Lowcountry Workforce Board – Meeting Minutes
WEDNESDAY, March 23, 2022 - 9:30 A.M.
Zoom Call

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**Guests:** Melissa Rodgers (DEW) Alison Kitler (SCVR) Juanita Murrell (Beaufort Adult Ed) Emily Mitchell (Lowcountry Community Action Agency) Mark Williams (Ross) Stephanie Ferguson (Ross) Karen Whitlock (Adult ED)

**Staff:** Mike Butler, Shelly Campbell, Tony Pollen, Sabrena Graham, Charles Myers, and Sheree Grant

1. **Call to Order:** Heather Simmons, Board Chair called the meeting to order at 9:30 a.m. Introduction of Guests. A quorum of board members was present on the call, and the meeting, having been duly convened, was ready to proceed with business.

2. **Minutes:** *** A motion was made by Heyward Horton to accept the minutes as sent in the meeting pre-reads and seconded by Greg Gilbert. All voted in favor with none oppose

**New Business:**
3. **Policy Update** Shelly Campbell: Performance Data Validation
Shelly informed the board on the needs and an overall purpose of the new policy. The policy update was in line with both the State and Federal policy guidelines. Board members received the draft policy in their pre-reads. A motion was made by Melanie Gallion to accept the Performance Data Validation Policy, Andy Thorson seconded the motion, all voted in favor with none opposed. Draft status was officially removed from the document.

4. **Policy Update** Shelly Campbell: Residency Policy
Shelly informed the board on the needs and an overall purpose of the new policy and how the policy will help benefit both clients and employers outside of the four-county workforce area by expanding the service delivery area. Andy Thorson made a motion to accept the updated Residency policy, Josie Anderson seconded the motion. All voted in favor with none opposed. Draft status was officially removed from the document.

5. **Business Service Report** Charles Myers
Since early February, OJT contracts have increased by 94% from 16 to 31. That is a 245 percent increase of obligated funds equaling over 115 thousand dollars. Our average wage for writing a contract is now $16.21. This amount will surely increase as we work with manufacturers who are hiring at a brisk place like Evanesce Packaging in Early Branch SC, a producer of compostable straws in Early Branch, SC.

The team also found time to join the South Coast Reentry Job Fair in Walterboro on March 16th. Held at the Walterboro Armory, the event was host to both Veterans and Second Chance candidates seeking employment.

The LCOG team is working with SC Works/Beaufort to hold a hiring event at the Bull Durham Center in Estill SC on April 26, 2022. A total of 26 employers and service agencies have signed up to participate so far and more are being recruited to participate.

6. **SC Works Operator Report** Mark Williams
Services being provided: Unemployment Claims filing, WIOA Certifications and general questions concerning SC Works, Federal Bonding, Typing Test, Job Readiness/Softskills Classes, Adult Education and DSS.

**Number of Hiring Events Since January 2022:** 22

**Total Placements - 34**

Basic overall traffic counts for all three center totals. 1745 Patrons, Post COVID-19.

Beaufort- Total of 1,008, Colleton total 568 and Hampton 169.

Statewide in person Second Chance South Coast Job Fair in partnership w/ Parole, Pardon and Probation was held on March 16, 2022

Total of employers participating was 19
Total Resource agencies participating was 9

Over thirty job seekers were in attendance.

The future events coordinated by the Beaufort Center. April 26,2022 Veteran Stand-down w/ DOL at the Bull Duran Center in Estill SC,

Veteran Consultant – Brad Barnett attending Jubilee Community Resource Day at 9:30am on March 24,2022 at the FCI Chapel in Estill SC.

SC Works continues to hold Hiring events weekly, job posting on DEW Website, Facebook and office hiring board.

7. **Youth Committee- No Report**

8. **Disability/Priority Population Committee- Greg Gilbert**

Disability/Priority Population Committee has been working with the Beaufort County Disability Coalition in the planning of a disability Resource Fair. The Resource fair is being done in conjunction with the Beaufort County School District and it will be hosted by Vocational Rehabilitation Department on March 31th from 5-7 pm. We currently have 43 partner agencies and tables reserved. We will also be meeting to increase the number of members on our committee.

