

GEORGIA MOUNTAINS REGIONAL COMMISSION
WORKSOURCE GEORGIA MOUNTAINS
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October 27, 2022

Minutes

The Georgia Mountains Regional Commission, Workforce Development Board (GMWDB) met on October 27, 2022, at 4:00 p.m. The meeting was held at the Lumpkin County Library located at 56 Mechanicsville Rd., Dahlonega, GA 30533. The following was present:

Members Present

Vicki Boling
David Cagle
Ricky Carter
Shannon Cole
Chris Dockery
Timothy McDonald
Mitch Griggs
Deborah Mack
Mike McGraw
Terry Merck
Juergen Moller
Arlene Brock
Tonya Powers
Shelby Ward
Brooke Stall
Jon Williams
Sandra Williams
Kevin Hankinson

Staff

Whitney Blair
Danielle Avelar
Heather Feldman
Diane Jackson
Amarylin Neil
Niki McPherson
Alicia Page
Ebony Tucker
Nona Turk
Judy Reynolds
Catherine Allen
Gina Kessler

Guest

Benjie Hopkins, Hopkins Associates
Greg Vitek, Workforce Strategies Group

Members Absent

Melissa Armstrong, William Chafin, Andrea Gibby, Jennifer Fleming, Betsy McGriff, and Mary Overholt were absent.

Call to Order/Welcome

Vicki Boling, Vice Chair called the meeting to order and thanked the Lumpkin County Library for allowing the Workforce Development Board to hold the meeting there. A quorum was established.

Consideration of Minutes

Vice Chair Boling informed the Board that they needed to vote on the minutes from August 25, 2022. Vice Chair Boling asked for consideration of the minutes. Juergen Moller made a motion to approve the August 25, 2022, meeting minutes. Mitch Griggs seconded, and the motion passed unanimously.

Old Business

Election of Board Chair

Vice Chair Boling explained that at the last meeting a nominating committee was appointed for the election of a Board Chair. The committee met and produced several candidates and spoke with them all and has a recommendation to present to the Board. Vice Chair called on Board member Sandra Williams to present the recommendation.

Board member, Sandra Williams thanked Vice Chair Boling for doing an excellent job filling in and facilitating the Board meetings. The nominating committee consisted of Vicki Boling, Jennifer Fleming, and Sandra Williams. The committee recommended Tonya Powers for consideration. Terry Merck made a motion to approve. Ricky Carter seconded, and motion passed unanimously.

Vice Chair Boling introduced Tonya Powers to those in attendance that may not know her.

New Business

Youth Program Update

Ebony Tucker, Youth Program Supervisor informed the Board that since the last meeting the Youth Department has continued to grow. The Youth Program has had seventeen new participants and has started receiving participants from North Georgia Technical College (NGTC) for the GED program. GED seems to be the fastest and most popular program. In September, all the youth staff attended the Youth Round Table put on by the Technical System of Georgia. The focus of the round table was to identify youth that live in high poverty areas, partnerships to share cost, and mental health. There is a meeting scheduled in November to get technical assistance with performance and guidance to help bring up the youth performance numbers.

The Youth Program is planning for the 2023 bootcamps for Forsyth, Banks, White Hart, Hall, and possibly Union & Towns for Summer 2023.

We are excited for a new partnership with Project Life in Forsyth County. Their program is like Project Search in Hall County that assist students with mild disabilities with job skills and experience. WorkSource will be offering supportive services and work experience through In School Youth funding.

The Fall Cohort of Virtual Work Experience has kicked off with a 50% increase in participation. WorkSource has a total of eight students enrolled.

The Youth Program will be bringing in more In School Youth (ISY) this program year by utilizing a wavier that allows funding to be split 50/50 between ISY and Out of School Youth (OSY). In the past the split was

75/25. We will be bringing in students from work-based learning, Mountain Education Center, and Project Search.

