

**Minutes**  
**Twin Districts Workforce Development Area**  
**Local Elected Officials Board**

**Tuesday, June 25, 2024     9:30 AM**  
**914 Sullivan Drive, Hattiesburg**

**PRESENT**

Lorenzo Carter, Christopher Cole, Steven Crotwell, Donald Hart, Arthur Keys, Kirby Nazary, Calvin Newsom, Joe Norwood, Obbie Riley, Greg Shaw, and Tim Wise.

**ABSENT**

Nathan Barrett, Terry Bass, Demarrio Booth, Randy Bosarge, Terry Frazier, Hal Hayes, Jon R. Jones, Darron Keys, Stephen Lee, Frankie Massey, Dillion McInnis, Steve Stringer, and George Walters.

**STAFF**

Allison Hawkins, Patricia Morrison, Emlyn Jackson, Marilyn Minor, Shonta Duncan, Marvin Dickey, Elena Borel, and Grant Wesley.

**WELCOME/CALL TO ORDER**

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

**APPROVAL OF AGENDA**

**ACTION: Mr. Obbie Riley motioned to approve the agenda; Mr. Donald Hart seconded. Motion carried.**

**APPROVAL OF MINUTES**

**ACTION: Mr. Chris Cole motioned to approve the minutes from last meeting (March 6, 2024); Mr. Greg Shaw seconded. Motion carried.**

**TWIN DISTRICTS UPDATE**

Mr. Newsom called on Ms. Allison Hawkins to present the Twin Districts Update. She began by stating that the High School Career Coach program was now in its third year of operation. The Mississippi State Legislature also recently approved a budget increase for the program by an additional \$3 million, adding up to a total of \$15 million. We have also hired new coaches for George County, Wayne County, Lauderdale

County, Bay-Waveland, and Quitman school districts. With two more coaches hired for Lamar County, we will now have a total of 42 coaches serving in the Twin Districts Area.

The RESTORE Re-Entry program, which helps incarcerated individuals re-enter the workforce following release, and should be fully operating in Jackson, Harrison, and Hancock Counties soon.

Ms. Hawkins explained that the next scheduled Board meeting will be in the Fall. It will be the Annual Meeting, with one day of workshops with the LEO and Workforce Board meetings held the following morning. The exact date and place have yet to be determined.

Program monitoring is still ongoing and progressing well, with no findings so far.

Ms. Robin Stewart has retired as Executive Director of MDES. Mr. Bill Ashley has taken her position.

Mr. Newsom inquired about Multi-County and their participants, since their contract was terminated along with Climb CDC's. Ms. Hawkins explained that Multi-County never quite got their program operational, and had no participants.

Mr. Obbie Riley asked if Multi-County would be eligible to re-apply next program year. Ms. Hawkins replied that they could.

Mr. Donald Hart inquired if other agencies in the Pearl River County area could apply. Ms. Hawkins replied that, yes, all agencies capable of running the program in that area should apply. Mr. Newsom added that any agency looking to apply needs to start preparing now. Ms. Hawkins stated that this also applies to any county in the TDWDA that is not currently served.

Ms. Hawkins concluded her report.

## **TWIN DISTRICTS FINANCIAL REPORT**

Mr. Newsom called on Ms. Elena Borel to present the Financial Report. She began her report with the Program Year 2023 (PY23) Overview of Current Funding. On February 12, 2024, TDWDA received NFA #500-23-6. This NFA provided the TDWDA the authority to expend and request an additional \$200,000 in PY23 Rapid Response/Layoff Aversion Funds. A copy of this NFA is included in the meeting packet. From PY21 and PY22, there was a total of \$6,582,060.90 in carryover funds. Combined with \$7,012,336.00 in PY23 funds, this creates a Grand Total of \$13,594,396.90.

Ms. Borel continued with the Obligations and Expenditure Summary. The expenditures reported are for the Third Quarter costs - the period ending 3/31/24. The Obligations were as follows: Adult was 95.5% obligated, Dislocated Worker 98.8%, Youth 92.6%,

and Rapid Response/Layoff Aversion was 68.6%. The overall obligation for all funds was 93.5%.

