

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

**Thursday, December 5, 2024      9:00 AM**  
**Gulf Hills Hotel & Resort**  
**13701 Paso Road, Ocean Springs**

**PRESENT**

Terry Bass, Demarrio Booth, Terry Frazier, Donald Hart, Hal Hayes, Arthur Keys, Stephen Lee, Frankie Massey, Joe Norwood, Greg Shaw, Steve Stringer, George Walters, and Tim Wise.

**ABSENT**

Nathan Barrett, Randy Bosarge, Lorenzo Carter, Christopher Cole, Steven Crotwell, Jon R. Jones, Darron Keys, Dillon McInnis, Kirby Nazary, Calvin Newsom, and Obbie Riley

**STAFF**

Leonard Bentz, Allison Hawkins, Patricia Morrison, Shari White, Emlyn Jackson, Marilyn Minor, Shonta Duncan, Kenny Jett, Natalia Diaz, Jennifer Bell, Stephen O'Mara, Marvin Dickey, Elena Borel, and Grant Wesley.

**WELCOME/CALL TO ORDER**

In light of Mr. Calvin Newsom's absence, Mr. Joe Norwood greeted those in attendance and called the meeting to order.

**APPROVAL OF AGENDA**

**ACTION: Mr. Terry Frazier motioned to approve the agenda; Mr. Steve Stringer seconded. Motion carried.**

**APPROVAL OF MINUTES**

**ACTION: Mr. Hal Hayes motioned to approve the minutes from last meeting (June 25, 2024); Mr. Donald Hart seconded. Motion carried.**

**TWIN DISTRICTS UPDATE**

Mr. Norwood called on Ms. Allison Hawkins to present the Twin Districts Update. Ms. Hawkins greeted everyone in attendance, and thanked those that were present for the Re-Entry simulation the previous afternoon.

First, Ms. Hawkins presented the 2024-2028 TDWDA Local Plan. This Plan outlines the workforce priorities and strategies of the Twin Districts area, and is rewritten every four years following the release of the Mississippi WIOA State Plan. Ms. Hawkins requested approval of the new Local Plan by the LEO. Mr. Norwood called for a motion.

**ACTION: Mr. Greg Shaw motioned to approve the 2024-2028 TDWDA Local Plan; Mr. Hal Hayes seconded. Motion carried.**

Next, Ms. Hawkins gave a monitoring update. Internal monitoring was conducted by a third party for all the SMPDD WIOA programs and the subrecipients, including the SMPDD Youth program. That has been completed, and there were no findings or disallowed costs. MDES Office of Grant Management (OGM) is also in the process of monitoring SMPDD. All relevant documentation has been submitted for review. So far, there have been no issues.

Ms. Hawkins then called on Ms. Patricia Morrison to give the PY23 WIOA Performance Outcomes Report. Ms. Morrison explained that these performance measures are tracked the 2<sup>nd</sup> Quarter (six months) and 4<sup>th</sup> Quarter (12 months) after a participant successfully exits a WIOA program. The five measures are employment 2<sup>nd</sup> Quarter after exit, employment 4<sup>th</sup> Quarter after exit, median earnings, credential attainment, and measurable skill gains.

For WIOA Adult, 87.6% of participants were employed six months after exit; 86% were employed 12 months after exit, which is really high and exceeds the performance requested by the State.

With median earnings, the wages from six months of employment from the participant in the exact middle of the lowest earning and highest participant is used as a benchmark. For PY23, this was \$7,999, which far exceeds the \$6,945 set by the State.

Next is credential attainment, in which an industry-recognized certificate is obtained within four quarters (12 months) after exit. In PY23, 83.4% of exited Adult participants obtained one or more credentials. In PY22, this was only 62.5%, which means there was over a 20% increase. Ms. Morrison attributed this improvement to the cooperation between MDES, the Community Colleges, and SMPDD and Subrecipient staff, as well as better follow-up data entry and communication.

Finally, there's measurable skill gains, which can be everything from grade level increase to demonstrated ability with a skill or technique. It can be very difficult to track and document, but our ability to do so has greatly improved. The goal set by the State is 58.3%, and TDWDA obtained 82.8% in measurable skill gains in PY23. In PY22, it was only 67.9%, so there was a marked improvement.

