

SC WORKS

UPPER SAVANNAH WORKFORCE BOARD MINUTES

3:30 pm, Monday, February 6, 2023

Upper Savannah Council of Governments
430 Helix Road, Greenwood, SC

Attendance (All were virtual except those marked “(p)” for present): John Calhoun, Candi LaLonde, Theresa Stover, Keli Fewox (p), Ann Blanton, Julie Bagwell, Dale Cullum, Roberta Kinard (p), Stephen Taylor (p), Darron Wilson (p), Catrina Witt, Roy Lowe, Chad Ulmer, Shelby Reed

Absent: Scott Coleman, Talese Kidd, Debbie Walling, Shunna Vance Jeter, Betty Carol Jones, Mashanda Ashton

Staff: Ann Skinner, Toni Belton, Linda Lagroon, Sam Leaman, Laura Hester

Guests: Melissa Rodgers, SC DEW; Kalen Kunkel, Renee Alexander, Eckerd Workforce Solutions

Upper Savannah Workforce Development Board Meeting

Executive Board member Darron Wilson called the meeting to order. Linda Lagroon recorded the names of those who called in or were on the Zoom link.

Wilson called for approval of minutes from November and January. Stephen Taylor made the motion to approve the minutes; Candi Lalonde seconded. Minutes were approved as written.

- **Business Closings and New Industry Report:** Ann Skinner stated that the Closing of Renfro in Clinton will result in 100 employees losing their jobs. She has met with them about services Upper Savannah Workforce/SC Works can provide.
- **2021-2022 Report Card and First Quarter Performance Indicators:** A copy of the report was distributed with the agenda and print copies were provided for those attending in person. Skinner noted that the update looks at Funding Utilization/Finance, Performance, Training and Soft Skills Activity, and Grants.

She also noted that the area fell short on one state-mandated goal. Thirty percent of program funds for adult and dislocated workers must be spent on direct client costs. Upper

Savannah did not meet the requirement for PY'21 with a participant cost of 29.05%. Ann said the area would have met the goal if it enrolled more clients or spent more per client.

Skinner said Upper Savannah Workforce/SC Works is required to submit an improvement plan. She brought forward three suggestions to improve services (and spend more money per client) and one suggestion to enroll more clients.

1. Consider paying for auto insurance as an emergency service for clients who have a car but cannot drive because of the expense of insurance. The driver must have a driver's license and car title. Payment will be limited to up to six months of coverage and up to \$600. Ann said that the idea came from front-line staff. She said that WIOA can help a client get their driver's license, but the next two hurdles are getting a car and insurance. Sometimes a client can get a car from a family member but cannot legally drive
2. Consider adding Certified Nursing Assistance Training as a way of enrolling more clients. Ann said the area could easily serve an additional 50 clients per year if it offered nursing assistant training. The program was funded a decade ago, but was discontinued due to low wages for graduates. Other partners such as Goodwill and the GLEAMNS Community Services Block Grant (CSBG) offer nursing assistant.

Ann said she researched outcomes for nursing assistant grads and found that while hourly wages are higher than before the pandemic, quarterly earnings of program participants reported to the Department of Employment and Workforce are still low (less than \$4,000 or \$16,000 a year). Ann said that some employers offer part-time hours and individuals often work unreported. Ann said she recommended approving the training for youth clients because the performance expectations for youth wages are lower than adults and then review wages after a year.

3. Increase the cap for Truck Driver Training from \$5,000 to \$6,000. Skinner noted that CDL is one of the most utilized training programs. Piedmont Technical College is less than five thousand dollars but sometimes has a waiting list. For clients in Edgefield, Newberry, and Saluda there are options which are closer which would allow them to start work sooner. Programs requested by clients have tuition of \$5,500.
4. Consider modifying Area Policy Regarding Serving Non-Residents. Historically, enrollment has been limited to residents of the seven-county area, but requests have come from residents of Honea Path, North Augusta, Batesburg Leesville, and other border areas, often from students who have been accepted to PTC. Skinner noted many workforce boards have policies allowing any SC resident who wants to work in the area to be served. She thinks that by serving those on the borders may increase the number of trained workers willing to commute.

Wilson asked members if they wanted clarification on any item or to discuss the planned policies.

Keli Fewox made the motion to accept all four items; Stephen Taylor, seconded. The motion passed unanimously.

- A recommendation from the Executive Committee was presented regarding contract awards for Adult/Dislocated Worker Career Services and One Stop Operator/Business Services. Upper Savannah had a Request for Proposal Solicitation in conjunction with WorkLink (Anderson, Oconee, Pickens. There was competition for the Operator grant. Eckerd Connects outsourced Two Hawks Employment Services. Eckerd's proposal included: a dashboard for board and partners, weekly social media posts and gatekeeper emails, emphasis on On-the-Job Training, and a promise to spend 90% of work-based training budget. Skinner noted that the WorkLink Workforce Development Board met and selected Eckerd.

There was only one responsive offer for Adult and Dislocated Worker career and training services. Skinner noted that they submitted a budget that would position Upper Savannah to meet 30% participant rate cost and promised to spend 90% of client cost. They also included a staff training program.

Stephen Taylor made the motion to accept the proposals from Eckerd; Keli Fewox seconded. The motion passed unanimously.

- Transition from GLEAMNS to Temporary Service Provision by Upper Savannah: GLEAMNS Human Resources Commission held all grants through December 31, 2022. The Commission was offered a six-month extension, but it chose to work through February 15, 2023, to wrap up service to clients who started earlier. Ann said that one former employee agreed to work for Upper Savannah during the transition and that five part-time contractors with workforce experience were found to help maintain services. Ann said that plans for Upper Savannah to provide services directly to clients were accepted by the state administrative unit. Skinner said that all services would be offered during the transition except for paid work experience. Ann noted that Erin Nodine, Workforce Development Deputy Director, left for another position in January but that a replacement, Willie Matthews, will begin Feb. 20.

Wilson thanked members and reminded them of the next scheduled workforce board meeting: May 1, 2023, 3:30 pm.

Respectfully Submitted,

Ann Skinner

Workforce Development Director