



**MEETING OF THE
TEXAS WORKFORCE COMMISSION**

DATE

JUNE 30, 2021

1 WEDNESDAY, JUNE 30, 2021

2 CHAIRMAN DANIEL: Good afternoon. The work
3 session is called to order. Let's just, we'll go in the order of
4 the agenda. So, the first thing we're gonna tackle.

5 COMPUTER: Recording in progress.

6 CHAIRMAN DANIEL: It's serious. I don't even
7 know what to say. We'll just go in the order of the Agenda. So,
8 we'll take up 2021 Statewide Monies with WIOA and TANF. This is
9 a continuation of the May 18th Commission Meeting where we moved
10 this here for a little additional discussion. Commissioners, I
11 have a proposal I'd like to present, which incorporates some
12 discussions I've had with staff. And some discussions I've had
13 with some other folks, including some Executive Directors of the
14 Board. But, we can approach this in whatever way you want. We
15 can all lay out our proposals. We can verify the balances. I
16 think staff's here primarily as a resource today. If you guys
17 have some--do you have a presentation ready, or are you just
18 here to answer questions?

19 COURTNEY ARBOUR: We're here as a resource.
20 We've briefed some ideas, you know, just to get--

21 CHAIRMAN DANIEL: Sure.

22 COURTNEY ARBOUR: --thoughts.

23 COMMISSIONER ALVAREZ: Chairman, I would
24 have no problem if we could all share some initiatives or ideas

25

1 we have. And I wouldn't mind starting with you, or Commissioner
2 Demerson.

3 CHAIRMAN DANIEL: I'm happy to start out.
4 So--

5 COMMISSIONER ALVAREZ: Yes, sir.

6 CHAIRMAN DANIEL: --if you don't mind, I'm
7 gonna give you--it's just simply entitled a White Paper and it's
8 ending the middle skills gap through comprehensive career
9 pathways. Kim's gonna put some here on the tables. So, if your
10 staff would like to see that while we go over this, those are
11 available there. Also, for general counsel and others as well.
12 So, I took a look at what I believed the WIOA and TANF budgets
13 to be. Kind of understood how much money was available. Looked
14 at some conversations, notes of conversations that I'd had with
15 Workforce Division staff and some other folks. And then
16 incorporated that with a conversation that I had started with
17 some Board Executive Directors. Really as far back as April.
18 So, we've been kind of thinking about these statewide balances
19 and looking at our statewide initiatives. You know, for a couple
20 months now, I think we've all be doing that. And the thing that
21 jumped out at me from the page is that we really talked at this
22 agency a lot about middle skills jobs, the middle skills gap.
23 And how we can get enough middle skills graduates to take those
24 jobs. And we do in fact have a lot of programs that are really
25 kind of focused on that tasked. But, they do other things as

1 well. And given that we had a balance here and understanding
2 that staff had some, I don't want to say wish list items. That
3 it seems like they were hoping for the best. I think they had
4 some really, kind of, directed strategies that they wanted to
5 explore further. So, I combined staff's ideas with my own ideas.
6 And also with some ideas from the Executive Directors of some
7 boards. Let me tell you just a little more about that. And I'll
8 tell you what's in the White Paper. So, in April, I sent an
9 email to all 28 Workforce Boards to the Executive Director.
10 Asked them, sort of, what were some items, if there were a
11 balance in either WIOA or TANF, what would they spend it on?
12 And got 11 responses back from the 28 boards. There were two
13 things that jumped out as being the one that the most boards
14 wanted. Although, it wasn't a large, it wasn't even a majority.
15 It was just a plurality of boards. One was career pathways. And
16 another was just sort of career and education outreach. So, I
17 was thinking about that, what they told me. Looking at some of
18 the notes that I saw from staff. And realized that it might be
19 time for TWC to consider a larger effort, a multipronged effort
20 to really address the middle skills gap. And so, what I'm
21 proposing today is to carve out \$11 million from our balances in
22 both TANF and WIOA. Proportional as to where the balance lies
23 and how the money could be used. And with that I would like to
24 propose a large statewide effort to end the middle skills gap.
25 This might be the first big step toward getting that done. And

1 here are some of the things that I would really want us to
2 consider. Including under this \$11 million framework for staff
3 to work from. So, a career pathways app. Probably have to work
4 with a vendor. Really something people could use from their
5 phone, or perhaps even a tablet or a laptop computer. To really
6 look at career pathways and how they can either upskill, or
7 reskill, or transition to a new career within the workforce
8 while still preserving their ability to earn wages. This app
9 would be something new that we would do. Probably in addition to
10 WorkInTexas and MyTXCareer.com, although it likely would use
11 some similar data. And I think some of that would be driven by
12 our ability to work with a contractor. You would want to see job
13 opportunity information. And then you would want to see your
14 real-time kind of advice on how to plug into educational
15 offerings to get there. Related to that, but kind of a separate
16 category, some very in-depth job coaching. Places where people
17 could call, perhaps interact with online; probably call and get
18 some job coaching advice. This would be a personal coach. This
19 would be people-to-people contact. And it would be something
20 that might even go above and beyond what we're already doing
21 here with boards. Also, within this ending the middle skills
22 gap. You know, I think there's some things that we're doing that
23 we should extend. Some certifications for metrics users. We've
24 actually talked about that one before. But, then more training
25 and certifications in trades, manufacturing, high-tech. Some of

1 that might be from apprenticeship. Our existing apprenticeship
2 program, which is robust at this point in terms of funding,
3 would play itself well into ending the middle skills gap
4 initiative. While still doing some of the other work, it does a
5 standalone apprenticeship initiative. It's very large, very
6 robust. And I think it plugs right in. And then the last
7 category here is just kind of a mobile credential tracker.
8 There's a lot of people doing work in this space right now.
9 Higher Education Coordinating Board. There's a lot of interest
10 in this. I think even TWIC has done some work in this area. I
11 don't think that precludes us from doing the work. My proposal
12 would be to take up these topics, assign \$11 million to staff;
13 meaning, not to exceed \$11 million. I think likely what would
14 happen if we were to move forward with this today is that staff
15 would take this framework, perhaps you might want to add to it.
16 There may be some things you might wish to discuss taking away.
17 But, we would find a framework that kind of fit what staff needs
18 to do; some things they're telling us need to be done; some
19 things the boards have asked to be done. And we would tell them,
20 don't spend more than \$11 million. Allocate it from WIOA and
21 TANF, which is today's discussion. But, I would also want to
22 advise staff. Be aware of other dollars that may come available.
23 Particularly, one time dollars. And if we need to substitute
24 those into this you should bring that before the Commission to
25 do that. So, I tried to keep that brief. I tried to keep that to

1 a summary. But, I don't mean that I don't want to discuss it. If
2 you have questions or comments that you'd like to make about
3 this; if there's something you were wanting to work on that's
4 kind of similar to something I'm wanting to work on. I'll just
5 say now, I'm very open to including your ideas. I'm much more
6 serious about this framework. This larger initiative. This
7 multimillion dollar initiative to end the middle skills gap. I
8 think the tools I've included are good ones. I think if you have
9 better ones I would mostly certainly want to adopt those in
10 there. And I think we could work together to get some things
11 done. So, I'm saying that just to say, I've made a very brief
12 presentation here. I've given you, actually what's a fairly
13 comprehensive paper, because staff has to develop some of these
14 things. And I'm definitely interested in your ideas concerning
15 this.

16 COMMISSIONER DEMERSON: Are you going to
17 allow me to go?

18 COMMISSIONER ALVAREZ: If you want, or I can
19 go.

20 COMMISSIONER DEMERSON: I defer to you.

21 COMMISSIONER ALVAREZ: Okay. So, Chairman
22 Daniel, I think all the three ideas that you have here fit right
23 into what we've been talking about. I like the career pathway
24 app. I'm okay with the metrics, or matrix, and mobile credential
25 tracker. But, I would like to discuss a couple other ideas. But,

1 I do agree with what you laid out. And I think what I'm about to
2 lay out may compliment some of the things that you just said.
3 And I appreciate the fact that we use the word, "highly skilled"
4 and of course, "middle skill." Let me just go over for the
5 record, we owe a statewide funding balances. For the record, we
6 have \$9,323,388; \$9,323,000, right? Okay.

