

**State of Indiana**  
**Governor's Workforce Cabinet**  
**Friday, February 16, 2024**  
**Meeting Minutes – Fort Wayne/Region 3**

**I. Call to Order**

The Governor's Workforce Cabinet met in regular session starting at 10:00 a.m. ET at Electric Works, 1690 Broadway, Building 19, Fort Wayne, IN 46802, with Chairman Ryan Kitchell presiding.

**Member Introduction & Roll Call**

Members Present: David Adams (virtual), Jacqueline Barton, Rep. Bob Behning (virtual), Robert Coons, Tony Denhart, Dr. Sue Ellspermann (virtual), Jody French (virtual), Megan Glover (virtual), Joyce Irwin (virtual), Dr. Katie Jenner (virtual), Sherm Johnson, Mark Kara (virtual), Paul Ketcham (virtual), Loren King (virtual), Ryan Kitchell, Theresa Koleszar, Chris LaMothe (virtual), Rebecca McCuaig (virtual), Richard Paulk, Fred Payne, Courtney Penn (virtual), Paul Perkins, Dan Peterson (virtual), Marilyn Pitzulo (virtual), Todd Richardson (virtual), Dr. Steve Rogers, Steve Schreckengast, Rebecca Schroeder, Amish Shah, Dave Shane (virtual), Tony Vespa

Regrets: Dr. Chuck Johnson, Chris Lowery, Sen. Jeff Raatz

**II. Consideration of the Minutes**

Chairman Kitchell asked for a motion to approve the GWC meeting minutes from December 14, 2023, in Sellersburg/Region 10. The minutes were unanimously approved by the Cabinet.

**III. Opening Comments**

Chairman Kitchell provided welcoming remarks and outlined the agenda for the meeting.

**IV. Growing the Future: Agbioscience in Indiana**

Rebecca Schroeder, President of Whiteshire Hamroc, welcomed all to the region. She provided an overview of Whiteshire Hamroc, an international ag business, responsible for providing swine tissue to the medical device and research industries. Whiteshire Hamroc requires a diverse workforce like any other, however, it is finding that the growing population is no longer as familiar with agriculture. Rebecca introduced Mitch Frazier to discuss further.

Mitch Frazier, Chief Executive Officer of AgriNovus Indiana, began by emphasizing the importance of the agbioscience field as it touches everyone on the earth because it centers on food. He shared the industry's five key areas: 1. Value-Added Food & Nutrition; 2. Animal Health & Nutrition; 3. Plant Science & Crop Protection; 4. Ag Equipment, Tech & Systems; 5. Production Agriculture.

Agbioscience is a \$58 billion economy and over the last 36 months has grown \$6 billion. Agbioscience employment now tops 156k. In aggregate, these jobs are connected to over 320,000 jobs in Indiana or, in other words, 10% of the state's workforce. Agbioscience jobs, on average, pay more than the state's average which could help increase per-capita income. There are several examples of successful agbioscience projects in the state including Elanco, which is now the second largest independent animal health company in the world – headquartered in Indianapolis. Corteva in 2022 announced that they would make Indianapolis their global headquarters. They are the 4<sup>th</sup> largest publicly held company in the state.

Collectively, the industry has worked to secure 2,600 job commitments over the last 40 months and \$1.5 billion capital investment committed. The current challenge is identifying new talent recruiting opportunities

and AgriNovus is working to develop more ways to do that and to highlight the benefits of living in Indiana. Mitch concluded his presentation by fielding questions from Cabinet members.

**V. Why Culture Matters: Innovative Ways to Recruit and Retain All Stars**

Amish Shah, CEO of Kem Krest, gave an overview of the company, which has 600 employees and 14 campuses. Kem Krest services multiple transportation industry segments including automotive, heavy-duty, powersports, electric vehicles, and defense, and specializes in supply chain optimization.

In 2020, Kem Krest was experiencing 180% turnover. They surveyed employees and learned there were six items that mattered most to associates, one of which was access to affordable healthcare. Leadership decided to create an on-site health clinic and reevaluate after the first year.

Kem Krest opened their first onsite Pulse Clinic, in partnership with Beacon Health, in January 2022 at the Elkhart facility. Employees were using the clinic often and telling friends and family about it. After one year, the data was showing positive results. The company also found that they were saving significant funds by managing pharmaceuticals and labs in-house. Other added benefits included diagnosing mental health disorders, discovering major health problems with easily accessible routine exams, vaccination increases, and zero cost increase in their annual health premiums.

Amish concluded the presentation by showing 2023 data – their most profitable year in company history – and the success they’ve had with innovative projects and investments in their associates.

**VI. Legislative Review, 2023 GWC Recommendations and Future Working Groups**

Chairman Kitchell opened the Legislative Review discussion with a reminder about the 2022 recommendations and the progress that has been made. He announced the kick-off for another round of GWC Recommendations, to be worked on during 2024 for the 2025 Legislative Session.

**VII. GWC Workforce Updates**

GWC Executive Director Whitney Ertel provided an update on the WIOA (Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act) plan which states are required to submit every four years. Indiana submitted a Unified State Plan for the 2024 – 2027 timeframe, aligned to the same three pillars in the original GWC Recommendations. The plan will be submitted to the Department of Labor on March 4.

Whitney drew attention to the proposed federal workforce legislation being considered. There is not necessarily more funding associated with the WIOA re-authorization, which is a general criticism of the bill, but it is suggesting reallocating how the funding is spent with a focus to re-prioritize training.

Whitney shared an update on the One Stop to Start campaign that launched on January 8, developed at the request of the Governor. Initial response has been positive, and the program will continue to be built out.

**VIII. Final Remarks**

Chairman Kitchell opened the floor for questions. He reminded Cabinet members that the next meeting will be held in Northwest Indiana – Merrillville. Meeting locations were announced for the remainder of the 2024 meetings and Chairman Kitchell welcomed suggestions on topics or sites for those meetings.

**IX. Adjournment – 12:00 p.m.**