Lowcountry Workforce Board – Meeting Minutes  
WEDNESDAY, May 26, 2021 - 9:30 A.M.  
Zoom Call

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Guests: Mark Williams (Ross) Melissa Rodgers (DEW) Alison Kitler (SCVR) Cynthia Harned (SCCB) Brad Steele (Beaufort Literacy)

Staff: Mike Butler, Shelly Campbell, Tony Pollen,

1. Call to Order: Heather Simmons, Board Chair called the meeting to order at 9:32 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 Sarah Marshall to accept the minutes as sent in the meeting pre-reads and seconded by Barbara Entriken. All voted in favor with none oppose

New Business:

3. Incumbent Worker Training (IWT) State/Local Policy Update*** - Shelly Campbell:
(See pre-read packet) Shelly informed the board of the new updated State IWT Policy State Instruction Number 20-08. Shelly stated the local policy was being updated to mirror the new State Policy with an added addition of a new Local IWT policy that will allow for up to 20% of Adult/DW allocated funds to be used to serve local employers when needed.

4. **Business Service Lead Appointment: Greg Gilbert**

The Core partners of the SC Works system met electronically to vote on a new appointment or re-appointment of the Business Service Lead for the Lowcountry Workforce Area.

This vote is done annually per the SC Work Center Standards guidelines. Tony Pollen who currently serves in this role was chosen to remain as the Business Service Lead for PY21. Tony has done an exceptional job and has led a group of outstanding workforce development partners called the Integrated Business Service Team over the past several years.

Tony also works in collaboration with the Business Service Lead in Charleston on regional sector strategies initiatives and other statewide projects.

We ask the board to vote on approval of our recommendation to have Tony Pollen remain as the Business Service Lead for the Lowcountry for PY21.

***Board Chair Heather Simmons ask for a motion to accept the Core partners recommendation of Tony Pollen continuing as Business Service lead for PY21. Patrick Harris made a motion to approve and Kevin Pak seconded the motion. All voted in favor with non-oppose.

5. **Operator Report SC Works- Mark Williams:**

Mark shared the following with the Board:

The number of days SC Works Center have been open to the public in 2021 is 100-Days. Office closures was due to Holidays and Staff Training.

Services being provided by staff: Unemployment Claims filing, Job Search, Adult Education testing (WINS & TABE), WIOA Certifications and Enrollments, SC Works, Typing Test, Job Readiness Classes via DSS and Hiring Events.

New Basic Computer Skills Workshop -SC Works Colleton Center, Wednesdays 2:30pm- 3:30pm, Fridays 10am-11am, 2:30pm-3:30pm – Computer Terminology, Keyboard and Mouse Commands, Internet Research and Email Basics. Total Clients participated in these workshops:

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<th>April Workshops</th>
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<td>Resume Writing</td>
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<tr>
<td>Job Searching &amp; Interviewing</td>
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<table>
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<tr>
<th>May Workshops</th>
<th>Number of Attendees</th>
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<tr>
<td>Basic Computer Skills</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
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Basic overall traffic counts for all three center totals 2,440 patrons, post COVID-19. Beaufort- 1797 Colleton- 529 and Hampton- 114 - Peak Hours of operations over the last 98 days, are 9am -11am

Total number of Hiring Events held Since January 2021 is 68  Total placements: 6

SC Works continues to hold Hiring Events weekly, job posting on DEW Website, Facebook and office Hiring Event Board. Beaufort SC Works Hiring Events are still ongoing every week provided there are no cancellation from employers.

Pepsi Cola-Beaufort, Coastal Employment, Express Professional, GMI, Glass Works, Disney’s HHI, Help of Beaufort, McDonalds, Elite Resort Group HHI and SCDOC are among the most active employers, conducting hiring events Post Covid-19 in the Beaufort and Colleton Career Centers.

Partners updates, Job Corp has reengaged its recruitment efforts in the Lowcountry area on the third Wednesday of every month, starting on June 23, 2021 and thereafter.

Partner Events: Help of Beaufort parking lot Hiring Event May26,2021. Location:1018 Ribaut Rd, Port Royal SC, from 9am-Noon. They have 15 employers in attendance.