7 CHRIS NELSON: The--

8 COMMISSIONER ALVAREZ: And TANF--go ahead.

9 CHRIS NELSON: Commissioner, the--for WIOA
10 the actual amount is \$9,350--

11 COMMISSIONER ALVAREZ: Even better.

12 CHRIS NELSON: --178.

13 COMMISSIONER ALVAREZ: Even better.

14 CHRIS NELSON: For TANF, the balance is 6--

15 COMMISSIONER ALVAREZ: \$6,600,000.

16 CHRIS NELSON: \$6.6 Million. Yes.

17 COMMISSIONER ALVAREZ: And that's not even
18 including another resource that I know of, so--of funding.

19 CHRIS NELSON: And AEL is 3.7--

20 COMMISSIONER ALVAREZ: Seven million.

21 CHRIS NELSON: Yes.

22 COMMISSIONER ALVAREZ: But, that's for later
23 discussion, right? Okay. So, let's talk about--and I also want
24 to appreciate the work that staff has put into this. We did ask
25 some questions. And particularly under the working document that

1 we were given, the information and job connection particular
2 portion where we are--and this is all--this is all going to be--
3 as we go, I'm also going to reference the amount of money that I
4 would like to use. So, keep in mind the Chairman has brought out
5 three initiatives. We can negotiate and talk about the \$11
6 million. Who knows, we may be able to use it all. There is an
7 abundance of money. This is something that I want to discuss
8 with my fellow Commissioners. And I think this would allow us to
9 fine tune some of the things that he's laid out. Okay. So, on
10 the information and job connection, which you have given us as
11 one of the documents to work with. I have an idea. I'd like to
12 use, out of the \$9 million of WIOA--I'd like to use \$2 million
13 for virtual reality technology, or headset glasses, or goggles
14 to provide innovative, engaging and scalable ways for students
15 to explore high wage, high demand, and careers in their region.
16 I feel that through these realty VR headsets, we can do
17 simulations. We can also reduce the cost, time and resources
18 required to showcase a day in the life of a career to a student,
19 no matter their location. By purchasing the licensing rights and
20 VR headsets, and housing them with our educational outreach
21 teams; which the Chairman referenced that he's had one of the
22 things that the boards had shared with him, the value of these
23 individuals; we can incorporate their use in workshops with
24 students, parents, faculty and staff in rural and urban
25 districts across the state. And there are multiple benefits by

1 having these headsets that I can share at a later time. This
2 initiative will support the work of the boards with educational
3 outreach teams. I would also like to direct our Executive
4 Director to research funding sources to purchase VR goggles or
5 headsets for our State Office Education Outreach Team as well.
6 That's one idea. That's \$2 million and I'm assuming that we're
7 going to discuss from the \$9,350,000. So, then let's subtract
8 the \$2 million from that--I mean, the \$2 million from that. And
9 you can certainly ask questions if you want during my
10 discussion. Job preparedness including short-term training. We
11 had a section on job preparedness including short-term training.
12 I'd like to ask that \$4 million of short-term WIOA money be used
13 for training, less than three months. For parents of children
14 enrolled in subsidized care to connect them with a career in-
15 demand occupations. Short-term training such as Apprenticeship
16 Readiness Program, MC3, and something we're all familiar with
17 the NCCER. Or, any other training connecting these parents to
18 in-demand fields. I think we talked about that in the last work
19 session. The value of having parents going through these short-
20 term training. Especially, when their kids are in subsidized
21 childcare. So, we had the \$2 million subtracted from the
22 \$9,500,000, right? Or, was it \$9,050,000; okay, \$9.4. And then
23 we had--that leaves us a balance of about seven. And then, of
24 course, this one that I just rolled out was a \$4 million. That

1 would leave us with \$3 million, plus \$3.3 million. And then I
2 have one more initiative which is--

3 COMMISSIONER DEMERSON: Commissioner
4 Alvarez?

5 COMMISSIONER ALVAREZ: Mm-hmm.

6 COMMISSIONER DEMERSON: So, the virtual tech
7 goggles, that was \$2 million?

8 COMMISSIONER ALVAREZ: So, yes. No, that--
9 yeah. That was \$2 million.

10 COMMISSIONER DEMERSON: And then you had
11 another that was \$2 million?

12 COMMISSIONER ALVAREZ: The other one was--
13 which is the short-term training. The WIOA short-term training,
14 less than three months, which we've discussed, was \$4 million.

15 COMMISSIONER DEMERSON: Was \$4 million.

16 COMMISSIONER ALVAREZ: Mm-hmm. So, that's a
17 total of six from the nine.

18 COMMISSIONER DEMERSON: Thank you.

19 COMMISSIONER ALVAREZ: And then, of course,
20 the Chairman referenced the matrix, the \$1.1, we could use for
21 that, Chairman. So, again, I agree with that. So, that handles
22 the--that's four, two, and 1.1; gives us a balance. If staff
23 wanted to work with some of these items that you have brought
24 forth that are for consideration, you would have \$2.2 million.
25 That's still just with WIOA. I haven't even touched TANF. So,

1 you would still have your \$6.6 million for TANF. All I touched
2 was WIOA. So, when the Chairman talked about \$11 million that
3 he'd like to rollout; you still have the \$6 million from TANF
4 left over, and then of course the balance of \$2.2 from WIOA.
5 That's \$8 million. Any questions?

6 COMMISSIONER DEMERSON: So, Commissioner
7 Alvarez, what's your total--total amount that you had?

8 COMMISSIONER ALVAREZ: My total amount would
9 be, four and two is six, plus 1.1; which is something the
10 Chairman has already referenced. The mobile app. It would be
11 \$7.1.

12 COMMISSIONER DEMERSON: So, that's about \$18
13 million in total, between Chairman's \$11 million, and your \$7
14 million. So, \$18 million.

15 COMMISSIONER ALVAREZ: I think that some of
16 the things we discussed could actually be blended.

17 CHAIRMAN DANIEL: Turn my microphone on so
18 people can actually hear me. So, in practice, the two
19 suggestions that Commissioner Alvarez has, I could definitely be
20 supportive of. I might not support the dollar amounts. And I do
21 want to talk about that. It's just not a do or die proposition
22 for me.

23 COMMISSIONER ALVAREZ: And I'd be willing to
24 negotiate that.

25

1 CHAIRMAN DANIEL: Yeah. This fits into the
2 framework that I'm suggesting.

3 COMMISSIONER ALVAREZ: Mm-hmm.

4 CHAIRMAN DANIEL: So, let's don't--I guess,
5 I'm taking the long way around this today. I'm not going to
6 worry about the totals right now. We're gonna make the totals
7 fit how much money we have. Courtney and Chris are already
8 calculating. They're gonna find us some more money. I'm kidding.
9 We're gonna make the totals fit where we are. Let's get all the
10 ideas on the table. 'Cause this is two really good ideas that we
11 just heard. Of course, I think my ideas are good. And I hope you
12 do too. But, let's get all the ideas and then we can start
13 talking about money and see how this is actually going to work
14 out.

15 COMMISSIONER ALVAREZ: And I would agree
16 with that. And the reason that I said--the initiatives that I
17 rolled out just touched WIOA. And so, again, we haven't even
18 touched TANF. We still have the \$6.6 and then of course there's
19 still a \$2.2 in WIOA after the initiatives. And again, I think
20 some of the things that the Chairman has rolled out, and I'm
21 sure Commissioner Demerson may have some ideas, I think there's
22 opportunities for us to blend some of the ideas that we're
23 proposing. It's just the technology that I'm reinforcing. Like,
24 the headsets and who are the recipients of the awards, the
25 grants. So, boards would receive them, career and educational

1 outreach specialists. Funding would be available to folks that
2 do short-term training. Like, our apprenticeship schools. Folks
3 like that. We are very familiar with what happened in Hurricane
4 Harvey, where we had money that was allocated. And one of the
5 local boards in Houston actually put some training in two weeks.
6 Which is similar to the NCCER. But, the MC3 Multi-Craft Core
7 Curriculum allows the individual to make their own decision of
8 what path they want to take. 'Cause there is a distinction
9 between the two training programs. But, they're both short-term.

10 CHAIRMAN DANIEL: There's some strength to
11 your VR, meaning virtual reality. We have too many VR's. But, to
12 your VR, I was probably in late 2019, I was on an information
13 trip up in Silicon Valley. And we were visiting different
14 computer companies looking at the ways that they're training
15 workers is what we were specifically looking at. Anyway, we
16 ended up in the office of one where they use virtual reality
17 training to give students at least what it would look like in an
18 operating room. So, I put on the goggles. We were doing heart
19 surgery that day. And--

20 COMMISSIONER ALVAREZ: Did he make it,
21 Chairman?

22 CHAIRMAN DANIEL: He made it.

23 COMMISSIONER ALVAREZ: Good.

24

25

1 CHAIRMAN DANIEL: I did pretty good work
2 according to the folks there. But, you know, you don't get the
3 smell of the operating room.

