
11 record, Clay Cole, Unemployment Insurance Division. Unemployment
12 claims and calls continue to trend downward helping UI teams
13 really reduce our overall assignment inventory. And really work
14 on improving our overall customer service delivery. You may
15 recall the majority of Federal Pandemic Unemployment Programs
16 ended in Texas effective with the week ending July 26, 2021.
17 Since that time, with the Texas economy continuing to recover.
18 And as we've seen our unemployment rates steadily improve. And
19 for the most recent reported month of July, Texas rate was down
20 to 6.2 percent from a historical high of 12.9% back when the
21 pandemic first hit. So, on August 20, 2021, the Department of
22 Labor notified the Texas Workforce Commission that TWC triggered
23 off state extended benefits. As Texas' three-month total
24 unemployment rate dropped to 6.4 percent. Which is below the
25 threshold of 6.5 percent required for paying state extended
benefits. Under Federal and State law, TWC has a three-week

1 trigger off period beginning with the benefit week ending August
2 28, 2021, through September 11, 2021. Those three week endings,
3 August 28, September 4, and September 11, serve as that three-
4 week trigger off period. And so as a result, TWC will stop
5 paying extended state benefits, with benefit week after
6 September 11, 2021. So, September 11, 2021, will be the last
7 week for state extended benefits. Claimants currently receiving
8 extended benefits may continue to receive benefits for weeks
9 through September 11, 2021, as long as they remain eligible and
10 file timely payment requests. And, as you pointed out, Chairman,
11 there are a lot of jobs available. And so the UI Division will
12 continue to work closely with Workforce Team with our
13 reemployment services in really getting the people back to work.
14 That's really gonna be a big focus for us as we transition
15 forward. And as all the federal benefits ends, as of September
16 11, 2021. So, this concludes my update. And I'll be happy to
17 answer any questions you might have.
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21 CHAIRMAN DANIEL: Any questions or comments?

22 COMMISSIONER ALVAREZ: None here, Chairman.

23 COMMISSIONER DEMERSON: None. Thank you.

24 CHAIRMAN DANIEL: Thank you very much.
25

Anything else under Agenda Item 13?

COMMISSIONER ALVAREZ: No, sir.

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2 CHAIRMAN DANIEL: No. legislative report
3 today? No. Let's see. I know we have an Executive Director's
4 report.

5 MR. SERNA: Yes, sir. Just an opportunity to
6 provide the commission with a brief notice that we'll be
7 changing organizational structure in the agency effective
8 tomorrow. The emphasis of the change is to continue to enhance
9 and improve our service to our customers. As well as our
10 outreach in communication efforts. During the past 18 months in
11 the pandemic, I noticed that we were providing good customer
12 service given everything that we were experiencing. If I had to
13 grade us, I'd probably grade us at about a B, or a B-. However,
14 I continue to think that after the rush of the pandemic and when
15 things ever got back to normal. And they will. That if we
16 continue to apply ourselves and we continue to focus on
17 providing outstanding customer service then we could really
18 excel. So, with that in mind, I'm changing the organization and
19 creating a new division. Its working title is the Customer Care
20 Division. It will take about a year to get setup. But, the
21 intent of that division is it will be a main door into both TWC
22 and the Workforce System. So, that someone that doesn't know
23 that--they don't need to know that, you know, we provide
24 childcare or all these other services. All they have to do is
25 get to that one place and they can get the service that they
need. This will not be a call center or a chat bot that simply

