

**GEORGIA MOUNTAINS REGIONAL COMMISSION**  
**WORKSOURCE GEORGIA MOUNTAINS**  
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**July 30, 2020**

**Minutes**

The Georgia Mountains Regional Commission Workforce Development Board (GMWDB) met on July 30, 2020 at 3:00 PM. The meeting was held by Zoom. A roll call was done, and the following were present:

**Members Present**

Thomas Bridges  
Vicki Boling  
Bill Chafin  
Shannon Cole  
Pat Freeman  
Mitch Griggs  
Deborah Mack  
Andrea Gibby  
Betsy McGriff  
Rhonda McLean  
Juergen Moller  
Shelby Ward  
Beth Williams  
Jon Williams

**Staff**

Heather Feldman  
John Phillips  
Diane Jackson  
Whitney Williams  
Nona Turk  
Jessica Williams  
Andrea Newsom

**Guest**

Benjie Hopkins, Hopkins Associates  
Marsha Hopkins, Hopkins Associates  
Kate Russell  
Shelly Davis  
Greg Vitek

**Members Absent**

David Cagle, Ricky Carter, Chris Dockery, Mike McGraw, Mary Overholt, Dr. Perren, Alex Warner, Will Wade and Mark Winters were absent.

**Call to Order/Welcome**

Rhonda McLean, Board Chair, called the meeting to order and welcomed the attendees. A roll call was completed, and a quorum was established.

## **Consideration of Minutes**

Chair McLean asked for consideration of the May 27, 2020 Workforce Development Board meeting minutes. Motion to approve the minutes was made by Bill Chafin. Beth Williams seconded, and the motion carried unanimously.

## **Old Business**

None

## **New Business**

### **WorkSource Georgia Mountains (WSGM) Plan**

Chair McLean announced that the Local WorkSource Georgia Mountains Plan was conditionally approved by the Technical College System of Georgia, Office of Workforce Development. A copy of the approval letter was included in the Board's packet.

The Plan was updated in section 3.4 (Description of Youth Services), to add opportunities made available to youth with disabilities. A statement on targeted populations was added in section 6.2 and in section 3.2 adult education and literacy services was added.

As part of the local plan update process, WSGM also had to update the progress on sector strategies work. The information describes the progress WSGM has made over the last four years and outlines the work that will continue over the next four years. WorkSource must submit all revisions to the State by October 1, 2020.

After a brief discussion, Andrea Gibby made the motion to approve the updates to the Plan. Thomas Bridges seconded and the motion carried unanimously.

### **Registered Apprenticeship Provider Agreement**

The Board had previously approved a provider application for a registered apprenticeship program. Since the apprenticeship program is different than the regular Occupational skills programs. WorkSource created three documents for apprenticeships.

The apprenticeship provider agreement would be used when a single entity is serving as a program sponsor and related instruction, which is most the likely scenario for Union apprentices.

The sponsor Provider Agreement is a three-party agreement that identifies the roles and responsibilities of the sponsor (entity responsible for administering the apprenticeship, like an employer) and the provider (entity providing education/related instruction portion of apprenticeship, like a school).

The Amendment would be used to modify the existing provider agreement when a registered apprenticeship is added to the list of approved programs for a provider.

Bill Chafin made the motion to approve the three apprenticeship provider documents. Andrea Gibby seconded, and the motion carried.

### **Adult/Dislocated Worker Policy Changes**

Whitney Williams, Adult/Dislocated Worker Program Supervisor, explained that due to cuts in this year's budget, WorkSource Georgia Mountains (WSGM) revised the Supportive Services Policy to change the amount of supportive services available to customers. Previously WorkSource Georgia Mountains (WSGM) assisted customers with dependent care, for a licensed facility, in the amount of \$90 to \$110 per week per child, depending on the county in which they lived, with a \$225 max per family. WSGM would like to change the amount to \$15 per day per child, regardless of whether the provider is a licensed facility. The second Supportive Service Policy change is for the transportation reimbursement. Currently WSGM assist with \$10 to \$15 per day for transportation depending on how far the customer drives. WSGM would like to change the amount to \$5 per day per participant. WSGM would save approximately \$28 thousand per year on childcare and around \$80 thousand on transportation. Beth Williams made a motion to approve the revisions to the Supportive Service Policy. Deborah Mack seconded, and the motion passed unanimously.