4 COMMISSIONER ALVAREZ: Mm-hmm.

5 CHAIRMAN DANIEL: It was real. I mean, I saw
6 stuff I didn't want to see.

7 COMMISSIONER ALVAREZ: Exactly.

8 CHAIRMAN DANIEL: And I'm not a doctor for a
9 reason. And so, it was very realistic. I think if you could
10 honestly--I think if you could honestly develop a tool where
11 students could experience a little bit about--maybe not specific
12 occupations, but certainly occupational fields, I think you
13 could do them a favor at an early enough age that we could get
14 them the education they needed. I definitely think it has merit.
15 And I for sure want that to be on the list. And we can have a
16 discussion about dollars today and sort of figure out how that
17 works. If you've--

18 COMMISSIONER ALVAREZ: I'm okay with that,
19 Chairman.

20 CHAIRMAN DANIEL: But, if you've got your
21 list out there, what I'd like to do is let Commissioner Demerson
22 have a chance to get--

23 COMMISSIONER ALVAREZ: Mm-hmm.

24 CHAIRMAN DANIEL: --his ideas on the list.
25 And then let's start to talk about them all together. 'Cause I

1 think my experience with this Commission has been that's how we
2 do our best work is when we sort of play off of each other's
3 ideas. And get some synergy going up here. So, if--

4 COMMISSIONER ALVAREZ: Sure. I'd just like
5 to add that I agree with you, Chairman. I was in last week. We
6 awarded a grant to Mary Ross's district where the students at
7 the high school, at Baird ISD, received VR goggles, headsets for
8 training. In a small community no bigger than Lockhart. And I
9 thought that was amazing. The only other high school that I know
10 of that has done something like that, the simulation, is in Rio
11 Grande City. And so, congratulations to the board for doing
12 that. And so, we've been having those discussions for some time.
13 My trip to Everson, Emerson and some other employers where
14 they've had these headsets has made it--I mean, you're right.
15 It's like being there in person. But, think about some of the
16 training that we could implement, OSHA 10, OSHA 30. We could
17 talk to parents about--and this is getting into Mahalia's area,
18 but AEL, speaking English, reading, writing, math, basic math. I
19 think this is, especially for my collocate educational
20 specialists that are out there. Those people that are out there
21 representing the agency talking to these students. Who knows
22 what they could do with them. So, I appreciate your comments and
23 your support on this. Commissioner Demerson?

24 COMMISSIONER DEMERSON: So, I think you guys
25 already spoke to the balances that we have. So, I'll address

1 these without dollar amounts. As you guys have brought up dollar
2 amounts, but I'll do it without dollar amounts. Connecting
3 foster youth to employment. That's something that's important to
4 me.

5 CHAIRMAN DANIEL: What was that again?

6 COMMISSIONER DEMERSON: Connect foster youth
7 to employment, but I'm going to add folks with disabilities as
8 well. And the number of the initiatives that I'm bringing out
9 probably fall under some of these categories that we have here.
10 And then we'll work back at any funding amounts or so. The other
11 Jobs Y'all activate--reactivation of Jobs Y'all. We have some
12 tools that are already out there. And so we need to really look
13 at what's already available at the agency in terms of career
14 apps. Because I think we took a dive into that at one point. I'm
15 not sure what's out there now. But, I actually had an
16 opportunity to use Jobs Y'all to commercials that we developed a
17 while back. And they're all tied to career pathways, in addition
18 to utilizing Reality Check and the like with some students
19 today. And so those tools are still very well-utilized and well-
20 accepted tools. So, Jobs Y'all, either activation, reactivation,
21 or building on it. And it probably will fall under some of these
22 categories that have been expressed here. The other is outreach
23 efforts as well. And I haven't defined this clearly. But, any
24 outreach efforts that we might be able to do in collaboration
25 with, say, the Governor's Office, Economic Development and

1 Tourism Team as they do outreach efforts. Or, Robert Allen's
2 group. Any outreach efforts along those lines. If there's
3 anything that we can do to play as an asset to what they're
4 doing or looking to do. I want to look at opportunities under
5 that umbrella as well.

6 CHAIRMAN DANIEL: So, I'm familiar with Jobs
7 Y'all, but give me if you could--if I could ask you to give me
8 some working parts to that. I know what it is. I know what it's
9 supposed to do. But, I could use a little more information on
10 that.

11 COMMISSIONER DEMERSON: Yeah. And I'll let
12 staff jump on that. But, basically, it was a marketing, an
13 outreach campaign that we developed a while back with
14 commercials geared towards students in reaching the market in
15 real time. And I know there was talk about making sure that that
16 was available on laptops, on desktops. Where you had the ability
17 to get it in real time. And so our agency's efforts to really
18 move into that space. And so I think apps were developed. I
19 mean, a number of things that were developed around that all
20 steered towards career pathways and job opportunities--creating
21 job opportunities and career pathways. But, career pathways was
22 the main focus here. Courtney, you guys may want to add to it.
23 Came out of Tom's shop as well so.

24 COURTNEY ARBOUR: I do and Tom McCarty is
25 here if you'd like--

1 COMMISSIONER DEMERSON: You may hit your
2 mic. I'm not sure if that's on.

3 COURTNEY ARBOUR: --for him to come up?
4 Courtney Arbour, Workforce Division. Tom is in the room and can
5 come up and provide you an update. It was one-time funding that
6 kicked off what you're talking about, Commissioner. But, Tom can
7 let you know what is still underway with that, with those
8 dollars. And I will just tell you, in a separate initiative
9 called Careers In Texas Industries that you all have funded for
10 the last few years, boards have funding to host events to
11 introduce students to target and--target occupations in their
12 areas. And that often has a Jobs Y'all component where they're
13 trying to work with young people and do it in a way that's
14 meaningful to them. But--so, Job Y'all is primarily I think what
15 Tom is about to share. But, know that the boards help to promote
16 it as well.

17 TOM MCCARTY: Good afternoon, Commissioners.
18 Tom McCarty, External Relations. The Jobs Y'all program it was--
19 basically, it was a website with a series of videos that was
20 designed to target kind of the middle school students around
21 seventh, eighth grade. Get them thinking about careers that are
22 projected to be in demand by the time they would be graduating.
23 So, we're looking forward about six years, seven years. That way
24 they could start thinking about those types of careers that
25 would be available to them at that time. As far as what we're

1 doing with it right now, we still have--we have the website that
2 was all transferred over to TWC when the project ended and the
3 funding ended. And we closed that part out. So, we continue to
4 promote the website. Update the jobs on the website, things of
5 that nature that were kind of projecting out. But, that's kind
6 of where we're at right now.

7 CHAIRMAN DANIEL: Where'd the money come
8 from?

9 CHRIS NELSON: It was funded with WIOA
10 funding.

11 COMMISSIONER ALVAREZ: Chairman, I have a
12 question regarding Jobs Y'all.

13 CHAIRMAN DANIEL: Yes, sir.

14 COMMISSIONER ALVAREZ: So, what is the
15 engagement? I mean, who's using it? How many views had it had? I
16 mean, what has been the response to that?

17 TOM MCCARTY: We've had a good response. And
18 I know that the education outreach specialists use it quite a
19 bit. I would need to--as far as the analytics to the website,
20 I'd need to pull that for you. And I can certainly work on doing
21 that and getting back with you, send it to your office.

22 COMMISSIONER ALVAREZ: But, that's something
23 certainly we could incorporate, Tom. You and Courtney, your
24 expertise on maybe these headsets. I mean, that's stuff that

25

1 could be actually programmed, right, if we needed to? I mean,
2 when you're saying the outreach specialist is using this stuff?

3 TOM MCCARTY: They use it and they'll
4 promote the website.

5 COMMISSIONER ALVAREZ: Mm-hmm.

6 TOM MCCARTY: They'll promote the--you know,
7 the LMCI tools around Jobs Y'all talking about the different
8 occupations that are available out there and the ones that are
9 in demand when they're talking about the Jobs Y'all program.

10 COMMISSIONER ALVAREZ: Perfect. Yeah. If you
11 can get those numbers that'd be great.

12 TOM MCCARTY: Yes, sir.

13 CHAIRMAN DANIEL: So, Commissioner Demerson?

14 COMMISSIONER DEMERSON: Mm-hmm.

15 CHAIRMAN DANIEL: You're interest in Jobs
16 Y'all seems to be the spirit of Jobs Y'all; not the specific
17 tool. If we need to make it better, we should consider that.
18 Basically, we're trying to get whatever juice we can get out of
19 that squeeze. We have a good tool that we think we've gotten
20 some benefit from. And you want to see more benefit from that
21 tool. Am I reading you right on that?

22 COMMISSIONER DEMERSON: You're reading me
23 right. And I think it fits in line when I'm reading your
24 information about required education in each pathway including
25 P-tech and early college, high school, community college. That

1 type of information, it exists with Jobs Y'all. And the agency
2 put money into it. And so I think you can get some juice out of
3 an existing tool to fit as it relates to career pathways if
4 we're talking that language. Not specifically reactivating the
5 Jobs Y'all in its current stage. But, looking at it and making
6 sure that we're taking advantage of what we have there to make
7 whatever we're proposing to do better.

