Minutes
Twin Districts Workforce Development Area
Local Elected Official Board

Thursday, July 23, 2026, 9:30 AM
914 Sullivan Drive, Hattiesburg, MS

PRESENT:

Christopher Cole, Terry Frazier, Arthur Keys, Kirby Nazary, Calvin Newsom, Joe Norwood, Obbie Riley, Greg Shaw, and Steve Stringer

ABSENT:

Nathan Barrett, Terry Bass, Dermarrio Booth, Randy Bosarge, Lorenzo Carter, Steven Crotwell, Donald Hart, Hal Hayes, Jon Jones, Darron Keyes, Stephen Lee, Frankie Massey, Dillon McInnis, George Walters, and Tim Wise

STAFF:

Allison Hawkins, Patricia Morrison, Marvin Dickey, Shari White, Elena Borel, Grant Wesley

CALL TO ORDER/WELCOME:

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

APPROVAL OF AGENDA:

ACTION: Mr. Greg Shaw motioned to approve the agenda; Mr. Steve Stringer seconded. Motion carried.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES:

ACTION: Mr. Arthur Keys motioned to approve the minutes from the last meeting (April 29, 2026); Mr. Christopher Cole seconded. Motion carried.

TWIN DISTRICTS UPDATE:

Mr. Newsom called on Mrs. Allison Hawkins to present the Twin Districts update. Ms. Hawkins began by stating that June 30 marked the end of the previous Program Year, and much of the staff's time since the last Board meeting has been spent preparing subawards for the new Program Year (PY26). All of these subawards have been executed, with the exception of MDES, which will be completed soon.

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Ms. Hawkins then announced that the Laurel WIN Job Center officially closed on June 30, 2026. Its closure was approved at the last Board meeting, and we've received little pushback on the decision so far. On a positive note, Laurel will be one of the first locations to receive the virtual MDES Navigator system, which Mr. Brian Johnson will demo during his report in the Workforce Board meeting. Jasper and Jefferson Davis Counties will also be getting Navigators, and Leake County has showed strong interest as well.

MDES is also bringing their mobile WIN Center bus, "Winnie," to today's meeting, and will have it open for LEO and Board members to tour.

This year's TDWDA Annual Meeting is currently set to be hosted in Meridian on October 14-15. However, several Board members noted that this would conflict with the MAS Tupelo Fall meeting. Another date will be determined, possible in early December to avoid other conflicts in November.

Hood Industries is closing their plywood production facility in Wiggins, which is also the largest employer in Stone County. The company cited damage from recent Tropical Storm Arthur and overall age of the site structures being too costly to repair and maintain. Around 260 employees will be affected. However, MDES and SMPDD staff are actually at the facility today (July 23, 2026) for a Rapid Response/Layoff Aversion event. Staff will be assisting the affected employees with re-employment services, Unemployment Insurance enrollment, and training opportunities to help them get back in the workforce as soon and as smoothly as possible.

Ms. Hawkins concluded her report.

TWIN DISTRICTS FINANCIAL REPORT:

Mr. Newsom called on Ms. Shari White to present the Financial Report. She began her report with the Program Year 2025 (PY25) Funding Overview. PY25 ended on June 30, 2026. There have been no changes since last meeting, the PY25 funding remains at $9,131,695.12.

Ms. White continued with the Obligations and Expenditure Summary. The Obligations for all PY25 funds is now 100%.

Ms. White then summarized the expenditures through June 30, 2026: Adult was 71%, Dislocated Worker 53%, Youth 81%, and Rapid Response/Layoff Aversion was 56% expended. Overall, TDWDA has expended 67% of its PY25 Obligations, equaling $6,146,551.04. Please note that the PY25 Youth Work Experience Rate is at currently at 36.02%.

Ms. White added that Sub-recipient closeouts are due to SMPDD no later than July 31, 2026. At that time, sub-recipients will report their final PY25 expenditures, so these

figures will change slightly. The final PY25 expenditure totals will be provided at the next TDWDA Board meeting.

Next, Ms. White went over the Unobligated Remaining Funds. The remaining unliquidated obligations rolled forward into PY26 and were re-obligated through new PY26 sub-awards.

Ms. White continued with the Expenditure by Quarter Report. Expenditures are as follows: 1st Quarter expended $1,280,944.45; 2nd Quarter $1,426,300.37; 3rd Quarter $1,536,000.30; and 4th Quarter $1,903,305.92, with additional closeout costs to be added at a later date.

Ms. White also stated that TDWDA's Program Year 2026 allocations were reduced by approximately 10%. At the next TDWDA Board meeting, we will be able to provide the total funds available, which will include both the PY25 carryover and the PY26 allocation.

