

GEORGIA MOUNTAINS REGIONAL COMMISSION
WORKSOURCE GEORGIA MOUNTAINS
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April 30, 2026

Minutes

The Georgia Mountains Regional Commission, Workforce Development Board (WDB) met on April 30, 2026 at 4:00 p.m., at The Boathouse at Lake Lanier Olympic Park, located at 3105 Clarks Bridge Road, Gainesville, GA 30504. The following were present:

Members Present

Tim Bennett
Lee Aurand-Hosey
Shannon Cole
Amanda Edmondson
Lisa Hamby
Deborah Mack
Mike McGraw
Rhonda McLean
Amy Poole
Beth Truelove
Shelby Ward

Staff

Danielle Avelar
Diane Jackson
Gina Kessler
Heather Feldman
Lynda Thompson
Nona Turk
Ebony Tucker

Guest

None

Members Absent

Ricky Carter, Amber Gaddis, Vicki Boling Jones, Timothy McDonald, Michelle Murray, Mary Overholt, Terri Partain, Tonya Powers, Tammy Rauch, and Dana Skelton,

Call to Order/Welcome

Deborah Mack, Board Secretary, called the meeting to order and welcomed the attendees. Secretary Mack introduced new Board members Lee Aurand-Hosey, organized labor representee, and Lisa Hamby with Legacy Link. A quorum was established.

Old Business

Secretary Mack asked the Board for consideration and a motion on the minutes of January 29, 2026 Workforce Development Board (WDB) meeting. Shelby Ward made a motion to approve the January 29, 2026 meeting minutes. Lee Aurand-Hosey seconded the motion, and the motion passed unanimously.

New Business

Non- Voting Board Member

Secretary Mack explained that the Board is required to have a Non-Voting Board Member for standing Committees. The full Board must appoint this individual. The Board appointed Non-Voting Board Member's term expired on April 27, 2026. With the Board's approval, Heather Feldman has agreed to continue for another term. Secretary Mack asked for consideration and a motion to approve Heather Feldman as the Non-Voting Board Member. Shannon Cole made a motion to approve Heather Feldman for another term. Rhonda McLean seconded and the motion passed unanimously.

One-Stop Certifications

Danielle Avelar, Adult, Dislocated Worker Supervisor, informed the Board that federal law requires all service locations to be ADA-accessible, secure, and meet additional standards. The One-Stop Certification packets for the comprehensive One-Stop and all affiliate sites were emailed to the Board prior to the meeting. WorkSource Georgia Mountains (WSGM) requested Board approval before submission to TCSG. Secretary Mack asked for a motion to approve the One-Stop Certifications. Shelby Ward made a motion to approve the One-Stop Certifications. Tim Bennett seconded the motion and the motion passed unanimously.

One-Stop MOU

Ms. Avelar informed the Board that the Memorandum of Understanding (MOU), which includes the Infrastructure Agreement (IFA) for the local One-Stop, is on a three-year cycle and must be renewed this year. The MOU and Infrastructure Agreement (IFA) was reviewed and updated, with the most substantial change being the cost allocation methodology. This new tiered partner system better reflects the cost-to-benefit each partner receives from One-Stop. The MOU was sent to the partners for comment and review. WorkSource Georgia Mountains received feedback on language changes to ensure partner services were reflected correctly, and those changes were made. With no substantial issues raised or requests for a meeting to discuss any additional ones, it has been sent to our partners for signature. WSGM will bring the agreement to the Board for approval in July, once fully executed.

One-Stop Operator RFP

Ms. Avelar informed the Board that the One-Stop Operator Request for Proposal (RFP) was released on March 9, 2026, with a submission deadline of April 9, 2026. One proposal was received and reviewed, submitted by Hopkins Associates. The proposal met all required criteria. WorkSource Georgia Mountains recommended approval. Secretary Mack requested consideration and a motion to approve Hopkins Associates as the One-Stop Operator. Shannon Cole made a motion to approve Hopkins Associates. Mike McGraw seconded the motion and the motion passed unanimously.

Reports and Announcements

WorkSource Georgia Mountains Report

Ms. Avelar informed the Board that WSGM had hired several new staff members. Lupita Sosa-Smith, part-time Receptionist, Intake Specialist- Lynda Thompson and Adult/Dislocated Case Manager- Innocent Ogbe.

WSGM recently began the latest Arrendale Transition Center cohort in partnership with North Georgia Technical College and Kubota. Ms. Avelar thanked Kubota and Mary Overholt for funding four participants, which helped ensure a full cohort.