1 tells you to call someplace else, or simply gives you a website.
2 It will actually be a call center that helps the caller. Whether
3 that caller is an employer, a jobseeker, family needing
4 childcare or some other assistance. Or, a student looking to
5 start their career and wants to get some information on
6 apprenticeship opportunities, or internship opportunities, or
7 things like that. That will take a little time for us to setup,
8 but we're creating that division effective September 1. We're
9 also, one of the things that I noticed during the pandemic is,
10 again, I think we did a good job getting the word out on what we
11 were doing and we were dealing with. But, I don't think we did a
12 great job doing that. And I think if we apply ourselves we can
13 do a great job with outreach and communications. So, I
14 reformulated one of our divisions. The current division of
15 Office of Employer Initiatives. Changed that functions and
16 expanded that division. They'll still be doing that. Our focus
17 is still on one of our core customers, our employers. But, it
18 will add outreach, strategic outreach efforts and communications
19 to that group. To that end, I'm combining all of our strategic
20 outreach, our communications, design services, things like that
21 into that division. If we were in the private sector, this
22 division would be the equivalent of a marketing arm; but, we're
23 not. So, what it is, is it is an outreach arm. The intent is not
24 just to put press releases out, but to get information to our
25 customers, to other individuals in the state on how all the

1 services that we can provide to them. You know, I heard this
2 session and last session that we were one of the state's best
3 kept secrets. And we really don't need to be a best kept secret
4 considering all the services that we provide to all the citizens
5 in the state. More than just unemployment insurance and job
6 seeking. So, the concentration of that group is going to be to
7 enhance our outreach, improve our communications, as well as
8 continue to do the things that they're doing now with regard to
9 skills development, high demand JET, and the other grants that
10 they work with. Also, final major change is, I made some
11 structural changes to--or, will be making some structural
12 changes to what is currently the regulatory integrity division.
13 That's a real cool name and real good name. And we all
14 understand what that means, but the public doesn't understand
15 that that's where fraud gets addressed. And I know that
16 firsthand because every time I talk to one of customers about a
17 fraud issue that they were concerned about, and I told them I
18 was referring them to Regulatory Integrity Division, eight or
19 nine out of ten times I would get back, "They're gonna handle my
20 fraud, right?" So, I would confirm that they are. So, one thing
21 that we're doing is taking Regulatory Integrity and having them
22 concentrate on fraud, fraud detection and prevention, as well as
23 monitoring. I'm taking the collections group out of that
24 division and moving it to finance. It's a financial function.
25 I'm also changing the management of that division. So, that

1 there can be some concentration on fraud and fraud detection.
2 They're also changing the name of that division. I gave them the
3 option. And the division will be the Division of Fraud Detection
4 and Compliance Monitoring. Very clear and our public can
5 understand--the public and our customers can understand very
6 clearly what that division does and what their emphasis is. The
7 rest of the agency will pretty much stay intact. Of course,
8 making these changes I did dissolve the external relations
9 division. The various departments of that division are moving to
10 either the new division or the restricted division of strategic
11 outreach and employer initiatives, or to other divisions. All
12 the staff--no staff are being impacted. Nobody's losing their
13 job. Nobody's losing their pay. Nobody's losing positions. But,
14 all the staff will continue to remain in place. One last change,
15 I'm sorry, I almost forgot it, and it's pretty significant as
16 well is currently LMCI was in our Labor, Market and Career
17 Information Department was in external relations. There's an arm
18 in that group, a department in that group, in LMCI, that focuses
19 on educational outreach. They're going to the new strategic
20 outreach division. The LMCI, the numbers part of LMCI, is going
21 to what is currently the division of operational insight. So,
22 we're putting all of our--what I consider to be all of my
23 numbers people together. Both the performance numbers and the
24 economic forecasters and economic numbers together. So, we can
25 begin to provide more information to the commission and to our

1 customers concerning the economy, our performance. And we can
2 begin to make more data-driven decisions from a single point.
3 That kind of encapsulates, or summarizes all the changes that
4 we'll be making. They'll be a message going out to all of our
5 employees as well a revised work chart that everybody can see
6 probably later today. I'll entertain any questions that you all
7 might have.
8

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10 CHAIRMAN DANIEL: Any questions or comments?