8 CHAIRMAN DANIEL: Mm-hmm. Now, your interest
9 in outreach. You know from experience, I share your interest in
10 that. I do think the agency probably doesn't--we're not in--
11 we're in all the right places, sometimes not at the exact right
12 time. And I think we can probably do some work there. I don't--
13 you may disagree with me on this. I 100 percent agree with your
14 interest in increasing our outreach. I'm not so sure that it's
15 tied directly to WIOA and TANF funding, except that's our source
16 of money to do things. And so I want to maybe just come back to
17 that one. 'Cause I have an idea I want to float past you that I
18 think might work for you. But, I do need to understand just a
19 little bit more about your interest in foster youth. Is there
20 something specific that we're not doing that you think we should
21 be doing to connect foster youth to employment? Or, are you
22 just--is this again an enhancement of something that's already
23 being done? I just need to understand that a little bit more.

24 COMMISSIONER DEMERSON: Yeah. Understanding
25 that, basically, with the White Paper that you rolled out trying

1 to incorporate ideas under that connecting foster youth, folks
2 with disabilities, veterans. Anything could fall under this
3 umbrella. And so, basically, anytime we have an opportunity to
4 connect when we're putting these things out, if we need to be
5 more specific towards that population base then we take an
6 opportunity to do so. And so, I'm putting that on the record.
7 Basically, if we're doing career pathways, or whatever we're
8 coming up with. The coaching that's a different market. And so
9 that's why we have separate programs for folks with
10 disabilities, folks with foster care. That's why on a job
11 application there's a box that you check off for individuals
12 like that. And so I'm saying when we're developing things, or
13 we're looking at potential programs, I want to make sure that
14 we're connecting the foster youth, folks with disability to
15 employment opportunities. That's not to say that we aren't doing
16 that. Because some of the things that we have mentioned down
17 here we're doing. We're looking at trying to enhance them and so
18 I want to move in that direction.

19 CHAIRMAN DANIEL: So, I'm gonna put what you
20 just told me in my own words. And then you tell me if I got it
21 right. So, your interest here is just making sure that whatever
22 we're doing that there is always an added focus on populations
23 of Texans that we want to ensure don't get overlooked. In this
24 instance, we're talking about foster youth because it's a large
25 measurable group, with whom we already do a lot of work. Very

1 worthy work that I participate in and will continue to
2 participate in. And I think the same could be true for Texans
3 who have any number of kinds of disabilities. It's a group that
4 could easily be sort of overlooked. And we just want to make
5 sure that we want to do that. I'm not hearing you advocate for
6 any specific activity, or some specific program. Just that we
7 be, although we wouldn't preclude that; but, you're not really
8 advocating for that right now. You're, at this point, saying
9 let's just make sure whatever we do that we have a focus for
10 these groups that really might require a little bit extra
11 attention just because of the circumstances they find themselves
12 in?

13 COMMISSIONER DEMERSON: Right. Right. That's
14 probably 98 percent there. And the other part would be that if--
15 as we are not addressing dollar amounts right now from that
16 standpoint. I want to make sure that it is on the table and out
17 there. So, that if there's anything special or something that
18 may come up, that we may be in a position to--it may come in--it
19 may turn into more than just information that's out here. And
20 the group that we're addressing, it may turn into a program or
21 so.

22 CHAIRMAN DANIEL: So, I've got a list of
23 items here. Commissioner Alvarez has put three items, although
24 we share an item.

25 COMMISSIONER ALVAREZ: Mm-hmm.

1 realistic about where we are. Now, Commissioner Alvarez, you
2 offered some very--two very specific ideas. On their face, I'm
3 in agreement with both ideas. We just got to make the money fit.
4 And, Commissioner Demerson, while your ideas are somewhat
5 similar to mine in the sense that they capture kind of a broader
6 kind of thing. You clearly have some priorities in mind in terms
7 of how you would pay for those and function those. That's a long
8 diplomatic government way of saying, I know I need \$11 million
9 to make my idea work. But, I would love to incorporate some of
10 the things that you're talking too into my heading of ending the
11 middle skills gap. Even though those programs can stand on their
12 own, will stand on their own, probably should stand on their
13 own; you know, I think they fit within my category. And so I'm
14 not really thinking today of \$7 million dollars for Brian, and
15 \$6 million for Commissioner Alvarez. And, you know, \$7 million
16 for Commissioner Demerson. I'm sort of thinking about can I
17 leave here today with a commitment to have the agency put our
18 considerable talent and resources toward ending the middle
19 skills gap. At the time same time, fund some of the concepts
20 that you have that I think make--in the case of the VR goggles,
21 both short and long-term difference in the case of short-term
22 training for parents of kids in subsidized care. I think a
23 little bit shorter term, but still nonetheless impactful. And
24 Jobs Y'all and outreach components of yours, Commissioner
25 Demerson, I think play a big role in that. And then, honestly,

1 I hear what you're saying. And we just need to be committed to
2 being mindful of always including foster youth and Vocational
3 Rehabilitation and some other things. So, let's talk about
4 money. Let's talk about how we would put the dollars. And just
5 wanted you to kind of understand my feelings today. Because
6 there are some specific things that I know need to be funded to
7 end the middle skills gap. But, I'm also willing to let staff
8 kind of figure out what stuffs actually going to cost. Based off
9 not an estimate, but a bid. And do some things like that. So,
10 let's open the discussion on that and see where we are in terms
11 of the available money.

12 COMMISSIONER ALVAREZ: So, Chairman, when I
13 laid out my initiatives, or ideas, it was all with WIOA. And,
14 again, I hadn't even touched TANF. I'd be willing to allow the
15 Chairman to fund some of the programs and the ideas that he has
16 to get to that--close to the \$11 million. I mean, like I said, I
17 don't have a problem using TANF money. We hadn't even talked
18 about that. So, if that's okay with you, Chairman? I mean, the
19 money that I was proposing that I would use to fund some of
20 these programs, or ideas, would be coming out of WIOA. But, like
21 the headsets, I would have no problem tapping into the TANF
22 statewide funding balance. Again, everything we discussed was
23 WIOA. We didn't even talk about TANF. And so I'd be willing to
24 negotiate so we could get to the number that you're looking at.
25 And again, because there's some ideas that you and I both share

1 in this, we may be able to even incorporate some of that \$11
2 million that you're talking about. My idea is just more of the
3 specifics on what that money is going to be used for. Like,
4 headsets, which people in Capitol, or Borderplex, or Rio Grande
5 Valley, everybody could use those. It's just an idea my out--you
6 know, the boards being able to have the flexibility to purchase
7 the headsets. The career outreach specialists as well being able
8 to use that as a tool. Keep in mind that many of the things that
9 we are laying out, Commissioner Demerson, we always keep foster
10 youth and, of course, our folks in VR, people with disability,
11 in mind. That's why I think these outreach specialists play such
12 a key role in what we do. Because they share the programs and
13 the services that the agency provides. Whether you're in foster
14 youth, and so--or, programs that provide apprenticeship, like,
15 Nicholas Morgan's program. Focusing on foster youth, military
16 service transitioning veterans. So, I hadn't even touched the
17 TANF, but I'd be willing to use, spend some of the money. And
18 I'd also be willing to allow staff to have more money for some
19 of the areas that they were looking at for consideration. Which
20 you laid out here. I would be even willing to negotiate the \$4
21 million. Heck, I could probably do three. You know, again,
22 these would be first time things. I'd even be willing to do two,
23 Chairman. Just so that we could get more in line with some of
24 the ideas that you have and anything that Commissioner Demerson
25 would possibly be bringing forth as well.

1 CHAIRMAN DANIEL: Okay. Thank you for that.
2 Commissioner Demerson, did you have some dollar amounts you were
3 thinking about for these just so we can start making this up?

4 COMMISSIONER DEMERSON: I really don't. I
5 think the outreach efforts may be \$2 million or so. That's
6 pretty much it.

7 CHAIRMAN DANIEL: Okay. Okay. Let me see if
8 this is going to work. So, Commissioner Alvarez, specifically--
9 you know, something you didn't mention, Commissioner Alvarez,
10 that I'm thinking there's a cost associated with. So, the
11 headsets are great. But, if you don't have the underlying
12 software that powers the experience, there's a development cost
13 to that as well.

14 COMMISSIONER ALVAREZ: Mm-hmm.

15 CHAIRMAN DANIEL: We're gonna have to do
16 that at the state level so that there's some continuity between
17 that. Here's what I might suggest. There's \$15 million between
18 WIOA and TANF, right?

