

GEORGIA MOUNTAINS REGIONAL COMMISSION
WORKSOURCE GEORGIA MOUNTAINS
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April 25, 2024

Minutes

The Georgia Mountains Regional Commission Workforce Development Board (WDB) met on April 25, 2024, at 4:00 p.m. The meeting was held at the Lavonia Railroad Depot at 1269 East Main Street, Lavonia, GA. The following were present:

Members Present

Vicki Boling
David Cagle
Ricky Carter
Shannon Cole
Amanda Edmondson
Mitch Griggs
Deborah Mack
Timothy McDonald
Juergen Moller
Christine Osasu
Mary Overholt
Tonya Powers
Tammy Rauch
Beth Truelove
Shelby Ward
William Chafin

Staff

Danielle Avelar
Whitney Blair
Heather Feldman
Diane Jackson
Gina Kessler
Ebony Tucker
Nona Turk
Alicia Page

Guest

Benjie Hopkins, Hopkins Associates
Marsha Hopkins, Hopkins Associates
Greg Vitek, Workforce Strategies Group LLC
Hannah Selvaraj, Youth Program Participant

Members Absent

Chris Dockery, Jennifer Fleming, Amber Gaddis, Mike McGraw, Terry Merck, Dana Skelton, Jon Williams, and Sandra Williams were absent.

Call to Order/Welcome

Tonya Powers, Board Chair, called the meeting to order and welcomed the attendees. Chair Powers thanked everyone for their attendance. A quorum was established.

Old Business

Consideration of Minutes

Chair Powers asked the Board for comments or a motion on the minutes from the January 25, 2024, WDB meeting. Shelby Ward motioned to approve the January 24, 2024, meeting minutes, Mitch Griggs seconded, and the motion passed unanimously.

New Business

Adult/Dislocated Worker Policy Update

Danielle Avelar, Adult/Dislocated Worker Supervisor, informed the Board of the increase in the number of special population participants that WorkSource had served this program year compared to previous years. In the Program Year (PY) 2019, WSGM served three individuals: PY20 was three, PY21 was two, and PY22 was seven. To date, for PY23, WSGM has served 20 homeless individuals. The WorkSource Georgia Mountains service area has seen a 30% increase in homeless individuals. The number of ex-offenders that WSGM served in PY18 and PY19 combined was 109. The number dropped in 2020. In 2021, it was 40; in 2022, it was 55; and for the current program year, WSGM has served 71 offenders. WSGM has served offenders from Arrendale, Caldwell, Whitworth, and Hall County Corrections.

Danielle Avelar explained that WorkSource would like to update the Needs Related Policy from the previous wording, "All needs-related payments will be limited to 6 months," to read now: "Payments shall not exceed 14 weeks (amount of time for unemployment Insurance payment period) per program year and/or will be paid until the 14-week limitation is reached or until the participant completes training, whichever comes first".

Chair Powers requested a motion to update the Needs-Related Policy as stated. Juergen Moller made a motion to approve. Shelby Ward seconded the motion. After a brief discussion, the motion passed unanimously.

New Provider Applications

Danielle Avelar informed the Board that WorkSource had received a new provider application from Norris Mechanical LLC. Norris Mechanical is located at 100 New Prospect Church Road, Anderson, South Carolina, and is currently on South Carolina's eligible training provider list. WSGM has had a customer request to attend this school. The school offers fast-track welding courses. The school applied for approval for five different welding classes. WSGM staff recommendation was to approve all programs applied for by Norris Mechanical.

WID-101 Fabrication- \$7,960; four hundred hours; Completion rate: 50%, Credential rate: 70%; Average

WID-101 Plate Welding- \$5,941; 240 hours; Completion rate: 65.6%; Credential rate: 68.8%; Average Wage: \$17/hr.

WID-102 Pipe Welding - \$5,941; 240 hours; Completion rate: 88.2%; Credential rate: 100%; Average Wage: \$17/hr.

WID-103 Pipe Welding Advanced - \$5,941; 240 hours; no performance measures noted.

