

To: Crater Workforce Development Board

Cc: Chmurra Economics & Analytics  
Virginia Board of Workforce Development, Sara Dunnigan  
William Robertson, Chairperson, Crater Elected Officials Consortium

Submitted by: Hopewell/Prince George Chamber of Commerce on behalf of members

February 13, 2017

### Executive Summary

During 2016 the staff of the Hopewell/Prince George Chamber of Commerce met with over 160 member organizations and learned that the majority of the businesses across all sectors are concerned about the quality of our current workforce and the emerging workforce. These results also mirror conversations between local government and employers and regional economic development and employers. This public comment is in support of Section A, item 4 of the new MOU signed by the Crater Elected Officials Consortium.

### Public Comment:

In general we have discovered that the Crater Workforce Development Board members who met on Friday, Feb. 10 and Monday, Feb. 13 agree on the following:

The draft strategic plan is not a document that they support as they do not believe that it is as good as some of the other plans in Virginia and it does not set forth a clear plan with priorities, deliverables, and metrics. We strongly believe that alignment of training with our existing employers current and future needs is a key point for the next 5 years. The document could do this by addressing the need for a business services team, which we believe is essential to creating pathways, employer engagement, increased use of technology; and to seek additional funding to implement proven and promising practices for meeting the needs of employers.

The participants in this discussion are all very interested in fulfilling their roles as board members and the non-board members are very interested in supporting the work of the board and staff.

We believe going forward that there needs to be transparency in this operation to include an updated organizational chart. It is disturbing that our "consortium" was unaware of their responsibility until recently and that all of us were unaware that the Learn to Earn organization also has a board of directors separate from the Crater Workforce Development Board. The current structure leaves the board members of the CWDB feeling like they meet in the open and the non-profit meets in private. We believe that a simplified structure by making it clear who reports to whom and who is evaluated by whom as well as job descriptions for the organization's staff. Such a structure would be more likely to produce real engagement, consistency, structure and goals.

Since the learning curve for board members is high, we urge the staff to use technology in onboarding and training of new board members to increase retention and improve recruitment. We also believe that those board members who are not attending the meetings or involved on subcommittees should be discharged and replaced.

Lastly, the individuals providing these comments have all been involved in strategic planning. If we want our plan to be a working document we must agree on priorities. We can't work on everything at once; therefore the approved plan should identify the priorities and agree on the metrics for achievement.

In summary, we would like our plan to mirror the type of plan that is being used by high performing workforce organizations, such as Shenandoah Valley who are getting great results with training.

Goal 1: Create a Business Services Unit

Goal 2: Simplify the organization and provide board orientation

Goal 3: Improve communication with stakeholders by sending board packets well in advance of meetings; placing minutes and agendas on the website; eliminating as much industry jargon as possible;

Goal 4: The Consortium to monitor the work of the board ensuring that terms of the MOU are firmly imbedded.

Goal 5: Clarify who the eligible customer is throughout the region served by the organization. Logistics have been mentioned as a barrier to the ability to serve more clients and we recommend that a subcommittee be formed to evaluate the current location of the operation, partners throughout the region who may offer space, such as libraries, and a survey of all organizations in the region who are offering services to the clientele that the Crater Workforce Development Board also serves.

Sincerely,

Becky McDonough, CEO  
Hopewell/Prince George Chamber of Commerce

On behalf of the following:

Accel Talent and Development Group

Appomattox Regional Library System

Service Center Metals

Virginia's Gateway Region

Standard Motor Products

City of Hopewell

County of Prince George

Fort Lee Federal Credit Union

Peoples Advantage Federal Credit Union

Crater Small Business Development Center of Longwood University

Hopewell/Prince George Chamber of Commerce – representing approximately 10,000 employees

Note: The Crater Regional Workforce Development is a valued member of the H/PG Chamber and we are committed to supporting the transition to the WIOA guidelines in order to meet the needs of jobs seekers and employers in the region.