

**Wisconsin Agricultural Education and Workforce Development Council
Full Council Meeting
Hybrid Meeting (Microsoft Teams Meeting)
June 16, 2025
1:00 – 4:30 p.m.**

MEETING MINUTES – APPROVED

Members Present: Sec. Randy Romanski; Sec. Amy Pechacek; Scott Loomans, Betsy Leonard; Greg Cisewski; Monica Gahan; Jen Pino-Gallagher; Bob Hagenow; Ben Huber; Vanessa Miller; Andy Bensed; Kurt Popp; Shelly Mayer; Erik Huschitt; Larry Lee; Brad Brusveen; Gwen Boettcher; Jeffrey Wright

Others Present: Sarah Gibbs; Ashley Andre; Sally Ladsten; Kietra Olson; Julia Halopka; Jen Cole; Sam Krause; Sofia (Rep. Tranel's office); Emily Hein

I. Call to Order and Opening Remarks

Chair Shelly Mayer called the meeting to order and welcomed those in attendance.

II. Introduction and Roll Call

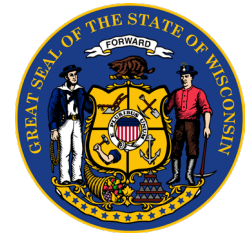
The roll was called, and the individuals present were recorded in the meeting minutes.

III. Approval of the April 28, 2025, Meeting Minutes

A motion was made by Erik Huschitt to approve the April 28, 2025, meeting minutes. Larry Lee seconded the motion, and the meeting minutes were approved unanimously and without correction.

IV. Department Updates

Sec. Randy Romanski provided updates from the Department of Agriculture, Trade, and Consumer Protection (DATCP). He shared that June Dairy Month kicked off and there are celebrations all over the state. Many engaged, enthusiastic youth attended the state FFA convention and the 6th year of the Agricultural Youth Council will convene at the start of the school year. 15 youth will meet once per month for the duration of the 2025/2026 school year. Many past members have mentioned that it was a meaningful experience and it helped them identify different pathways in the agriculture industry. DATCP is surveying members to get more information about how to get into and stay in agriculture. The state budget proposal includes investments that prioritize the workforce of the future and so far discussions have been positive. Organizations that represent farmers as well as DATCP are advocating for grant programs that will bolster the industry. Funding for the Meat Talent Development program, which was able to be implemented with federal funding, runs through this year unless additional funding can be secured. The technical



Telephone: (414) 250-6503

Email: emily.hein@dwd.wisconsin.gov

colleges are doing really great work and the program's success speaks to the need for continued investment.

Sally Ladsten provided updates for the Department of Public Instruction (DPI). The free summer meals program for students in need, has kicked off. DPI's website has an online tracker to provide updates regarding federal funding changes. DPI is monitoring Perkins grant funding moving from the U.S. Department of Education to the U.S. Department of Labor and assessing the impacts that will have on Career and Technical Education (CTE). DPI has requested additional CTE funding in the state budget as well as funding for student organizations. The State FFA convention wrapped up last week and they recorded record attendance. There is still a gap in the number of students participating in agricultural education and those enrolled in FFA. In Wisconsin, one of our goals if we were to receive the funding proposed in the Governor's budget would be to become fully affiliated, with the state funding being utilized to cover the fee, removing the barrier involved in traditional membership.

Sec. Amy Pechacek provided updates for the Department of Workforce Development (DWD). Due to skinny budget cuts to workforce agencies, WI lost \$32 million dollars in grant funding that was being used to modernize our Unemployment Insurance (UI) system. The federal government is talking about 34% cuts to workforce agencies, and this will have a major impact on DWD programs because 75% of DWD funding comes from the federal government. This would have a huge impact on DWD's ability to support industries and workforce development activities. The Joint Finance Committee removed most of DWD's provisions. The items that passed included funding for Vocational Rehabilitation, additional funding for Fast Forward to focus on healthcare and CDL workforce training, and youth apprenticeship. DWD continues to monitor labor market information and early signs are showing that job creation is slowing, and unemployment is ticking up.

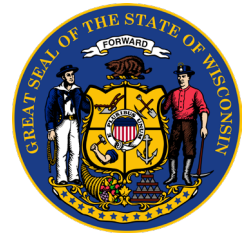
V. Draft Strategic Plan

The council reviewed the current draft of the strategic plan and provided input on the progress that has been made. Subcommittee 3 will work on cleaning up the draft to incorporate the feedback that was provided by the full council.

VI. Subcommittee 1 & 2 Report Outs

Gwen Boettcher shared that next week is the Wisconsin Association of Agricultural Educators (WAAE) conference. This is an important time of year because we see which members are continuing into the next year and offer new teacher training and mentorship. Post-secondary teachers will also be there and this year the conference includes a full day where tech teachers will lead trainings, and industry experts will teach sessions to the high school teachers. This is a partnership built from the council and subcommittee 1.

Ben Huber provided an update for subcommittee 2 and shared a look at the video that was created. Council members provided feedback on the video and discussed where it should live. Suggestions included ending the video with information on wages, earning potential and the demand in Wisconsin. From this video the subcommittee is looking into creating a template that could be used over and over and that would include the same



Telephone: (414) 250-6503

Email: emily.hein@dwd.wisconsin.gov

bookends. The council agreed to look at creating four or five videos and packaging them together.

VII. Other Business

a. Public Comment

DWD provided an update on the CTE Grant Application. The Bureau that oversees this grant is hiring a new staff and their contact information will be shared once available. Applications to add new certifications to the grant incentive list will open up this fall and messaging will go out. Certifications will need to be related to an identified shortage or occupation. Details about the process will be available on the CTE grant incentive webpage in August.

No other public comments were offered.

VIII. Closing Remarks & Adjournment

Chair Mayer closed the meeting at 4:04p, thanking everyone for their hard work.