Adult Program Update

Daniel Avelar, Adult/Dislocated Worker (DW) Program Supervisor gave an update for the Adult and Dislocated Worker Program. The numbers for the Adult and DW were lower due to COVID and funding cuts, however, PY22 has already shown an increase. WorkSource has started having in-person application and overview sessions held at the Department of Labor offices located in Habersham, Hall, and Stephens Counties and at the technical colleges. WorkSource staff are striving to attend community and family connection meetings in all thirteen counties- either in person or on Zoom.

WorkSource staff attended The Day Reporting Center which is an outpatient rehab for those under felony parole/probation, which held the 3rd Annual Hall/Dawson Recovery Rally on Saturday, September 17th at Laurel Park in Gainesville and had an attendance of 450 people.

WIOA staff along with Be Pro Be Proud attended the first A Family Fair organized by Dawson County-Family Connections. It was a large community resource event with games, food, and a movie all at no cost to families and over three hundred people attended.

The Homeless shower event in Hall County is scheduled two times a week. WorkSource staff visits several times during the month to assist individuals who are ready to take the next step in getting a job or training. Thanks to a partnership with Ninth District Opportunity, WIOA participants with substantial barriers that exceed WorkSource capability have been able to receive subsidized lodging and additional transportation assistance while in training.

Daniela Avelar shared a WorkSource Georgia Mountains success story. Monique Rucker was a high school dropout, had her first child, a felony conviction, and a job as an entry-level worker in a poultry company when she decided to return to school. She completed GED classes at NGTC and took a class here and there to try and find her passion. In her own words, she became a professional student until 2002 when she attended a Medical Assisting /Phlebotomy program in Athens.

While she was able to work as a Certified Medical Assistant her background remained a barrier. Eventually, a friend of a friend hired her to do Phlebotomy for a lab company based in Virginia. She worked her way up in the company to become the Phlebotomy Supervisor for half of the United States. In 2018 she decided she wanted to become a nurse but needed assistance because she was out of financial aid; she learned about WorkSource and upon her acceptance into the Licensed Practical Nursing (LPN) program at NGTC she applied and started training with Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) assistance.

Although she was pardoned by the state in 2017, her felony background created a problem for her yet again. When she was to start her externship, the medical facility refused to use her based on her background and she was dropped from the LPN program.

Her WIOA Case Manager, Stephanie Underwood, assisted in her appeal to the school and she was readmitted. A short time later she was refused a clinical site for the second time and was dropped from the training.

Instead of giving up in the face of adversity, Monique worked with NGTC's EMT Director to be accepted into their program and graduated with her EMT license in 2021.

Monique created her own mobile phlebotomy company and later determined she wanted to open her own school to train competent phlebotomists. She came to our office last week to talk with Stephanie Underwood and thank her for her support as she completed her training and shared her story with me as well. She is forever grateful for WIOA taking a chance on her and is the epitome of a WorkSource success story.

Business Services Update

Niki McPherson, On-the-Job-Training (OJT) Program Coordinator informed the Board on the activities for Business Services for PY21 and PY22. Ms. McPherson showed the numbers for PY21 compared to PY22 the numbers showed WorkSource was on track to meet and exceed the number assisted for PY21.

WorkSource placed two individuals in internships in Stephens County at Currahee Club and Jaymarz Signs. Both individuals have obtained full time employment with the companies.

Ms. McPherson shared exciting news for the WorkSource OJT Training Program. WorkSource will be assisting Life Point Medical which would be WorkSource's first employer in Rabun County. This would also be the first OJT in the medical field for our region. The participant received her medical assisting certification through our program in 2016. She is currently making \$12.00 an hour. Through the OJT she will be hired and make \$16.00 an hour.

WorkSource has had Internships in Stephens County and Hall County. The employers for the internships were Chattahoochee Marketing Group, Currahee Club and Jaymarz Signs.

The OJTs have been in Stephens County and Hall County with employers FX Logistic Solutions and ASI.

WorkSource provided Temporary Work Experiences at Good Samaritan, Lumpkin County Family Connection, and Habitat Northeast Georgia.

