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Naynesh Mehta
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4/27/2024

Mid-Carolina Workforce Development Board
Agenda Packet
April 2, 2024
Item(s) IIA



- Agenda Item(s):** IIA – Approval of the minutes from the January 23, 2024 Mid-Carolina Workforce Development Board Meeting
- Presenter(s):** Naynesh Mehta, MCWDB Chairman
- Responsible Staff:** Justin Hembree, Interim Executive Workforce Development Director
Verna Jones, Workforce Development Deputy Director
Mary Beth Haire, Workforce Development Administrative Coordinator
- Action Item:** Yes
- Attachment(s):** Mid Carolina Workforce Development Board Minutes from January 23, 2024 quarterly meeting.

Background:

The minutes from our previous meeting serve as an official record of the discussions, decisions, and action items undertaken during that session. Accurate and comprehensive minutes are crucial for maintaining transparency, accountability, and continuity within our organization. These minutes are a reflection of our collective efforts and commitments as a team. All members are requested to review the minutes circulated before this meeting and raise any corrections or amendments if necessary. Following any revisions, a vote will be conducted to approve the minutes.

Staff Recommendation(s):

Staff recommends approval of the proposed amendment.

Suggested Motion(s):

“Move to approve the minutes from our previous meeting as presented.”

MID-CAROLINA WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT BOARD

January 23, 2024

10:00am

Sandhills Community College
Dempsey Student Center – Clement Dining Hall
3395 Airport Road
Pinehurst NC 28327

Members Present:

Mr. Naynesh Mehta (Representative of Business)
Mr. Kevin Brooks (Representative of Business)
Lee Spruill (Business)
Nicole Peterson (Business)
Xavier DeBrough (Business)
Dana Dawson (Small Business)
Candace Howell (Registered Apprenticeship)
Delvin McAllister (Community Based Organization)
Dr. Britt Davis (Representative of Education and Training) – Virtual
Ms. Juanita Hooker (Representative of Education and Training – Vocational Rehabilitation) -Virtual
Mr. Victor Glover (Division of Workforce Solutions) – Virtual
Ms. Phyllis Godwin (Representative of Workforce – Registered Apprenticeship) – Virtual

Members Absent:

Mr. Tony McKinnon (Representative of Workforce – Labor)
Mr. Jerry Milton (Representative of Business)
Mr. Chuck Spell (Representative of Business)
Ms. Denver Hopkins (Representative of Business)
Mr. Hugh Carr (Representative of Business)
Mr. Stepen Barrington (Representative of Economic Development)
Mr. Scott Tart (Representative of Business)
Mr. Michael Jackson (Representative of Business)
Mr. Curtis Brown (Representative of Workforce – Registered Apprenticeship)
Mr. Jimmy Keefe (Representative of Business)

Ex-Officato Members Present:

Dr. Jon Matthews (Representative of Education and Training – Adult Education and Literacy)
Savannah Heath (Montgomery County Economic Director)

Guests Present:

Raymond Godsave (NCWorks – Cumberland County)
Anitra Hart (NCWorks – Harnett County)
Sandra Clyburn (NCWorks – Montgomery County)
Sonja Godsey (Equus)
Amy Epley (Community College System)
Robert Locklear (My Future So Bright)
Jared Little (Sandhills Community College)

Lori Degre (Sandhills Community College)
Lisa Boyd (Equus)
Julia McKenzie (NC Commerce) – Virtual
Faith Hatton (Greater Fayetteville Business) – Virtual

Staff Present:

Mr. Matthew Fowler
Ms. Verna Jones
Ms. Tamara Hodge
Ms. Karmen McRae
Ms. Veronica Rozier
Dr. Orin Gill
Mr. Doug Muessle
Ms. Mary Beth Haire

10:15 am

I. Call to Order and Roll Call

Staff Member - Mary Beth Haire called the meeting to order and took roll call. Mr. Chairman, we have quorum.

II. MCWDB Chair Report – Naynesh Mehta

Call to Action Items:

- a. Approval of Minutes from April 4, 2023 MCWDB Meeting – **Requires Action**
Dana Dawson made a motion to approve the minutes, Lee Spruill seconded the motion. It passed unanimously
- b. Approval of Minutes from July 11, 2023 MCWDB Meeting – **Requires Action**
Kevin Brooks made a motion to approve the minutes, Dana Dawson seconded the motion. It passed unanimously.
- c. Approval of Minutes October 3, 2023 MCWDB Meeting – **Requires Action**
Nicole Peterson made a motion to approve the minutes, Candace Howell seconded the motion. It passed unanimously
- d. Approval of Minutes from November 8, 2023 Special MCWDB Meeting – **Requires Action**
Lee Spruill made a motion to approve the minutes, Xavier DeBrough seconded the motion. It passed unanimously.
- e. Updated Policies – **Requires Action**
Nicole Peterson made a motion to approve the policies and provide approval for administrative changes to the Workforce as needed, Dana Dawson seconded the motion. It passed unanimously.
- f. Splash Beauty School – **Requires Action**
Board acknowledged receipt of the information.