As for Third Quarter Expenditures: Adult was 45% expended at \$1,921,652.77; Dislocated Worker 42% at \$1,236,025.59; Youth 57% at \$2,778,119.70; and Rapid Response/Layoff Aversion was 47% expended at \$258,263.16. Overall, TDWDA has expended 49% of its PY23 Obligations, equaling \$6,194,061.22. Please note that the PY23 Youth Work Experience Rate is at currently at 48.69%.

Next, Ms. Borel went over the Unobligated Remaining Funds. Unliquidated Obligations are funds that were obligated, but not expended. Closeouts will be due from the providers around mid-August, and all funds that have not been expended by the providers will roll forward into PY24.

Ms. Borel continued with the Expenditure by Quarter Report. Expenditures for the Third Quarter were \$2,285,768.40, which is around a 26% increase from the prior quarter. We expect the expenditures to increase again in the Fourth Quarter.

Ms. Borel concluded her report. Mr. Newsom called for a motion to accept Ms. Hawkins and Ms. Borel's reports.

**ACTION: Mr. Greg Shaw motioned to accept the reports; Mr. Donald Hart seconded. Motion carried.**

## **YOUTH COMMITTEE REPORT**

Mr. Newsom called on Ms. Patricia Morrison to present the Youth Committee report in the absence of Ms. Lillie Graves. Ms. Morrison began with the PY24 SMPDD Youth Subaward, which includes the operation of the four Youth Sites that SMPDD operates within the TDWDA. Since there was an overall reduction in WIOA funding, small line-item adjustments were made throughout the budget to reduce the cost. However, these cuts will not affect the services provided or the number of participants served, which will remain the same. Other than the lower costs, the subaward is the same as last program year. Ms. Morrison requested that the LEO vote on the PY24 SMPDD Youth Subaward. Mr. Newsom called for a motion.

**ACTION: Mr. Chris Cole motioned to approve the PY24 SMPDD Youth Subaward; Mr. Arthur Keys seconded. Motion carried.**

Ms. Morrison added that SMPDD also met all of the benchmark goals, including participants served, for this program year (PY23). All of the Youth subrecipients have improved as well, with more Youth participating in the wake of the pandemic.

Ms. Morrison concluded her report.

## ONE-STOP COMMITTEE REPORT

Mr. Newsom called on Ms. Rebecca Brown to present the One-Stop Committee Report. Ms. Brown began with a brief overview of the One-Stop Committee, and its role within the TDWDA. The Committee last met on June 6, 2024, and discussed the Incumbent Worker Funding Level. Under WIOA regulations, the Board can spend no more than 20% of Adult and Dislocated Worker funds on Incumbent Workers, either Customized Training or On-the-Job (OJT) Training. The One-Stop Committee voted to allocate \$300,000 for PY24 to Incumbent Worker Training, based on current employer needs in the area. Ms. Brown then presented this transfer to the LEO for their approval. Mr. Newsom called for a motion.

**ACTION: Mr. Greg Shaw motioned to approve the Incumbent Worker Funding Level Recommendation; Mr. Lorenzo Carter seconded. Motion carried.**

Ms. Brown continued with the One-Stop Center Recommendations from the State Workforce Investment Board (SWIB), and asked Ms. Allison Hawkins to present their findings. Ms. Hawkins began with a brief overview of the SWIB itself, explaining that its members are appointed by the Governor, Lieutenant Governor, and others among the State Executive Staff. The SWIB serves as an advisory board to the Office of Workforce Development (i.e. AccelerateMS), to monitor publicly-funded workforce development programs, and to recommend strategies and policies that enhance coordination among programs and activities towards continuous improvement of Mississippi's complex workforce development system.

