

GEORGIA MOUNTAINS REGIONAL COMMISSION  
GEORGIA MOUNTAINS WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT  
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**January 29, 2015**

Minutes

The Georgia Mountains Regional Commission Workforce Development Board (GMWDB) met on January 29, 2015 at 3:30 PM. The meeting was held at the Habersham EMC office located in Clarkesville GA. Handouts were made available as visual aids. Also, a sign-in sheet was distributed and the following were present:

**Members Present**

Charlie Auvermann  
Tim Bala  
Mike Berg  
Thomas Bridges  
David Cagle  
Bill Chafin  
Andrea Gibby, Chair  
Mitch Griggs  
Greg James  
Mark Ivester  
Danny Lewis  
Deborah Mack  
Sam Norton  
Ken Schubring  
Danette Smith

**Staff**

Diana Eddins-Wiggin  
Diane Jackson  
Jessica Williams  
John Phillips  
Dawn Bruce  
Becky Sievers

**Guest**

Ricky Carter  
George Nolan

**Call to Order/Welcome**

Andrea Gibby, Chair, called the meeting to order and welcomed the attendees. She recognized guest, George Nolan, Bowersville Commissioner and first time guest, Ricky Carter, Hart County Commissioner. Chair Gibby asked that everyone please remember Board Member, Pat Freeman as she was unable to attend due to the passing of her daughter. She thanked everyone for their attendance. A quorum was established.

## **New Business**

### **Participant Payment Process**

Danny Lewis, Georgia Mountains Regional Commission (GMRC) Executive Director explained that GMRC had uncovered a fraud with its finances. GMRC was told by the fraud officers with the City of Gainesville Police Department that 85% of bank accounts have had some type of fraud. WD had seven fraudulent checks that were cashed that totaled approximately \$27,000.00. The good news was that WD had recovered all of the money. The first check was found in Kentucky. The same check number was on all seven checks. GMRC is presently using electronic signatures on checks and is looking to start using a new banking service that is similar to using a debit card. Each customer would have a card and money would be automatically placed on the card. The cost to GMRC would be \$1.00 per card. Becky Sievers, Finance Director stated that the checks did not have the GMRC logo or the bank logo on them. Most of the checks were deposited using a mobile application on a phone. Danny Lewis stated that the New Policy would be presented to the GMRC Council for a decision.

### **Sector Strategies**

John Phillips, WD Director informed the Board that the new Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) is stressing that WD work with companies and form sector groups. Most likely GMRC WD sectors would be manufacturing and medical. A study of our area would have to be performed to determine the sectors. He stated that he attended a conference on Sector Strategies. The employers would tell us what they need then WD would tell the employer what they could assist them with. The structure of the groups would be, WD Board, employers, Department of Labor and Economic Development. By doing this you would see improvement in employability, moral, retention, quality and businesses improve their bottom line. John stated that the Board would be informed as WD learns more about this topic.

Chair Gibby pointed out that information on Sector Strategies was included in their handouts. She also informed the Board that she and John attended the Georgia Workforce Leadership Association (GWLA) meeting in Macon last week. There were supposed to be new federal regulations out this month, however the regulations will not be out until spring. She stated that there are a lot of changes coming including possible board changes. She stated that the meeting was informative. There were a lot of conversations on what others are doing around the state to try to prepare for the changes. Chair Gibby stated she asked the question, "who might be carrying the Bill?" She did not get an answer. She stated that John and his staff would let the Board know of any changes.

### **New Board Structure**

Chair Gibby, directed the Board to the information in their handouts on Board structure. She stated that the information showed the minimum required membership for WIOA. She stated that there will be a lot of changes forth coming. As the changes happen, the Board will be informed.

### **Planning for WIOA Changes**

John Phillips stated that there is not a lot WD can tell the Board on the changes at this time due to not knowing what the federal regulations would be. Once the federal regulations are released WD would have more information.

