

Minutes
Twin Districts Workforce Development Area
Local Workforce Development Board

Tuesday, November 16, 2021 11:00 AM
914 Sullivan Drive, Hattiesburg

LOCAL WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT BOARD PRESENT:

Wayne Barrow, Danny Box, Rebecca Brown, Wayne Buffington, Charles Fairley, Sedgie Foxworth, Lillie Graves, Newt Ishee, Lucy Lamberth, Julia Lindsay, Calvin Newsom, Jermaine Simmons, David Stephens, Connie Valentine, Lucretia Williams, and Marshall Wood, Sr.

LOCAL WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT BOARD ABSENT:

Donnie Bond, Jennifer Griffith, Ricky Harrison, Tom Miles, and Phil Nichols.

STAFF:

Allison Hawkins, Patricia Morrison, Marilyn Minor, Shari White, Natalia Diaz, Emlyn Jackson, Shonta Duncan, Marvin Dickey, Kenny Jett, and Grant Wesley

CALL TO ORDER AND COMMENTS

Mr. David Stephens called the meeting to order and greeted everyone in attendance. Mr. Stephens then called on Mr. Kenny Jett to present the Southeastern Employment and Training Association (SETA) update. This year, the conference was held in Biloxi, Mississippi.

Mr. Jett began by stating the SETA Conference had a 97% approval rating based on follow-up surveys.

The conference also had rigorous COVID-19 protocols, but provided a safe environment and peace of mind for those in attendance.

The SETA Board, as well as the conference as a whole, is transitioning to a younger demographic.

Efforts are being made to make the conference more user-friendly by implementing tracks, allowing attendees to choose a session 'focus' and go to those most applicable to their occupation.

Mr. Stephens thanked Mr. Jett for his report.

Mr. Stephens stated he had a few items to discuss from the National Association of Workforce Boards (NAWB) conference that he attended earlier in the year. One of which was the Advanced Robotics for Manufacturing (ARM) program presented by John Zappa. Due to the decline of available manpower, there is an increase in need of robotics. Mr. Stephens has Mr. Zappa's contact information for those interested.

Another item was the heavy discussion at the NAWB conference regarding the truck driver shortage, and the different ways to incentivize and recruit new drivers to the industry.

The other item was NAWB's successful launch of Workforce Compass in partnership with technology providers, which is an online career and navigation platform.

APPROVAL OF AGENDA

Mr. Stephens called for a motion to approve the agenda.

ACTION: Mr. Wayne Buffington motioned to approve the agenda; Mr. Calvin Newsom seconded. Motion carried.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Mr. Stephens called for a motion to approve the minutes from last meeting (April 20, 2021).

ACTION: Ms. Lillie Graves motioned to approve the minutes; Mr. Calvin Newsom seconded. Motion carried.

LEO BOARD UPDATE

Mr. Stephens called on Mr. Calvin Newsom to present the LEO Board report. Mr. Newsom announced that the LEO voted to approve the appointments of Mr. Jermaine Simmons, Marshall Wood, Sr., and Mr. Charles Fairly to the TDWDA Workforce Board at the last meeting (July 20, 2021). They also approved the appointment of Ms. Lucy Lamberth at this morning's meeting (November 16, 2021). She will assume the seat formally held by Mr. Joseph Knight.

Mr. Stephens formally welcomed the new members to the Workforce Board.

Mr. Newsom concluded his report.

FINANCIAL REPORT

Mr. Stephens called on Ms. Shari White to present the Financial Report.

Ms. White began her report with the PY21 Overview of Current Funding. On June 24, 2021, TDWDA received PY21 NFA #1, which allocated \$2,823,202 to Youth funds. On July 22, TDWDA received NFA #2, which allocated \$980,583 to Adult and Dislocated Worker funds. OGM issued this NFA authorizing TDWDA to expend and request a limited amount of these funds.

On October 19, TDWDA received NFA #3, which allocated \$4,387,283 also for Adult and Dislocated Worker funds. This NFA authorized the remaining Adult and Dislocated Worker funds for PY21.

These allocations bring PY21's Total Funds Available to \$15,661,301.71.

