

**GEORGIA MOUNTAINS REGIONAL COMMISSION  
WORKSOURCE GEORGIA MOUNTAINS  
1856 THOMPSON BRIDGE RD., SUITE 3 ♦ GAINESVILLE, GEORGIA 30501  
PHONE (770) 538-2727 FAX (770) 538-2729  
January 28, 2021**

**Minutes**

The Georgia Mountains Regional Commission Workforce Development Board (GMWDB) met on January 28, 2021 at 3:00 PM. The meeting was a virtual Zoom meeting. A roll call was done, and the following were present:

**Members Present**

Vicki Boling  
Terry Merck  
David Cagle  
Bill Chafin  
Shannon Cole  
Melissa Armstrong  
Chris Dockery  
Rhonda McLean  
Andrea Gibby  
Mitch Griggs  
Deborah Mack  
Betsy McGriff  
Juergen Moller  
Mary Overholt  
Tim McDonald  
Beth Williams  
Shelby Ward  
Sandra Williams  
Mike McGraw  
Mark Winters

**Staff**

Heather Feldman  
Andrea Newsom  
Whitney Williams  
Nona Turk  
Ebony Tucker  
Diane Jackson  
Danielle Avelar  
Niki McPherson  
Judy Reynolds

**Guest**

Benjie Hopkins, Hopkins Associates  
Greg Vitek, Workforce Strategies Group, LLC  
Shelley Logan, Workforce Strategies Group, LLC  
Corin Morgan, Vocational Rehabilitation

**Members Absent**

Ricky Carter, Jon Williams, and Alex Warner were absent.

## **Call to Order/Welcome**

Rhonda McLean, Board Chair, called the meeting to order and welcomed the attendees. Chair McLean informed the Board of the new members. Board member Pat Freeman, Legacy Link CEO is retiring at the end of this month. Melissa Armstrong, who has worked as Director of Legacy's Senior Employment and Training program would now be the CEO and will be representing Legacy Link on the Board. Beth Williams, Unit Manager with Vocational Rehabilitation (VR) has accepted a new position as Supervisor for the Athens office. Corin Morgan, Cumming and Gainesville VR Supervisor will be representing VR on the Board. Board member, Thomas Bridges has also retired from the Board. Chair McLean congratulated Thomas Bridges and Pat Freeman on their retirement, and Beth Williams on her new position. She thanked them for their service to the Georgia Mountains area. A roll call was completed, and a quorum was established.

## **Consideration of Minutes**

Chair McLean asked for consideration of the October 29, 2020 Workforce Development Board meeting minutes. Motion to approve the minutes was made by Bill Chafin. Betsy McGriff seconded, and motion carried unanimously.

## **Old Business**

None

## **New Business**

### **WorkSource Georgia Mountains Staff Changes**

Chair McLean announced that WorkSource Georgia Mountains has had several staff changes recently. Whitney Williams, WorkSource Georgia Mountains Director introduced Ebony Tucker, Youth Program Supervisor. Ebony has been with WorkSource for seventeen years. Ebony's prior position was Senior Case Manager for the Youth Program. Ebony has great ideas on how to move our services forward and a special relationship with the population we work with. WorkSource also had some staff changes in the Adult Department. Instead of filling the Adult Program Supervisor with one position, WorkSource broke it down into three areas. Leading the Case Managers is Judy Reynolds. Judy has been a Case Manager for four years. Judy does a good job in making sure the Case Managers follow policies and that the participants get what they need. Niki McPherson will be leading the Business Services Department which includes On-the-Job Training, (OJT) Incumbent Worker, apprenticeship training and internships. Niki has been the OJT Coordinator for eight years. Thanks to Niki and Dan Thornton's efforts, WorkSource has really seen the Business Services grow. Danielle Avelar will be leading outreach and new programs. Danielle has been with WorkSource for ten years. Danielle has overseen WorkSource Georgia Mountains' Facebook page. She has made our page so engaging that WorkSource Georgia Mountains has had more likes on our page than any other WorkSource office in the state. Danielle will be working closely with our Career Couch Advisors and our partners to share information and to help develop new programs.

## **Board Training**

Whitney Williams informed the Board that we are still planning on conducting Board member training as soon as the State opens back up and we can meet in person again. The Board has several new members, and we have several more to add.

## **Program Policies**

Ebony Tucker, Youth Program Supervisor, explained that due to the programmatic finding WorkSource was required to revise the Youth Supportive Services Policy to say that Case Managers will review the supportive services form before approving any participant for supportive services. The policy now reads that Youth Program staff will review the Supportive Service request form to determine participant eligibility and need. WorkSource requested approval of the revised policy. Beth Williams made a motion to approve the revisions. Andrea Gibby seconded, and motion passed unanimously.

## **Proposals Received for Outreach**

Whitney Williams informed the Board that WorkSource received a Request for Proposal (RFP) for a Regional Workforce Development Logo and Video Production with a focus on manufacturing. The project will be funded through a Sector Strategy grant provided by the Technical College System of Georgia (TCSG). The RFP was released on November 2, 2020.

WorkSource received three proposals from Vendors. All proposals were received by the December 2, 2020 deadline. The bid opening was held on December 14, 2020 with Heather Feldman, Gina Kessler, Shelley Logan, and Whitney Williams present, and each received a full set of proposals for evaluation. After scoring and review, Sozo Bear Films was chosen as the vendor to recommend to the GMRC council to produce a logo and video for the region. Chris Dockery made a motion to approve Sozo Bear Films. Beth Williams seconded, and motion passed unanimously.

