

**WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT BOARD
BOARD MEETING**

February 3, 2021 Minutes

Clemson SC Works Comprehensive Center/ Teleconference via Zoom

Members Present:

| | | | |
|-----------------------|-----------------|-------------------|-------------------|
| Danny Brothers, Chair | Jeromy Arnett | David Bowers | Daniel Brazinski |
| Edgar Brown | David Collins | Stephanie Collins | Allen Fain |
| Brooke Garren | Billy Gibson | Lisa Gillespie | Teri Gilstrap |
| Robert Halfacre | Emily Hodge | Grayson Kelly | Kristi King-Brock |
| Jennifer Lannom | Melanie McLane | Ed Parris | Patrick Pruitt |
| Mike Wallace | Shonna Williams | | |

Members Absent:

Cheryl Allmon

Staff Present:

| | | | |
|--------------|----------------|-----------------|--------------|
| Trent Acker | Jennifer Kelly | Meredith Durham | Windy Graham |
| Sharon Crite | | | |

Guests Present:

| | | | |
|-----------------|-----------------|-----------------|--------------|
| Thomas Freeland | Renee Alexander | Matt Fields | Karen Craven |
| JT Parnell | Karen Hamrick | Melissa Rodgers | |

I. Call to Order/Introductions

The meeting was called to order at 1:04 p.m. Chair Danny Brothers announced a quorum was present to conduct the business of the Board and reminded everyone the meeting was being recorded for processing of minutes. Introductions were made around the room. Chair Brothers introduced Mr. Thomas Freeland, State Workforce Board Chair. Mr. Freeland stated that he has been traveling to meet the local areas and was appreciative for the opportunity to attend the WorkLink meeting.

II. COVID-19 Update

Mr. Trent Acker asked Mr. Billy Gibson, Emergency Services Director for Pickens County and WorkLink Board member, to provide an update related to COVID-19. Mr. Gibson stated that at one point during the pandemic, the upstate of South Carolina was a COVID-19 hotspot. He stated that DHEC counts COVID-19 cases on a 14 day cycle, so there has been 1,083 cases in Pickens County as of last week. That is about a 300 case reduction on average for the county. Mr. Gibson pointed out the positive number of cases are starting to decline. Mr. Gibson emphasized the need for continued mask wearing, social distancing, and practicing good hygiene to help combat the pandemic. Mr. Gibson stated that

vaccines are available and DHEC and Prisma have both released phone numbers to assist individuals with scheduling. Pharmacies are also beginning to receive vaccine doses.

III. Approval of Minutes

The minutes from the November 4, 2020 meeting were emailed with the meeting notice and included in the meeting packet. Chair Brothers called for any corrections or amendments to the minutes.

BOARD ACTION TAKEN: David Collins made a motion to approve the minutes as presented, seconded by Kristi King-Brock. The motion carried with a unanimous voice vote.

IV. Director's Report

A. *Employment Situation*

Mr. Trent Acker, Executive Director for WorkLink, referred to page 6, which showed a visualization of Unemployment Insurance claims since the beginning of the pandemic. There has been a large uptick in initial UI claims into the week of December 25, which is somewhat expected with holiday shutdowns. There has been a steady downtick since then. Additional legislation could make additional individuals eligible for expanded or additional UI benefits, so the numbers may increase again. Mr. Acker referred to pages 7-10 for additional information regarding initial UI claims.

B. *Fund Utilization Rate*

Mr. Acker referred to page 11, and stated that there is a state policy in place that for each of the three traditional fund streams by the end of the program year, at least 70% has to be expended. If it is not, then a corrective action plan and analysis must be submitted. Mr. Acker stated for PY19, WorkLink fell short of meeting the Dislocated Worker Fund Utilization Rate because of factors including lack of training available due to COVID-19, training provider scholarships, center costs, and the billing process. Corrective action steps include frequent budget meetings with Eckerd Connects, checkins with training providers, changes in the local supportive services policy to include technology and internet access costs, review of monthly invoices, innovative outreach, and analysis of Rapid Response grants. The full Fund Utilization Rate Response can be found on pages 11-13.