WSGM was awarded an apprenticeship grant in January that has assisted with the cost of 32 apprenticeships for 11 companies. The goal is to support 100 apprentices by June 2027. Ms. Avelar explained that if a Board member's company or an employer that the Board may know might be interested in an apprenticeship program, to please let them know there are funding opportunities through WSGM. There is no real 'eligibility' for the funding beyond participation in a Registered Apprenticeship. WSGM streamlined the process for employers to make enrollment easy.

Plans for the first pre-apprenticeship programs in the region are well underway. Two pre-apprenticeship programs focused on entry-level manufacturing will launch in June. Participants will be graduating seniors from Stephens, Franklin, Banks, and Hart County in partnership with school CTAE programs, NGTC, and local employers. Ebony Tucker, Youth Program Supervisor, has been working with TCSG at the state level to help organize the pre-apprenticeship programs. WSGMs is excited about the launch and to share the results with the Board at a future meeting.

Programs Update

Adult/Dislocated Worker Supervisor, Danielle Avelar informed the Board that WSGM received a new provider application from Herway Training Institute located at 1325 Satellite Blvd., Suwanee GA. Herway Training Institute is currently on the State's Approved Provider List. The programs submitted were Phlebotomy Technician and Certified Medical Assisting.

The Phlebotomy Technician program cost \$3,179 and is 80 classroom hours with a 40-hour internship. The completion rate is 100%. The training-related employment rate is 82% and the average pay is \$25 per hour. The Certified Medical Assisting program is \$7,000 with 450 classroom hours, and a 200-hour internship and takes 16 weeks to complete. The completion rate is 96%, training related employment rate is 85%, and the average pay is \$25 per hour.

WSGM staff reviewed and based on the cost of program being higher than equivalent programs available in the WSGM area recommended denying this provider. Secretary Mack asked for consideration and a motion on the WSGM recommendation to deny Herway Training Institute. Amy Poole made a motion to accept the recommendation to deny. Rhonda McLean seconded and motion passed unanimously.

One-Stop Update

Ebony Tucker, Youth Program Supervisor, presented the One-Stop update to the Board. Ms. Tucker explained that during the most recent quarter, January 1, 2026 through March 31, 2026 the One-Stop Career Center had 145 customers. In addition, the Youth Center had 119 students during this period, and these students spent a total of 343.5 hours preparing for their GEDs.

Hopkins Associates continues to plan and host bi-monthly Partner Meetings at the One-Stop. The purpose of the meetings is to learn about services available, to share updates from each partner organization, and to promote referrals. Each meeting has a focus topic. At the most recent meeting in March, the guest speaker was Dr. Pam Kenney, Advocacy Director for United Way of Hall County. She discussed the work of United Way's One Hall Committees on Health, Education, and Financial Stability.

The next Partner meeting will be on Tuesday, May 26th at the One-Stop Center at 11:00 a.m. The minutes of all One-Stop Partner meetings are available online at the One-Stop website: <http://onestopworkgamtms.org/>. A useful feature of this website is that it is available in eight languages.

This past quarter, Hopkins Associates participated in three community Job Fairs, talking with employers and with job seekers. Hopkins Associates attended meetings with area Chambers of Commerce, United Way of Hall County, Salvation Army, and Hall County Family Connection. They continue to reach out to various human services organizations throughout the region to establish strong links between WorkSource Georgia Mountains and other Partners.

Budget

Nona Turk, Senior Financial Assistant, explained the budget report for the period ending March 31, 2026. As of March 31, 2026 the available funds for the Adult Program were \$845,406.70, with \$371,353.47 in obligations, leaving a remainder of \$474,053.23. The Dislocated Worker Program had available funds of \$228,957.76, with \$105,274.19 in expenses, leaving a balance of \$123,683.57. The Youth Program had \$383,437.33 available, with \$153,736.02 in obligations and expenses, leaving \$229,701.31. The Quest Grant was fully expended and expired on September 30, 2025. WSGM received the State Apprenticeship Grant, which had a balance of \$199,293.97 and the Rapid Response Grant had a balance of \$57,479.88.

Performance

Ebony Tucker, Youth Program Supervisor, explained the performance report that was included in the agenda packet. The Adult program exceeded all measures except credential attainment. The Dislocated Worker program exceeds all measures except for the employment quarter 2 measure and the measurable skills measure. The Youth program exceeds all measures.

Adjournment

Secretary Mack requested a motion to adjourn. Tim Bennett made a motion to adjourn. Mike McGraw seconded the motion, which passed unanimously.

Meeting adjourned at 4:30 PM.

Board Chair, Tonya Powers

Secretary, Deborah Mack