

YOUTH COMMITTEE MEETING MINUTES

Virtual Meeting:

<https://us04web.zoom.us/j/975263815?pwd=NGZFaXpoQkIXcGVaUnRZN2RyNEFtUT09>

April 16, 2020 – 11:30

Attendees:

Members:

Scott Crain
Brenda Dalin
Marsha Hopkins
Khadija Hoeltke
Shannon Cole
Shelby Ward
Lynne Warren

Staff:

Kaitlin Andrews
Jessica Williams
Shameka Harrison
Juston Kearby
Angela Pugh
Ebony Tucker

The Youth Committee met virtually through Zoom due to the Covid 19 issuance.

Meeting Called to Order:

Youth Committee Chair, Shelby Ward, called the meeting to order and welcomed everyone in attendance. Roll was called to confirm all in attendance.

New Business:

- Discussion on WSGM Covid 19 updates
 - Shelby Ward, Youth Committee Chair, spoke on how WorkSource Georgia Mountains is handling the Covid 19 crisis while working from home due to the ‘shelter in place’ issuance by the Governor. She explained that the WorkSource office has been closed and will continue to be closed through at least the April 30th date given. After this point it will be determined by the Executive Director, in accordance with guidance put in place, when the office will re-open. Currently, staff is still available via email and phone and continue to stay in contact with participants and partner agencies
- Disaster/Emergency Supportive Service Policy
 - Jessica Williams, Youth Program Supervisor, discussed the Disaster/Emergency Supportive Service Policy. She explained that the policy was developed due to the Covid 19 crisis. In order to continue some type of support for the participants during these new and unusual circumstances, there needed to be a policy in place. The policy was developed with guidance from the Technical College System of Georgia (TCSG) and other WorkSource areas which have a Disaster/Emergency Supportive Service Policy in place, as guidance since the Georgia Mountains area had not needed this type policy in the past. Jessica went on to explain that the Board did go ahead and approve this in order for the policy to be active immediately. She also mentioned that the main purpose and urgency of the policy was to assist participants who have children in licensed daycare who are still need to pay for their child’s spot in the daycare. (The policy is attached to these minutes)

Program Updates:

- GED Program Update
 - Shameka Harrison spoke on the GED program. She shared that since the last Committee meeting there had been 20 GED completions, two Welding Certifications, three Forklift Certifications, and two Microsoft Certifications through the Lanier Technical College Career Pathways Program. North Georgia Technical College Program reflected eight GED completions. At this time Athens Technical College program does not have any completions reported. Shameka announced that there are also two new staff members with the Career Pathways Programs, Todd Wolfe and Stacie Welch, both with the Lanier Tech program.
- Shift
 - Angela Pugh discussed the challenge of keeping students engaged when they are not able to meet in person for class in times like Spring Break, so Covid 19 has been a challenge as well. She reported that she has been able to make sure that her students are all set up on the GED lessons and have continued to work their GED hours online. They have also been set up for virtual classroom and are attending that on occasion as well. Angela was excited to share that some of the Shift youth have been very productive during this time. She continued that four youth have been able to gain employment and have dedicated themselves to not only working their assigned hours, but have volunteered to work a double shift to provide relief to other employees. Angela shared that she and Ebony will be holding workshops with the students that are geared toward managing study time and will then move into personal study guides for each student. Angela and Ebony will follow these workshops with employment training workshops. Angela also announced that six participants in the Regional Youth Detention Center (RYDC) GED program and seven participants in the Shift GED program have completed GED's. She shared that she attributes part of these successes to the fact that they have taken ownership in their "own" space, the GED classroom in the ROUTE 180 center, and the students feel more comfortable. Prior, they did not have a set classroom; it was different dependent on the day of the week.
- Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) Youth Updates
 - Jessica reminded the Committee of the "freeze" on new Youth applications due to shortage of funding. She informed the Committee that Area 2 was provided some extra Youth funding from the State. The Youth Department was able to resume accepting applications as of April 1, 2020. Jessica also added that Work Experience has been stopped during the Covid "Shelter in Place" issuance, and will stay in effect until State of Emergency is lifted.
- College Update
 - Ebony Tucker announced that one Shift participant would be completing his college program this semester and two other Shift participants will be starting college in the fall. She also mentioned there is a participant in the RYDC Transition to Success program who is working on the Automotive Program with Lanier Technical College and doing well. Currently she has received 10 GED graduates from the GED Success programs with Lanier Technical College and North Georgia Technical College who will begin occupational skills training in the summer and fall. Ebony continued in stating that 5 of her college participants

are on track to complete and graduate the end of this semester. Ebony also discussed a new program she and Angela are working with call Girls Unlimited. This group teaches leadership skills and helps develop confidence and self-awareness to young women who have had some type of court involvement.

- Workshops & Mountain Education Charter (MEC) Schools Update
 - Kaitlin Andrews informed the Committee that the Youth Department participated in or hosted 48 events in the fall semester which included job fairs, middle school workshops, interviewing workshops and WIOA services overviews. She continued that there have been 26 events for the spring semester. The spring semester typically involves more events however, with schools closed to the Covid crisis, we have not been able to have as many. Kaitlin also spoke about the virtual workshops we are working on. These will be overviews, and workshop resources placed on our website for teachers to be able to access.
- Intake Update
 - Juston Kearby reported new participants in the different programs. There have been three new applications for the Shift program, 26 applications for the Lanier Tech GED program, two applications for the North Georgia Tech GED program, 10 applications for the Mountain Education Credit Recovery Program and four new applications for occupational skills training program. Juston mentioned that the WIOA program on the state level is trying to work on having an online application available. He deferred to Jessica to speak a little more on the subject. Jessica stated that the state would like to have an electronic application available, which would include some electronic signatures. This idea is still in the works and there is not a time frame yet as to when this might be available. The state hopes to be able to use the data system in place as a platform for the application.

Review of ROUTE 180 Opening:

Shelby discussed the ROUTE 180 Open House on February 20, 2020 and suggested it was a success. She explained that even with the rainy day, more than 50 people came. This number included Committee members, board members, partner agencies, WIOA participants, staff and several guests. Four participants gave guided tours of the center. Several attendees tested out the game equipment.

Future Meetings:

June 18, 202- TBD

Adjournment:

Meeting adjourned by Chair Ward.