WID-104 Pipe Welding Specialist- \$6,300; 240 hours; no performance measures noted.

Chair Powers asked for a motion to approve Norris Mechanical as a training provider for the WSGM area. Amanda Edmondson made a motion to approve. Christine Osasu seconded, and after a brief discussion, the motion passed unanimously.

Youth Program RFP

Ebony Tucker, Youth Program Supervisor, informed the Board that WSGM received one Request for Proposal (RFP) for the Youth Independent Living Mentor. The Independent Living Mentor would support the case managers and the students in reaching their goals. The RFP was posted on February 23, 2024, and closed on March 25, 2024. WSGM received one proposal from Angela Pugh. Ms. Pugh has served in this position for the last 11 years. She has over 30 years of experience working with at-risk youth. Ms. Pugh is a Certified Life Coach, Career Services Specialist, and Global Career Development Facilitator. The RFP met the proposal request, and the recommendation from WSGM was to approve the received RFP.

Chair Powers asked for a motion for consideration to approve the RFP received from Angela Pugh. Vicki Boling made a motion to approve, Shannon Cole seconded, and after a brief discussion, the motion passed unanimously.

Reports / Announcements:

WorkSource Georgia Mountains Report

Whitney Blair, WorkSource Georgia Mountains Director, informed the Board that the SB 26 Bill passed a few weeks ago, which allows Workforce Boards to meet telephonically. This bill has been in the works for at least five years, so WSGM was very excited to share the news. WSGM still encourages members to attend in person as much as possible but understands that with a Board comprised of over half of employers, work commitments can come up.

WSGM is still working on the process, but the vision is for the Board to receive a calendar invite with the Zoom link included. WorkSource has purchased equipment to ensure attendees can see the meeting and hear individuals talking, making it worth their time. This change also means that if there is no quorum and we have not officially heard that you cannot attend, WSGM will start making calls.

The One-Stop MOU has been fully renewed, executed, and sent to the Technical College System of Georgia (TCSG) and all necessary partners.

The Local Plan rewrite is required this year. WSGM will post the Plan on our website for public comment in the next few weeks. The Plan is required to be posted for 30 days for public comment. WSGM would

then bring the Plan to the Board for approval at the July 25, 2024, meeting, address any proposed changes, and submit a final copy to the State by the end of September.

WSGM is anticipating a 9% cut in funds this year. WSGM has not yet received the final funding numbers but will share them at the next Board meeting.

The Sector Grant is the money that has been funding, among other things, the work Greg Vitek and Shelley Logan have been doing for WSGM for the last few years. The State has opened another round of funding, and WSGM is currently completing the application. TCSG has said this will be the last round of Sector dollars, but we are hopeful that they will ‘rebrand,’ and we can continue in the same vein to meet employer needs.

Whitney Blair informed the Board that there were marketing items on the tables for the Board to take and asked the Board to let WSGM know if additional items were needed.

Chair Powers introduced Youth Program participant, Hannah Selvaraj. Ms. Selvaraj attended the meeting to assist everyone in signing in. She was very excited to be able to attend. Ebony Tucker explained that Ms. Selvaraj has been in the Youth Program for two years. She is completing online alternate schooling, which allows her availability during the workday. She has assisted the Youth Department with clerical duties and is now assisting at the front desk. She does a great job. The customers and staff all have made very positive comments.

Budget

Nona Turk, Senior Financial Assistant, explained that the budget report was in the agenda packet that was emailed prior to the meeting. The report was for the period ending March 31, 2024. As of March 31, 2024, the available funds for the Adult Program were \$953,283.21 with \$238,023.69 in obligations. These funds will expire on June 30, 2025. The Dislocated Worker Program had available funds of \$65,100.89, with \$2,668.53 obligated. These funds will expire on June 30, 2025. The Youth Program had \$330,298.46 available with \$110,700.98 in obligations. The available funds are for PY23 and will not expire until June 30th, 2025. The HDCI grant had a balance of \$81,133.69 and will expire on June 30th, 2024. The Rapid Response grant had a balance of \$61,094.17 and will expire on December 31, 2024. The Quest grant had a balance of \$167,289.05 and has \$114,654.77 in obligations. These funds will expire on September 30, 2024.