## **Adult**

Diana Eddins-Wiggin, Adult/Dislocated Supervisor stated that there will be a change to Career Service from core/ intensive and training service. Explaining that there will not be a sequence in which customers would have to receive services. This is a change that will benefit participants as well as businesses. Also, there would be an increased focus on businesses, through sector strategies partnerships, career pathways, on the job training (OJT), incumbent worker training and customized training. WD would be putting them in place once we know the regulations and more about the law.

## **Youth**

Jessica Williams, Youth Case Manager Supervisor stated that there are some major changes coming with WIOA. The biggest change being the funding for youth. With WIOA, 75% of funding will go to out of school youth and 25% to in school. There would also be extra programs that will involve businesses as well. Some of the programs WD will be looking at are apprenticeships programs and more work based learning programs and a bigger mentoring program. WD has started working on the mentoring program this week. Another change is the age bracket. The age bracket changes from WIA fourteen to twenty one to WIOA fourteen to twenty four. Danny Lewis asked if the adult age bracket will change. Diana Eddins-Wiggin stated that the age for the adult funding will not change, it stays at eighteen.

## **One Stop Changes**

John Phillips stated that one of the changes in the new law was the One Stop System. The One Stop was set to allow customers to receive varies services in one location. WIOA is changing to require that the One Stop be bidded out and require a RFP be done for the destination of the One Stop. WD was hoping that the State would develop a uniform RFP. In some places, Goodwill could be the One Stop and some it could be the Department of Labor Career Centers.

## **Working with Court System**

Chair Gibby informed the Board that WD has been to Dawson and Hall County Treatment Courts for résumé writing workshops and providing information on available occupational skills assistance in January. Currently résumé workshops are scheduled each month through April for Hall County and pending schedule confirmation in Dawson.

## **Youth from Gainesville Regional Youth Detention Center (RYDC) earned GED**

Jessica Williams, Youth Case Manager Supervisor stated that a little over a year ago, WD started a GED program at the RYDC in Gainesville. WD has had fourteen youth that have received services. Four students have passed their test, some are waiting to pass their final test. Two have completed their GED, one was in the WD mentoring program at Kipper Tools, and another has applied for college. It was great

to see the successes that the students have had and to hear them say that they have hope. These kids thought that they did not have anything going for them because they had gotten into trouble. Jessica also stated that the Gainesville Times would like to do an article on the GMRC WD program at the Gainesville RYDC.

### **Audit**

John Phillips WD Director explained the results of the audit. He stated that WD was giving participants \$25.00 for sending WD a copy of their credential. During the audit, the Governor's office stated that the \$25.00 was an unallowable cost. WD appealed and Diana Eddins-Wiggin performed a 250 count desktop file review and the results showed that WD had only paid one participant the \$25.00. The Governor's office stated that the one \$25.00 payment was an insignificant amount and therefore WD was not required to pay this back.

### **Employ GA**

Chair Gibby informed the Board of the information included in their handouts on Employ GA. Employ GA was a new website that the Department of Labor is using to assist individuals with job search. Customers can create and upload their résumés, match their résumé to jobs, set job alerts and view job posting from thousands of employers. They can also explore career and educational opportunities and get labor market information.

### **Support Cuts**

Diana Eddins-Wiggin, Adult/Dislocated Supervisor explained that WD created a policy that went into effect last July, due to the limits that the Governor's Office of Workforce Development put into place. The limit was \$3000.00 per person and no more than 20% per funding stream. The adult funding stream is the funding where WD assist adults that is most in need, single parents, and lower income families. WD is at a point where it cannot stay at the required 20% in the adult finding. WD thought that it would have to stop assisting the current customers. However, John Phillips stated that another WIA area was able to raise their percentage limit by applying for a waiver through the State. Therefore, GMWD would like to have the Board's support to request a percentage increase from the State. John Phillips stated that the other area went from 20% to 30%. He stated that WD has enough funding for the increase. Bill Chafin asked "what would be a fair percentage?" Diana stated that since the other area was approved for 30% and because WD dislocated worker funds and youth funds are doing ok with the 20% she felt that increasing the adult support fund to 30% would be sufficient. Charlie Auvermann asked if the demographic of the region that received the increase lined up with GMWD demographic area. Diana stated that the area that received the increase was Southwest which is a rural area and GMRC WD area is also rural. Bill Chafin made a motion that WD to ask for an increase up to 30% for adult support. Charlie Auvermann seconded and motion passed unanimously.