11 COMMISSIONER ALVAREZ: I was just going to
12 ask if there was going to be an update to the work chart, the
13 vice organization chart. So, good. I do have something for Ed
14 during this time. One, is something I'd like to ask you and
15 staff. The other one's gonna be on a personal note. Ed, I would
16 like staff to explore utilizing the remaining IKEA funds to host
17 a second-chance reentry roundtable and invite employers,
18 economic development incorporations, and training providers. The
19 purpose of the roundtable will be to disseminate information
20 regarding Fidelity bonding, work opportunity tax credit,
21 educating employers about the value of hiring second-chance
22 individuals to fill the gaps in their workforce and highlight
23 TWC's ongoing work in this space. Such as MOU's with TDCJ, TDLR,
24 and Wyndham School District. And the Department of Labor Reentry
25 Grant in the Rio Grande valley area. I would also like our
office of employer initiatives, or the new office that you've

1 just created, or mentioned to us, to provide information
2 regarding grant opportunities. And would like OEI to organize
3 the event and work closely with my office. I would extend the
4 invitation to my fellow commissioners to join me during this
5 roundtable. Also, pleased to explore any opportunities we may
6 have for Civil Rights Division to provide information at this
7 roundtable, as well as AEL. We should also invite TDCJ and any
8 sister agencies that can contribute positively to this
9 discussion. Organizations such as TAB, or Chamber of Commerce's
10 around the state. I'd also like to make some remarks, or
11 elective state a couple of things that are a little personal.
12 We're gonna have a--maybe a picture here. But, we have three
13 individuals that just recently retired. And I'd kind of like to
14 acknowledge them. Dolph Lesak, after 25 years of state service
15 with the Texas Workforce Commission is retiring affective today,
16 August 31, 2021. He began his career with the agency on May 1,
17 1996. Dolph, also spent most of his career at TWC in the finance
18 division. He was instrumental in the functional design of the
19 Cash Draw and Expenditure Reporting System. And has exhibited
20 tremendous customer service to not only all TWC vendors and
21 grantees during the business with TWC, but all TWC employees
22 throughout the agency. We wish him all the best enjoying his
23 many hobbies, golfing, fishing among some of those. I'd also
24 like to acknowledge Jimmy Mullins, retired July 31, 2021, as
25 well. After more than 35 years of service with TWC's

1 Unemployment Insurance Division. Most recently, Jimmy served as
2 the ombudsman helping customers directly with UI issues. Jimmy
3 was our original "Texas gentleman." His kind and steady manners
4 set customers to ease and his Texas-talk made them smile. Jimmy
5 was tenacious in helping customers resolve their problems.
6 Lastly--that's an old picture of Jimmy, by the way. Lastly, I'd
7 like to acknowledge someone who is very helpful to all the
8 commission offices and this agency. And that is Rosa Perez.
9 Retired for the second time on July 10, 2021. After more than 44
10 years of service with TWC's Unemployment Insurance Division.
11 Rosa served for eight years as a manager in UI before donning
12 her ombudsman cloak to help both English and Spanish speaking
13 customers. Rosa was our walking UI encyclopedia. There was no UI
14 law, rule, or procedure, or contact she did not know thoroughly.
15 She was incredibly thorough in her work. Freely sharing her
16 knowledge with her coworkers and staff, as well as resolving
17 difficult customer issues. She helped train new staff and served
18 as team leader for a number of teams over the years. Together,
19 this dynamic pair served as part of the trio here at the agency.
20 Which includes Francis Brown, who's still working for TWC during
21 the worst of the pandemic. These amazing people worked overtime
22 to help UI handle the huge surge of calls while still remaining
23 responsive in their heavy workloads. They handled high-priority
24 items and responded as rapidly as possible to serve customer
25 issues. They continued working closely with our payment partners

1 to help our customers get their benefit payments. And were the
2 first to help TWC use enhanced verification to identify
3 claimants under new PUA rules using LexisNexis. We celebrate the
4 great contributions of all these Texans to the Texas Workforce
5 Commission. We will miss them and we wish them all the best in
6 their retirement. On a sad note, I'd like to also acknowledge
7 that we recently lost Steve Riley, former head of Tax Division,
8 who passed away Friday. Our prayers are with him. Thank you, Ed.
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11 COMMISSIONER DEMERSON: Commissioner

