

MINUTES
HEART OF GEORGIA ALTAMAHA WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT BOARD
May 12, 2026

The Heart of Georgia Altamaha Workforce Development Board of Service Delivery Region 9 met Tuesday, May 12, 2026, at The Economic Development Center, Vidalia, Georgia.

MEMBERS PRESENT

Dan Bennett	Carolyn Blackshear
Rochelle Culver	Matt Donaldson
Tim Herrington	Dr. Margaret Hightower
Dr. Hank Hobbs	Michelle Johnson
Mac Jordan	Martha McBride
Mel Powell	Clay Reid
Marshall Smith	Dr. Barry Dotson
Ted Buford	Doug Rooks
Roy Selph	Raymond McCullough
John Shaw	Mitch Griggs

MEMBERS ABSENT

Sharon Flanagan	Randall Holcomb
Keith Miles	Lee Radney
Steve Jones	Lisa Livingston
Jason Whitlow	Lakeisha O'Neal

GUEST

Jeff Floyd, City of Alamo

STAFF

Keith Dixon	Brett Manning
Heather Ernst	Alex Clements
Allie Williams	Delores Kesler
Sandy Bunton	Carla Mills

CALL TO ORDER

Chair Bennett called the meeting to order and introduced Jeff Floyd, City of Alamo. A quorum was present.

GUEST SPEAKER

Keith introduced Rosanna Ierullo, Program Specialist with the Office of Workforce Development at the Technical College System of Georgia. Rosanna explained that she monitors workforce development areas across the state and serves as the program liaison for the Heart of Georgia region. Her role is to identify challenges affecting the region and communicate those needs to the state, so appropriate support and resources can be provided.

During her monitoring visit, Rosanna met with staff and observed that many workforce areas expressed a desire for additional training opportunities. In response, the state will offer peer-to-peer training sessions during the summer. Four in-person training courses will be held in June and July, providing opportunities for participants to learn from both state staff and one another. Training topics will include apprenticeship programs and veteran services, equipping local areas with additional tools and resources.

Rosanna also discussed the performance improvement plan, which has been implemented to assist workforce areas that are experiencing challenges in meeting their performance milestones. She noted that the Heart of Georgia region is not among those areas and is performing very well.

Rosanna concluded her remarks by thanking the Workforce Development Board for its continued support, engagement, and commitment to serving the Heart of Georgia region.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Matt Donaldson made a motion, seconded by Rochelle Culver, to approve the February 10, 2026, meeting minutes. Motion Carried.

DIRECTOR'S REPORT

Keith provided an update on workforce development at the state and federal levels. He explained that the Governor has the authority to move Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) services under different state agencies. Previously, WIOA has been administered through the Georgia Department of Labor, the Department of Economic Development, and currently the Technical College System of Georgia (TCSG). The state is now considering consolidating the K-12, Technical College System of Georgia, and Workforce Development Boards under the Governor's Office of Education and Workforce. While the organizational framework continues to change, WIOA services will remain in place, although it is not yet known which agency will ultimately provide oversight.

Keith also noted that the state is evaluating workforce areas that are not meeting performance expectations and is considering consolidating some of those areas with neighboring regions. Keith reported that the Heart of Georgia Workforce Development Area received approximately \$3.3 million in WIOA funding last year, while the projected allocation for the upcoming year is approximately \$2.5 million. These funds must be distributed across the region's 17 counties and allocated among the Adult, Dislocated Worker, and Youth programs.

Keith explained that the current federal administration continues to emphasize apprenticeship programs. While apprenticeships can be valuable, they present challenges for smaller workforce areas that are primarily served by small businesses. The local area is advocating for greater flexibility to use funding for On-the-Job Training (OJT) and customized training opportunities that better meet the needs of local employers.

He further reported that local workforce directors have requested revisions to the funding allocation formula. Currently, unemployment rates are a significant factor in determining funding levels. Georgia maintains a relatively low unemployment rate, and the existing formula may not accurately reflect the workforce needs of the state's local areas.

Keith concluded by sharing that the recent state monitoring review resulted in no findings. The area also underwent monitoring for the National Emergency Grant (NEG), which required only minor revisions to the wording of one policy. The adjustment was made, and no significant issues were identified.

ATTENDANCE

Dr. Hank Hobbs stated that he would remain chair of the committee. He stated that the WDB orientation would be held for new members at the next meeting.

BUDGET AND EVALUATION

Mac Jordan referred the Workforce Development Board to the expenditure report, noting that approximately 52% of the current budget has been expended. Keith explained that Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) funding is received at various times throughout the year rather than as a single allocation. As a result, the organization carries over available funds to ensure there are sufficient resources to maintain program operations while awaiting future federal funding. This approach allows the workforce area to continue providing uninterrupted services regardless of when federal funds are distributed.

Mac stated the Budget and Evaluation Committee would like to make a motion to accept the PY26 budget. Seconded by Clay Reid. Motion carried.

Mac stated that the Budget and Evaluation Committee would like to make a motion to accept the final PY25 budget. Second by Michelle Johnson. Motion carried.

DISABILITY

Michelle Johnson reported that the Disability Committee voted to reelect her as Chair and Lakeisha O'Neal as Vice Chair of the Disability Committee.

