

SC WORKS

UPPER SAVANNAH

**Upper Savannah Workforce Development Board Meeting
via Conference Call
Monday, September 14, 2020
Meeting: 4:00 PM**

Members Present: Ann Blanton, Scott Coleman, Theresa Stover, Chad Ulmer, Shunna V. Jeter, Kassie Burton, Taiese Kidd, Roy Lowe, Julie Bagwell, Roberta Kinard, Camilla Haigler, and Darron Wilson

Members Absent: James Tisdale, Glenn Herlong, Debbie Walling, Betty Carol Jones, Dale Callum, and Kevin Crouch

Staff Present: Ann Skinner, Billy Morgan, and Linda Lagroon

Guest: Melissa A. Rodgers and Diana Goldwire, SC DEW; and Katie Craven, GLEAMNS

Welcome and Call to Order

Chair Ann Blanton welcomed members and guests. The meeting was called to order.

The meeting conference call roll call was conducted by Linda Lagroon.

Approval of Minutes for June 1, 2020: <https://upperscworks.com/workforce-system/board-minutes/>

Ms. Blanton reminded members that minutes are emailed along with the meeting agenda. They are also archived on-line. The minutes were adopted unanimously as submitted.

Distribution of Regular Reports – Linda Lagroon

The regular reports included the Contractor Enrollment report, which showed an average of 29 participant enrollments for 6 case managers. The expected active caseload per case manager is 55. There were no questions regarding the report presented during the meeting.

Developments with Unemployment Insurance System – Diana Goldwire, DEW

Diana Goldwire, SC DEW Area Director, gave an update on unemployment.

- How do we get a live person when a person needs to communicate with UI: Call in to 866-831-1724 number. Currently, wait times are not long, especially Wednesday-Friday.
- How can they report fraud and folks do not return: Through their employer portal or email recall_taskforce@dew.sc.gov.
- If someone feels fraud has happened to them, there is an online form on the dew.sc.gov website and a hotline that people can call: 1-800-868-1488. DEW staff at any of our Centers can be contacted and submit the information. We tell customers not to be alarmed if we ask to see their ID or SS card when they are reporting fraud and not to destroy any paperwork they have received - this helps DEW staff with turning in their claim.
- Strategies for partnering with UI/DEW to fill hard to fill vacancies:
 - UI Target Messaging – DEW staff are texting and emailing UI Claimants about job opportunities and job fairs in their areas.
 - If there is an event or a position in the area, let DEW staff know. As long as the employer is registered with SC Works, staff can direct message claimants. We have tangible results.
- On Thursdays, DEW posts the unemployment numbers on the website under 'News and Announcements'.

Workforce Plan Approval – Ann Skinner

Training Plan

Members were directed to the documents distributed prior to the meeting. The 2020-2024 plan is an extension to the prior workforce strategic plan. The board routinely refers to the executive summary of the plan to ensure it is reviewing relevant items and to put decisions into context. Ann went over the revised plan.

Since the original plan in 2016, the board has refined two policies and set a new significant goal. The heart of the plan is the training which will be provided. The area has limited resources and must closely monitor training programs to ensure they are relevant. The board has significant knowledge in current hiring needs.

Previously, the area focused on careers needed to support advanced manufacturing and health care. At the November 2019 meeting, the board was asked to participate in a training survey. Workforce board members along with 160 others ranked training needs. The survey results and workforce statistics compiled by DEW were compiled to establish training priorities. Ann showed the current list. Classroom training for occupations in the top half of the chart that supports manufacturing and health will be funded. Upper Savannah will support other occupations by offering work-based training to ensure there is demand for workers and the training is relevant.

Ann asked the board to refine the training plan by limiting the cost per client. The area has received a funding reduction. The area historically has used the state lifetime cap of \$14,000. Ann asked for a cap of \$7,500 so that more individuals could receive training. She also said that clients are given training vouchers which they use to select training from a pre-approved list. Ann said there needs to be options and the lowest cost provider is not always the best choice. Upper Savannah staff cannot arbitrarily exclude a program from the list. She suggested the board have a policy excluding training programs which cost more than double other alternatives.

Target Group

The other strategic decision is who to serve. The WIOA adult program has very broad eligibility requirements but the state requires 70% of all enrollees to be either low income (through family income

guidelines or receive Food Stamps) or be basic skills deficient (high school dropout or low test scores). Upper Savannah's goal was for 90% of adults to either be low income or basic skills deficient.

Ann said early on of the pandemic, the board voted via email to broaden eligibility by allowing those needing assistance to finish medical training to enroll without regard to family income.

In August, the executive committee of the board voted to add a new criterion – poor work history. The new criterion is defined as: an individual who is not currently working full time and has not worked consecutively for 18 months out of the last 36. She said the committee did not address the previous criterion for individuals seeking medical training and it is in effect as long as the pandemic is classified as a national emergency.

Budget

Ann said the budget is a continuation of the previous year. GLEAMNS Human Resources Commission is in the middle of an 18-month contract. The area made some adjustments due to Covid – security, leasing more space and buying masks and cleaning products. It appears that the CARES Act funding will reimburse some of the additional costs.

Ann said that the plan in its entirety as well as the regional plan (the document linking the four workforce board's efforts to support manufacturing in the greater upstate area) would be published on the website and a comment period would be offered. Partners would receive a link to the plans as well.

The chair, Ann Blanton, commented that the plans were reviewed by the executive committee August 4. She said that since action was taken then, a motion would not be necessary for the full board to approve the plans. Darron Wilson made a second and the plans were approved.

Adjourn

Chair Blanton acknowledged that the Board had lost a member, Zebbie Goudelock, who recently passed.

Chair Blanton called the meeting to conclusion and reminded members that the next scheduled meeting will be Monday, November 2, 2020 at 4:00 pm, at Upper Savannah, 430 Helix Road.

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned.

Respectfully submitted by



Ann Skinner
Workforce Development Director