Overall, every performance goal was met or exceeded in PY23, with no failing marks. Ms. Morrison thanked the staff for their diligence in making this possible.

Ms. Hawkins then called on Ms. Jennifer Bell to provide more insight on auditing, monitoring, and internal controls at SMPDD. Ms. Bell began by giving an overview of the multiple levels of internal financial control, with every type of financial request and reimbursement progressing from the individual, to department finance, to SMPDD finance, to final executive approval. There is also a software system in place that separates individual programs and funding streams, and tracks each of them according to their own reporting and documentation requirements. Multiple people are then required to review each transaction at different points before any payment or check request is executed.

The LEO and Ms. Hawkins thanked Ms. Bell for giving her overview of the checks and balances in place.

Ms. Hawkins concluded her report.

## **TWIN DISTRICTS FINANCIAL REPORT**

Mr. Norwood called on Ms. Shari White to present the Financial Report. She began by stating that the report will start with a review of the 4<sup>th</sup> and final Quarter of Program Year 2023 (PY23), and conclude with a review of 1<sup>st</sup> Quarter of PY24. Ms. White then explained the PY23 Overview of Current Funding. On May 15, 2024, TDWDA received NFA #7, in the amount of \$375,000 in 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. White continued with the Obligations and Expenditure Summary. The expenditures reported are for the 4<sup>th</sup> Quarter costs - the period ending 06/30/24. Adult, Dislocated Worker, Youth, and Rapid Response/Layoff Aversion were all 100% obligated.

As for 4<sup>th</sup> Quarter Expenditures: Adult was 73% expended; Dislocated Worker 61%; Youth 71%; and Rapid Response/Layoff Aversion was 36%. Overall, TDWDA has expended 66% of its PY23 Obligations, equaling \$9,286,322.23.

Next, Ms. White 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. White continued with the Expenditure by Quarter Report. Expenditures for each Quarter of PY23 are as follows: 1<sup>st</sup> Quarter was 22% of total expenditures, 2<sup>nd</sup> Quarter 20%, 3<sup>rd</sup> Quarter 25%, and 4<sup>th</sup> Quarter 33%.

Next, Ms. White moved into the report on PY24 with the Overview of Current Funding. On June 21, 2024, TDWDA received PY24 NFA #1 which provided TDWDA the authority to expend and request PY24 WIOA Youth Funds in the amount of \$2,115,188.

On July 15, 2024, TDWDA received PY24 NFA #2 which provided TDWDA the authority to expend and request PY24 WIOA Adult (States) funds in the amount of \$394,136. On July 23, 2024, TDWDA received PY24 NFA #3 which provided TDWDA the authority to expend and request PY24 WIOA Dislocated Worker (States) funds in the amount of \$449,792. On October 24, 2024, TDWDA received PY24 NFA #4 which provided TDWDA the authority to expend and request PY24 WIOA Adult (Advance) funds in the amount of \$1,610,714. Finally, on November 6, 2024, TDWDA received PY24 NFA #5 which provided TDWDA the authority to expend and request PY24 WIOA DW (Advance) funds in the amount of \$1,636,763. A copy of each of these NFAs are included in the meeting packet.

For PY22 and PY23 Carryover funds, a total of \$4,683,074.67 was not expended. When combined with the total PY24 Allocation outlined in the NFAs above, there is a grand total of \$10,889,667.67 for Program Year 2024 activities.

Ms. White continued with the Obligations and Expenditures summary. The expenditures reported are for the 1st Quarter costs - the period ending 09/30//24. The Obligations were as follows: Adult was 93.9% obligated, Dislocated Worker 92.4%, Youth 100%, and Rapid Response/Layoff Aversion was 23.6%. The overall obligation for all funds was 90.7%.

As for 1<sup>st</sup> Quarter Expenditures: Adult was 12% expended, Dislocated Worker 11%, Youth 22%, and Rapid Response/Layoff Aversion was 9% expended. Overall, TDWDA has expended 15% of its PY24 Obligations, equaling \$1,495,095.40. Please note that the PY24 Youth Work Experience Rate is at currently at 43.13%.

Next, Ms. White went over the Unobligated Remaining Funds. Unliquidated Obligations are funds that were obligated, but not expended. These currently total \$1,017,123. Staff are working diligently to obligate these funds.