6. Unemployment Update Michelle Adams Department of Employment and Workforce(SCDEW) Regional Manager:

Reaching out to employers in our region to ask about their hiring needs

DEW started the “enhanced referral program” - this is where we obtain a list of those on the federal programs, specifically the extensions and refer them to industry specific employers. In doing this, we work with employers who are willing to give us feedback, communicate with us about who they scheduled for interview, who they offered a job too? Etc. - once the referral is made the employer will schedule an interview or offer employment - should the referred candidate not attend or not accept (given the job is comparable to past employment) SCDEW will then in turn ask the employer to complete a “Refusal of Work” form and that will be submitted to UI for them to make a decision as to whether or not this person(s) benefits will be stopped

We are also receiving emails from those employers who use SUITES to seek out what their needs are upon receiving this email, we log it, verify in SCWORKS that they have an active account (if not we help them set that up) given they do we reach out to them and inquire about positions available, pay, etc. - if they would like to have a hiring event, we will also set a date for that.

We are also conducting State Wide Industry Specific Virtual Hiring events – The Hospitality Industry was the first event held across the state on May 20, 2021.

We are promoting the Back to Work Program which consists of 12 engaging workshops that cover Job Readiness topics such as Soft Skills to WIN Testing - included in this is a participant specific hiring event along with a graduation celebration upon completion.
Our team is being very proactive and thinking outside the box to help employers out. We welcome any and all suggestions.

7. Committee Reports

a) Disability/Accessibility- Greg Gilbert
Meeting was held via phone May 4th 2021 attendees were Allison Kitler, Mark Williams, and Greggory Gilbert. We discussed the March 25th employer event presented by Walton’s Options and did some brain storming on how we can solicit more participation from the business community.

During the morning session we had 7 participants attending and the afternoon session netted 4 attendees. We looked at ways to engage partners in future events and spent some time discussing what our next event would be to increase awareness and access to employment for people with disabilities and underserved populations. We also have reinstituted VR tours for new Workforce staff members.

b) Youth Committee Chris Horvath:
Youth Summit: Chris J Horvath led a discussion on what the Youth Summit would look like, would it be for Youth Providers or Youth, Employers, Schools? Where would it be held and when?

Mr. Horvath stated the goal of the summit is to engage the 18–24-year-old population and link them to employers with opportunities. Chris will contact Tony Pollen, Lowcountry Integrated Business Service Led to coordinate date(s) and time(s). Tony will be responsible for recruiting and communicating with the Employers for the Summit. The members discussed if the Summit should be virtual possibly utilizing the state’s newly purchased “Brazen” virtual Job Fair platform, or in person, it was the consensus of the group that in-person would be best. Chris will send out a survey regarding date and time and the initial location will be at the Beaufort One Stop.

Questions/Comments: Kevin Pak asked what role the Youth Committee members are expected to serve regarding the Youth Summit. Mr. Horvath responded that Youth Committee members should attend the organizational meetings, provide Outreach to assist in the promotion and marketing of the Youth Summit, and if able, attend and participate in the Summit.

c) One Stop Committee Report Barbara Entriken:
The One Stop Committee met and began reviewing the SC Works Center Standards for compliance and to determine if any updates need to be added. This will be an ongoing activity for the committee until all sections have been reviewed.

The committee also discussed the new masking guidelines from the CDC and what affect if any it would have on the centers. The consensus of the committee was to continue requiring masks as a pre-caution of not knowing who has or has not been vaccinated. The requirement of masking in the centers will be evaluated at the beginning of each month with staff and partner staff.
The Stop Committee will be updated at the beginning of each month on any changes on the Center mask requirements.

8. Adult Education RFP Committee Report Sarah Marshall:

The review team consist of three board members, Michelle Adams, Arlene Dunbar and myself (Sarah Marshall). We received a total of six Adult Education and Family Literacy Act applications that we have been charged to review, arrive at a consensus and submit one response per application and entered the aforesaid into a scoring rubric.

The submission date was initially May 21, 2021, but has since been extended to June 11, 2021 in an effort to provide ample time to review applications and submit responses via the online scoring rubric. We would like to thank you for giving us this opportunity and will provide a follow up with the board at the next meeting if needed. Again, thank you.

9. Business Services Report Tony Pollen:

PY20 started pretty slow due to the pandemic. New Business engagements and OJTs were down, but the silver lining to the low labor participation rate numbers is that the wages increased due to a limited supply of job seekers and a much higher demand of opening positions that needed to be filled in order for businesses to remain open.

Mr. Mike Butler and I toured Carolina Textiles Care, a high-tech machine laundry business in Early Branch. Businesses are reaching out for higher level employees more than they were pre-pandemic, and I feel that additional significant relationships will develop in the coming months.