C. *Performance*

Mr. Acker referred to page 14 in the packet, which showed a summary of rolling-4 quarters through the first quarter of PY20. WorkLink was successful in meeting all performance goals. Mr. Acker noted that this year was the first time that WorkLink has had to negotiate individual goals for the workforce area, instead of accepting state goals.

D. *Anderson Job Fair*

Mr. Acker shared the flyer on page 15 in the packet for the February 4 Anderson County Job Fair.

V. Committee Reports

A.) Executive Committee

i.) Report of Actions

Chair Brothers stated that the following items need to be ratified. On November 6, 2020 the Executive Committee approved a transfer of \$375, 000 in 2020 Dislocated Worker funding making it available to the Adult program. On December 14, 2020 the committee approved the transfer of \$75,000 in 2019 Dislocated Worker funding making it available to the Adult program. On December 21, 2020 the committee approved a modification to the IWT agreement with King Asphalt from \$875 to \$1,750. On January 27, 2021 the committee approved the corrective action plan that was developed in response to the failure to meet the 70% annual expenditure requirement that Mr. Acker reviewed.

BOARD ACTION TAKEN: Ed Parris made a motion to ratify the Executive committee actions, seconded by David Bowers. The motion carried with a unanimous voice vote.

B.) Finance Committee

1) Budget Overview

a. WorkLink Grants

i) *PY20 Grant Overview*

Ms. Stephanie Collins referred to Eckerd staff for PY2020 budget overview.

Eckerd Staff referred to the following as of December 2020:

- Page 16: Adult Program budget— 50.5% of the Adult Program budget has been expended out of a goal of 50% through December.
- Page 17: Dislocated Worker (DW) Program budget –42% of the DW Program budget has been expended through December.
- Page 18: Rapid Response grant—63.5% was expended through December. This grant offsets Dislocated Worker training.
- Page 19: State Restoration Adult/DW grant—18.2% was expended through December. This grant is tuition only and began on November 1, 2020.
- Page 20: The Obligations report is listed. Mr. Parnell reviewed vouchers and ITA's for Adult, Dislocated Worker, and Restoration grants.
- Page 21: Adult Operator budget – 39.9% of the Adult Operator budget has been expended through December. Mr. Fields stated that a modification is in the process to make up for the small deficit. There are no training or supportive services associated with the Operator budgets.
- Page 22: DW Operator budget—39.1% of the DW Operator budget has been expended through December.

ii.) PY20 Youth Budget

Ms. Karen Craven, Program Manager for Palmetto Youth Connections (PYC), referred to page 23 and stated that 50.1% of the Youth budget (1058) has been expended through December 2020. Ms. Craven pointed to page 24, which showed the Restoration grant budget (1301), and stated that 33% has been expended through December 2020. Ms. Craven pointed to the Work Experience line item and stated that 50% of Work Experience stipends were expended and 80% obligated through December 2020. Ms. Craven stated that no WIOA dollars have been spent on student training so far due to other scholarships students have received. Eleven participants have entered postsecondary education.

b. In-House Budget

i.) PY20 In-house Budget

Mr. Acker presented the PY20 in-house budget, provided on page 25 of the packet. Mr. Acker stated that WorkLink was grateful to receive funds to serve additional participants through the Restoration Grants. Mr. Acker stated that the budget is 45% expended through the year. Mr. Acker added that page 26 shows where the current Fund Utilization Rates stand as of December 2020. All programs are currently meeting the December goal.

c. Ongoing Grants

i.) Incumbent Worker Training Grants

Mr. Acker directed committee members to the IWT reports in the packet. Approximately \$132,421.10 of the 18IWT01-02 grant has been expended through December 2020. Several companies with existing contracts were unable to complete their trainings on time, due to COVID. There is currently 1 Rapid Response IWT agreement with Champion Aerospace.

ii.) WEX Pilot

Mr. Acker pointed to page 29, which showed the invoice for the Work Experience Pilot program. The grant will allow for 2020 high school graduates who are not currently employed or in school to have a work experience opportunity and be paid wages during the opportunity. WorkLink is in ongoing discussion with DEW to discuss the possibility of adding 2021 graduates to the program.

