



NOVAworks Workforce Board
September 25, 2024, Retreat Minutes

PRESENT: T. Baity, C. Berdiansky, G. Biggs, D. Dorsey, R. Foust, P. Guevara, N. Leonor, J. Lind, A. Manwani, M. Nemits, S. Porter, A. Switky, and M. Vittal

ABSENT: R. Brunson, D. Bini, J. Cohen, L. Lambert, S. Levy, J. Morrill, and B. Murphy, K. Vartan, and N. Williams

ALSO PRESENT: M. Sessions, L. Anders, C. Bernhardt, J. Cheyer, G. Pham, R. Pryor, and E. Stanly of NOVAworks staff, and guest consultant Kevin Perkey

1. CALL TO ORDER

Co-Chairperson R. Foust called the meeting to order at 9:05 a.m.

2. PUBLIC ANNOUNCEMENTS

NOVAworks was awarded a \$950,000 State Additional Assistance grant to serve the unprecedented number of layoffs impacting the local technology industry. The grant will also include funding for a community outreach person to target access and recruitment. NOVAworks also received a \$500,000 grant of unrestricted funding from a private foundation to build the Launch Lab capacity for innovative initiatives.

3. CONSENT AGENDA

It was moved by A. Switky, seconded by A. Manwani, and carried by voice vote to approve the consent agenda as submitted. For this meeting, the agenda items included the meeting agenda, July 24, 2024, meeting minutes, and Amended Biennial Conflict of Interest Code.

4. GENERAL BUSINESS

4A. Extension of Western Digital Initiative: Due to the success of this venture and continued demand for talent in the semiconductor industry, the Western Digital initiative has been extended for another year with an additional \$350,100 in funding. The funding will be used to build on the accomplishments of this past year. Given the time sensitive nature of this request and in lieu of a Board meeting, the extension was approved by the Board co-chairs.

5. WELCOME AND INTRODUCE TIM KIRBY, SUNNYVALE CITY MANAGER

The new Sunnyvale City Manager Tim Kirby was introduced and welcomed to the Board.

6. RETREAT DISCUSSION

Consultant Kevin Perkey presented on Envisioning the Future. To view the slides, click here, https://novaworks.org/documents/Ongoing/9_25_24NOVAworksWorkforceBoardRetreat.pdf

The retreat focused on grounding the Board's role, exploring innovation, and identifying future priorities for workforce development across the NOVAworks' region. It was framed around the Board's four strategic roles: Strategist, Convener, Influencer, and Optimizer.

Board members engaged in an interactive session to reflect on what NOVAworks does well, identify gaps, and brainstorm specific innovations that could enhance NOVAworks' impact. Innovation was explored through NOVAworks' three strategic pillars: Business Engagement & Sector Strategies, Access & Equity for Job Seekers, and Workforce System Integration & Partnerships. The discussion explored ways to reengage businesses, particularly in critical sectors like manufacturing or biotech/healthcare, potentially replicating the success of the Biocom California Institute partnership, and expanding services to underserved job seekers across San Mateo County. In addition, the discussion included:

- **Communication & Branding:** A recurring theme was the need for NOVAworks to enhance its communication and marketing efforts to better reach the broader community and its key customers. Board members stressed the importance of branding NOVAworks as a leader in workforce development, ensuring that businesses, job seekers and community partners understand the services and opportunities available to them. Precise, targeted messaging through digital platforms, social media, and partnerships will be essential in raising its profile and driving engagement.
- **Ongoing Board Development:** As part of NOVAworks' ongoing commitment to strengthening the Board's leadership and influence, Board members expressed a desire to continue developing the Board by strategically adding members from large employers and influential organizations across the region. This focus will enhance the Board's ability to build stronger partnerships, deepen its understanding of the workforce needs in critical sectors, and continue to drive innovation.

The discussion concluded with the identification of two critical strategic focal areas that will be developed through the NOVAworks Launch Lab:

1. **Develop and Execute New Sectoral Strategy:** NOVAworks will focus on creating a new sectoral strategy, prioritizing either manufacturing or biotech/healthcare. This strategy will involve engaging employers in targeted industries to develop workforce pipelines, addressing skills gaps, and fostering partnerships across these sectors. The Launch Lab will be the testing ground for piloting sector-specific initiatives arising from this new sectoral strategy.
2. **Expand Access to NOVAworks Services to Underserved Population Areas:** The Board will prioritize expanding NOVAworks' presence across San Mateo and Santa Clara Counties to serve underserved job seekers better. This includes creating new physical access points and forming strategic partnerships with local organizations. The goal is to ensure equitable access to workforce services for all communities.

The next steps in the coming year will include work in the following areas:

1. **Launch Lab Implementation:** NOVAworks will utilize the Launch Lab to pilot sectoral initiatives and access expansion strategies in the upcoming year, aiming to test, refine, and scale these initiatives.
2. **Engagement with Employers and Partners:** As the sectoral strategy takes shape, NOVAworks will deepen its engagement with employers in priority industries, ensuring alignment between workforce needs and training programs available across the region.
3. **Strategic Access Partnerships:** In partnership with community-based organizations, NOVAworks will roll out new access points across its service area, ensuring job seekers have greater access to NOVAworks resources and services.

7. ADJOURNMENT

The meeting was adjourned at 1:00 p.m.