ONE-STOP

Doug Rooks reported that he was elected Chair of the One-Stop Committee.

Doug informed the Board that the procurement process for the Comprehensive One-Stop Request for Proposals (RFP) was unsuccessful. As a result, the One-Stop Committee recommends that the Regional Commission sole-source with Job Training Unlimited to provide

One-Stop Operator services from July 1, 2026, to June 30, 2027. Seconded by Carolyn Blackshear. Motion carried.

Doug also stated that the committee recommends that the WDB have the option to allow Job Training Unlimited to sole-source with the Regional Commission, to be reviewed each year, for an additional three years. Seconded by Rochelle Culver. Motion carried.

PLAN AND PROGRAM REVIEW

Tim Herrington reported that he was elected Chair and Barry Dotson Vice Chair of the Plan and Program Review Committee.

Tim referred the Workforce Development Board members to the Customer Counts Report, explaining that it is divided into two sections: Training Services and Business Services. He noted that the report includes a separate column for each county, allowing Board members to review the number of customers served within their respective counties. Tim explained that approximately 95% of the budget supports training services, while the remaining 5% is allocated to business services. He reported that the number of customers being served in both training services and business services has increased since the previous WDB meeting. Tim commended the staff for their continued hard work and dedication in serving customers throughout the region.

PUBLIC AWARENESS/EMPLOYER

Rochelle Culver reported that the Public Awareness Committee voted to elect Lisa Livingston as Chair and Mitch Griggs as Vice Chair of the Public Awareness Committee.

Rochelle Culver referred the WDB to the Public Awareness Report:

The Job Training Unlimited staff participated in the following events:

Feb 11th-12th- Parker's hosted a meeting at the Evans County One-Stop. Staff also attended hiring events for RenewableWorks in Eastman and McRae-Helena.

Feb 18th- Staff participated in the Career Fair at Jeff Davis' Coastal Plains Charter School.

Feb 24th- 26th- Staff hosted the Regional Commission Staff for financial monitoring.

Feb 25th- Staff participated in the SECCA College and Career Readiness Fair held in Vidalia.

Feb 26th- Staff attended the Local Area Director's Meeting held virtually and the Regional Commission meeting held in Montgomery County.

Feb 27th- Staff participated in Career Day held at Claxton High School.

March 2nd-5th- Staff attended the Southeastern Employment and Training Association held in Orlando.

March 4th- Staff participated in the Southeastern Technical College Job Fair held at the Emanuel County campus.

March 5th- Staff attended the Labor Workforce Development Area bi-weekly meeting held virtually.

March 10th- 11th- Parkers hosted a meeting at the Evans County One-Stop.

March 10th- Staff attended the WorkSource Heart of Georgia Request for Proposal Bidders Conference held virtually. Staff participated in the Southeastern Technical College Resource Fair held at the Vidalia Campus.

March 17th- Staff met with Ogeechee Technical College at the Evans County One-Stop. Staff attended a Meet and Greet with Derek Dooley at the Vidalia Community Center.

March 18th- Parkers hosted a meeting at the Evans County One-Stop.

March 19th- Staff participated in the Brewton Parker College Job Fair held in Montgomery County.

March 20th- Staff participated in the Jeff Davis Career Day at Jeff Davis Middle School.

March 25th- Parkers hosted a meeting at the Evans County One-Stop.

March 26th- Staff attended the Local Area Director's Meeting virtually and the Regional Commission meeting held in Montgomery County.

March 30th- April 1st- Staff hosted the Regional Commission Staff for financial monitoring.

April 2nd and 16th- Staff attended the Local Workforce Development Area bi-weekly and monthly meeting held virtually.

April 17th and 21st- Parkers hosted a meeting at the Evans County One-Stop.

April 23rd- Staff attended the Local Area Director's Meeting held virtually and the Regional Commission meeting held in Montgomery County.

April 28th- Parkers hosted a meeting at the Evans County One-Stop.

April 30th- Staff attended the Local Workforce Development Area bi-weekly meeting held virtually.

May 5th- Staff attended the Coastal Plains Charter School Job Fair held at Tattnall County High School.

Staff met with customers and employers across the region to discuss WIOA services.

RETREAT AND NOMINATING

Ted reported that the Retreat and Nominating Committee voted to elect him as Chair and Matt Donaldson as Vice Chair.

Ted stated that the WDB would like to make a motion to elect Dan Bennett as Chair and Carolyn Blackshear as Vice Chair for the WDB Board. Seconded by Mac Jordan. Motion carried.

YOUTH COMMITTEE

Margaret Hightower reported that she was elected as Chair and Lee Radney as Vice Chair of the committee. Margaret Hightower encouraged the WDB to get involved in the youth activities in their counties.

UNEMPLOYMENT

John Shaw reported that the state's unemployment rate is 3.6%, and the Heart of Georgia Altamaha region is at 3.6%.

RC UPDATE

Brett reported that the Regional Commission has been working with four counties on their Comprehensive Plans since January and is now entering the accelerated phase of the planning process. He also stated that the Regional Commission has been assisting local governments in several counties with litigation-related planning efforts.

Respectfully submitted,

Allie Williams

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