

GEORGIA MOUNTAINS REGIONAL COMMISSION
WORKSOURCE GEORGIA MOUNTAINS
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August 25, 2022

Minutes

The Georgia Mountains Regional Commission, Workforce Development Board (GMWDB) met on August 25, 2022, at 4:00 p.m. The meeting was held at the Habersham Electric Membership Corporation located at 6135 Highway 115 West, Clarkesville, GA 30523. The following were present:

Members Present

Vicki Boling
David Cagle
Ricky Carter
Shannon Cole
Chris Dockery
Jennifer Fleming
Mitch Griggs
Deborah Mack
Mike McGraw
Terry Merck
Juergen Moller
Arlene Brock
Mary Overholt
Shelby Ward
Sandra Williams
Kevin Hankinson

Staff

Whitney Blair
Danielle Avelar
Heather Feldman
Diane Jackson
Dawn Bruce
Niki McPherson
Alicia Page
Ebony Tucker
Nona Turk
Judy Reynolds

Guests

Benjie Hopkins, Hopkins Associates
Marsha Hopkins, Hopkins Associates
Shelley Logan, Workforce Strategies Group
Greg Vitek, Workforce Strategies Group
Shandra Spear, Vocational Rehabilitation
Jessica Zagarella attended for Melissa Armstrong

Members Absent

Melissa Armstrong, William Chafin, Andrea Gibby, Tim McDonald, Betsy McGriff, Tonya Powers, and Jon Williams were absent.

Call to Order/Welcome

Call to Order/Welcome

Vicki Boling, Vice Chair, called the meeting to order and announced that a quorum was established. Vice Chair Boling welcomed the attendees and introduced the new Board members. Kevin Hankinson, Department of Labor, Gainesville Career Center Supervisor. Kevin filled the seat of Career Center Manager, Mark Winters, who recently retired. Arlene Brock, Vocational Rehabilitation Program Supervisor. Arlene has filled the seat for Beth Williams due to Beth's retirement. Vice Chair Boling also introduced new Board member Jennifer Fleming, Human Resource Director with Lake Foods located in Hartwell, GA. Jennifer has been with Lake Foods for six years. Lake Foods has grown from 100 to almost 700 employees in that period. Jennifer currently serves on the Board of Hart County College and Career Academy.

Vice Chair Boling informed the Board that a vote was needed to approve the amended agenda. The agenda was emailed to the Board prior to the meeting. The reason for the amendment was to add Youth Policy Updates. Deborah Mack made a motion to approve the amended agenda. Chris Dockery seconded, and the motion passed unanimously.

Consideration of Minutes

Vice Chair Boling informed the Board that they needed to vote on the minutes of January 27, 2022 and April 28, 2022. The votes would need to be done separately. Vice Chair Boling asked for consideration of the January 27, 2022, board minutes. Juergen Moller motioned to approve the January 27, 2022, meeting minutes. Deborah Mack seconded, and the motion passed unanimously. Vice Chair Boling asked for consideration of the April 28, 2022, board meeting minutes. Terry Merck made a motion to approve the April minutes. Deborah Mack seconded, and the motion passed.

Old Business

Adult/Dislocated Worker Policy

Judy Reynolds, Adult and Dislocated Worker Case Manager, explained that the Supportive Services Policy was updated for transportation and to help reduce barriers. First, for supportive services to ensure mobility between home and the clinical site, those traveling over eighty miles round trip may be eligible to receive \$15.00 if their Case Manager documents the need. The second change is to help reduce barriers noted by partner agencies and to allow limited supportive services provided before training to enable the participant to complete their eligibility documentation and participate in a program. Reasonable costs for documentation include, but are not limited to, payment for: State ID, Birth Certificate, and Social Security Card. Terry Merck motioned to approve the changes to the supportive service policy. Deborah Mack seconded, and the motion passed unanimously.

New Business

Youth program Update

Ebony Tucker, Youth Program Supervisor, informed the Board that since the last meeting, the Youth Department has enrolled 63 new participants. 10 have earned welding certifications, 15 have earned GEDs two have completed virtual work experience. There will be a new cohort for Virtual Work Experience starting in October. Three participants in a Bootcamp partnered with Lanier Technical College and Starlite Industries. The Youth Department is planning for a Fall and Winter welding Bootcamp for Mountain Education Center and Lanier College and Career Academy.