iii.) Re-Entry Navigator Grant

Mr. Acker stated that the Re-Entry grant is another pilot grant opportunity. Anderson County is the grantee and they have hired the Re-Entry Navigator. The original plan was for the Navigator to go into the detention centers to work with individuals, but since the

pandemic that has not been an option. The Re-Entry Navigator is working with community partners on receiving referrals for the program.

iv.) DWG Grant

Mr. Acker referred to page 31, which showed the COVID-19 DWG grant budget support. The grant will fund 4 WIOA participants to work in the SC Works Centers in the WorkLink area to assist with light janitorial services, checking in customers, and assisting in the SC Works resource room. One participant will be based in Anderson, two in Seneca, and one in Clemson.

C.) Youth Committee

a. PY20 PYC New Enrollment Report - Information

Mr. Allen Fain, Chair of the Youth Committee, reviewed the PYC New Enrollment Report on page 33. Mr. Fain noted that there were a total of 70 new enrollments and an overall total of 125 enrollments in PY2020 so far. The committee's next meeting is on March 2.

b. Upcoming Local Youth Program Monitoring (02/16-02/23/21)

The upcoming Local Youth Program monitoring will be February 16-23, 2021.

D.) One Stop Operations Committee

a. Committee Report

b. Application Procedures for Eligible Training Provider List- Instruction Letter

Mr. Ed Parris, Chair for the One Stop Operations Committee, gave the committee summary, and directed the members to pages 36-39. Highlights from the report included:

- 14,857 people have visited the SCWorks Centers or online site so far this year.
- 767 individuals have attended drive-thru job fairs.
- 102 have been enrolled into the WIOA program out of Eckerd's goal of 80.
- 126 individuals have received training.

Mr. Parris stated that the OneStop Operations Committee has historically reviewed and approved applications for Training Providers to be included on the Eligible Training Provider List. Being included on the ETPL allows training providers to receive WIOA scholarship funding on behalf of WIOA participants that enroll in their programs of study. Mr. Parris stated that on pages 42-48 of the packet, there is an instruction letter titled "Application Procedures for the Eligible Training Provider List." The Committee has been discussing the benefits of allowing Training Providers that only provide online training options to be approved for the Eligible Training Provider List. The COVID-19 pandemic has brought to light the need for additional options for training for WIOA participants. Therefore, the committee is bringing forth a motion to update the Instruction Letter to allow online training options with the following changes to the policy:

- Bottom of page 43 - Delete "Providers who operate solely as online institutions are not eligible for local approval."

- Top of page 45 – In reference to the Criteria that states that “Training Provider does not offer programs of study within 150 miles of Clemson, SC” - add the phrase “applies only to Training Providers that offer only in-person programs of study requiring a participant to travel outside of the 150 mile radius to participate in training.”

The Committee has been voting to approve or deny every application for the Eligible Training Provider List. The committee discussed whether or not they should review every application and voted to allow WorkLink staff to approve or deny based on the Instruction Letter just discussed with the understanding that WorkLink staff will bring forth any applications that require further consideration to the Committee for final approval or denial. This will streamline the process and allow for quicker turnaround times for training providers to receive a determination. Also note that the appeals process seen on page 47 will not change. Any Training Provider that wishes to appeal a decision will go to the Executive Committee for a hearing and final decision.

BOARD ACTION TAKEN: OneStop Operations Committee made a motion to update the Instruction Letter to allow online training options with the presented changes to the policy, seconded by Mike Wallace. The motion carried with a unanimous voice vote.

The next meeting will be March 18, 2021 at 3pm via zoom conference call.

E.) Priority Populations Committee

Ms. Lisa Gillespie stated that on January 5, 2021 the Priority Populations Committee heard a presentation from Ms. Ashley Swift, who is the Re-Entry Navigator. Ms. Swift reviewed grant information with committee members. WorkLink’s unemployment rate is 3.7% and for individuals with a disability the unemployment rate is 12.3%.

The next Priority Populations meeting is planned for March 2, 2021.

F.) Other Business

Chair Brothers adjourned the meeting at 3:16 p.m.

Respectfully submitted by: Meredith Durham