### **Whistle Blower Policy**

Chair Gibby stated to the Board that the Whistle Blower Policy was approved by the Chief Local Elected Officials (CLEO) in October and is on the GMRC website. A copy was included in the handout for their review.

## **Board Affidavits**

Chair Gibby informed the Board that if they had not completed their affidavit to please do so today. WD staff, Dawn Bruce would be available to notarize the affidavit.

## **Quarterly Performance Report**

John Phillips stated that WD just received the first quarter performance report on Tuesday and received the second quarter report today. On the first quarter, WD met or exceeded everything except the adult employment rate and literacy gains. However, WD improved in the second quarter. The overall measure shows WD is meeting performance. Diana Eddins-Wiggin explained that WD only has to meet 80% of our negotiated level. Charlie Auvermann asked how GMWD was doing compared to the other areas in the state. Diana stated that GMWD was a little higher than most of the other areas in the state. Diana stated that WD has access to that information and can send it out to the Board.

## **Plan for 2015 Board Retreat**

Chair Gibby stated that the WIB needs to plan for the 2015 retreat; however WD does not have the WIOA federal regulations, therefore it should be scheduled after WD receives the new regulations.

## **Term Expiring for Board Members**

Chair Gibby stated that the Board has two members that have expiring terms for the month of January, Thomas Bridges and Mark Ivester. The list was sent to the Chief Local Elected Official, Mike Berg for approval to be nominated to serve for another term. Danny Lewis made a motion to approve the two members. Bill Chafin seconded and the motion passed unanimously.

## **Budget**

John Phillips stated that Nona Turk was not able to attend the meeting today; therefore he would be explaining the budget. John directed the Board to the spreadsheet included in their handouts. The funds to be expensed by June 30, 2015 are Adult, \$213,953.11, Dislocated, \$1,104,345.66, Youth, \$480,620.91 and Rapid Response was \$138,564.64. John stated that WD has had two companies to close recently, one being Caterpillar and the other Navitor. Dan Thornton has been working with these two companies and WD could use Rapid Response money to assist the effected employees.

## **Exception Rule for GED**

Jessica Williams, Youth Supervisor explained that the current WD policy states that WD can fund a participant to take the GED test twice. Some of the RYDC participants are having difficulty in passing due to their circumstances. Jessica requested to put an exception rule in place to be able to assist with funding for the test more than twice. The Board discussed in detail and a motion was made by Mike Berg to allow funding for participants to take the GED test up to three times. Ken Schubring seconded and motion passed unanimously.

## **Youth Support Service Policy**

Jessica Williams explained that the current Supportive Service policy allows transportation supports for participants living 5-10 miles from school to receive \$5.00 a day and participants living 10 miles or more \$10 per day. WD would like for this to be waived for youth. WD is requesting that youth be able to receive a flat \$10.00 a day for transportation support. In order for youth to be eligible for the GMWD program, they must not only be low income, but must also meet one other barrier to education or employment. Many youth do not have the support or resources to be successful and depend on supportive service to help. Mike Berg made a motion to approve the change for the youth support. Sam Norton seconded and motion passed unanimously.

## **Old Business**

### **Approval of Minutes**

Mike Berg made a motion to approve the minutes from the October 30, 2014 Board meeting. Sam Norton seconded and motion passed unanimously.

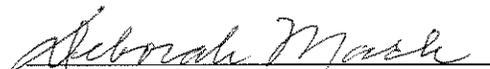
### **Adjournment**

Bill Chafin made a motion to adjourn, Deborah Mack seconded and motion passed unanimously.

Meeting adjourned at 5:00 p.m.

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Andrea Gibby, Board Chair

  
Deborah Mack, Secretary