19 COMMISSIONER ALVAREZ: That's correct.

20 CHRIS NELSON: Just under 16.

21 CHAIRMAN DANIEL: Just under 16. So, it's a
22 range between--

23 CHRIS NELSON: No. No range.

24 CHAIRMAN DANIEL: Ish, he hadn't said that
25 yet. I'm proud of him. So, if we asked staff to go assign

1 realistic dollar amounts to everything in my proposal. I think
2 they have some idea based on some conversations I've had with
3 them. I don't know that we are at--you know, we're certainly not
4 at the bid stage. So, that could change a little bit. I would
5 say if we looked at this in terms of \$2 million to--be our \$2
6 million to training at less than three months. And \$2 million to
7 sort of revitalize the outreach efforts and the Jobs Y'all
8 reactivation. That would leave \$9 million for the things that
9 are contained in my ending the middle skills gap concept. It
10 would let me get my concept advanced and start some of these
11 tools toward working. I think our course of action today might
12 be if--and we can discuss this as needed. But, I think our
13 course of conversation today might be to pass out the--to move
14 out of this work session, so that staff can begin on it. For the
15 Commission to take action on these specific items that we've all
16 laid out. Maybe the dollar amounts that I just suggested. And
17 let staff flush this out and try to give us a real understanding
18 of what that costs. How many people with \$2 million dollars help
19 in terms of parents of students who are in subsidized childcare,
20 in terms of short-term training; how much would \$2 million
21 really do in terms of Jobs Y'all and outreach efforts? I do,
22 Commissioner Demerson, I still firmly believe that we can pick
23 up the spirit of working with foster youth and others into.

24 COMMISSIONER DEMERSON: Mm-hmm.

25

1 CHAIRMAN DANIEL: And then, Commissioner
2 Alvarez, of course, you've already confirmed to me that our
3 shared interest in metrics can advance--

4 COMMISSIONER ALVAREZ: Mm-hmm.

5 CHAIRMAN DANIEL: --under this particular
6 plan. So, I'm going to do this backwards. We still can make this
7 work within proper parliamentary procedure. But, the motion I
8 would make is to approve the two items that Commissioner Alvarez
9 advanced, the one shared item that I have in mine, all of the
10 rest of my items, and the three items that Commissioner
11 Demerson. To approve those concepts is really the priorities of
12 the Commission at this time. and then with an eye toward \$2
13 million for the headsets, \$2 million for the short-term
14 training, \$2 million for the outreach and Jobs Y'all efforts,
15 and then \$9 million for the remainder of the things on my list.
16 To take action on that today. Give that to staff. Find out what
17 survives the money. And bring that back for some sort of final
18 ratification that this is what we're going to be able to do
19 within the money. And this is what's going to happen. And then I
20 will make a commitment today. If that motion ends up becoming
21 acceptable, I'll make a commitment that I'll take the haircut
22 out of my list of things if we come up short on the money. Or,
23 we need to do something, you know, put a little more money
24 somewhere else. So, that is sort of how I see the path to

25

1 completion on this item. But, I'd love to hear any additional
2 thoughts you might have on it.

3 COMMISSIONER ALVAREZ: You're gonna cut your
4 hair?

5 CHAIRMAN DANIEL: No. That was a figure of
6 speech, sir.

7 COMMISSIONER ALVAREZ: If I find more money,
8 will you cut your hair? It looks great though.

9 CHAIRMAN DANIEL: No. No. I'm not. I like it
10 the way it is.

11 COMMISSIONER ALVAREZ: Well, there is more
12 money if I'm not mistaken. According to the 6/16/21 TWC Recovery
13 Report, we still have \$1.2 million left over from IKEA. So,
14 there's your additional money.

15 COMMISSIONER DEMERSON: Well, we're
16 discussing statewide initiatives right now. I thought we were
17 discussing WIOA and TANF. I didn't know we were looking at other
18 resources.

19 COMMISSIONER ALVAREZ: We're looking at
20 resources that we untapped, unused.

21 CHAIRMAN DANIEL: So, and there may be other
22 resources within the agency as well. Just out of fairness to
23 staff, let's have them work on what I just said. And then also
24 in the course of that discussion, identify potential other
25 sources of money for our further consideration. Does that work?

1 COMMISSIONER ALVAREZ: I would be okay with
2 that.

3 COMMISSIONER DEMERSON: I'm definitely okay
4 with that.

5 COMMISSIONER ALVAREZ: Just so that that
6 doesn't go unspent.

7 CHAIRMAN DANIEL: Okay. So, I sufficiently
8 stated my motion. I'm willing to restate that if we need to for
9 general counsel's purposes or for any Commissioner. I stated the
10 intent of my motion. Let me just do it again. I move that this
11 Commission instruct staff to take up the list, including the
12 White Paper entitled, "Ending the Middle Skills Gap through
13 Comprehensive Career Pathways," presented by Chairman Daniel;
14 the virtual reality goggles project, and the training of less
15 than three months project advanced by Commissioner Alvarez; the
16 Jobs Y'all reactivation and the outreach efforts in the
17 connecting of foster youth and Texans with Disabilities to
18 employment concepts advanced by Commissioner Demerson. I would
19 ask that staff give us a realistic cost estimate for
20 implementing each of these items; considering \$2 million for the
21 goggles, \$2 million dollars for the training of less than three
22 months, \$2 million dollars for the Jobs Y'all reactivation and
23 outreach efforts. With the remaining approximately \$9 million to
24 the list contained in the White Paper. And at the same time

25

1 identify potential other sources of money that could be used to
2 this. That would be the motion that I would make.

3 COMMISSIONER ALVAREZ: I would second that
4 motion. And if staff needs any clarification, we'd be more than
5 happy to provide that.

6 CHAIRMAN DANIEL: So, it's been moved and
7 seconded; any further consideration?

8 COMMISSIONER DEMERSON: None here.

9 CHAIRMAN DANIEL: Okay. If there's no
10 objections we'll just vote that right now. We can take a vote if
11 you want to. I don't want to pressure anybody into anything.

12 COMMISSIONER DEMERSON: It's up to you.

13 CHAIRMAN DANIEL: If there's no objection,
14 we'll advance that. We'll let staff work on that with the
15 additional instruction as soon as you've completed your list of
16 what things are going to cost that you obviously bring that back
17 to a Commission meeting for final action. So, that we can see
18 those dollar amounts. Things could change. And I just want to
19 leave a little bit of room for that. And I think we can take
20 this up at a regular Commission meeting as a single actionable
21 item. So, with no objection? No objection? Okay. Courtney, did
22 we give you everything you needed; do you need something else
23 from us right now?

24 COURTNEY ARBOUR: We have what we need.

25 Thank you.

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CHAIRMAN DANIEL: Okay.

COMMISSIONER ALVAREZ: What did you say?

COURTNEY ARBOUR: And just as a reminder, this is the 2021 balances. So--

CHAIRMAN DANIEL: That's correct.

COURTNEY ARBOUR: --2022 will have additional funding for some of the other programs.

CHAIRMAN DANIEL: That's next.

COMMISSIONER ALVAREZ: That's correct.

COURTNEY ARBOUR: So, that's next week. But, we'll work with the guidance you've given us today.

CHRIS NELSON: Chairman, for the record, Chris Nelson, Chief Financial Officer. Just to make sure I'm clear, I've got all the requests. What I'm hearing is a kind of--are you expecting a comprehensive kind of allocation distribution to all workforce areas. This is some kind of competitive thing. It's just we need to do the math behind the scenes to figure out what each one of these things cost. And then you're expecting some kind of distribution that would be made available to all areas?

CHAIRMAN DANIEL: That's an excellent question. So, some of my items would not be an allocation at all.

CHRIS NELSON: Okay.

1 CHAIRMAN DANIEL: It would be a function
2 that took place here. I could imagine--

3 CHRIS NELSON: It's not from the
4 procurement. Like, on the apps and things like that.

5 CHAIRMAN DANIEL: Yeah. Yeah. Yeah. So, I
6 don't know the answer to your question because I don't know what
7 Commissioner Alvarez intended on either the goggle project or
8 the short-term training. And, although, I believe Commissioner
9 Demerson's Jobs Y'all and his outreach efforts would be
10 statewide. We probably do need to clear that up right now.

11 COMMISSIONER ALVAREZ: I would say
12 allocation would be appropriate, or an RFA.

13 CHRIS NELSON: For the short-term training?

14 COMMISSIONER ALVAREZ: Yeah. For all of
15 them. All my ideas. Short-term--

16 CHRIS NELSON: Right, or the goggles. Right.

17 COMMISSIONER ALVAREZ: --VR goggles. Some
18 boards may not already have them. Mary Ross may already have
19 them, Frank Almaraz. Some boards may not be--have access to
20 broadband. I would say the allocation for goggles would be a
21 good idea. And especially we talked about the career ex--the
22 outreach specialist. That would be a direct allocation.