9. **Budget Report- Mike Butler:**

Mike pointed out to the board that due to line-item changes as a result of receiving multiple discretionary workforce grants and various other departments receiving grants, that the entire LCOG budget needed to be revised and approved by the LCOG board. Once approved, the workforce board line items would change and would provide a more accurate budget for the board to review.

10. **Director Notes-Mike Butler:**

Resiliency Grant of $392,729 was officially awarded to the LCOG on February 17, 2022. Adult $324,568 and Youth $68,161. $70,860 has been approved to be expended on a total of 55 public computers for the Colleton and Beaufort Offices.

EDA Good Jobs Challenge Grant application was completed and submitted to EDA on February 10, 2022 by the BCD COG. Participating workforce areas partners are Waccamaw, Santee Lynches, Pee Dee and Lowcountry.

The grant name chosen was Bounce Back Bigger. Projected budget to support this three-year initiative is $15,355,000 across the five workforce areas. LCOG submitted budget is 1.2 million dollars, which includes staff cost & SF&I, equipment for training provider, travel, supplies etc. EDA received 509 applications nationwide from entities seeking funding via this grant.
The partnership is committed to working with all our partners to systematically align our programs and services with one another and to collectively support the work of the regional employers that are identified in the in-demand sector partnership. A total of 28 regional employers in the sectors of Health Care, Diversified Manufacturing, and Transportation Distribution and Logistics have signed letters of commitment to support our efforts via, hiring individuals who receive and complete formalized Occupational Skills Training, while offering above average wages. Total committed new-hires for the life of the grant is 1526.

The PY21 Monitoring Corrective Action Plan (CAP) was submitted to DEW for their review on March 1, 2022. The Board, select LCOG staff, Training Consultant Innovative Workforce Solutions, Ross senior management and local Ross staff all received copies of the CAP.

The PY22 MOU/IFA negotiation meeting was held on March 8, 2022 via zoom and facilitated by Center Operator Mark Williams. The meeting was well attended by state level partners and local partners. There were no significant changes to the MOU/IFA documents and all partners were in agreement of the drafted budget for PY22.

The State recently conducted a regionalism meeting with all 12 local workforce areas with the Upstate and Greenville workforce areas providing a power point as their example of how sharing of resources has helped them to save close to a million dollars in operational cost over the years. With SC yearly allocations consistently being reduced (another 10% reduction) for PY22, it's imperative that local areas look for ways to consolidate or cost share select operational functions and pass the savings on to our participants for training purposes.

Board Members Melanie Gallion, Arlene Dunbar and Roy Dupont have volunteered to form the SC Works Certification Committee and will be responsible for reviewing the SC Works Certification Standards on site and making a recommendation to the full board for approval during our May meeting.

Board member updates- I would like to welcome to the board Mr. James Williams Executive Director for Beaufort Jasper Economic Opportunity Commission (BJEOC) and Roy Dupont Director of Sales and Recruiting for Coastal Employment.

I would like to thank Glynis Avant for his timed served on the board and wish him well moving forward.

Board Chair Heather Simmons has officially resigned from the board effective 03/24/2022, Mike thanked Heather Simmons for her hard work and dedication in serving as the Workforce Board Chair." I wish Heather much success as she moves forward with her professional career" stated Mike Butler Workforce Director.

Kevin Pak Vice-Chair will assume the role of Interim Board Chair for the remainder of PY21 which concludes on June 30, 2022. Kevin will decide at the PY22 July meeting if he is able to commit to the role as required.

11. Final Remarks- Chair Heather Simmons/Vice-Chair Kevin Pak:

Heather thanked the board for its support of her throughout her time as Board Chair.
Kevin Pak thank Heather for her leadership and hoped to be able to provide the same level of guidance that the board has grown accustomed too under her leadership.

12. Meeting was adjourned at 10:20am by Chair Heather Simmons

13. Next meeting May 25, 2022 9:30am

Denotes Voting Item***