

GEORGIA MOUNTAINS REGIONAL COMMISSION  
WORKSOURCE GEORGIA MOUNTAINS  
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October 26, 2023

**Minutes**

The Georgia Mountains Regional Commission Workforce Development Board (WDB) met on October 26, 2023, at 4:00 p.m. The meeting was held at Montaluce, located at 501 Hightower Church Rd., Dahlonega, GA 30533. The following were present:

**Members Present**

Vicki Boling  
Ricky Carter  
Chris Dockery  
Amanda Edmondson  
Deborah Mack  
Timothy McDonald  
Terry Merck  
Juergen Moller  
Christine Osasu  
Tonya Powers  
Tammy Rauch  
Beth Truelove  
Shelby Ward  
Sandra Williams

**Staff**

Whitney Blair  
Danielle Avelar  
Heather Feldman  
Diane Jackson  
Dawn Bruce  
Niki McPherson  
Chris Highland  
Alicia Page  
Gina Kessler  
Ebony Tucker  
Nona Turk

**Guest**

Benjie Hopkins, Hopkins Associates  
Marsha Hopkins, Hopkins Associates  
Greg Vitek, Workforce Strategies Group LLC  
Shelley Logan, Workforce Strategies Group LLC  
JoAnne Taylor  
Brandon Lounsbury

**Members Absent**

David Cagle, William Chafin, Shannon Cole, Jennifer Fleming, Mike McGraw, Mitch Griggs, Mary Overholt, Dana Skelton, Brooke Stall, and Jon Williams were absent.

## **Call to Order/Welcome**

Tonya Powers, Board Chair, called the meeting to order and welcomed the attendees. A quorum was established.

## **Consideration of Minutes**

Chair Powers asked the Board for comments or a motion on the minutes from the July 27, 2023, WDB meeting. Sandra Williams motioned to approve the July 27, 2023, meeting minutes, and Deborah Mack seconded. Ricky Carter commented that a change was needed on page five, paragraph six, to change the words "Celebrate Life" to "Celebrate Recovery." Ricky Carter made a motion to approve the minutes with the stated change. Deborah Mack seconded, and the motion passed unanimously.

## **Old Business**

None

## **New Business**

### **State Policy Updates**

Whitney Blair, WorkSource Georgia Mountains (WSGM) Director, reminded the Board that they had approved WorkSource staff to update policies when required by the State.

The following items were adjusted in the Local Policy to reflect the changes at the state level:

- Updated the Adult & Dislocated Worker Eligibility and Youth Eligibility sections to remove explicit mention of TABE assessment within the Basic Skills Deficient definition (pg. 103, 110, State Policy)
- Added definitions of "dependent child" and "independent child" (pg. 89, State Policy)
- Added Trade Adjustment Assistance and Dislocated Worker co-enrollment requirement (pg. 100, State Policy)

### **Provider Application**

Danielle Avelar, Adult/Dislocated Worker Supervisor, informed the Board that WSGM had received several new provider applications.

The first was from Winder CNA Training, located at 2891 Monroe Highway, Suite 1010, Bogart, GA 30622. They are currently on the State's Approved Provider List. The program that was submitted for consideration was for Certified Nursing Assistants. The cost is \$1279 for 76 hours of training over four to six weeks with a 24-hour clinical. The cost includes all supplies, books, testing fees, and the CNA state exam. Their Completion Rate was 96%. The related Employment Rate was 60%. The Credential Rate was 67%, and the average pay was \$13 per hour.

WSGM staff reviewed and recommended denying based on their performance in the Northeast Georgia area. Juergen Moller motioned to deny Winder CNA Training based on staff recommendations. Deborah Mack seconded, and the motion passed unanimously.

Mrs. Avelar informed the Board that the other applications received were also currently on the State's Provider List. WSGM staff reviewed and approved the following providers:

North Georgia Technical College (NGTC): Associate of Science-AAS Degree Bridge Program. The cost for this program is \$9,392; It is a 32-hour program over 55 weeks.

160 Driving Academy: CDL-A Truck Driving Training. The cost for this program is \$4,500; 160 hrs. over four weeks; Commercial Driving License.

Medical Institute of North Georgia: Emergency Medical Technician. The cost for this program is \$3,900; 344.5 hrs. over 15 weeks with a 60-hour clinical; National Registry of Emergency Medical Technician (NREMT) and Dental Assistant. The cost for this program is \$3,000; 80 hrs. over 10 weeks plus 80-hour externship.