Whitney explained that the Incumbent Worker Training (IWT) Policy was also updated to include language from the States Policy regarding a non-layoff aversion scenario. A copy of the policy change was included in the Board's packet. Andrea Gibby made a motion to approve the IWT policy changes. Bill Chafin seconded, and motion carried.

The Intake Manual was also updated to include language from the State Policy regarding Priority of Services. The change distinguishes between Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) priority and Veterans priority and how to merge and implement. A definition citation was added for veteran and eligible spouse and a statement on how individuals with disabilities are included in priority was added. Andrea Gibby made a motion to approve the updates to the Priority of Services. Beth Williams seconded, and motion passed unanimously.

### **Program Policies**

Jessica Williams, Youth Program Supervisor, explained that the Policies would be covering both Adult and Youth programs. The first was the Strategic Populations with Barriers to Employment. This policy is to further define strategic populations with barriers to employment. Local Areas must focus on serving individuals with barriers and must seek to ensure access to quality services for these populations. There is a list of the populations included. This policy does not mean that these are the only individuals that WSGM can serve. Andrea Gibby made a motion to approve the Strategic Population Policy. Jon Williams seconded, and the motion carried.

Jessica informed the Board that the Confidentiality and Security Policy is to ensure that personal information remains confidential including medical and disability information. The Policy was included in the information that was emailed to the Board. Bill Chafin made a motion to approve the Confidentiality and Security Policy. Beth Williams seconded, and motion passed unanimously.

## **Provider Applications Received**

Jessica informed the Board that WSGM received a Provider application from Lanier Technical College for their Certified Production Tech program. This program would be targeting dislocated workers that were affected by COVID-19. The cost does fall in line with the WIOA allowable cost and the entry wage is considered a livable wage as defined by the WSGM area. The WSGM staff would like to recommend approval on a trial basis. Bill Chafin made a motion to approve the Certified Production Tech program from Lanier Tech. Beth Williams seconded and motion carried.

WSGM also received an application from iCode Academy Inc. for their Medical Billing and Coding Program. The cost and length of their program falls in-between the program offered by Lanier Technical College and North Georgia Technical College. The program is mostly on-line; however, they do meet in person about four times throughout the program. They offer externships and job placements. They are currently on the State's eligible provider list through the Atlanta Regional Office. Diane Jackson reached out to the Atlanta Regional office to get their insight and they highly recommend them. WSGM would like the Board to consider iCode Academy on a on a trial basis. Deborah Mack made a motion to approve the Medical Coding program from iCode Academy. Beth Williams seconded, and motion passed unanimously.

Jessica explained that Gwinnett College requested resubmittal of their application for Associates of Applied Science Medical Assisting Program, Medical Assisting Diploma Program and Office Administration Diploma that was previously denied due to cost. Initially, the cost was higher than our allowable programs. Gwinnett College replied after being informed of the Board's denial with an email. The email stated that the school keeps the students Pell Grant and the amount that is paid by WIOA and they write off the remainder of the tuition. WSGM staff have some concerns based on statements taken from the current WSGM Provider application. Which states "The Provider assures that the costs correlate with the price advertised to the general public, less any WIOA discount, if applicable. The training programs are open to the general public, have published catalog price structures and are not solely dedicated/availed to WIOA customers. The WSGM area has these programs offered at other schools in the area at a lower cost even with the school writing the remainder off. WSGM does not recommend approval. Bill Chafin made a motion to accept staff's recommendation. Deborah Mack seconded, and motion carried.

## **Reports / Announcements:**

### **New Staff**

John Phillips, WSGM Director, informed the Board that WSGM hired Catherine Allen as an Adult/Dislocated Worker Case Manager. Catherine would be replacing Case Manager Wanda Payne that recently retired. Catherine graduated from UNG in 2017 with a Bachelor's Degree in Sociology. She spent the last two years at DFCS and facilitated over 50 adoptions for the state during that time. She is longtime resident of Hall County until 2015 when she bought a 6-acre farm in Banks County with her husband. They have bees and a few chickens. Some of her favorite activities are cooking, trout fishing, camping, riding horses, traveling, and farm chores.

### **Budget**

Nona Turk, Financial Assistant, explained as of June 30, 2020, WSGM had \$139,792 left for the Adult/Dislocated Grant and as of July 20, 2020 all had been expensed. All Youth funds had been expensed.

On July 7, 2020 WSGM received \$934,208 Youth funds that was due in April. WSGM is waiting to receive Adult/Dislocated Worker grant that was due on July 1, 2020. WSGM should also be receiving \$380,000 Dislocated Worker COVID-19 grant.