Youth Policy Changes

Ms. Tucker explained the updates to the Youth Policy. The Basic Skills Deficient Definition for both In-School Youth (ISY) and Out of School Youth (OSY) was updated to include English Language Learners. Shannon Cole motioned to approve the change to the Basic Skills definition. Shelby Ward seconded. After a brief discussion, the motion passed unanimously.

Ms. Tucker explained that the next policy change was to allow co-enrollment for ISY. ISY funds did not allow enrollment for Individual Training Accounts (ITA)s. This would enable co-enrollment with the adult program to pay for training. Deborah Mack made a motion to approve the Youth Co-enrollment Policy change. Shelby Ward seconded, and the motion passed unanimously.

Activation of Nominating Committee

Vice Chair Boling explained that the Board bylaws require the Chair to be from the private sector in the Georgia Mountains area. Rhonda McLean, Board Chair, accepted a job offer in Gwinnett County, therefore, the Board needed to activate a nominating committee to elect a new Chair. She requested volunteers for the committee. Board members Sandra Williams, Jennifer Fleming, and Vicki Boling volunteered to be on the nominating committee.

Updates to the WorkSource GA Mountains Plan

Whitney Blair, WorkSource GA Mountains Director, informed the Board that the Office of Workforce Development requires the 2020-2024 WorkSource Georgia Mountains Comprehensive Plan to be updated and approved by the Workforce Board at the end of the second year. The Plan is on a four-year cycle, and this is the end of the second year. Technical College of Georgia (TCSG) only requires minimal updates, such as the impact of Covid and updating of tables. The Plan has been posted on our website for thirty days for public comment. WorkSource has not received any feedback. The Plan was also emailed to the Board. Terry Merck made a motion to approve the updates to the WorkSource Georgia Mountains Plan. Mike McGraw seconded, and the motion passed unanimously.

Sector Strategy Request for Proposal (RFP)

Ms. Blair explained that this Request for Proposal (RFP) is for developing a website designed to feature Sector Strategy information and initiatives. The project will be funded through a Sector Strategy grant

provided by the Technical College System of Georgia (TCSG). The RFP was released on May 18, 2022. GMRC received three proposals from Vendors. All proposals were received by the June 20, 2022, deadline. The bid opening was held on June 21, 2022, with Heather Feldman, Gina Kessler, Faith Bryan, and Whitney Blair present, and each received a full set of proposals for evaluation. After scoring and review, App Studios was chosen as the vendor to recommend to the GMRC council to develop the Sector Strategy website. After a brief discussion, David Cagle motioned to approve App Studios as recommended. Chris Dockery seconded, and the motion passed unanimously.

Eligible Training Provider List

Whitney Blair informed the Board that the State now requires all training providers to submit their performance data to TCSG to be reported to the federal government to ensure that we are using providers giving quality training and credentials. This is the first time the providers have had to follow through with this requirement. The requirement has been waived since it went into effect several years ago. If schools choose not to submit the required data, we can no longer use them for training. WorkSource had two schools to come off the approved provider list, Construction Education Foundation and the University of North Georgia. WorkSource is working on speaking with these providers to get them back on the approved list.

Reports / Announcements:

Budget

Nona Turk, Senior Finance Assistant, explained that as of June 30, 2022, the available funds for the Adult and Dislocated Worker program were \$432,859 with \$180,890 in obligations. These funds will expire on June 30, 2023. The Youth Program had \$267,077 available with \$134,589 of obligations. These funds expire on June 30, 2023, as well. WorkSource has received the PY22 Youth Grant for \$751,435. The National Dislocated Worker funds available were \$269,547 with \$157,716 obligated. This Grant was set to expire March 31, 2022; however, it was extended to March 30, 2023. The Sector Strategy Grant had a balance of \$59,528, which is entirely obligated. Since June 30th, WorkSource has received the Adult and Dislocated Worker and Sector Strategy Grant for PY 2022. The Adult Grant was in the amount of \$112,128 and the Dislocated Worker Grant was \$213,035, which was requested to be transferred to the Adult Grant. The amount received for the Sector Strategy Grant was \$263,305.