WorkSource has had Incumbent Worker Training in Stephens, White and Forsyth counties for ASI, Meadowbrook Machine and Tool, Specialty Appliances and Tencate.

WorkSource Georgia Mountains Report

WorkSource was lucky enough to be recognized for two awards this year from the National Association of Development Organization or NADO awards: the Quality Control Apprenticeship saw employers from five counties. This was a first-of-its-kind in a Georgia Quality Apprenticeship. Shelley Logan and Greg Vitek spoke on this before, and their efforts with the sector work made this possible, along with the employers who helped create this curriculum and Lanier Technical College for providing the training. This is an initiative to promote economic mobility and upskill the regional workforce to meet the needs of the Advanced Manufacturing and Technology industry. Industry leaders needed an innovative way to reach new, highly motivated talent and an avenue to reenergize their existing workforce to be as productive and successful as possible. Quality Control Technicians play a vital role in the manufacturing process in careers that provide good pay, opportunities for advancement, stable employment, and excellent company benefits. Two cohorts of apprentices have graduated and have moved on to careers in the field.

The **Weld Ready Bootcamp** is an innovative short-term welding training program designed to equip workers with the skills needed to participate in the Georgia Mountains thriving manufacturing industry. WorkSource GA Mountains provided a series of four-week boot camps for recent high school graduates

from the 13-county region who sought workforce certification for the high-demand field. Participants have trained in various industrial processes, soft skills, and networking assistance. To date, all participants have received welding certifications, and more than half are working in their training field, earning \$15-\$22 per hour. The program serves the Georgia Mountains Regional Commission's economic development priorities by providing skills training to create economic mobility for residents and making the region more attractive to high-paying manufacturers looking to locate in areas with skilled workforces.

The Mobile Training Units (MTUs) have not been out in the community as often as they were before covid. Covid, of course, stopped them in their tracks as putting a crowd of strangers in a tiny box together was just not going to happen. With that break in use, despite our best efforts, some mechanical issues began to appear. The units are almost ten years old and have begun having extremely costly repair issues. After discussions with staff, finance, and Executive Director, Heather Feldman, we have made the decision to move forward with selling both mobile units. Staff is working to ensure services provided by the unit will continue. Technology has continued to grow, and we do think staff will be able to provide the same level of resources without the continued expense of an MTU.

As an agency receiving federal dollars, we have monitors from our state agency, TCSG comes in at least once a year. Since the last meeting, WorkSource had that week-long audit covering finance, administrative, and programmatic aspects of the program and was thrilled to announce that WorkSource had a clean audit this year with no findings.

WorkSource has made a small amount of progress on the Open Meetings Act. A counterpart in South Georgia, Berrien County - was able to meet with Penny Houston, the committee chair under this legislation. After speaking with her and working through past issues, she is now open to allowing WIOA to hold telephonically meetings. This has been an ongoing effort- these boards are required to be made up of private employers, everyone is busy, and it would be much easier to engage if we were allowed to have hybrid meetings and you could attend the occasional meeting electronically. If you do have a good relationship with your legislative members, primarily in the house and ESPECIALLY if they are an economic development committee, we would appreciate their support.

Reports / Announcements:

Budget

Nona Turk, Senior Financial Assistant, informed the Board that they should have received the budget report in their agenda packet. The report was for the period ending September 30, 2022. As of September 30, the available funds for Adult/DW programs were \$317,693.84 with \$310,609.83 of obligations. These obligations did not include the projected expenses of Staff Payroll and operating cost. The spreadsheet totals did not include the FY23 Grant awards. FY23 awards will be made available as of October 1, 2022.

Our expected Grant award amounts are Adult \$501,709.00 and Dislocated Worker \$846,343.00 for a total of \$1,348,052.00. The Youth program had \$798,812.35 available with \$109,482.94 of obligations. Our National Dislocated Worker Grant had a balance of \$69,436.37 with \$69,436.37 obligated. This award has been extended until March 2023. The HDCI grant had a balance of \$278,925.68.