Ms. White then explained the PY22 Rapid Response/Layoff Aversion Plan Modification #2. We are requesting the board ratify the modification to the PY22 Layoff Aversion Plan and extension request. The funds expired on 06/30/24; however, the NFA TDWDA received had a 06/30/25 expiration date. SMPDD Staff had discussions with the State, and they approved the extension request and plan modification, tentative upon Board approval. Ms. Patricia Morrison explained that this request was to better align the RR/LA funding with current needs to support TDWDA job seekers as well as local business and industry. \$50,000 was moved from RR Economic Analysis to the RR Strategic Planning, Business Outreach, Outreach Specialist, Incumbent Worker Training, and Linkages category. The Linkages line item was added to the budget as shown on page 25 in your packet; and \$115,311 was moved down from the RR/LA line item into the linkages line item to total of \$165,311. These funds are being leveraged with other funds to assist with technology needs to provide services remotely and securely to underserved populations in the TDWDA. Ms. White and Ms. Morrison requested approval of Modification #2 to transfer \$50,000 from RR Economic Analysis

to RR Linkages, and to transfer \$115,311 from RR Layoff Aversion to RR Linkages; and extend the ending date to March 31, 2025. Mr. Norwood called for a motion.

**ACTION: Mr. Tim Wise motioned to approve the PY22 Rapid Response/Layoff Aversion Plan Modification #2 and Transfer of Funds; Mr. Steve Stringer seconded. Motion carried.**

Next, Ms. White requested a modification to the PY23 Rapid Response/Layoff Aversion Plan. This includes \$50,000 to be transferred from RR Economic Analysis to RR Linkages, and \$100,000 to be transferred from RR Layoff Aversion to RR Linkages to align with the PY22 Modification. Ms. Patricia Morrison explained that this request was to better align the RR/LA funding with current needs to support TDWDA job seekers as well as local business and industry. Additionally, these funds are being leveraged with other funds to assist with technology needs to provide services remotely and securely to underserved populations in the TDWDA. Mr. Norwood called for a motion.

**ACTION: Mr. Greg Shaw motioned to approve the PY23 Rapid Response/Layoff Aversion Plan Modification #1 and Transfer of Funds; Mr. Hal Hayes seconded. Motion carried.**

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

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

## **YOUTH COMMITTEE REPORT**

Mr. Norwood called on Ms. Lillie Graves to present the Youth Committee report. Ms. Graves began by stating that the Youth Committee met via Zoom on November 20, 2024, and Ms. Shonta Duncan provided the Youth Program update. Program Year 2023 finished with 402 Youth enrollments. Since July 1, 2024, the Youth providers have served 193 participants in PY24; 153 Out-of-School Youth (OSY) and 40 In-School (ISY). Enrollments have increased significantly over past Program Years, and because of this increase, all providers have met enrollment benchmarks for the 1<sup>st</sup> Quarter of PY24.

The Youth Committee also approved two action items, which also need to be approved by the LEO. The first is the PY24 SMPDD Youth Subaward Modification. Due to low Out-of-School enrollment, budget cuts, and problems retaining staff, the decision was made to close the Laurel SMPDD Youth Site. The remaining staff will be moved the SMPDD Hattiesburg office, and will continue to serve In-School Youth remotely in the TDWDA. Ms. Graves asked for the LEO's approval of the modification. Mr. Norwood called for a motion.

**ACTION: Mr. Arthur Keys motioned to approve the PY24 SMPDD Youth Subaward Modification #1; Mr. Hal Hays seconded. Motion carried.**

Ms. Graves also presented the PY25 Youth RFP Solicitation Schedule, which outlines the procurement process for the SMPDD Youth Program in the upcoming program year. Ms. Graves requested LEO approval of this schedule, and to grant SMPDD the authority to make changes to schedule as needed. Mr. Norwood called for a motion.

**ACTION: Mr. Donald Hart motioned to approve the PY25 Youth RFP Solicitation Schedule; Mr. Greg Shaw seconded. Motion carried.**

Ms. Graves concluded her report.

### **NEW BUSINESS**

No new business.

### **ADJOURNMENT**

With nothing further to discuss, Mr. Joe Norwood called for a motion to adjourn the meeting.

**ACTION: Mr. Steve Stringer motioned to adjourn the meeting; Mr. Donald Hart seconded. Motion carried.**