23 ED SERNA: For the record, Ed Serna,
24 Executive Director at TWC. I completely understand that we want
25 to heavily engage the board. I would request the Commissions

1 indulgence to let us in the evaluation of all of these determine
2 whether it may be better for us to execute a statewide contract
3 for distribution of things to the boards. Because if we
4 distribute money, some of the smaller boards are gonna get a
5 smaller allocation and they may not be able to buy as much
6 equipment. We'll use the VR goggles as an example. Whereas, we
7 can probably execute a single contract for a larger number that
8 would be more cost effective, and then we can distribute the
9 equipment. So, if you'll give us the flexibility on an
10 allocation and not simply-- 'cause Chris does a good job on
11 developing the allocations. But, I'm afraid, just the way the
12 models work, some of our smaller boards might end up getting--
13 having less funds to be able to do less things. This will give
14 us the opportunity to do (inaudible)--

15 COMMISSIONER ALVAREZ: I'm okay with that.

16 CHAIRMAN DANIEL: So, the motion is passed,
17 gives actually flexibility to staff to do exactly that.

18 COMMISSIONER ALVAREZ: Right. Mm-hmm.

19 CHAIRMAN DANIEL: I think you need any
20 additional from us. Commissioner Alvarez--

21 COMMISSIONER ALVAREZ: I'm agreed.

22 CHAIRMAN DANIEL: --he agrees with that.

23 COMMISSIONER ALVAREZ: Mm-hmm. I agree.

24 CHAIRMAN DANIEL: Commissioner Demerson
25 doesn't seem like he's objecting.

1 COMMISSIONER DEMERSON: Yeah. I agree with
2 it. We added other resources to the list. I mean, the way that
3 this lays out, we're not sure where it will land. Some of it
4 may, or if they--some of them may not be.

5 COMMISSIONER ALVAREZ: Right.

6 CHAIRMAN DANIEL: So, when you bring that
7 back in the next couple weeks to the Commission meeting, just
8 tell us what's gonna be the best thing. We may debate it at that
9 time. I doubt it. But, we may debate it at that time. But, let's
10 do it that way.

11 COMMISSIONER ALVAREZ: Ed, and if I may ask,
12 will you reach out to the outreach specialist. I guess it would
13 be Lori Night, right, to see?

14 ED SERNA: Yes, sir. We'll engage staff.

15 COMMISSIONER ALVAREZ: Okay.

16 ED SERNA: It won't be just something that
17 this group does.

18 COMMISSIONER ALVAREZ: Great.

19 ED SERNA: But, we'll engage staff. It just
20 gives us the opportunity to determine. And I'll use the metrics
21 contract that we executed last year.

22 COMMISSIONER ALVAREZ: Mm-hmm.

23 ED SERNA: As a good example of doing that
24 statewide let us provide a whole lot more than if we had
25 distributed those funds to the boards. 'Cause some of the boards

1 wouldn't have had enough purchasing power to have a vendor even
2 pay attention to them.

3 COMMISSIONER ALVAREZ: I'm okay with that,
4 Chairman. I'm okay with that, Ed. Great idea.

5 ED SERNA: Sorry to interrupt.

6 CHAIRMAN DANIEL: All right. Anything else
7 on Agenda Item 1? I think we've covered it. Let's move then to
8 Agenda Item 2. This is Discussion, Consideration, and Possible
9 Action. This is AEL things. I similarly have a White Paper on
10 AEL. You guys just want to follow the same format we just did.

11 COMMISSIONER ALVAREZ: We could.

12 CHAIRMAN DANIEL: Yeah. So--

13 COMMISSIONER ALVAREZ: I'd be okay with
14 that, Chairman.

15 CHAIRMAN DANIEL: All right. Let me lay out
16 this. This one's much shorter. Similarly there's papers at the
17 desk if you'd like to look at it. So, I picked up our
18 conversation that we had, whenever that was, where we talked
19 about an innovation fund for AEL. I picked it up and brought it
20 forward. I brought with that a couple items that I picked up
21 from a staff discussion that captured my attention. So, you'll
22 see on my list, integrated education and training activities for
23 folks that in the correctional system that are getting ready to
24 come out. Pretty important stuff. Employer engagement, I have up
25 to \$2 million budgeted. Because frankly, we won't never ever do

1 enough in that area to get it all done. So, whatever we can do
2 in terms of employer engagement. I hope that we'll be able to do
3 that. And then I did pick up the--continued the idea of the AEL
4 innovation fund that we tabled the last time we talked about it.
5 Two awards, up to \$200,000 apiece, for a total of \$400,000. So,
6 my budget for this list of items for AEL would be \$750,000 for
7 the IET to get started on that; \$2 million on employer
8 engagement, and up to \$400,000. Which I think takes us pretty
9 close to the available balance. What is that? About \$3.1
10 million, or so on my list. So, that's the extent of my list. I
11 can definitely discuss in any detail anything on there. But, I
12 think all three of these are familiar to you guys. And I'll
13 spare you extra words if we can here today. So, again, just a
14 summary. If there's anything else you want to know, I'm happy to
15 answer to answer that. But, I'd love to hear your ideas as well.

16 COMMISSIONER ALVAREZ: Can we clarify what
17 the balance is outstanding RFA?

18 ED SERNA: For Adult Ed, it's \$3.7 million.

19 COMMISSIONER ALVAREZ: Okay. So, I have a
20 couple ideas. And I agree with the Chairman on some of these
21 items. And again it might be just the specifics on how we would
22 use the funding. And so for job preparedness including short-
23 term training and upscaling. I was asking--and of course, we can
24 negotiate on the amount. I had proposed \$1 million for a pre-
25 apprenticeship bridge program to provide remedial education for

1 applicants to the Building Trades Apprenticeship Program, who
2 need remedial math, instruction in math. A perfect example of
3 that is in some of our apprenticeship programs around the state,
4 one of the biggest barriers of getting entry into a program is
5 that many of these individuals do not know how to read a tape
6 measure. And so we have data that shows that hundreds of
7 students apply to go to these schools. And, unfortunately,
8 because of their lack of math, or their deficiency in math, many
9 of the students are not entered into some of these programs. As
10 a result, not being able to read a simple tape measure. So, what
11 I'm asking here is for these remedial type of programs to be
12 funded. So, that we can help these individuals get into these
13 programs. And again, it may fit into specifically what the
14 Chairman has laid out on integrated educational training. I
15 agree with him on the integrated educational training IET in
16 correctional state leadership funds. Specifically for that
17 program, I'd like to provide literature. And I'm not even sure
18 if this is going to cost any money. This might be something
19 Courtney may be able to negotiate, and Mahalia, with the boards.
20 Provide literature regarding TWC and Workforce Solution Services
21 for correctional facilities for transitioning inmates. I was at
22 Lockhart Women's Prison. Young lady had a baby. No literature on
23 where some of the services that she would be eligible for.
24 Childcare, TANF funding. Did she qualify for SNAP? Could she
25 qualify for any of our resources that we have? So, what I'd like

1 to see, if this is--I think is the appropriate time. And if
2 there's a fiscal note to it or a financial amount that we need
3 to allocate, I'd be willing to, you know, negotiate that. But, I
4 don't think there is. And all I would want, Chairman and
5 Commissioner Demerson, is for the--just like you were talking
6 about in marketing, is for some of our services that we provide
7 to our claimants around the state, to be provided to inmates
8 behind bars. That's it. English and Spanish, if that's okay. The
9 initiative that'd I'd like to talk about next would be
10 particularly on the family literacy initiative. Let me talk
11 about--I would to propose, and this is just the amount that I
12 had--I was looking at. We could negotiate. I would like to
13 propose \$1 million to expand math assistant call center to the
14 family of an AEL participant. So, that if a child requires math
15 tutoring and their parents are engaged in an AEL service, the
16 child can also access the math call center. So, we do provide
17 that service now for parents, math tutoring. But, if the child
18 is there with the parent, no reason why they can't just transfer
19 the phone and let the child be a part of the discussion with the
20 tutorial, or with the tutor that's available. Just an idea. My
21 last one would be, \$1 million in state leadership funding to
22 support curriculum development for AEL customers, training in
23 construction trades. This would be a developing and
24 disseminating curricula, including curricula incorporating the
25 essential components of reading instruction, as such components

1 relate to adults. Developing content in models for integrated
2 education and training and career pathways. We could also look
3 at dual-language on that. So, those were the ones and I'd be
4 willing to negotiate. Those were just some ideas, Chairman, that
5 as we laid out earlier that maybe we could incorporate together
6 on some of the things that--these are just specifics on what I'd
7 like to use the money for. That's really it.

8 CHAIRMAN DANIEL: All right. Thank you, sir.
9 Commissioner Demerson?

10 COMMISSIONER DEMERSON: Yeah. I think what
11 you've laid out is fine. Of particular interest to me is the
12 employment engagement. And that \$2 million that we have there is
13 where I would land.

14 CHAIRMAN DANIEL: Okay. Thank you, sir.
15 We've got \$3.7 million to work with. By my estimate, we've laid
16 out about \$6 million in items. I can't use the word haircut
17 anymore. So, now we gotta look for actual cuts. All right. I
18 don't think there's anything on here that from a concept, not a
19 dollar amount--

20 COMMISSIONER ALVAREZ: Mm-hmm.

21 CHAIRMAN DANIEL: --but, from a concept that
22 I don't think would be beneficial to some Texans. Commissioner
23 Demerson, do you feel the same way? Is there anything you don't
24 like that's on the list?