One-Stop Update

Benjie Hopkins, One-Stop Operator, gave a brief update on the One-Stop office. The last One-Stop Partner meeting was held on September 27, 2022, at the One-Stop Office. The core partners in attendance were, WorkSource, LTC, NGTC, Georgia Department of Labor, Legacy Link. Other community partners that attended were, Gainesville City Schools, Goodwill Industries, My Sisters Place, Gateway Domestic Violence Center, Ninth District Opportunity, Good News at Noon, Habitat for Humanity, and the Gainesville Housing Authority. The purpose of the meetings is to encourage collaboration between partners and to facilitate referrals. The focus topic was My Sisters Place, a homeless shelter for women and children. Each partner gave an update on their organization. The next meeting will be on November 29, 2022. Workforce Board members are welcome to participate. The minutes are posted on the One-Stop website at <http://onestopworkgamtns.org/> The customers coming into the One-Stop has increased. For the first quarter of the calendar year WorkSource had 174 people come in the office for services. The second quarter there were 207 and the third quarter 298.

Workforce Strategies Group LLC Report

Greg Vitek with Workforce Strategies Group (WSG) gave an overview on their activities. WSG LLC noted and explained details about the Sector processes including County Focus meetings, Company tours for Sector members, and the upcoming combined meeting. Of special note was the example of White County where the focus meeting generated to idea of an HVAC Bootcamp for High School graduates next June in support of the local contractors and supported by White County High School, and NGTC and WSGM

Career path activities included a very full schedule of eleven Be Pro Be Proud visits and seven Mountain Ed events for the 22/23 school year. Also, very significant results for all the manufacturing tours for students during October.

Marketing activities with the Mentor Newsletters and the WFD Newsletter continues to reach more people. The Website is well underway with programming in process.

The Influencers group has identified priorities and will begin to address the how we will focus on them.

Training announced Cohort 3 of the Quality Apprenticeship will start in Q1 2023 and the hopes for enough interest to start a Cohort at NGTC.

Greg Vitek recognized the accomplishments of the team: Lumpkin County High School, Lanier Technical College, and WorkSource, (and Lincoln Electric for supply of equipment) in support of Satellite Industries Aluminum Welding Bootcamp. He also recognized the progress of the three apprentices at Sherwin Williams, who have reached the midpoint for their Industrial Maintenance apprenticeship and are already performing advanced maintenance tasks for the company.

Workforce Strategies Group is proud to have been recognized along with LTC for a NADO recognition of the Quality Apprenticeship program.

Performance

Danielle Avelar, Adult/Dislocated Worker Program Supervisor explained the most recent performance numbers for PY21. WorkSource is meeting or exceeding all the performance measures for the Adult/DW employment in quarter two and quarter four as well as the credential and measurable skills gain. The youth measures have improved for employment in quarter two and quarter four and their measurable skills has also improved, and the youth exceeded their credential performance measure. WorkSource is tracking performance to make sure we meet performance for PY22.

Board member Ricky Carter stated that he had attended a Board meeting in Jekyll Island and one of the topics that was discussed was the shortage in construction workers in the housing industry. Mr. Carter stated he was aware of a program that WorkSource has done called Construction Ready and he is not sure how it operates. He would like to get the information about the Construction Ready training to the individuals with which he had met. Whitney Blair explained that WorkSource would discuss this with him and get him the needed information. Ms. Blair explained that construction is one of the focusses of Sectors Strategies.


Mitch Griggs also mentioned their Career Academy. There will be a ribbon cutting on Friday, October 28, 2022. The Career Academy has started a construction pathway that is very popular with the students. A good place to start would be with your local High Schools and Career Academies.

Vice Chair Boling mentioned with the new Board members that there was a need for Board training

Adjournment

Vice Chair Boling announced the next scheduled Board meeting will be on January 26, 2023 and requested a motion to adjourn. Terry Merck made a motion to adjourn. Juergen Moller seconded, and motion passed unanimously.

Meeting adjourned at 4:45 p.m.



Board Chair, Tonya Powers



Secretary, Deborah Mack