Mr. Newsom asked how the lower funding might affect the TDWDA going forward. Ms. Hawkins replied that we will still serve the same number of participants, despite the reduced funding. The Navigator kiosks are one example of providing the same services at a lower cost. Also, some staff have retired or otherwise left on their own volition, their duties have been delegated to other current staff, rather than replace them. No staff have been laid-off due to the reduced funding. SMPDD has also acquired non-WIOA funding sources to diversify.

Ms. White concluded her report.

ONE-STOP COMMITTEE REPORT:

Mr. Newsom called on Ms. Rebecca Ellis to present the One-Stop Committee report. Ms. Ellis reported that as of the last Board meeting (April 29, 2026), all One-Stop Certifications were completed, with the lone exception of the Forest WIN Job Center. TDWDA Executive Committee met on June 18, 2026, and voted to approve the Forest One-Stop Certification through June 30, 2028. Ms. Ellis asked the LEO to ratify the Executive Committee's approval. Mr. Newsom called for a motion.

ACTION: Mr. Greg Shaw motioned to ratify the Executive Committee's approval of the Forest WIN Job Center One-Stop Certificaiton through June 30, 2028; Mr. Steve Stringer seconded. Motion carried.

Ms. Ellis then asked for the LEO's approval of the One-Stop Committee's recommendation to designate $150,000 of PY26 Adult funds for Incumbent Worker training. Incumbent Worker Funds go into the existing workforce for upskilling, reskilling, and other training to keep them competitive in the workforce. Mr. Newsom called for a motion.

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ACTION: Mr. Obbie Riley motioned to designate $150,000 from PY26 for Incumbent Worker training; Mr. Steve Stringer seconded. Motion carried.

Ms. Ellis concluded her report. Mr. Newsom then called for a motion to accept all reports.

ACTION: Mr. Steve Stringer motioned to accept the reports; Mr. Arthur Keys seconded. Motion carried.

NEW BUSINESS:

Mr. Newsom called on Ms. Hawkins to go over new policies and current policy revisions. The first one is the updated Conflict of Interest Policy. This policy establishes mandatory standards of conduct to ensure integrity, impartiality, and full compliance with all applicable federal and state conflict of interest (COI) requirements for the TDWDA. Unlike some other policy updates, this one strengthens our local procedures. The underlying ethics laws have not changed, but the policy expands disclosure requirements, organizational conflict (OCI) standards, procurement safeguards, monitoring, and documentation to improve compliance and transparency. Mr. Newsom called for a motion to approve the updated Conflict of Interest Policy.

ACTION: Mr. Christopher Cole motioned to approve the updated Conflict of Interest Policy; Mr. Greg Shaw seconded. Motion carried.

Mr. Newsom then called on Ms. Patricia Morrison to go over the new Standards for IEP/ISS, Documentation, and Measurable Skill Gains Policy. The purpose of this policy is to establish detailed standards and requirements for the development, implementation, and ongoing maintenance of Individual Employment Plans (IEPs), Individual Service Strategies (ISS), objective assessments, case documentation, and the accurate reporting and validation of Measurable Skill Gains (MSGs) for participants enrolled in WIOA Title I programs.

The intent of this policy is to ensure that all workforce services delivered within the Twin Districts Workforce Development Area (TDWDA) are consistent, participant-centered, fully documented, and compliant with federal WIOA regulations and Mississippi Department of Employment Security (MDES) WIOA Policy 42.

This is an entirely new policy that establishes consistent standards for how individualized career services are delivered throughout the TDWDA. Although the document is lengthy, much of it consists of the operating procedures, forms, and implementation tools staff use every day. The Board is adopting both the policy framework and the administrative guidance needed for consistent implementation. Mr. Newsom called for a motion to approve the new policy.

ACTION: Mr. Steve Stringer motioned to approve the Standards for IEP/ISS, Documentation, and Measurable Skill Gains Policy; Mr. Joe Norwood seconded. Motion carried.

Ms. Morrison then went over the updated Certificate and Credential Attainment Policy. The purpose of this policy is to establish requirements for the validation, documentation, tracking, and reporting of certificates and credentials for participants enrolled in WIOA Title I-B Adult, Dislocated Worker, and Youth programs. This policy ensures compliance with federal and state regulations governing the Credential Attainment performance indicator.

This policy modernizes our existing Credential Policy. The underlying WIOA requirements have not changed, but the policy has been updated to reflect current guidance, expanded to include Youth programs, and strengthened with clearer procedures, documentation requirements, and implementation tools. Mr. Newsom called for a motion.

ACTION: Mr. Arthur Keys motioned to approve the updated Certificate and Credential Attainment Policy; Mr. Christopher Cole seconded. Motion carried.

ADJOURNMENT:

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

ACTION: Mr. Steve Stringer motioned to adjourn; Mr. Christopher Cole seconded. Motion carried.

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