Mr. Marshal Wood, Sr., asked for clarification on the carry-over funds. Ms. White explained that they are not held permanently, but we do have two years to spend them.

Ms. White also stated she will provide a report of the total funds available to the State and how they are distributed among the LWIB at the next TDWDA meeting.

Ms. White continued with the Obligation and Expenditures Summary. Program Year 21 began on July 1, 2021, and will end on June 30, 2022. The expenditures reported are for cost through 09/30/21.

As for Obligations, Adult was 86.2% obligated, Dislocated Worker 85.6%, Youth 73.5%, and Rapid Response/Layoff Aversion 17%.

As for Expenditures, Adult was 18% expended, Dislocated Worker 16%, Youth 14%, and Rapid Response/Layoff Aversion 4%. Overall, TDWDA has expended 16% of its PY21 Obligations.

As for Expenditures by Quarter, we have expended \$1,917,367.26 in this 1st Quarter. Ms. White also explained that our expenditures this time last year were only \$1,507,067.39, so they are trending upwards. We are expecting the expenditures to continue that upward trend.

Ms. White had one more update. At our last meeting, we discussed the unexpended PY19 youth funds. SMPDD submitted our PY19 Closeout to the Office of Grant Management, returning \$357,681.70 in youth funds. OGM has informed us that they will be returning those youth funds to TDWDA.

Ms. White concluded her report.

DIRECTOR'S REPORT

Mr. Stephens called on Ms. Allison Hawkins to present the Director's Report.

Ms. Hawkins began by stating SMPDD recently had a monitoring Exit Call with MDES, and that there were no findings. Ms. Hawkins thanked Ms. Patricia Morrison and Ms. Shari White for ensuring the process went well. With this success, there should be no problems with the upcoming audit.

SMPDD Youth monitoring is underway, and should be completed by the end of the year.

Ms. Hawkins introduced Ms. Marry Ann Myers from Accelerate Mississippi and the Office of Workforce Development. Ms. Meyers herself was formally at the Mississippi Development Authority.

Mr. Ryan Miller was appointed as the first Executive Director of the Office of Workforce Development/Accelerate MS. He has done a great job reaching out to Community Colleges, SMPDD/TDWDA, and others to ensure a smooth transition. The overall goal is foster cooperation among all Workforce partners.

Accelerate MS has divided the four Mississippi Workforce Board Areas into eight distinct workforce “ecosystems.” This will allow for more unique programs tailored to each specific region, and to the business and industries that they contain. In addition, each “ecosystem” will have its own committee to give input. These are not meant as a replacement for the current system, but as a complement.

There has also been a push by Accelerate MS and MDES to integrate Workforce Programs into the Mississippi Department of Education Perkins Plan to better serve K-12 students.

Ms. Judith Redshaw has resigned from the Workforce Board after many years of faithful service, and has moved to Missouri to be closer to her family.

There are several new TDWDA Policies that have been updated, and they will be presented by their respective committees later in this meeting.

Ms. Hawkins thanked Mr. Kenny Jett for all of his work with SETA and the Biloxi Conference, and for doing a great job representing us on the SETA Board.

Ms. Hawkins concluded her report.

WIN JOB CENTER UPDATE

Mr. Stephens called on Ms. Connie Valentine to present the WIN Job Center update.

Ms. Valentine began by stating the Choctaw WIN Center was reopened May 28, which had been closed due to COVID-19. Mr. Jerry Hollifield has been named as the new manager of the Hattiesburg WIN Center, and Ms. Valentine introduced him to those present.

There are now 16 On-the-Job training agreements, totaling \$801,149. 292 participants have been enrolled in ITAs during the program year, and have so far obligated \$1,880,567.

Nine participants have completed their OJT programs, and 27 participants have completed their ITAs in PY21.

At this time, we have 1,019 WIOA enrollments in PY21.

Ms. Valentine concluded her report.

YOUTH COMMITTEE REPORT

Mr. Stephens called on Ms. Lillie Graves to present the Youth Committee report.

Ms. Graves began by stating that the staff recently completed the quarterly benchmark calls with the service providers. Overall, the providers are doing well in meeting the enrollment numbers, the physical goal, and the work experience expenditures.