One-Stop Update

Benjie Hopkins, One-Stop Operator, gave a brief update on the One-Stop office. Since the last Workforce Development Board meeting, there have been two One-Stop Partner meetings. On May 31, 2022, the focus was on North Georgia Technical College (NGTC). Shelby Ward with NGTC had Katie Johnson, a recruiter for NGTC come and speak about having 500 eighth graders visit the campus in Clarkesville to learn about the educational options and opportunities. These were called Color Tours, which offered hands-on activities during fifteen-minute sessions, and groups of students rotated between various color-coded areas of training options. It was very successful, and NGTC plans an expansion next year.

On July 26, 2022, the Partner meeting focused on Habitat for Humanity. Director Alison McElvery came and explained their Home Buying Program, eligibility, and their need for volunteers. She also spoke about

their ReStore, which is open to the public and located on Murphy Boulevard in Gainesville. The core partners are always in attendance at the meetings, and we appreciate their attendance.

WorkSource GA Mountains, Lanier Technical College, NGTC, Vocational Rehabilitation, Department of Labor Career Center, and Legacy Link are core partners. There are also invited agencies that attend. These agencies are United Way, Goodwill, WorkSource Strategies, Gainesville High School, Dawson County Chamber of Commerce, Good News at Noon, Good Samaritan Ministries and Gateway Center for Domestic Violence.

The minutes for the meetings are always posted on the One-Stop website at <http://onestopworkgamtns.org/>. The next One-Stop Partners meeting is scheduled for September 27, 2022, at 11:00 a.m. Workforce Board members are welcome to participate.

Mr. Hopkins informed the Board that the number of people visiting the One-Stop is beginning to increase. Pre Covid the One-Stop had about 800 people per quarter. In the first quarter of 2022, 174 people came to the One-Stop seeking services; in the second quarter, we had 207. We have a representative from the Department of Labor at the One-Stop and Vocational Rehabilitation. Benjie Hopkins explained that he and Marsha Hopkins are always out in the community looking for ways to spread the word about our services and attending meetings.

Workforce Strategies Group LLC Report

Greg Vitek with Workforce Strategies Group gave an overview of their activities. He explained Sector Strategies to the Board for the new members. The update for the Sector Process was that they had received approval for their Grant for next year. Workforce Strategies have enlarged the focus with skilled trades and plan to increase their focus on special populations activity.

The Career Pathways group focused on Be Pro Be Proud implementation last year. It was very successful. We sponsored 10 visit days and will be sponsoring 15 visit days this year. They are also incorporating Mountain Education. Special education students will also be able to participate in Be Pro Be Proud.

The training project is Supervisor and Leadership training development. Employers have expressed that they have a need for supervisors. Workforce Strategies is in the process of meeting with the local Technical Schools to see what types of training already exist. They would like to be able to offer this training in 2023.

The marketing focus is to launch the Sector Strategy website. They have also started to sponsor industry visits. They have had two this year, one was a ball bearings plant, and the other was Sherwin Williams. Greg Vitek informed the Board of their Newsletter that is sent out monthly.

The employability skills group has developed employability skills lesson plans and materials. This group name has been changed to the Influencers.

They plan to have a combined steering committee meeting in November.

Performance

Danielle Avelar, Adult/Dislocated Worker Program Supervisor, explained the most recent performance numbers for PY21. The performance chart provided in the PowerPoint was color-coded to show if WorkSource is exceeding, meeting, or not meeting. For quarter two, Adult employment was 111.76%, Dislocated Worker (DW) was 109.80%, and Youth was 85.34%. Employment for quarter four was Adult 99.72%, DW 92.88%, and Youth 79.07%. Credential attainment for Adults was 110.86%, DW 107.60%, and Youth was 117.85%. The Measurable Skills Gain for Adults was 159.42%, DW 215.05%, and Youth 3.49%. Danielle Avelar also explained the slide provided that showed WorkSource Georgia Mountains' performance for employment in quarter two compared to all the other Areas in the State.


Adjournment

Vice Chair Boling announced the next scheduled Board meeting would be on October 27, 2022. Chair Boling requested a motion to adjourn. Chris Dockery made a motion to adjourn. Sandra Williams seconded, and the motion passed unanimously.

Meeting adjourned at 4:45 p.m.



Vice Chair, Vicki Boling



Secretary, Deborah Mack