Mike and I attended a prospect recruitment meeting hosted by Beaufort Economic Development and attended by several other area partners to speak with representatives from Project Legacy, an Aerospace company considering bringing 150 aerospace jobs to Beaufort with an average salary of $60K per year.

Workforce Partners met with employers from Yemassee, SC to discuss workforce needs. At this meeting, the team was introduced to Frampton Ferguson Owner of Ferguson Forest Products. He expressed that they are looking for suitable candidates and lack of experience was not a factor, just a willingness to work and learn with a starting wage from $15-$20 an hour with opportunities to increase based on production.

The first SCDEW state wide Hospitality and Tourism Virtual Hiring Event went live on May 20, 2021. There were seven employer booths for the Lowcountry, 122 job seekers signed up for the event, 84 of them registering, and 40 attended.

The South Coast Region Sector Partnership has been moving right along. Initially, we started with three teams with their business champions as leads,. but due to champions increased workloads, teams 1 and 3 initiatives were placed on the back burner. And the team members have thrown their support behind team two, whose initiative is promoting manufacturing careers to meet the workforce demands. The key is to get K-12 interested in MFG and gauge the increased interest of 6th to 8th
graders as they enter high school and make them aware of the manufacturing opportunities in our area.

10. **Budget Report-Mike Butler:** (See pre-read packet) Mike reviewed the April 2021 budget report and pointed out the challenges COVID-19 continues to have with SC Work Center traffic, and low enrollment numbers which has contributed to program expenditures being below budgeted projections. Mike also reminded the board that May expenditures are not accounted in this report, thus additional progress is being made to expend our participant cost budgets as projected. Mike also spoke about TCL and Palmetto Training Institute collaborating on manufacturing training which limits training opportunities from two entities down to one for our immediate area. This has and will continue to create a bottleneck for clients and creates a wait list that hinders Ross from expending funds.

Mike reminded the board about the free TCL scholarship program which is good for local students, but also the effect it will have on individuals not seeing a need to come thru the WIOA program as a result of less hurdles to become eligible for these training.

11. **Directors Notes- Mike Butler:** Mike shared the following notes with the board.

   1. PY21 funding allocations amounts for all three programs were given last week, as a result there is no contract in place for the board to approve for Ross for PY21 today. The Board has two options once allocation numbers are received a) reconvene in June for the vote of the Contract or b) defer to the Executive Committee to review and vote on the contract on behalf of the board in June and share the decision with the board electronically in June.

   ***Board Chair Heather Simmons asked the board for a motion on accepting option a or b. A motion was made by Barbara Enriken to accept option B, the motion was seconded by Kevin Pak. All voted in favor with non-oppose.***

   2. 80% of the $81,000 Continuous Improvement Grant Expenditures have been expended for new PPE equipment, technology equipment for the centers and staff, and approved outreach materials such as table covers, 10x10 tent and Table Top 2ft roll up Banner.

   3. We submitted a Budget Modification/ Extension along with a narrative to SCDEW for review for possible extension into the first and second quarters of PY21 of the RRC grant to assist with the need to provide services for the DW’s that will be returning back to work because of the federal UI programs ending. Thanks to both Zach Nickerson and Michelle Rodgers of SCDEW for their assistance with this effort. No decision has been made by upper management and Workforce Grants as of this time.

   4. Board members whose terms were to expire on June 30th 2021 were notified and all chose to continue to serve another three- year term. Re-appointment letters will be sent to all four County Councils for re-appointment approval.
5. Mr. Andy Thorson Managing Partner/Owner of Carolina Textiles Care of Early Branch SC, is our newest approved board member representing Business for Hampton County.

6. PY21 we will have 3 seats in Beaufort, 2 in Colleton 3 in Jasper to expire. I will be notifying those board members whose terms expire on 06/20/22. Every year a third of the board’s term expires per board by-laws.

7. Conflict of interest Statements will need to be updated for PY21. I will be sending out soon, please return as quickly as possible.

8. Beaufort is in the final three for Project Legacy an Aero Space Company. Other locations are Indiana and Illinois. This will certainly keep a lot of transitioning military personnel in Beaufort.

9. Since our last meeting our 2020-2023 Local and Regional plans were fully approved by DEW and posted on the COG’s website.

10. We are looking for experienced Case Managers for our Beaufort location, please provide me with resumes of individuals some of you may have interviewed that were good candidates, but you made an offer to someone else.

   This concludes my Director notes

12. Meeting adjourned at 10:35 am

13. Next meeting July 28, 2021 9:30am

14. *** Denotes Voting Item

Respectfully submitted
Michael V. Butler