

MINUTES  
HEART OF GEORGIA ALTAMAHA WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT BOARD  
February 14, 2023

The Heart of Georgia Altamaha Workforce Development Board of Service Delivery Region 9 met Tuesday, February 14, 2023, at The Economic Development Center, Vidalia, Georgia.

MEMBERS PRESENT

Dan Bennett	Carolyn Blackshear
Rochelle Culver	Cason DeVane
Kim Edge	Sharon Flanagan
Brian Hamilton	Tim Herrington
Dr. Margaret Hightower	Dr. Hank Hobbs
Mac Jordan	Martha McBride
Mel Powell	Clay Reid
Marshall Smith	Nolan Thigpen
Tamra Wells	Ted Buford
Lisa Livingston	Doug Rooks
Roy Selph	Billy Trapnell
John Turner	Dr. Barry Dotson
Dr. Paul Scott	Guy Singletary
Ryan Waldrep	

MEMBERS ABSENT

Roger Branch	Ashley Googe
Michelle Johnson	Joe Sikes
Gabriela Munoz	Raymond McCullough
Jason Whitlow	Lee Radney
Debbie Dyal	Hugh Darnley
Alfred Wheeler	Bobby Cox

GUEST

Susan Cross, Adult Education Southeastern Technical College  
Tracy Bulharowski, Department of Human Services  
Chris Moser, Evans County Sheriff's Department  
Kelly Peacock, Wiregrass Georgia Technical College

STAFF

Keith Dixon	Brett Manning
Sandy Bunton	Alex Clements
Allie Williams	
Alexis Eason	
Heather Ernst	

### CALL TO ORDER

The meeting was called to order. The WDB had a quorum of 27 members present. Dan Bennett introduced the guest: Tracy Bulharowski with the Department of Human Services, Chris Moser with Evans County Sheriff's Department, Susan Cross with Adult Education Southeastern Technical College, and Kelly Peacock with Wiregrass Georgia Technical College.

### APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Mac Jordan made a motion seconded by Rochelle Culver to approve the minutes of the December 13, 2022, Workforce Development Board meeting.

### GUEST SPEAKER

Dan Bennett introduced Chris Moser, Evans County Sheriff's Department Chief Deputy. Chris stated that he has worked in law enforcement for 13 years. He started working in Tattnall County and became an investigator at the GBI Southeast Regional Office for six years covering 27 counties, including undercover work. He later joined the Claxton Police Department as Lieutenant Investigator and then moved to the Evans County Sheriff's Department as Chief Investigator. Chris stated that law enforcement has mandatory training hours mandated by the State that must be completed. The training has changed rapidly to adapt to how the world is changing. Some of the training includes de-escalation techniques and community policing. He said the Evans County firing range has been very beneficial for training. Years ago, firearm training was held at a property owned by the Sheriff, which got them by but was not very efficient. They were only able to firearm train once a year. The Evans County Economic Development Authority (EDA) donated land to the Ogeechee Technical College Law Enforcement Training Program (OTC) that was taught at the Evans County Campus from 2010-2015. In 2021, EDA started renovating the property for the shooting range, and in 2022, the project was complete. The shooting range has concrete shooting lanes, electricity, targets, a building that secures the targets and ammo, a covered concrete area with picnic tables, and a cleaning area. The Sheriff's office uses the training facility once a month, and special forces use it twice a month. The facility is not open to the public, but any agency can use the range. He stated that there are two firearm instructors, and he is one of the instructors.

Keith Introduced Dr. Barry Dotson, Southeastern Technical College. Barry stated that Southeastern Technical College works closely with the Workforce Development Board. He said they are requesting a grant to fund students in non-traditional programs. He requested the WDB members each complete a survey to help gather information for the workforce needs. He provided information and a web address: <https://forms.office.com/r/zkmhDHUWev>.