The SWIB made the following recommendation: WIOA Core Partners must examine ways to reduce public workforce system infrastructure costs, improve access to services and training in areas of the greatest prime-age employment gap, and areas with existing and anticipated high labor market demands. Examine current operating structure and procedures of WIN Job Centers along with other WIOA funded programs and make recommendations for any improvement that may reduce administrative costs and increase program access and efficacy as well as detailing how participants will be directed to priority occupations, established by AccelerateMS and associated training programs. For example, how many WIN Job Centers should there be? How should centers be staffed? What are the most efficient means for centers to communicate and correspond with the population? What are barriers to a higher percentage of this population accessing meaningful occupational training?

Following this recommendation, the One-Stop Committee examined the following metrics:

- WIN Job Center (WJC) customer count over the last 12 months
- Rental costs
- Space needs vs. size of facility
- Geographic considerations, i.e. access to job searchers

The Committee does not currently recommend closing any of the WJC's in the workforce area. However, the Committee does believe that we can reduce the costs of some centers by reducing rental costs. This can be accomplished by relocating or adding paying partners to the facility.

As for the WJC staff, the Committee recommends that the one-stop operator (currently the MS Department of Employment Security) work within the budget given to them, possibly by removing vacant positions. The staffing is the responsibility of the operator who is selected through a competitive Request for Proposals (RFP) process.

One-Stop operational costs (facility and staff) are currently at 50%, and training expenses are at 50%, totaling \$4,300,000. The Committee recommends the following in facility/staff costs:

- PY 2024 – decrease operations by \$200,000 resulting in 45/55 ops vs. training
- PY 2025 – decrease operations by another \$200,000 resulting in 40/60 ops vs. training.

To direct people to priority occupations, the Committee recommends establishing a sector training center as a pilot at the Hancock County WJC. The WJC would be relocated to a facility nearby the PRCC campus that is scheduled to open in August 2024. It will be a challenge to make this a reality without funding partners.

Finally, TDWDA is a proponent of improving upon the digital delivery system for WIOA career services. The Committee recommends that the SWIB/AccelerateMS establish a statewide platform for digital delivery with input from the local workforce areas. Similarly, MDES should provide Wi-Fi internet access to its customers at all WIN Job Centers in the area, as previously recommended in the past. Some WJC's have only recently installed Wi-Fi, while others still do not have it at all.

Mr. Obbie Riley asked if any of the empty office spaces within the WJC's could be rented out to private start-ups, small businesses, entrepreneurs, etc. Ms. Hawkins replied that yes, they could, and would be another great option. Ms. Brown added that some of the WJC's have undeveloped "dead space" as well, which could also be repurposed into offices.

Mr. Riley also asked how much the Wi-Fi installation would cost. Ms. Hawkins replied that she wasn't sure, but that would need to be handled by the One-Stop Operator, which currently is MS Department of Employment Security (MDES).

With no further questions, Ms. Hawkins asked the LEO to vote on these One-Stop Center Recommendations. Mr. Newsom called for a motion.

**ACTION: Mr. Arthur Keys motioned to approve the One-Stop Center Recommendations; Mr. Donald Hart seconded. Motion carried.**

## **NEW BUSINESS**

Mr. Newsom announced that there are two new appointments to the Workforce Board. The first is Ms. Millie Bordelon from MGCCC, who will be taking Mr. John Poelma's seat following his retirement earlier this month. The second is Ms. Kammie Carpenter, who will be the new Executive Director of the Petal Area Chamber of Commerce following Ms. Valerie Wilson's retirement. Mr. Newsom called for a motion to approve these appointments.

**ACTION: Mr. Greg Shaw motioned to approved Ms. Millie Bordelon's and Ms. Kammie Carpenter's appointments to the TDWDA Workforce Board; Mr. Lorenzo Carter seconded. Motion carried.**

Mr. Newsom reminded the LEO members to sign the LEO By-Laws and Conflict of Interest Acknowledgement forms. Signed forms must be returned to SMPDD staff as soon as possible.

## **ADJOURNMENT**

With nothing further to discuss, Mr. Calvin Newsom called for a motion to adjourn the meeting.

**ACTION: Mr. Chris Cole motioned to adjourn the meeting; Mr. Lorenzo Carter seconded. Motion carried.**