

SC WORKS

UPPER SAVANNAH WORKFORCE BOARD MINUTES

4 pm, Wednesday, January 4

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

Meeting was held in person and via Zoom link

Attendance (All were virtual except those marked "(p)" for present): Chad Ulmer, Ann Blanton, Debbie Walling, Candi Lalonde, Theresa Stover, Stephen Taylor, Catina Ross, John Calhoun (p), Kelli Fewox (p), Shelby Reed, Scott Coleman, and Roy Lowe

Absent: Taiese Kidd, Julie Bagwell, Shunna Jeter, Betty Carol Jones, Roberta Kinard, Dale Callum, Mashanda Ashton, and Darron Wilson

Staff: Ann Skinner, Linda Lagroon, Erin Nodine, and Sam Leaman

Guests: Matt Wiggins, Piedmont Technical College; -Ursula McFadden and Katie Craven, GLEAMNS Human Resources Commission; and Caitlin Brazell, SCDEW.

Upper Savannah Workforce Development Board Meeting

Vice Chair Scott Coleman called the meeting to order. -Erin Nodine recorded the names of those who called in or were on the Zoom link.

Coleman opened the public hearing for the Upper Savannah and Link Upstate Workforce Development Plans. -No one asked to speak.

Coleman asked Ann Skinner to discuss the plans. -Ann said that every four years workforce development boards and multi-area workforce regions must develop a strategic plan. There are many workforce needs but limited funding. The plan describes the needs, identifies gaps in coverage, and outlines how resources will be used.

The attached handout was distributed to local elected officials, economic developers, and partners for feedback. Ann said the two largest drivers of the local economy are manufacturing and healthcare. The entry-level job requirement for nearly all jobs is a high school credential. Ann said that skill training is prioritized for occupations that support manufacturing and healthcare, which pay self-sufficiency wages.

In November, plan outlines were approved. Since then both plans were added to the workforce board website in their entirety. They are not recreational reading because we were required to use an awkward format.

Ann said approval is needed for the plans including a provision to transfer funds from the WIOA dislocated worker program to the adult program. She said three comments were received. She suggests the comments be handled as followed:

1. The suggestion was made to add "homeless" to the categories of individuals who are targeted for WIOA enrollment. Ann said the plan targets residents who are low-income and the definition of low-income includes those who are homeless. She said that because of the comment "homeless" was specified to make it clearer.
2. A comment was made about the lack of nursing assistance training. Workforce development boards specify what training they will fund. For the last decade Upper Savannah has not sponsored nursing assistance training. Previously, wages and retention rates were lower than performance standards. Ann said she would research more recent outcomes with other workforce boards and bring the matter back by the February 6 meeting.
3. The third comment focused on transportation issues including lack of car insurance. The lack of transportation was cited as the biggest hurdle for low-income job seekers. Front-line staff said that driver's education is funded, and individuals sometimes get cars from relatives. The hurdle is car insurance. Policies can cost \$400 to \$600 which is a lot of out-of-pocket money for a new worker. Ann said that she would research how this could be offered as a supportive service and the board could review options at the February 6 meeting.

Ann went over the budget. The area receives money for adult, dislocated worker, and youth programs. Currently, there are more adult clients. In addition, Upper Savannah has another grant to pay for dislocated worker On-the-Job Training. Ann suggested transferring \$500,000 from the dislocated worker program to the adult program. She said in the event the area experiences a large plant closure, it could request additional money for re-employment activities.

Candi Lalonde made a motion to accept the local and regional workforce plans, including the transfer request. Stephen Taylor seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

Vice Chair Coleman thanked members and reminded them of the next scheduled workforce board meeting: February 6, 2023, 3 pm.

Respectfully Submitted

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Ann Skinner". The signature is written in a cursive style with a small dot above the 'i' in "Skinner".

Ann Skinner

Workforce Development Director