John Phillips informed the Board that due to a 37% cut in Youth funding and a 4% cut in Adult funding WSGM had to cut several contracts. WSGM had to end the Business Services contract with Hopkins Associates. John explained that the One-Stop Operator contract will not be affected.

### **One-Stop Update**

Benjie Hopkins, One-Stop Operator, gave a brief update on the One-Stop office. Benjie stated that on June 30, 2020 they held a Zoom Partner meeting. It was interesting to hear how the Partners were serving their clients during the pandemic. There was a new participant in attendance at the meeting, representing the Georgia Department of Community Supervision. The Georgia Department of Community Supervision works with individuals who are being released from incarceration. The Technical Colleges are planning a blended course schedule, offering online and some face to face courses. Georgia Vocational Rehabilitation Agency staff used the One-Stop training room for an audiologist to conduct testing for their clients from throughout the region. Hopkins Associates provided the Partners with information that WorkSource staff had researched regarding jobs available working from home, and information on affordable WIFI available for low income households.

According to the Georgia Department of Labor (GDOL) reports: At the end of June 2020, Unemployment Rates were: 11.1% for U.S, 7.6% for Georgia, and 5.9% for the Georgia Mountains Region. GDOL Unemployment Claims for May 2020 were 836,060, and for June 2020 claims were 607,851 – a decrease of 27%. There are 116,000 jobs listed for Employ Georgia and 200 of those are within 50 miles of the One-Stop office. Benjie reminded the Board to use the One-Stop website for updates and information: <http://onestopworkgamtns.org/> The next One-Stop Partners meeting is scheduled for August 25, 2020 at 11:00 A.M. on Zoom. Workforce Board members are welcome to participate.

### **Business Services Update**

Marsha Hopkins gave an update of the highlights of the Business Services activities.

- Continued contacting employers in thirteen counties to share Business Services information
- Continued participation with Dawson Workforce Committee
- Attended Greater Hall Chamber Zoom meetings on topics related to business during crisis
- Participated in four Business Services staff/contractor meetings
- Participated in meetings concerning upcoming grant application, and contacted agency representatives to gather statistics
- Participated in Small Business Development Center webinar about businesses using LinkedIn
- Contacted organizations regarding potential availability as worksites for Dislocated Workers
- Participated in Sector Strategy planning meetings
- Recorded a forty-minute podcast interview about WorkSource programs with North Georgia RadioX. This has been broadcast twice on local radio station – Link for interview: <https://businessradiox.com/podcast/northgeorgiabusinessradio/https-stats-businessradiox-com-31968-mp3/>

Marsha thanked the Board for their opportunity to work and provide Business services for WorkSource Georgia Mountains for the past year.

### **Workforce Strategies Group LLC Report**

Greg Vitek with Workforce Strategies Group gave an overview on their activities.

- The Manufacturing Sector Strategy has over 100 active people which include; Partners, Developers, Educators and Employers, involved in multiple meetings per month with either the full partnership, just the employers or a specific workgroup to Plan for Sector events to address topics with individual companies and hold group purposed sessions.
- Since starting early this year, Workforce Strategies Group have moved from primarily strategy discussions and meetings, to action focused agendas. Four employer-validated workgroups including: Employability Skills, Career Paths, Marketing, and Training have been created. Each group has met to review its' charter and plan the next steps to begin in Aug./Sept.
- From the Apprenticeship perspective, they added Welder/Fabricator to the 3 existing 2-year USDOL apprenticeships of Industrial Maintenance Technician, Machinist and CNC Machinist. They are in the process of assisting four apprentices at three companies begin programs that will start courses in Fall 2020 (August semester start).
- The participating Sector Employers have prioritized their Top 10 Occupational Needs. The training program development decisions are being made based on this prioritization. Industrial Maintenance Technician continues to be the most active apprenticeship, followed by First Line Leader, and Quality Control Tech.
- We are currently designing a 2-year Quality Technician Apprenticeship which is a high priority on the occupational needs list. Roll out to Employers is planned for Fall 2020 with class starting in Spring semester 2021.
- Short term training programs like the Poultry Bootcamp for maintenance and the Certified Production Technician program are being supported and are important potential tactics to address training needs in a concentrated manner.

### **Adjournment**

Meeting adjourned at 4:00 P.M.

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Board Chair, Rhonda McLean

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Secretary, Deborah Mack