25

1 COMMISSIONER DEMERSON: No. I think what
2 we've laid out is fine.

3 CHAIRMAN DANIEL: Commissioner Alvarez,
4 everything on the list, nothing needs to come off the list?

5 COMMISSIONER ALVAREZ: Unh-unh.

6 CHAIRMAN DANIEL: Okay. So, I heard you say,
7 Commissioner Alvarez, you definitely were okay with what I had
8 laid out in terms of IET. I had \$750,000. You thought--your
9 concept might be--

10 COMMISSIONER ALVAREZ: A million.

11 CHAIRMAN DANIEL: -- less costly. 'Cause it
12 was really more about materials. Let me do this. On employer
13 engagement, this is something I drew from a real brief set of
14 staff notes. Do you have an idea of what our needs are in terms
15 of employer engagement, in terms of a dollar amount from where
16 you sit? I said \$2 million 'cause I always think that's
17 important. But, it could be--\$200 million probably wouldn't be
18 enough. I mean, so we'll have to do what we can do here.

19 MAHALIA BALDINI: Good afternoon,
20 Commissioners. For the record, Mahalia Baldini, Adult Education
21 and Literacy. In terms of the dollar amount, maybe some feedback
22 or just some discussion about what we're really thinking about
23 in terms of this initiative. Right now, our general core
24 grantees. We have 37 contracts statewide. This is something that
25 they can currently do with their allocation. What we're really

1 looking at doing with this initiative is to build a quality
2 model. So, many of our state leadership activities that involve
3 students, and we want to sort of expand these models; we want to
4 come up with quality models that then can go back to those core
5 grantees and say, this is sort of how you do it. This is what
6 the curriculum looks like. This is how you really work with an
7 employer to develop those progress milestones. So, with that
8 being said, \$2 million sounds like a good number. It's a good
9 number to put out there. We'll get a lot of applicants, I think
10 for this money. It was actually one of the feedback that we had
11 received from our providers as something they really wanted to
12 do. So, I don't know if that helps you with your discussion.

13 CHAIRMAN DANIEL: Well, really not at all
14 'cause you agreed with me that \$2 million was a good number.
15 But, we don't have that much money. So, now you're saying
16 basically, Hey, Brian, now do your job and figure out where the
17 money's going. I hear you. I'm just giving you a hard time.

18 MAHALIA BALDINI: Okay.

19 CHAIRMAN DANIEL: Working off of my list.
20 So, I kind of had in my mind that employer engagement was one
21 thing. And that the AEL innovation fund was really more of an
22 instructional thing. In the interest of money, though, I could
23 probably move the AEL innovation fund up into employer
24 engagement. And just look for innovative ways to deal with the
25 employer engagement. Probably save some money that way. So,

1 that's a way, I think, we can get a little closer to getting
2 this done for the money. Commissioner Alvarez, it would strike
3 me that the \$1 million that you've advanced for your pre-
4 apprenticeship job preparedness section and your curriculum
5 development training for construction trades would be similar in
6 the sense that; I mean a million dollar would be great, but if
7 we don't have that much money it seems somewhat scalable to me.
8 And maybe the same thing could be said for the family literacy
9 initiative. That while just like I feel \$2 million dollars is
10 ideal for employer engagement, I understand that that's
11 scalable. And that really we just need to probably work our way
12 up from the bottom. If I'm inaccurate in my assumption here,
13 please tell me, so I can do a better job of trying to find some
14 common ground here for the dollar amounts. I'm not suggesting we
15 cut it to any one thing. I just think it can be cut if it needs
16 to be cut. And still be able to have the initiative.

17 COMMISSIONER ALVAREZ: Sure. I think I had
18 proposed a million. Was that a little too much?

19 CHAIRMAN DANIEL: Well, we're in the
20 enviable position of, we all like all the ideas that have been
21 advanced.

22 COMMISSIONER ALVAREZ: I agree.

23 CHAIRMAN DANIEL: Which is about like \$7
24 million worth of stuff that we've got \$3.7 million to spend on.

25

1 COMMISSIONER ALVAREZ: Chairman, I would be
2 willing to negotiate that again. Again, this is just because of
3 the remedial math that's really needed for some of these
4 programs. And because it's a first time. I mean, I'd be willing
5 to negotiate that to \$500,000.

6 CHAIRMAN DANIEL: Okay. Let me ask you a
7 question.

8 COMMISSIONER ALVAREZ: Mm-hmm.

9 CHAIRMAN DANIEL: Is it a literacy issue, or
10 a practical application issue? You gave the example of not being
11 able to read a tape measure.

12 COMMISSIONER ALVAREZ: Mm-hmm.

13 CHAIRMAN DANIEL: Is it numerical
14 illiteracy. We just unfortunately have an individual who hasn't
15 had the right kind of education; or, they don't have the
16 functional ability to read a tape measure?

17 COMMISSIONER ALVAREZ: They just can't do
18 fractions.

19 CHAIRMAN DANIEL: I see.

20 COMMISSIONER ALVAREZ: And again, some of
21 these individuals that are looking at going into these programs
22 are right out of high school. Not to put blame on anyone, and
23 some of them are adult learners that haven't done math in
24 forever. And so, unfortunately, a lot of students just don't
25 know how to do fractions. Bottom line.

1 CHAIRMAN DANIEL: Understood.

2 COMMISSIONER ALVAREZ: But, I'd be willing
3 to negotiate, Chairman, from the \$1 million to \$500,000.

4 CHAIRMAN DANIEL: What's the bottom line on-
5 -we may come up from this, but what would be your bottom line on
6 family literacy and curriculum development? You started at a
7 million. How far downward do you think you could conceivable go?

8 COMMISSIONER ALVAREZ: I'd be willing to do
9 \$500,000 as well.

10 CHAIRMAN DANIEL: So, they're all viable--

11 COMMISSIONER ALVAREZ: Sure.

12 CHAIRMAN DANIEL: --at roughly that?

13 COMMISSIONER ALVAREZ: Mm-hmm.

14 CHAIRMAN DANIEL: All right.

15 COMMISSIONER ALVAREZ: Two for one.

16 COMMISSIONER DEMERSON: What does that get
17 that down to?

18 CHAIRMAN DANIEL: I'm stuck with Texas Tech
19 math. Somebody else probably ought to add this up.

20 COMMISSIONER DEMERSON: (Inaudible) Where
21 would that leave your request if you reduce down to \$500,000--

22 CHAIRMAN DANIEL: Well, if he reduced all of
23 his requests. I'm not saying we have to, but--

24 COMMISSIONER DEMERSON: Yeah.

25 COMMISSIONER ALVAREZ: Mm-hmm.

1 CHAIRMAN DANIEL: If we took him down to
2 \$500,000 that's \$1.5 for the three. And then the IET, I had it
3 at \$750,000. If we took it to \$500,000 also just for this
4 exercise.

5 COMMISSIONER ALVAREZ: Mm-hmm.

6 CHAIRMAN DANIEL: That's at \$2 million. And
7 that leaves us \$1.7 for employer engagement. And then, as I
8 said, I'm willing to bury the innovation fund back up in the
9 employer engagement. We can just consider that at zero for
10 purposes of this exercise. Or, we could--so, I took IET to
11 \$500,000. We could restore it to \$750,000. 'Cause I think all
12 three of us are agreeing on that. And then if we take the
13 employer engagement down to--

14 COURTNEY ARBOUR: Chairman, Courtney Arbour,
15 Workforce Division. Can I just jump in on the employer
16 engagement piece? I don't know if we answered you directly
17 earlier. But, because we're just looking for a model, we could--
18 we were thinking around \$400,000 per grant. And we could do
19 three or four awards to have them build out a model that we
20 could then try to replicate.

21 CHAIRMAN DANIEL: So, 1.2 million?

22 COURTNEY ARBOUR: Or, 1.6 if you wanted
23 three or four awards.

24 CHAIRMAN DANIEL: All right.

25

1 COMMISSIONER ALVAREZ: You think your math
2 is bad. Man, I'm already running out of paper. So--

3 CHAIRMAN DANIEL: I'm--

4 COMMISSIONER ALVAREZ: --but, I am okay with
5 the reduce in the amounts that I had proposed. Because I know
6 Commissioner Demerson, last week, also talked about the award.
7 And, you know, we certainly don't want to forget about that. So,
8 I'd be okay with my initiatives going \$500,000 each, instead of
9 the million. If that works with staff and with the Commission.

