Local Elected Officials (LEO) Board Meeting
October 27, 2022
3:00 p.m.

MINUTES

The Local Elected Officials (LEOs) met on October 27, 2022, at 3:00 PM. The meeting was held at the Lumpkin County Library located at 56 Mechaniesville Rd., Dahlonega, GA 30533.

CALL TO ORDER

Greg James, Chief Local Elected Official (CLEO) called the meeting to order and thanked everyone for attending. A quorum was not established. The following members were present:

Members Present and County Represented	GMRC Staff Present
Greg James (Rabun County)	Heather Feldman, Executive Director
Chris Dockery (Lumpkin County)	Gina Kessler, Executive Assistant
James Addison (Stephens County)	Whitney Blair, WorkSource Director
Travis Turner (White County)	Diane Jackson, Administrative Assistant
Jim Conley (City of Blairsville)	Ebony Tucker, Youth Program Supervisor
Lamar Paris, (Union County)	Amarylin Neill, Intake Specialist
Marty Roberts for Cliff Bradshaw (Towns County)	

CONSIDERATION OF MINUTES

Due to lack of quorum, the minutes from the September 29, 2021were not considered.

REPORTS

Whitney Blair, WorkSource Georgia Mountains Director provided an update on the activities for WorkSource. WorkSource had served 651 participants in PY21 and enrolled 161 new participants. These participants were enrolled in occupational skills training and were eligible for tuition assistance, books, and supportive services like, childcare and gas reimbursement. WorkSource tries to eliminate any barriers so that participants can attend school and be

successful. During the program year WorkSource spent over $500,000 in tuition. The participants primarily attend North Georgia Technical College and Lanier Technical College; however, we do assist students at the University of North Georgia, Piedmont and Brenau. Students also attend GED classes or classes to get the High School Diploma. One of the schools that we partner with is Mountain Education School. One of the big interests is short term training such as CDL-A truck driving. Due to the demand, the training providers have a six-month waiting list. WorkSource has had thirty-four students graduate from short-term training Boot Camps such as the Electrical Mechanical Skills. Ninety-two precent of the students in the boot camps are employed. It was very successful.

WorkSource was lucky enough to be recognized for two awards this year. The National Association of Development Organization or NADO awards. One of the awards was for the short-term welding cohort. Which is a perfect example of the counties in our region working together to benefit their residents. We had students from Dawson, Forsyth, Hall, and Lumpkin to complete these cohorts. The participants are making $15 to $22 an hour.

The Youth Program has had their Youth Center (Route 180) open. They have held workshops, virtually and in person for youth across the region. WorkSource have also started GED classes again. This year WorkSource has had more than seventy-five participants in Career Pathways with seventeen graduates.

The Business Services Program continues to grow which includes On-the-Job Training, Incumbent Worker Training, Apprenticeships and Work Experience. Since 2019 WorkSource has paid out more than $415,000 to arear employers. Which is a wonderful opportunity for businesses especially small businesses.

WorkSource has also had a COVID Grant since 2020. Through that Grant WorkSource has been able to provide 7270 hours of assistance to local area nonprofits. The nonprofit gets a worker, and the worker gets paid.

The Sector Strategy work has continued which focusses on advanced manufacturing. The Sector Strategy has a steering committee with over one hundred reginal partners that focusses on Career Pathways, Outreach, and training. WorkSource has also had the Be Pro Be Proud initiative. WorkSource offered to pay for visits for this to all the thirteen counties in their region. The Be Pro Be Proud initiative is a hands-on mobile unit that has a CDL simulator, a welding simulator, and plumbing for a hands-on experience. WorkSource will be sponsoring visits again.

WorkSource's other NADO award was the Quality Control Apprenticeship, which was with employers from five counties, Banks, Dawson, Forsyth, Hall, and Lumpkin. This apprenticeship was the first of its kind in the State. Employers got together and produced the curriculum that their businesses needed and placed their employee into the apprenticeship and WorkSource was able to help pay for the cost of the training.

WorkSource Georgia Mountains funding which ended June 2022 was 2.5 million. This year it was 2.3 million which was a slight decrease. WorkSource has planned for the decrease and has funds to assist employers and participants with training.

WorkSource performance remained stellar this year with eighty-two percent still employed after one year of completing their training.

WorkSource is also working on the Open meetings Act. As of now, we are not allowed to meet by Zoom or phone. 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., she is now open to allowing WIOA to hold telephonically meetings. 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.

Georgia Mountains Regional Commission Executive Director, Heather Feldman thanked Whitney Blair and her team for the wonderful job that they have done. The office had just finished monitoring the last week in September and we received zero observations and zero findings.

Stephens County Commissioner, James Addison announced that he had a luncheon with Congressman Andrew Clyde today and they discussed plans for Stephens County. One of the plans were that twenty-five teachers have signed up to visit different plants in the county to see what they need. Then the teachers can speak with their students and let them know the employment opportunities and pay that is offered here in Stephens County. If you get your teachers involved, then you can get the students involved.

White County Commissioner, Travis Turner mentioned that funding may be cut or removed for the Mountain Education. He requested a meeting with WorkSource if possible, by zoom or in person in the next couple of weeks to discuss.

OLD BUSINESS

None

NEW BUSINESS

None

ADJOURNMENT

Meeting adjourned at 3:30 p.m.

Greg James, CLEO