


Lee Spruill (Apr 8, 2025 15:37 EDT)

Apr 8, 2025



4.8.25

MID-CAROLINA WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT BOARD
11am, Tuesday, January 7th, 2025
Harnett County Public Library
455 McKinney Parkway, Lillington, N.C. 27546

-MINUTES-

Members Present:

Mr. Xavier DeBrough (Business)
Ms. Phyllis Godwin (Representative of Workforce – Registered Apprenticeship)
Ms. Dana Dawson (Small Business)
Ms. Candace Howell (Registered Apprenticeship) ~ Virtual
Mr. Victor Glover (Division of Workforce Solutions) ~ Virtual
Ms. Vainette Walker (Vocation Rehabilitation Program)
Ms. Jennifer Williamson (Business)
Ms. Savannah Heath (Montgomery County Economic Director)
Mr. Lee Spruill (Business)
Ms. Carolyn Helms (Business)
Mr. Delvin McAllister (Community Based Organization)
Mr. Gregory McElveen (Higher Education) ~ Virtual
Dr. Fallon Brewington (Adult Education/WIOA Title II)
Mr. Ken Adelberg (Business) ~Virtual
Mr. Tony McKinnon (Representative of Workforce – Labor)
Mr. Naynesh Mehta (Business) ~ Virtual

Members Absent:

Ms. Phyllis Godwin (Representative of Workforce – Registered Apprenticeship)
Mr. Jerry Milton (Representative of Business)
Mr. Curtis Brown (Representative of Workforce – Registered Apprenticeship)
Mr. Lonnie Ballard (Community Based)
Mr. Jeremy Sanders (Labor Organization- Youth Services)
Mr. Hugh Carr (Representative of Business)
Ms. Nicole Peterson (Business)

1. CERTIFICATION OF A QUORUM / CALL TO ORDER

Chair DeBrough called the meeting to order at 11:00 AM, welcoming attendees with a "Good morning" and extending Happy New Year greetings. A quorum was certified, and the meeting proceeded.

2. CONSIDERATION & APPROVAL OF THE AGENDA

Chair DeBrough presented the agenda for approval. A motion to approve the consent agenda was made by Dr. Fallon Brewington and seconded by Mr. Lee Spruill. The agenda was unanimously approved without amendments.

3. ETHICS AWARENESS & CONFLICT REMINDER

Chair DeBrough read the Ethics Awareness and Conflict Reminder as required by the State Government Ethics Act; no conflicts were identified by board members.

4. CONSENT ITEMS AGENDA

Chair DeBrough introduced the consent agenda, which included:

- **A. Consideration of Approval of October 1, 2024, Mid-Carolina Workforce Development Board Meeting Minutes**

A motion to approve the consent items agenda was made by Dr. Fallon Brewington and seconded by Mr. Lee Spruill. The consent item agenda was approved unanimously with no items removed for separate consideration.

Justin Hembree acknowledged the significant effort behind the policies adopted in the consent agenda, noting that they represent a comprehensive rewrite of workforce development policies to ensure compliance with state and federal requirements. Appreciation was expressed to staff, particularly Lorria and Jennifer, for their work on this major undertaking, which aligns the board's policies with state and federal standards and strengthens the workforce program's implementation and monitoring processes.

5. ITEMS OF BUSINESS / DISCUSSION / UPDATES

The meeting transitioned into a robust discussion of ongoing business and updates, with broad participation from board members and staff. Key points included:

- **Performance Update on Subrecipients:**

An informal update was provided on the performance of subrecipients since the October 1, 2024, meeting. Following that meeting, a Strategic Planning Committee was formed to address performance concerns and procurement strategies. The committee met twice—once for a kickoff and again approximately one to two months prior to this meeting—to assess performance levels and plan procurement for workforce services across the five-county region. Weekly calls were held with Service Provider staff, including Equus leadership, for two months based on a one-month Performance Improvement Plan (PIP). The PIP addressed staffing shortages, outreach to businesses, and consistent service delivery. While initial progress was challenging, improvements were noted, particularly in staffing, and performance numbers are beginning to rise. Monthly check-ins will replace weekly calls, with plans to maintain the current subrecipient (Equus) through the program year while preparing for procurement starting July 1, 2025.

- A Request for Intent to Bid will be released on January 17, 2025, to gauge interest from potential service providers, with responses informing whether a full RFP is needed or if a waiver can be sought for areas with limited provider interest.
- The board discussed the lack of a consistent performance report in the agenda packet, attributing it to holidays and staff vacations. Staff committed to

developing a standardized performance reporting system, seeking board input via email on desired metrics (e.g., service numbers by county, employer engagement). Performance has improved since October, notably for adult and dislocated worker programs, though youth programs, particularly in Montgomery and Sampson Counties, remain a challenge. New staffing, including a career counselor and program manager, is expected to boost youth outcomes.

- Introductions were made by Rochelle Brown (Regional Director, Equus Workforce Solutions) and Torris Ferguson (new Project Director), who expressed optimism about leading the team to higher performance and community impact. Mr. Ferguson shared his personal connection to workforce programs as a former dislocated worker, emphasizing collaboration and execution.

- **Procurement Process:**

The procurement timeline was shared for informational purposes, with the Request for Intent to Bid set for January 17, 2025, and new contracts effective July 1, 2025. The process will involve broad outreach via email, websites (e.g., National Association of Workforce Development Boards), and legal advertisements, targeting providers in North Carolina and nationwide, including governmental and community-based organizations.

- **Career Pathways and Sector Partnerships:**

The discussion shifted to career pathways and sector partnerships as a strategic priority. The Chair and staff highlighted a gap in sector-specific workforce development and proposed establishing at least one sector partnership in 2025. Feedback will be sought from board members via surveys on high-demand sectors (e.g., manufacturing, healthcare) identified by economic developers. The goal is to create pathways to lifelong careers, not just temporary jobs, by engaging private sector leaders. Examples included Cape Fear's manufacturing partnership and Cumberland County's pre-COVID healthcare initiative. Challenges include overcoming egos and silos among partners, with a call for consistent, long-term leadership (citing a 13-year successful model in western North Carolina). Board members suggested leveraging existing resources (e.g., NC Business Committee for Education grants) and events like the Sector Partnership Academy on February 6, 2025, at Sandhills Community College. Wendy Jenkins shared a successful Pitt County youth apprenticeship model ("Transformers") as a potential blueprint.

- **Workforce Board Membership:**

An overview of board composition was provided (51% private sector, 20% labor, remainder community partners). Staff noted challenges in maintaining membership due to resignations and shifts, requesting board assistance in recruiting new members. The Chief Elected Officials (county commissioners) will review appointments in late winter/early spring 2025. Input will also be sought on meeting logistics (timing, location) to enhance engagement.

- **Youth Program Funding:**

The board was informed of significant unspent youth program funds, with a push planned for a five-county blitz targeting out-of-school youth (e.g., graduating seniors) via symposiums or summer programs. Staff will collaborate with K-12 and college partners to strategize expenditure by June 30, 2025, ensuring funds are used effectively rather than simply spent.

6. REPORTS

No formal reports were presented due to time constraints and the focus on discussion items. However, staff committed to providing consistent performance data at future meetings, with initial numbers indicating improvement since October.

7. ADJOURNMENT

Chair DeBrough called for a motion to adjourn. A motion was made, seconded, and unanimously approved. The meeting adjourned at approximately 12:30 PM, with appreciation expressed to all attendees.

January Meeting Minutes

Final Audit Report

2025-04-08

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