GEORGIA MOUNTAINS REGIONAL COMMISSION
WORKSOURCE GEORGIA MOUNTAINS
1856 THOMPSON BRIDGE RD., SUITE 3 ♦ GAINESVILLE, GEORGIA 30501
PHONE (770) 538-2727 FAX (770) 538-2729
October 29, 2026

Minutes

The Georgia Mountains Regional Commission, Workforce Development Board (WDB) met on October 29, 2026 at 4:00 p.m. at Camp Glisson located at 690 Camp Glisson Rd., Dahlonega, GA 30533. The following were present.

Members Present
Arlene Brock
Vicki Boling Jones
Shannon Cole
Amanda Edmondson
Amber Gaddis
Mike McGraw
Tim McDonald
Juergen Moller
Michelle Murray
Terri Partain
Tonya Powers
Beth Truelove
Shelby Ward

Staff
Whitney Blair
Diane Jackson
Gina Kessler
Heather Feldman
Lynda Thompson
Alicia Page
Danielle Avelar
Chris Highland

Guests

Shawna Hart attended for Lisa Hamby
Benjie Hopkins, Hopkins Associates
Marsha Hopkins, Hopkins Associates

Members Absent

Lee Aurand-Hosey, Tim Bennett, Chrystal Coker, Lisa Hamby, Stacey Madden, Sanchez Harris, Mary Overholt, Amy Poole, and Tammy Rauch.

Call to Order/Welcome

Tonya Powers, Board Chair, called the meeting to order and welcomed attendees. Chair Powers introduced Arlene Brock, the Gainesville District 4, Vocational Rehabilitation Office Supervisor to the Board.
A quorum was established.

DRAFT

Old Business

Chair Powers asked the Board for consideration and a motion on the minutes of July 30, 2026 Workforce Development Board (WDB) meeting. Terri Partain made a motion to approve July 30, 2026 meeting minutes. Vicki Boling Jones seconded the motion, and the motion passed unanimously.

New Business

Training Providers

Danielle Avelar, Adult/Dislocated Worker Supervisor informed the Board that WorkSource Georgia Mountains (WSGM) received a provider application for a new program from Workforce Innovators of America which is on the State Approved Provider List.

The program submitted was for Industrial Associate. The cost for the program is $995, and it is 40 classroom hrs. in one week. The credentials the participants would receive upon completion are OSHA-10, Forklift, CPR/AED, Lean Six Sigma. The Industrial Associate is a new program. Therefore, there was no completion or employment data available.

Notification: WSGM staff reviewed and based on the occupation being a high growth field, approved the Industrial Associate program.

Mrs. Avelar announced that WSGM also received an application from Cyber Tech LLC located at 410 N. Hull Street Montgomery, AL 36104. This provider is on the State's Approved Provider List.

The program submitted was CompTIA Security Plus. The cost for the program is $4,980; 32-48 classroom hours in 8-12 weeks. The Completion Rate is 86%; Training Related Employment Rate 71% and the Average pay is $18.65 an hour.

Recommendation: WSGM Staff reviewed and based on the training related employment rates being under WSGM performance rates of 85%, recommend denying this program.

Chair Powers asked for a motion on Cyber Tech LLC CompTIA Security Plus program. Terri Partain made a motion to accept WSGM recommendation to deny the program. Amber Gaddis seconded and the motion passed unanimously.

Nominating Committee

Chair Powers called on Vice Chair Vicki Boling Jones for the nominations for the vacant Secretary seat on the Board. Vice Chair Boling Jones explained that the nominating committee met, and several nominations were made and contacted. Based on the responses the Committee nominated Shelby Ward for the Board secretary seat. Chair Powers asked for a motion on the nomination of Shelby Ward. Tim McDonald made a motion to approve Shelby Ward as Secretary. Shannon Cole seconded and the motion passed unanimously.

DRAFT

Reports and Announcements

WorkSource Georgia Mountains Report

Whitney Blair, WorkSource Georgia Mountains Director, reported that WSGM had received the remaining $250,000 from the apprenticeship grant awarded in January. The funds are required to be spent by the end of June. WSGM is seeking employers with current apprentices or an interest in establishing a Registered Apprenticeship program.
Ms. Blair reported that Danielle Avelar had hosted a meeting at the WorkSource office the previous month with the Technical College System of Georgia (TCSG) apprenticeship team and interested employers to discuss transitioning existing in-house training programs into Registered Apprenticeships. She noted the potential benefits for employees throughout the region and WSGM's interest in assisting businesses in accessing the available funding.
Ms. Blair reported that the Youth Department had again received a $15,000 grant from Northeast Georgia United Way. The funds provided flexibility to serve individuals who needed assistance but might not otherwise qualify for services.
Ms. Blair announced that Danielle Avelar would attend GARC in St. Simons the following week with Heather Feldman and the other GMRC Department Heads. Ms. Blair reported that the monitoring period had begun the previous day and that WSGM had received an initial email requesting the upload of documentation. The on-site monitoring visit is scheduled for the week of December 7, and the results will be shared at the January meeting. Ms. Blair announced that the GMRC Annual Meeting will be held on December 4 at the Boathouse in Gainesville. Event information had been provided at the tables. She encouraged attendance, noted that food and door prizes would be offered, and requested sponsorship support from Board members or their employers.

One-Stop Update

Marsha Hopkins of Hopkins Associates reported that the One-Stop Career Center served 99 customers in person during the quarter from July 1, 2026 through September 30, 2026. She also reported that a new GED instructor was leading classes for youth in the training room.
Ms. Hopkins reported that the Partners Meetings continued to be planned and held on a bi-monthly basis to share resource information and facilitate referrals, with an average attendance of approximately 30 people. The September meeting featured guest speaker Kyndra Cohen, director of Hall County Family Connection and the HUB, a student, family, and community resource center housed at Gainesville High School.
Ms. Hopkins announced that the next Partners Meeting was scheduled for Tuesday, November 17, at 11:00 a.m. at the One-Stop Center. Minutes of all One-Stop Partners Meetings were available on the One-Stop website: http://onestopworkgamtns.org/
Ms. Hopkins reported continued participation in seminars and job fairs sponsored by area Chambers of Commerce and civic groups to share information about WorkSource Georgia Mountains and One-Stop services and resources. She noted that recent events had placed considerable emphasis on artificial intelligence (AI) and its effects on jobs and individuals. Outreach to human services organizations throughout the region also continued to establish and strengthen connections between WorkSource Georgia Mountains and its partners.

Do not hesitate to contact Hopkins Associates at (470) 577-0823 if you have any questions or suggestions regarding the One-Stop operation.

DRAFT

Budget

Alicia Page, GMRC Finance Director, explained the budget report for the period ending September 30, 2026. As of September 30, 2026 the available funds for the Adult Program were $363,557, with $ 264,856 in obligations, leaving a remainder of $ 98,701. The Dislocated Worker Program had available funds of $230,923, with $88,819 in expenses, leaving a balance of $142,103. The Youth Program had $912,524 available, with $143,498 in obligations and expenses, leaving $769,026. The State Apprenticeship Grant had a balance of 219,815 and the Rapid Response Grant had a balance of 54,624.

Board Training

Workforce Development Board Training was held and reviewed the basics of WIOA, Board Responsibilities and Bylaws, funding, and local programs and staff.

Adjournment

Chair Powers requested a motion to adjourn. Mike McGraw made a motion to adjourn. Juergen Moller seconded the motion, which passed unanimously.

Meeting adjourned at 4:50 PM.

DRAFT

_____
Board Chair, Tonya Powers

_____
Secretary, Shelby Ward