### DIRECTOR'S REPORT

Keith stated that the transition with Rapid Response was taking place. Rapid Response started with DOL, transitioned to WIOA, transitioned back to DOL, and is now transitioning back to WIOA. TCSG will be the entity overseeing Rapid Response. They will be hiring regional workers throughout the State. WIOA will have local control over the Rapid Response in the Region. Rapid Response is for employers in the Region closing or doing a mass lay-off. A

strategy that would be available with Rapid Response would be lay-off aversion for eligible employers. Several employers may need assistance because they have upgraded equipment and need staff to operate the equipment. The Rapid Response funding would help those companies pay for training to keep the employees from being laid off. WIOA will work with the technical colleges to help with training.

Keith stated that the Federal Covid Grant would end on June 30, 2023. The State will be sending an additional \$250,000 of Covid funds for the Region. The State has also approved the Quest Grant that will be received in the next few weeks. The eligibility requirements will be similar to the adult eligibility requirements, which will help more participants go to school and receive training. Wagner-Peyser is still in the process of transitioning. He stated he should receive more information soon. He also stated that a proposal was submitted to the State to be able to put more offices within the counties so that customers can have direct access to partner agencies.

#### ATTENDANCE/ BOARD ORIENTATION

Dr. Hank Hobbs thanked the WDB members for their attendance and stated a quorum was present. He stated that the WDB had an attendance of 25 plus. He also stated that a New Member Orientation would be held on March 10th at the WDB Retreat at the King and Prince on St. Simons Island.

#### BUDGET AND EVALUATION COMMITTEE

Dr. Paul Scott referred the WDB members to the Heart of Georgia Altamaha WIOA Expenditures Report. He stated that everything is current.

#### ONE-STOP COMMITTEE

Billy Trapnell referred the WDB members to the One-Stop Report. He stated that the One-Stops had a slight increase in visits. Each county has a One-Stop for customers to get assistance with resumes, job search, and computer access. He stated that the number of jobs posted has decreased.

#### PLAN AND PROGRAM REVIEW

Tim Herrington referred the WDB members to the Work Source Heart of Georgia Website. He stated that the WDB members could find information on the website, including job postings. He referred the WDB members to the Customer Counts Report. The Report is divided into two sections, Training Services, and Business Services. The Training Services has a total of 698 customers served, an increase of 26 from the last WDB meeting. The Business Services has a total of 7,472 customers, an increase of 1,639. The grand total of customers served is 8,170. He stated that most counties had an increase in participants. He commended the staff.

#### PUBLIC AWARENESS/ EMPLOYER

Rochelle Culver stated that the JTU staff reached nine counties in December and January, including Zoom calls. She stated that the staff reached three more counties in the month of February, and staff will participate in the upcoming events:

Feb 15th- Staff will participate in Mock Interview Day at Wayne County High School.  
Feb 16th- Staff will participate in a Career Fair held at Tattnall High School.  
Feb 28th- Staff will participate in the College and Career Readiness Fair at the Southeastern Early College and Career Academy in Vidalia.

#### RETREAT/NOMINATING

Ted Buford stated that the WDB Retreat would be March 10, 2023- March 12, 2023, at the King and Prince Resort. He stated that the check-in time would be at 4:00 on Friday afternoon. Dr. Hank Hobbs and Heather Ernst will conduct the New Member Orientation at 5:00. Dinner will follow at 6:00 for WDB members. The dress is casual for all sessions, and registration will be in the lobby.

#### UNEMPLOYMENT

Keith stated that Georgia's unemployment rate is 2.7%, and the Heart of Georgia area is one of the highest in the State with 3.3%.

#### RC REPORT

Brett stated that last July, the State changed the record submissions of annexation. Paper maps or plats are no longer accepted. The format the annexation needs to be submitted in is a shapefile which the Regional Commission can convert if anyone needs assistance.

There being no further business, the meeting adjourned.

Respectfully submitted,

*Allie Williams*

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