

MINUTES  
HEART OF GEORGIA ALTAMAHA WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT BOARD  
December 10, 2024

The Heart of Georgia Altamaha Workforce Development Board of Service Delivery Region 9 met Tuesday, December 10, 2024, at The Economic Development Center, Vidalia, Georgia.

MEMBERS PRESENT

Dan Bennett	Carolyn Blackshear
Matt Donaldson	Kim Edge
Sharon Flanagan	Randall Holcomb
Tim Herrington	Dr. Margaret Hightower
Michelle Johnson	Bobby Cox
Lisa Livingston	Doug Rooks
Roy Selph	Raymond McCullough
Billy Trapnell	Jason Whitlow
John Shaw	Hugh Darnley
Mac Jordan	Keith Miles
Mel Powell	Joe Sikes
Marshall Smith	Lee Radney

MEMBERS ABSENT

Rochelle Culver	Ashley Googe
Dr. Hank Hobbs	Ted Buford
John R. Turner	Guy Singletary
Ryan Waldrep	Alfred Wheeler
Martha McBride	Clay Reid
Dr. Barry Dotson	

GUEST

Karen Pharis, Human Resources Information Specialist (HRIS) Administrator City of Dublin

STAFF

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

### CALL TO ORDER

Chair Bennett called the meeting to order. A quorum was present.

### APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Matt Donaldson made a motion seconded by Mac Jordan to approve the August 13, 2024, meeting minutes. Motion Carried.

### GUEST SPEAKER

Heather Ernst introduced Karen Pharis, HRIS Administrator at the City of Dublin. Karen stated that she has benefited from WIOA services as an employer and as a participant. Five years ago, Karen worked at Dinex in Dublin, and Dinex desperately needed CNC operators. Job Training Unlimited staff referred employees laid off from Husqvarna to fill those positions using the On-the-Job Training (OJT) program. They were able to hire the laid-off workers and train them through the OJT program. A few years later, she became the Human Resources Manager at Flexsteel in Dublin. She received a call stating that Flexsteel would be relocating operations to Mexico and the employees at Flexsteel would no longer be employed, and 250 employees needed immediate work. Again, she was directed to Job Training Unlimited. The Rapid Response team jumped in to help, and 90% of those employees found employment through the services of Job Training Unlimited. She said that these programs have been a blessing to Dublin, and she is so thankful.

### DIRECTOR'S REPORT

Keith stated that additional funding was requested and received for Youth and Dislocated Workers. He encouraged the WDB members to reach out with any information within their county about possible layoffs or business closures. WIOA services can help the individuals affected by the closures and may be able to help the businesses to prevent closures. He stated that the Wagner Peyser piece of the Department of Labor is now part of the Technical College System of Georgia. Wagner Peyser staff set up a Kiosk in the Evans County One-Stop. The Kiosk allows customers to receive access to a Wagner Peyser staff member to provide assistance and explain the services provided through Wagner Peyser and WIOA. He stated that it would be beneficial to put a kiosk in each county so customers can access it when the one-stops are closed. He encouraged the WDB members to help find a location for the Kiosks within their county with public access. Staff will continue to be at the one-stops, but this will enhance the services without the customers having to drive across the county. Keith stated that there was one observation and no findings during State Monitoring.

### BUDGET AND EVALUATION

Mac Jordan referred the WDB members to the Heart of Georgia WIOA Expenditure Report. He stated that 60% of the funding has been spent. Keith stated that funding is received at different times of the year, and each grant has an expiration period. New funding will be added to the report when the funding is received. Delores Kesler stated that there were zero financial findings during state monitoring.

### ONE-STOP COMMITTEE

Billy Trapnell referred the WDB members to the One-Stop report. He stated that the numbers for each category were lower.

#### PLAN AND PROGRAM REVIEW

Tim Herrington referred the WDB members to the Customer Count Report. The report is divided into two sections: business services and training services. He encouraged the WDB members to look at their county and the numbers represented in each program within their county. Ninety-five percent (95%) of the budget is for training services, and 5% is for business services. The total number of customers served is 6,487.

Alexis Eason referred the WDB members to the Performance report. She stated that the Heart of Georgia Area 16 met or exceeded each performance measure.

#### PUBLIC AWARENESS/ EMPLOYER COMMITTEE

Chair Bennett referred the WDB members to the Publicity Report and commended the staff for attending all the events to promote WIOA services.

#### RETREAT/NOMINATING COMMITTEE

Keith stated that once the final budget is received, they will decide on the 2025 retreat.

#### UNEMPLOYMENT

John Shaw stated that the state's unemployment rate is 4%, and the Heart of Georgia Altamaha region is 4.7%. He stated that this area provides high quality services. He commended the staff for their hard work.

#### RC REPORT

Brett Manning stated that the new Regional Plan and the plan for GDOT have been approved by the council. They are both available for review if anyone is interested.

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned.

Respectfully submitted,

*allie williams*

Allie Williams