10 COMMISSIONER DEMERSON: So, that's \$1.5 on
11 Commissioner Alvarez, right?

12 CHAIRMAN DANIEL So--

13 COMMISSIONER DEMERSON: Or, 1.--

14 CHAIRMAN DANIEL: --if job preparedness,
15 pre-apprenticeship, family literacy, curriculum and development
16 training all came in at \$500,000. If we did--so, that's \$1.5.

17 COMMISSIONER ALVAREZ: Mm-hmm.

18 CHAIRMAN DANIEL: And they're broadcasting
19 my math skills out to the world right now. And then if we say
20 \$750,000 for IET, let's see where this takes us? So, that's
21 \$2.2. So, that leaves about \$1.5. What if we did this?

22 COURTNEY ARBOUR: Commission, I just wanted
23 to make a quick note also. Courtney Arbour, Workforce Division,
24 for the record. The math call center, the idea that you proposed
25 about the--

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COMMISSIONER ALVAREZ: Mm-hmm.

COURTNEY ARBOUR: --children being able to access that also.

COMMISSIONER ALVAREZ: Mm-hmm.

COURTNEY ARBOUR: Family literacy is an allowable activity. We need to work with legal to ensure that this activity would meet the definition of a family--

COMMISSIONER ALVAREZ: Okay.

COURTNEY ARBOUR: --literacy activity. But, we will work on that.

COMMISSIONER ALVAREZ: Okay.

COURTNEY ARBOUR: And get back with you. So, if you want to settle on a dollar amount. But, just knowing that we need to do a little more research on that.

COMMISSIONER ALVAREZ: That's fine. And again, lowering it to \$500,000 is fine with me.

CHAIRMAN DANIEL: Okay. So, I think we come in under budget if we do \$750,000 to IET, \$500,000 to job preparedness pre-apprenticeship, Commissioner Alvarez' concept; \$500,000 to Commissioner Alvarez' family literacy initiative and the math assistance call centers. We just heard a little bit about that; \$500,000 curriculum development training for construction trades, I believe you said.

COMMISSIONER ALVAREZ: That's correct.

1 CHAIRMAN DANIEL: That should let us get to
2 \$1.2 million for employer engagement. And then again, I was
3 operating under the assumption that we would sort of wave off
4 the AEL innovation fund and just look for innovations in
5 employer engagement. Did I come in under budget, Chris?

6 CHRIS NELSON: I believe. So, you're
7 lowering the employer engagement to \$1.2 million?

8 CHAIRMAN DANIEL: Mm-hmm.

9 CHRIS NELSON: Then yes. I believe you would
10 be within the balance.

11 CHAIRMAN DANIEL: So, Commissioner Demerson,
12 you and I were having a robust conversation a few days ago on
13 the AEL innovation fund, which you know I supported.

14 COMMISSIONER DEMERSON: Mm-hmm.

15 CHAIRMAN DANIEL: But, in this instance, in
16 light of all these activities, I could forgo that one in favor
17 of some of these others which I think have merit.

18 COMMISSIONER DEMERSON: So, the innovation
19 fund that we were discussing last week that was tied to the same
20 funding source. So, we're at \$1.2 for employer engagement. And
21 if we're at \$1.2 in employer engagement, we're made whole at
22 that point.

23 COMMISSIONER ALVAREZ: Yes.

24

25

1 COMMISSIONER DEMERSON: Employer engagement
2 at \$1.2, Commissioner Alvarez' initiative is at \$1.5. And then
3 the integrated education and training at \$750,000.

4 COMMISSIONER ALVAREZ: Yes.

5 COMMISSIONER DEMERSON: That totals--

6 COMMISSIONER ALVAREZ: Say that again,
7 Commissioner?

8 COMMISSIONER DEMERSON: So, the integrated
9 education and training dollar amount, that's \$750,000. I think
10 the proposals that were laid out by Commissioner Alvarez that
11 total is \$1.5.

12 COMMISSIONER ALVAREZ: Correct.

13 COMMISSIONER DEMERSON: And then the
14 employment engagement, we're looking at \$1.2.

15 COMMISSIONER ALVAREZ: Mm-hmm.

16 COMMISSIONER DEMERSON: And what's that
17 total?

18 CHRIS NELSON: \$3.4.

19 COMMISSIONER DEMERSON: \$3.4. All right. And
20 what's our allocation, \$3.7.

21 COMMISSIONER ALVAREZ: Yes.

22 CHRIS NELSON: \$3.7 is the balance.

23 COMMISSIONER DEMERSON: Okay.

24

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1 CHRIS NELSON: And I'll double check on the
2 innovation fund because there was--I believe weren't we
3 transferring funds set aside for the awards too?

4 COMMISSIONER DEMERSON: That's what I
5 thought. A separate pile--

6 CHRIS NELSON: I need to double check and
7 make sure that your proposal isn't necessarily coming out of
8 that--or, the full amount isn't coming out of that \$3.7 million.
9 But, I'll double check.

10 COMMISSIONER DEMERSON: That's what I--I
11 thought it was a separate pile. But, so we're at \$3.2 and we
12 have \$3.7. So, we have a little bit leftover.

13 CHAIRMAN DANIEL: And that leaves a little
14 cushion if we find out something might be a bump or something.

15 COMMISSIONER DEMERSON: Yep.

16 COMMISSIONER ALVAREZ: I'm okay with that.

17 COMMISSIONER DEMERSON: Mm-hmm.

18 CHAIRMAN DANIEL: All right. Let me restate
19 this in the form of a motion then.

20 COMMISSIONER ALVAREZ: And can--before you
21 do that, Chairman.

22 CHAIRMAN DANIEL: Yes.

23 COMMISSIONER ALVAREZ: Can I just one--make
24 one point clear?

25 CHAIRMAN DANIEL: Sure.

1 COMMISSIONER ALVAREZ: And it's one that
2 didn't require amount, Courtney, and I was wondering if you and
3 staff could assist me? Again, reiterating the value of having
4 our information disseminated or distributed to inmates behind
5 bars. I don't think there's a cost to that. But, I thought it
6 was appropriate for me to mention that during this discussion
7 night area--or, this time. And so I just wanted to make that
8 clear. No money involved in that, Chairman. It's just having
9 literature in English and Spanish to inmates behind bars,
10 Lockhart, Gatesville, Huntsville, all that.

11 CHAIRMAN DANIEL: Yeah. Certainly, no
12 objection from me.

13 COMMISSIONER ALVAREZ: Okay.

14 COMMISSIONER DEMERSON: Mr. Chairman, let me
15 bring this up. So, if we find out that the allocation for awards
16 was separate from this \$3.7, we still have \$500,000 on the table
17 here. So, I don't know if we want to do anything with that, or
18 we'll have time to come back to do something with it if we find
19 out that they're two separate pots.

20 CHAIRMAN DANIEL: So, you know, the item
21 here that doesn't get taken up is the innovation fund. And if we
22 find out that the award money was not included in this balance,
23 we can bring back up the innovation fund.

24 COMMISSIONER DEMERSON: Okay.

25

1 CHAIRMAN DANIEL: Or, we can simply look to
2 supplement the money in one of the ones that we've already
3 funded.

4 COMMISSIONER DEMERSON: Okay.

5 CHAIRMAN DANIEL: I'm more comfortable
6 leaving a little bit of a balance. Just you never know what
7 happens when you actually bid it out and you get the bids back.
8 So, I'm always in favor of that. Any of these could accept more
9 money the minute we wanted to put it in there.

10 COMMISSIONER DEMERSON: I agree. Okay.

11 COMMISSIONER ALVAREZ: I agree.

12 COMMISSIONER DEMERSON: Good here.

13 CHAIRMAN DANIEL: All right. So, I move we--
14 from the AEL allocation fund on this list, \$750,000 to integrate
15 education and training in corrections; \$1.2 million for employer
16 engagement; \$500,000 for job preparedness, which is the pre-
17 apprenticeship program that Commission Alvarez outlined;
18 \$500,000 to the family literacy initiative for a math assistance
19 call centers that Commissioner Alvarez outlined; \$500,000 for
20 the curriculum development training in the construction trades.
21 There was more to it, but it's what you outlined. And that's my
22 motion.

23 COMMISSIONER DEMERSON: Second.

24 COMMISSIONER ALVAREZ: You have a unanimous.

25

1 CHAIRMAN DANIEL: It is unanimous. Is there
2 any other order of business to come before the Commission Work
3 Session?

4 COMMISSIONER ALVAREZ: None here, Chairman.

5 COMMISSIONER DEMERSON: I'm good.

6 CHAIRMAN DANIEL: Well, we do need a motion
7 to adjourn.

8 COMMISSIONER ALVAREZ: Chairman, I move we
9 adjourn.

10 COMMISSIONER DEMERSON: Second that motion.

11 CHAIRMAN DANIEL: It has been moved and
12 seconded to adjourn. And we are adjourned. Gentleman, thank you
13 very, very much.

14 COMMISSIONER ALVAREZ: No. thank you, sir.

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