## **Reports / Announcements:**

### **Budget**

Nona Turk, Financial Assistant, explained the totals listed on the budget. The dollar amount for Adult funds that WorkSource has available to spend by June 30, 2021 was \$850,053. All the Dislocated Worker funds were transferred to use as Adult funds. The Youth funds available was \$353,447 through March 31, 2021. WorkSource has received both National Dislocated Worker Grants that totals \$995,355.

## **One-Stop Update**

Benjie Hopkins, One-Stop Operator, gave a brief update. The One-Stop Partner meeting was held on January 26, 2021. Partners attending meeting: WorkSource Georgia Mountains; Area Technical Colleges (Lanier, North Georgia, and Athens); Georgia Department of Labor, Georgia Vocational Rehabilitation Agency, and Legacy Link. Other organizations represented: Ninth District Opportunity, United Way of

Hall County's Compass Center, Gateway Domestic Violence Center, and Georgia Department of Corrections (Community Supervision). The purpose of the meeting is to learn about services available, to share updates from each partner organization, and to promote referrals among organizations to coordinate and to improve service delivery. The presenters for the meeting were from WorkSource. They gave a presentation on their current programs and services. Benjie explained that the Department of Labor has over 170,000 jobs posted on Employ Georgia. The Federal unemployment rate is 6.7%, the unemployment rate for Georgia is 5.6%, and the rate for Georgia Mountains is 3.5%. This information shows that the work being done in Georgia Mountains is helping. The minutes from the Partner meetings are always posted on the One-Stop website. The next meeting is scheduled for March 30, 2021, everyone was invited to attend.

## **Workforce Strategies Group LLC Report**

Shelley Logan with Workforce Strategies Group gave an update on their activities. Since the November meeting, employers continue to face a shortage of skilled candidates and an increasing need for entry level applicants with employability skills. Unemployment incomes act as friction against people retraining and changing industries for entry level positions.

The MFG Sector Strategy work, while impacted by COVID, has continued to progress. Our regional Steering Committee, Employer Partnership and Workgroups have continued per the planned schedule and are resulting in actions asked for by Employers. They have projects including videos, short-term training, and apprenticeships all vetted and implemented by the partnership of employers, economic developers, and educators.

### Employability Skills Workgroup

The Employability Skills Workgroup kicked-off a project with local school systems to develop videos creating a regional library of up to 50 videos. The Career Technical and Agricultural Education (CTAE) and Audio-video educators from the region met with broad acceptance. Each video will feature a local student or recent graduate along with a local manufacturing or trade-related employer with a focus on applying employability skills that students are being taught in school. They anticipate completion by the end of this school year.

### Career Path Workgroup

Our regional survey of manufacturers identified a "Manufacturing Technician Career Path" and "Bootcamps" as priorities. The Career Path starting at entry level all the way up to Engineering/Management is in the process of being benchmarked.

### Training Workgroup

Design and implementation of the Bootcamps that came out of the Career path workgroup will provide focused training in 1 to 12 weeks to meet Employer expectations. Discussions currently include programs for high school graduates and options for dislocated workers along with possible pre- and post-hire programs for the existing workforce. They were proud to say that the Quality Technician Apprenticeship was completed, approved, marketed, and started this morning at Lanier Tech with 7 apprentices representing 7 manufacturers! This was 100% employer led.

Tim McDonald, Lanier Technical College Executive Vice President explained that they have had a tremendous response from Greg Vitek and Shelley Logan as well as twelve or thirteen local employers in developing this program. The On-the-Job training came from WorkSource. They are very excited to be a part of developing this new program.

### Marketing Workgroup

Support for all the other workgroups includes working on materials for the Quality Tech apprenticeship and the Employability Skills Video project. Since the Board approved the bid today, the group is excited to begin the workforce development video targeting the high school audience. They will work together on the development and production specifics to create a professional tool to meet the workforce demands. They anticipate beginning the website soon.

Their goal is to determine need and capacity and to work with all the partners to implement ACTION ultimately meeting the goal. They are thankful for Maher and Maher's initiative. They are excited about the ongoing participation in the MFG Sector Strategy of 30 employers and 50 community members. This participation level indicates value in the investment being made. Shelley thanked the Board and the staff at WorkSource Georgia Mountains for their support.

### **Performance**

Chair McLean informed the Board that the PY-20 Quarter 1 performance was emailed for their review. The performance was also shared on the screen in the Zoom meeting. The chart showed the performance compared to the overall performance of the state for each indicator. WorkSource has had a positive contribution to the overall performance of the state. WorkSource is meeting or exceeding all the performance measures.

#### Adult Program Performance      All Providers

Achieved - 119.92%	110.54%
Actual 98.33%	85.67%
Plan 82%	77.50%

#### The Dislocated Worker Performance      All Providers

Achieved - 119.05%	110.54%
Actual -100.00%	85.67%
Plan – 84.00%	77.50%

#### Youth Performance:      All Providers

Achieved – 125.79%	110.54%
Actual – 100.00%	85.68%
Plan – 79.50%	77.50%

Chair McLean announced the next Workforce Development Board meeting is scheduled for April 29, 2021.

**Adjournment**

Meeting adjourned at 3:40 PM

---

Board Chair, Rhonda McLean

---

Secretary, Deborah Mack