Ms. Shonta Duncan will be seeking new Youth Committee members from small non-profits that serve youth in our Workforce Area. A solicitation letter has been drafted that will be sent to prospective members. If any Board member is aware of any non-profit that might qualify, please contact Ms. Duncan.

SMPDD recently started an In-school partnership with local Career Technical Education programs. The first partnership was with the Kemper County School District. So far, we have enrolled 19 students.

Ms. Graves stated she had three items requiring Board approval. The first is the 2022 WIOA Youth RFP Solicitation Schedule. Ms. Graves motioned to approve this Schedule.

ACTION: Ms. Lillie Graves motioned to approve the 2022 WIOA Youth RFP Solicitation Schedule; Mr. Wayne Buffington seconded. Motion carried.

The second item is the updated Youth Contact and Follow-Up Policy. Ms. Graves motioned to approve this policy.

ACTION: Ms. Lillie Graves motioned to approve the updated Youth Contact and Follow-Up Policy; Mr. Calvin Newsom seconded. Motion carried.

The third item is the Youth Eligibility and Data Validation Policy, which combines the two formally separate policies. Ms. Graves motioned to approve this policy.

ACTION: Ms. Lillie Graves motioned to approve the updated Youth Eligibility and Data Validation Policy; Ms. Lucy Lamberth seconded. Motion carried.

Ms. Graves concluded her report.

ONE-STOP COMMITTEE REPORT

Mr. Stephens called on Ms. Rebecca Brown to present the One-Stop Committee report.

Ms. Brown began by offering a motion to approve the reservation of \$350,000 for Incumbent Worker Training. The Workforce Board can allocate up to 20% of the budget to Incumbent Worker Training, and this amount was based on budget forecasts by Ms. Shari White; i.e. what was likely to be spent this program year.

ACTION: Ms. Rebecca Brown motioned to approve the Incumbent Worker Budget; Ms. Lucretia Williams seconded. Motion carried.

The next two items are policies that were updated to better reflect current WIOA language. The first is the Dislocated Worker Registration Policy; Ms. Brown motioned to approve.

ACTION: Ms. Rebecca Brown motioned to approve the updated Dislocated Worker Registration Policy; Mr. Calvin Newsom seconded. Motion carried.

The second updated policy is the Work Experience/Internship Policy; Ms. Brown motioned to approve.

ACTION: Ms. Rebecca Brown motioned to approve the updated Work Experience/Internship Policy; Mr. Wayne Buffington seconded. Motion carried.

Ms. Brown also announced to the Board that CARES Act funding was used for the purchase of several trucks for training purposes in Hattiesburg, which will partially alleviate the shortage of truck drivers that was mentioned earlier in the meeting, as well as provide well-paying jobs for our participants.

Ms. Brown concluded her report.

Mr. David Stephens thanked Ms. Brown for her report. He also explained that Mr. Donnie Bond had stepped down as One-Stop Chair, and Ms. Brown filled that vacancy. Mr. Bond will continue to serve on the One-Stop committee and Workforce Board.

Mr. Stephens also took a moment to thank the other committee chairs for their reports, and stated that the new Board members can feel free to ask questions at any time.

NEW BUSINESS

Mr. Stephens presented the Waiver Exception Policy, which has also been updated to reflect current WIOA language. Mr. Stephens called for a motion to approve.

ACTION: Mr. Sedgie Foxworth motioned to approve the updated Waiver Exception Policy; Mr. Calvin Newsom seconded. Motion carried.

Mr. Stephens also presented two committee chair appointments. The first was Ms. Rebecca Brown's appointment to One-Stop Committee Chair. The second was the appointment of Mr. Mark Scott to the Industry Advisory Council Chair. Mr. Stephens thanked both of them for their service. He then asked for a motion to approve these appointments.

ACTION: Mr. Calvin Newsom motioned to approve the appointments of Ms. Rebecca Brown to One-Stop Committee Chair and Mr. Mark Scott to Industry Advisory Council Chair; Mr. Sedgie Foxworth seconded. Motion carried.

ADJOURNMENT

With nothing further to discuss, Mr. Stephens adjourned the meeting.