12 Alvarez, thank you so much for making that recognition. I heard
13 clapping and clapping is very appropriate for those individuals
14 that have retired and reached those milestones. So, thank you so
15 much for that recognition. Secondly, I look forward to working
16 with you and the team as it relates to the initiative that
17 you've mentioned. I'm not sure which form or capacity that will
18 go forward, but I look forward to providing that opportunity to
19 employers here in our state to make a difference in that area.
20 And then lastly, Ed, in regards to the work chart and the
21 changes, I commend you on the work that's going forward there.
22 One thing that you mentioned, the customer contact center and
23 taking a year to standup. I challenge the team to do that more
24 quickly than later. I think with technology and the things that
25 we know that you want to do, you may have an opportunity to do
that even faster. A year, you can come back and look at it at
that point. But, if you can stand it up faster, that makes this

1 agency that much better. So, I challenge you guys to do that.
2 Take every advantage to do so. And then lastly, something you
3 and I talked about. Communication for this agency is very, very,
4 very, very important. Especially, with what we have recently
5 dealt with. And, however, you stand it up, or so, we've talked
6 about what my thoughts are in regards to that. But, making sure
7 that we are solidly on board is very important that we take care
8 of business--
9

10
11 MR. SERNA: Yes, sir.

12 COMMISSIONER DEMERSON: --in that regard.

13
14 MR. SERNA: Absolutely.

15 COMMISSIONER DEMERSON: Thank you.

16
17 MR. SERNA: Yeah.

18 COMMISSIONER DEMERSON: That's all.

19
20 CHAIRMAN DANIEL: All right. Thank you. Is
21 there any other order of business to come before the commission?

22 COMMISSIONER ALVAREZ: None here, Chairman.

23
24 COMMISSIONER DEMERSON: No.

25
CHAIRMAN DANIEL: All right. Is there a
motion to adjourn?

MR. SERNA: Mr. Chairman, can I ask very
quickly, since it is regarding the use of the IKEA, the

1 remaining balance on the IKEA funds; is that something that you
2 want us to come back to the commission with? With, here's how we
3 would structure it. So, that you all can take a--
4

5 CHAIRMAN DANIEL: Yes.

6 MR. SERNA: --make a decision on that.

7 CHAIRMAN DANIEL: Yes.

8 MR. SERNA: Good. 'Cause that's not my money
9 to spend.
10

11 CHAIRMAN DANIEL: Agreed.

12 COMMISSIONER ALVAREZ: Ed, I would ask that
13 you have input from the commission office as well.
14

15 MR. SERNA: Absolutely, sir. No, no. Yes,
16 sir.
17

18 COMMISSIONER ALVAREZ: I would. And I agree
19 with Commissioner Demerson. We talk about communication being
20 important to this agency. We've had multiple employers that
21 have, along with folks that have called the office, the offices,
22 I'm sure; regarding reentry in services. And, again, just
23 piggybacking off of your initiative and your goal here to
24 promote what the service is that we have at the agency. This is
25 just another avenue of doing it for this population. So, I
appreciate that. So, if you could get the offices engaged in

1 that, I'd like to see this moving forward and something come out
2 soon.

3
4 MR. SERNA: Yes, sir.

5 COMMISSIONER ALVAREZ: Thank you.

6
7 MR. SERNA: Absolutely.

8 CHAIRMAN DANIEL: Yeah. So, just, you know,
9 once you've developed the program bring it back for a final
10 vote. And then we should be..

11
12 MR. SERNA: Yes, sir.

13
14 CHAIRMAN DANIEL: We'll look at it like
15 that.

16 MR. SERNA: Yes, sir.

17
18 CHAIRMAN DANIEL: All right. Anything else?

19 COMMISSIONER ALVAREZ: None here, Chairman.

20
21 CHAIRMAN DANIEL: Motion to adjourn?

22 COMMISSIONER ALVAREZ: Chairman, I move that
23 we adjourn.

24
25 COMMISSIONER DEMERSON: Second.

CHAIRMAN DANIEL: It's been moved and
seconded to adjourn. The votes unanimous. We're adjourned.