One-Stop Update

Marsha Hopkins, One-Stop Operator, briefly updated on the One-Stop office. Two regular bi-monthly meetings of One-Stop Partners have been held since the last Workforce Board meeting. These occurred on January 30th and on March 26th. The programs for both meetings consisted of group discussions about workforce development resources and service delivery in the region. Each meeting had approximately 30 people in attendance. The network of individuals and organizations has increased and strengthened in the past year. The Partner Meetings aim to enhance collaboration by sharing information and resources and encouraging referrals. Minutes of all meetings are posted on the One-Stop website under “Our Partners”: <https://onestopworkgamtns.org>. The next Partner Meeting will be on Tuesday, May 28, 2024, at 11:00 AM in the One-Stop training room. Board members are always welcome to attend. Customer visits to the One-Stop in the most recent quarter, from January through March 2024, was 488. In the same quarter last year, visitors totaled 401. The Hopkins meet regularly with various community organizations to represent the One-Stop by sharing information about programs and services related to workforce development. They

appreciate Workforce Board members, as well as the WorkSource and the Georgia Mountains staff, for their support. The board's input is always welcome.

Workforce Strategies Group LLC Report

Greg Vitek with the Workforce Strategies Group gave an overview of their activities. Georgia Mountains Works (GMW) Sector Strategy focuses on recruiting and adding new employer partners. This cycle, we welcomed John Soules Foods (Hall Co) and JTEKT (Lumpkin Co).

The on-site visits and tours at manufacturing facilities continue. Recently, a visit to Morito Scovill showed an old established company (started in the 1700's) that has combined classic manufacturing processes with modern technology. Presses from the 1950's run next to just installed CNC Wire forming equipment. Additionally, they incorporate a work-based learning program to develop their future workforce. The next tour will be at Freudenberg NOK. See the GMW website for details. All partners are encouraged to attend.

Hire a Vet Webinar: The employer partners indicated an interest in Veterans as an untapped source of employees. GMW sponsored a webinar with Veteran transition and employment experts to present and answer questions. There are programs and funds to assist vets and employers in transition planning, training, and actual one-the-job training for veterans. Employers may contact Shelley Logan to connect with VET experts.

WSGM, Lanier Technical College (LTC), and WSG LLC were recognized for program development by NADO (National Association of Development Organizations). The Quality Control Technician and the Supervisor and Leadership Development (SAIL) courses were recognized. Employers in our region designed the details of structure and course content for both programs.

The Quality Control Apprenticeship at LTC graduated five apprentices from the 2-year program in April. Each graduate made Capstone presentations and received the Certificate from LTC. They will also receive a Journey-Worker Certification from USDOL. The five apprentices recorded six promotions amongst themselves during the program period. Congratulations to the apprentices and their companies. See the GMW website for highlights. [Georgia Mountains Works](#)

WSGM sponsorship of Be Pro Be Proud (BPBP) visits to area high schools will continue this year. Most recently Stephens County, Gainesville City, Towns County, and Union County high schools were visited. The districts enhanced the visits with employers present, holding career day activities and or including Mountain Education students.

Planning for the application to the next round of Sector Strategy grant funding is underway, as reported by WSGM.

Greg Vitek thanked the WSGM Workforce Development Board for the support of our Sector Strategy initiatives.

Performance

Ebony Tucker, Youth Program Supervisor, explained the most recent performance numbers for PY23. For the Adult Program, WorkSource Georgia Mountains exceeded all performance measures except for the Measurable Skills Gains. Measurable Skills Gains are a real-time measure; all other measures happen at exit. The Measurable Skills Gains for the Adult Program should increase once the semester ends and grades are posted. The Dislocated Workers Program and the Youth Program are exceeding all measures.

Adjournment

Chair Powers adjourned the meeting.

The meeting adjourned at 4:50 p.m.


Board Chair, Tonya Powers


Secretary, Deborah Mack