

MINUTES
HEART OF GEORGIA ALTAMAHA WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT BOARD
June 13, 2023

The Heart of Georgia Altamaha Workforce Development Board of Service Delivery Region 9 met Tuesday, June 13, 2023, at The Economic Development Center, Vidalia, Georgia.

MEMBERS PRESENT

Dan Bennett	Carolyn Blackshear
Kim Edge	Sharon Flanagan
Ashley Googe	Brian Hamilton
Tim Herrington	Dr. Margaret Hightower
Dr. Hank Hobbs	Michelle Johnson
Mel Powell	Clay Reid
Joe Sikes	Nolan Thigpen
Tamra Wells	Ryan Waldrep
Bobby Cox	Lisa Livingston
Doug Rooks	Roy Selph
Raymond McCullough	Billy Trapnell
John Turner	Jason Whitlow
Dr. Barry Dotson	Lee Radney

MEMBERS ABSENT

Roger Branch	Rochelle Culver
Cason DeVane	Mac Jordan
Martha McBride	Marshall Smith
Debbie Dyal	Hugh Darnley
Guy Singletary	Alfred Wheeler
Ted Buford	Gabriela Munoz
Dr. Paul Scott	

GUEST

Pete Snell, Coastal Pines Technical College
Amanda Rousey, Georgia Division of Child Support Services Fatherhood Program
Hannah Mullins, Candler County Industrial Authority
Kelly Peacock, Wiregrass Technical College
Tracy Bulharowski, Georgia Division of Child Support Services Fatherhood Program
Sierra Hines, Legacy Link

STAFF

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

CALL TO ORDER

The meeting was called to order. The WDB had a quorum with 26 members present. Chair Dan Bennett introduced guest Amanda Rousey with the Georgia Division of Child Support Services Fatherhood Program, Hannah Mullins with the Candler County Industrial Authority, and Kelly Peacock, Dean of Adult Education at Wiregrass Technical College.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Dr. Margaret Hightower made a motion seconded by Clay Reid to approve the minutes of the March 12, 2023, Workforce Development Board meeting.

GUEST SPEAKER

Chair Bennett introduced Hannah Mullis, Candler County Industrial Authority. Hannah thanked the WDB for allowing her to speak at the meeting. She stated that Candler County has several projects happening during this time. Candler County is within a 40 mile radius of the Hyundai Plant which will allow Candler County citizens the opportunity to secure employment at the plant. Hyundai staff visited in August of last year to present information about the plant to the surrounding counties. The staff stated the pay rate would be \$10-\$12 an hour, which wouldn't be feasible for Candler County citizens. Hannah stated that the Candler County Industrial Authority adopted a wage threshold resolution of a minimum of \$18 an hour.

Hannah stated that another project in the pipeline is not Hyundai related. It is not up for announcement, but information should be available within the next few months. Candler County has secured a CRISI Grant to help update the railway for this project. She also stated that downtown Metter is vibrant and growing and has a low vacancy rate for the first time in years. Multi-family homes are an issue here and in many counties. Contractors have been looking in the area for potential subdivisions.

Hannah stated that a job tax credit status is a big deal in the economic development world. A tier one status is the lowest tax credit tier but receives the highest job tax credit. Most of rural Georgia is tier one. Candler County was at tier one status but moved to a tier two status losing tax credits for the county hurting industry recruitment and the local entrepreneurs in the county. The DCA decides this every year, which is strongly based on unemployment. She stated that hopefully in January, Candler will be moved back to tier one.

DIRECTOR'S REPORT

Keith Dixon stated the Wagner Peyser funding has moved from the Department of Labor to the Technical College System of Georgia. Rapid Response grants were moved back to local areas to give the opportunity for the local areas to help companies prevent layoffs. Youth funding is running behind, and the delay in receiving funding/grants hurts customer enrollment. The Budget and Evaluation Committee will make a recommendation for the upcoming budget. This budget is a projection. The actual grant amounts have yet to be received. Keith stated that the additional grants we receive allow us to serve more customers within the community.

ATTENDANCE/ BOARD ORIENTATION

Dr. Hank Hobbs thanked the WDB members for their attendance and stated a quorum was present. Dr. Hobbs introduced new member, Raymond McCullough.

BUDGET AND EVALUATION COMMITTEE

Joe Sikes stated that the Budget and Evaluation Committee would like to recommend adding the Construction Management Program, including the Diploma Track and the Certificate Tract, at Oconee Fall Line Technical College to the Eligible Training Provider List. Seconded by Sharon Flanagan. Lee Radney stated that he would not be participating in the voting for this motion due to a possible conflict of interest. Motion Carried.

Joe Sikes stated that the Budget and Evaluation Committee is recommending approving the PY23/PY24 proposed budget in the amount of \$4,203,809.00. Seconded by Carolyn Blackshear. Motion Carried.

ONE-STOP COMMITTEE

Billy Trapnell stated that the One-Stop Committee would like to recommend renewing the current MOU agreement with the amendment addressing the transition of Title III Wagner Peyser from the Georgia Department of Labor to the Technical College System of Georgia. The One-Stop Committee also recommends the approval of the adjustment applied to the Infrastructure Agreement to account for the Technical College System of Georgia as a physically present partner located in the comprehensive one-stop on behalf of Wagner Peyser. Seconded by Bobby Cox. Motion Carried.

PLAN AND PROGRAM REVIEW

Tim Herrington referred the WDB members to the Customer Counts Report. The report shows customers served in each county and is divided into two sections: Training Services and Business Services. The Training Services shows a 14% increase in Adult ITA. The total for training services is 766, a 61% increase since the last meeting. Appling, Johnson, Montgomery, Treutlen, Wheeler, Wilcox, and Bleckley's numbers stayed the same. Candler, Emanuel, and Wayne picked up four customers. Dodge, Jeff Davis, Telfair, and Toombs County picked up one customer. Evans County picked up 29 customers. Laurens County picked up five customers. Tattnall picked up nine customers. Training Services has seven different grants which has allowed them to add more customers. Tim stated that the Business Services total was 12,221, an increase of 4,000 more than the last meeting. The grand total for Training and Business Services is 12,967. Keith stated that one example of the additional funds received was money that could only be used to serve customers in transitional centers within the region. With these funds, the staff enrolled eligible Evans County Transition Center residents into training.

Tim referred the WDB members to the Performance Report. He stated that the performance goals were met or exceeded in all categories. He commended the staff for their hard work.

PUBLIC AWARENESS/ EMPLOYER

Lisa Livingston referred the WDB members to the Publicity Report. She stated that the Job Training Unlimited Staff attended events such as career days, job fairs, family connection meetings, and classroom meetings.

UNEMPLOYMENT

Keith stated that the Heart of Georgia Altamaha area's unemployment rate is 3.2%.

RC REPORT

Brett Manning stated that all the local government should have received a one-time payout on discretionary funds from the first TSPLOST. He stated that they assisted local governments last fall with some recreational grants, which were finally rewarded with a total of 13 million dollars for the region. He stated that they assisted Hazlehurst in getting funded for One Georgia, which was about 500,000 dollars. They are currently working on three comprehensive plans for Wilcox, Johnson, and Tattnall County and on master plans for the City of Vidalia. Brett stated that they are working on a grant for electrical charging stations that will be put in the surrounding counties for citizens that need access to electrical ports. The grant is being submitted today. All but nine counties within the region chose to participate.

There being no further business, the meeting adjourned.

Respectfully submitted,



Allie Williams