## **Reports / Announcements:**

### **WorkSource Georgia Mountains Report**

Whitney Blair, WorkSource Georgia Mountains Director, informed the Board that WorkSource had a few staffing changes to share. Angie Flores could not attend the meeting to be introduced, but she is a new Intake Specialist. This spot opened when Amarylin Neill moved from intake to case management, WSGM is excited to have them both in new roles. Additionally, we filled the Outreach Coordinator position with Chris Highland, who was in attendance. WSGM excited to be his 'second act' as he retired from Forsyth County Schools earlier this year, and he has brought tremendous energy to the department. Director Blair announced that Dawn Bruce would be leaving, and we wish her well.

WorkSource Georgia Mountains had a clean monitoring report from the Technical College System of Georgia (TCSG) for the second year in a row. Director Blair thanked all the program staff, especially Diane Jackson, Ebony Tucker, and Danielle Avelar, as they ensured WSGM followed the myriad of policies and procedures. She also thanked the finance staff, Alicia Page, Nona Turk, and Cheryl Smith.

Director Blair thanked the Board Chair, Tonya Powers, for attending the Southeastern Training Association (SETA) conference this year to learn more about WIOA. SETA is a conference that brings together all the southern states and is held twice a year. WSGM appreciates Ms. Powell's time commitment to the role of Board Chair. WorkSource also had two staff attend SETA and will send nine staff members to the WorkSource Academy held by TCSG in Jekyll Island on November 6<sup>th</sup>- 8<sup>th</sup>.

Additionally, Director Blair recognized Danielle Avelar, who will present at the Carl Vinson Workforce Pipeline conference in a session with North Georgia Tech and Kubota, sharing the success of WSGM work at Arrendale Transition Center. Ebony Tucker will also present at the CTAE state conference that week, discussing our Youth projects and partnerships.

WorkSource has seen a slight uptick in enrolled students in the first quarter of this program year compared to last- about a 10% increase, which is excellent news.

Director Blair shared the upcoming Board meeting dates for the forthcoming year and asked if it would be helpful if we sent out a calendar meeting invite on the first of the year for each of these dates. The Board agreed that it would be beneficial.

## **Budget**

Nona Turk, Senior Financial Assistant, explained that as of September 30, 2023, the available funds for the Adult program were \$200,428.44 and \$194,000 is obligated. The totals do not reflect the FY23 Adult and Dislocated Grant awards. Once the FY23 Grant awards are received, it would add \$1,237,204.00 to the Adult funding stream. The Dislocated Worker program's available balance was \$220,517, with \$5,921 in obligations. The Youth Program had \$771,358 available with \$170,309 of obligations. The new High Demand Career Initiative (HDCI) Grant had a balance of \$207,326.60 available. The Rapid Response Grant had \$32,543, and the Quest Grant had \$306,212.

## **One-Stop Update**

Marsha Hopkins, One-Stop Operator, briefly updated the One-Stop office. Since the last meeting of the WDB, one Partners Meeting was held on September 26<sup>th</sup>, 2023. There were 32 people in attendance. Tammy Rauch, Business Services Recruiter for the Office of Workforce Development of the Technical College System of Georgia, presented the program. Ms. Rauch encouraged the use of the statewide site [www.worksourcegportal.com](http://www.worksourcegportal.com) by employers, job seekers, and anyone involved in workforce development. There is an option to view resources on the site as a guest without registering. The Partners Meetings are held every other month on the last Tuesday at 11:00 a.m. in the One-Stop training room. The purpose of the meetings is to enhance collaboration by sharing information and resources and to encourage referrals. Minutes of all meetings are posted on the One-Stop website under "Our Partners": <https://onestopworkgamtns.org>. The next Partners Meeting will be held on Tuesday, Nov. 26, 2023, at 11:00 a.m. All the WDB are welcome to attend. Mrs. Hopkins stated that she appreciated Board member Deborah Mack for attending the last two meetings. The number of customer visits to the One-Stop in the most recent quarter, from July through September 2023, was 430. In the same quarter last year, visits totaled 198, so activity has more than doubled. Benjie and Marsha Hopkins continue to attend meetings to represent One-Stop by sharing information about the many programs and services available related to workforce development. They are active with local Chambers of Commerce, United Way, civic groups, educational institutions, and many regional human services organizations. Hopkins Associates certainly appreciate the Board members and the WorkSource and Georgia Mountains staff for your support. The Board's input is always welcome.

