

Minutes
Twin Districts Workforce Development Area
Local Elected Officials Board

Tuesday, April 26, 2022 9:30 AM
914 Sullivan Drive, Hattiesburg

PRESENT

Wayne Barrow, Bobby Bolton, Lorenzo Carter, Marvin Chapman, Curtis Gray, Sr., Donald Hart, Kenneth Harris, Arthur Keys, Calvin Newsom, Dwight Norris, Joe Norwood, Burkett Ross, Bobby Rushing, Greg Shaw.

STAFF

Allison Hawkins, Patricia Morrison, Shari White, Shonta Duncan, Marvin Dickey, Grant Wesley.

ABSENT

Terry Bass, Clark Bond, Randy Bosarge, Jackie Bradford, Henry Cochran, Christopher Cole, Travares Comegys, Kenneth Harris, Marlin Ladner, Kirby Nazary, Obbie Riley.

WELCOME/CALL TO ORDER

LEO Chair Calvin Newsom greeted those in attendance and called the meeting to order.

APPROVAL OF AGENDA

ACTION: Mr. Wayne Barrow motioned to approve the agenda; Mr. Lorenzo Carter seconded. Motion carried.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

ACTION: Mr. Marvin Chapman motioned to approve the minutes from last meeting (January 25, 2022); Mr. Bobby Bolton seconded. Motion carried.

TWIN DISTRICTS UPDATE

Ms. Allison Hawkins presented the Twin Districts Update. She began stating that the State Workforce Plan was submitted to the Department of Labor by Accelerate MS. SMPDD's update to the Plan will be presented at the next TDWDA Meeting in July.

In response to the Youth Program separation-of-duties finding by the external monitor last year, Ms. Hawkins presented a written response to the LEO Board. The response

addressed the monitor's concerns of possible conflict of interest. This involved removing the Youth Program Administrator (Ms. Shonta Duncan) from the procurement process, and handing off those responsibilities to other SMPDD staff. After the submitted Youth Program proposals are selected and ranked, only then will Ms. Duncan review them. An external monitor will be brought in to review SMPDD Youth Programs for compliance moving forward. Furthermore, relevant policies will be reviewed to ensure compliance with State and Federal guidelines. A copy of this response is attached.

Mr. Burkett Ross asked for clarification on the finding and its severity. Ms. Hawkins explained that no actual error had taken place, only that the monitor had advised changes to the procurement process as an extra layer of caution.

The results of the Youth Program procurement process and the rankings of the selected proposal will be presented to the Workforce Board in the upcoming meeting to be voted on.

Ms. Hawkins and Ms. Patricia Morrison attended the National Association of Workforce Boards conference in Washington, D.C. While there, they had the chance to meet with several Workforce professionals and discuss potential program strategies, one of which was a family-centered approach that would impact an entire household.

SMPDD has partnered with MDES and the Governor's Job Fair Network. Three job fairs have been hosted on the Gulf Coast so far, with great turnout at each one. Numbers were bolstered by requiring those on Unemployment Insurance to attend. Ms. Hawkins asked the LEO members to contact SMPDD if any would like to host a job fair in their county. Another fair will be held in Laurel this June.

This October, the TDWDA Annual Board Meeting will be held in Meridian. An exact date will be determined closer to that time to avoid potential scheduling conflicts.

During the SETA Spring Conference in March, Kenny Jett was presented the John Craig President's Award for his outstanding performance on the SETA Board.

Ms. Hawkins concluded her report.

TWIN DISTRICTS FINANCIAL REPORT

Mr. Newsom called on Ms. Shari White to present the Financial Report. Ms. White began her report with the PY21 Overview of Current Funding. Effective January 1, 2022, TDWDA received an additional \$700,000 in Rapid Response/Layoff Aversion funds (PY21 NFA #4). This increased the Total Funds Available to \$16,677,194.21.

Activities for the Twin Districts' Layoff Aversion Plan for 2022-2023 include strategic planning, business outreach, Incumbent Worker training, performance data collection and tracking, economic analysis, and Dislocated Worker activities.

At the last meeting (January 25, 2022), the Board approved to move \$500,000 from PY21 Dislocated Worker funds to Adult funds. That request was approved by the Office of Grant Management on February 8, 2022.

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 03/30/22.

As for Obligations, Adult was 91.7% obligated, Dislocated Worker 97.7%, Youth 81.3%, and Rapid Response/Layoff Aversion 14.1%.

As for Expenditures, Adult was 54% expended, Dislocated Worker 38%, Youth 38%, and Rapid Response/Layoff Aversion 11%. Overall, TDWDA has expended 42% of its PY21 Obligations. Ms. White also noted that PY21 Youth Work Experience Rate is at 43.58%.

As for Expenditures by Quarter, we have expended \$1,917,367.26 in the 1st Quarter, \$1,970,652.92 in the 2nd, and \$1,923,342.35 in the 3rd, totaling \$5,811,362.56. Ms. White explained that our Expenditures this time last year were \$4,694,908. They are continuing to trend upward.

Ms. White continued with the PY21-22 Funding Comparison. TDWDA has received an estimate of our PY22 funding. The PY22 Allocation estimates reflect a 10% decrease in funding across the board, in all funding streams. At our next meeting, we should have a more accurate funding level to report for PY22.

Ms. White concluded her report. Mr. Newsom inquired about foot traffic in the WIN Job Centers increasing or decreasing post-pandemic. Ms. Hawkins confirmed that traffic was still low, and that a full report will be given by Ms. Connie Valentine in the upcoming Workforce Board meeting. Ms. Patricia Morrison added that one reason traffic is so low is because people are being hired off the street directly by employers due to high demand, and have less need to go to the WIN Centers.

Mr. Newsom also asked if the Workforce 101 training could continue, possibly in the upcoming Annual Meeting, which has been on hold since the pandemic began. Ms. Hawkins agreed. Mr. Newsom stressed to the LEO members the importance of staying informed on Workforce terminology and operations.

Mr. Newsom called for a motion to accept both Ms. Hawkins' and Ms. White's reports.

ACTION: Mr. Dwight Norris motioned to accept the reports given by Ms. Shari White and Ms. Allison Hawkins; Mr. Bobby Bolton seconded. Motion carried.

NEW BUSINESS

No new business.

COUNTY REPORTS

With no new business to discuss, Mr. Newsom opened the floor to the LEO members to provide a brief report on their respective county. Topics were varied, but most were focused on COVID recovery, use of American Rescue Plan Act funds to build/repair roads and bridges, Medical Marijuana facilities and whether to opt in/out for the program, truck driver shortage, large business and industry recruitment/retention, and allocation of Use Tax funding.

ADJOURNMENT

With nothing further to discuss, Mr. Calvin Newsom motioned to adjourn the meeting.

ACTION: Mr. Kenneth Harris motioned to adjourn the meeting; Mr. Marvin Chapman seconded. Motion carried.