## **Workforce Strategies Group LLC Report**

Greg Vitek with Workforce Strategies Group gave an overview of their activities. Shelley Logan explained that Sector Strategy started in 2018 and is funded by TCSG. There are 11 Sector Partnerships in Georgia. Workforce Strategies Group has the operation contract for Region 2, Georgia Mountains. Greg Vitek has a German Manufacturing (MFG) Operations background, and Shelley Logan has a Chamber of Commerce Economic Development background, specifically focusing on the Existing MFG Industry.

Everything is data-driven and about collaboration with active partners that determine the priorities and develop the programs and resources. Labor Market Data shows that MFG is still the top employment industry with an average \$30/hour wage in our 13-county Georgia Mountains Region. The WorkSource Strategy Group has a Steering Committee and an Employer Partnership that make projects happen. Some workgroups specifically work on the priority projects identified by the partnership.

The WorkSource Strategy Group has 80 Sector Strategy Partners, some of whom are WDB members and were in attendance. Mrs. Logan thanked them for their commitment. American Yazaki, ASI, Satellite Industries, and Universal Servo hosted tours for the partnership. Also, American Yazaki, ASI, Automation Direct, Freudenberg, Kubota, Linde + Wiemann, Morito Scovill, StruXure, and ZF are featured manufacturers in some of the 18 videos on Employability Skills featured on our YouTube Channel.

All resources are determined, developed, and delivered by the partnership. Occupational Priorities are determined annually. The wage survey is new; 24 manufacturers contributed their employee compensation data. All resources are available on the website.

Greg Vitek stated that the workforce of tomorrow is in our schools today. Working horizontally ensures that we do not have the needed participation in Manufacturing. We must go down into the school with Career Exploration, CTAE, and Work Based Learning Connections with schools, teachers, counselors, parents, and students. The Sector Partnership develops training and comes from the Occupational Priorities list. Supervisor and Industry Leadership (SAIL) starts the third cohort in January. The new Leadership Excellence and Development (LEAD) will start its first cohort in January 2024.

The Quality Control Technician Apprenticeship (QTAPP101) was developed by the partnership, and certified by USDOL, and then Lanier Technical College opened its doors to this 2-year apprenticeship. The fourth Cohort begins March 2024 at Lanier Tech and a new first cohort will begin at North Georgia Technical College in the spring.

The Boot Camps originated with the Electrical Mechanical Boot Camps and the Georgia Poultry Federation. Not only do they continue to run, but others have been added, as WSGM, school systems, and the employer's partnership in action have adopted the model. The newsletter featured Satellite Industries retaining the seven high school boot camp students for over a year after hiring and training. American Yazaki, Freudenberg, Haering, IMS Gear, Kings Hawaiian, Ranger MFG, Satellite Industries, Sherwin Williams, Specialty Appliances, and Voyant Beauty (and non-partners) have participated in apprenticeships and short-term training.

Sector Strategy is a Public-Private Partnership. The public first funds it, and then as the public funding goes away, the private businesses and industries should grow to create sustainability, shared responsibility, and customer ownership. Shelley Logan stated that if anyone had ideas in their counties, the region, or an employer contact, please let them know. They are always looking for more partners. Mrs. Logan also requested to please help share their information; if you do not tell anybody, then nobody knows.

## Performance

Ebony Tucker, Youth Worker Program Supervisor, explained the most recent performance numbers for PY22. WorkSource Georgia Mountains had met or exceeded all performance measures except for the credential rate for Dislocated Workers and Youth.

## Adjournment

Board Chair Powers turned the meeting over to Board Secretary Deborah Mack. Board Secretary Mack asked if there were any additional comments before the adjournment. Board member Ricky Carter thanked WorkSource staff for creating the Program Informational one-page flyer.

Board Secretary Mack requested a motion to adjourn. Sandra Williams made the motion to adjourn. Christine Osasu seconded, and the motion passed unanimously.

The meeting adjourned at 4:45 p.m.



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Board Chair, Tonya Powers



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Secretary, Deborah Mack