- **Introduction of new Workforce Development Board Members – Naynesh Meta**
Chairman Naynesh Mehta had the new Board Members introduce themselves.
- **Standing Committee Review – Naynesh Meta, Verna Jones**
Verna Jones emphasized the significance of standing committees in ensuring the proper functioning of the board and addressing the diverse needs of clients, participants, businesses, and job seekers across a five-county region.

The committees include:

- Strategic Planning
- Operations/One Stop
- Business Services,
- Youth
- Executive

Ms. Jones went on to explain the One Stop Committee, currently comprising the chairman, board vice chair, focuses on local workforce development plans and effective operations of career centers. Members are encouraged to express their interest in joining committees, with Marybeth reaching out next week to gather preferences. The Youth Committee already has an appointed chairman, Kevin Brooks, who will seek a vice chair. Members are invited to consider leadership roles within committees, including chair or vice chair positions. The Executive Committee, consisting of the board chair, vice chair, and other committee chairpersons, serves as the governing body. An email detailing each committee's responsibilities will be sent for members to make informed choices and actively participate in the organization's committees.

Naynesh Meta emphasized the importance of attendance at its quarterly meetings, highlighting the need for a quorum. Acknowledging challenges faced in the previous year due to alliance changes and county relocations, members are urged to make every effort to attend meetings. In cases of inability to attend, communication with the team is encouraged. While virtual attendance is an option under exceptional circumstances, in-person participation is preferred for the benefit of all.

III. **MCWDB Director Report – Matthew Folwer**

a. **Workforce Board Annual Plan PY23 – Matthew Fowler**

Mr. Fowler explained the update covers progress on the annual plan, outlining challenges faced in finalizing it. Changes in language within previously voted policies and the need to secure signed associate agreements caused delays in submitting the plan. With these issues now resolved, the plan is set to be sent to the state after the meeting. Emphasizing the plan's significance, preparations for the next cycle must begin promptly. The deadline for the upcoming plan is in May, and the extended

approval duration for the current plan was due to negotiations involving redlining and addressing the governor's concerns. The board acknowledges the delayed awareness of certain requirements, contributing to the timeline. The plan is expected to be laid out in May, with the state taking 30 to 60 days for evaluation, followed by potential inquiries or approval. The board is currently in the process of meeting the state's requirements and deadlines for the annual plan.

b. Monitoring Update – Matthew Fowler

Mr. Fowler provided an update on the organization's financial status, indicating that it is currently undergoing a monetary monitoring period by the state. During this cycle, the state requests information, often having already conducted research and groundwork on monetary losses. The team has been diligently working to provide the necessary documents, facing challenges in retrieving some information due to recent changes in operational areas. Despite the difficulties, significant progress has been made over the past year and a half. The state is scheduled to visit on-site during the week of January 29th to assess the situation. The board is assured that updates will be provided as the process unfolds. Additionally, the conversation touches upon the state's involvement in monitoring financial activities at the local level, emphasizing the importance of compliance. This marks the organization's first experience with this monetary cycle, and the board is encouraged to stay informed about the ongoing developments.

c. Fierce Fellows Reentry Grant – Verna Jones

Verna Jones discusses her organization's involvement in the First Fellows Program, a state initiative aimed at providing reentry support for individuals with a background that may pose barriers to employment. Carolina, the organization Verna represents, enthusiastically hosted the program, which included a four-week soft skills class. This class focused on addressing issues and barriers faced by the reentry demographic, such as appropriate workplace behavior, presentation skills, and strategies for securing and maintaining employment.

The program had eight participants who successfully completed the four-week course. As an incentive for completion, each participant was offered a \$500 incentive. Verna Jones, along with Matthew, engaged with the participants both at the beginning and end of the program.

Upon completion of the First Fellows Program, Carolina plans to enroll the participants in a work experience initiative supported by Arpa funding. This work experience program, focused on reentry-based learning, aims to place the individuals

in suitable work environments. Verna mentions that they have successfully found host agencies for all eight participants and have resolved administrative matters to enroll them in the program.

In conclusion, Verna expresses satisfaction with the program's success and outlines plans to collaborate with the state and other agencies to continue serving the underserved reentry population. Overall, Carolina is committed to offering second chances and facilitating opportunities for the reentry demographic to overcome employment barriers.

d. Elected Official Board Update – Justin Hembree

Justin Hembree acknowledges the administrative challenges and red tape that come with such initiatives, emphasizing that certain policies are non-negotiable as they are mandated by the state. Despite the initial administrative hurdles, Justin expresses a commitment to moving away from excessive bureaucracy and ensuring that discussions within the Workforce Development Board focus on the actual workforce needs in the five counties.

Mr. Hembree introduces the concept of the Workforce Development Board and its counterpart, the chief elected official board. He explains that local elected officials, such as county commissioners, hold the authority and accountability to oversee, implement, and adjust workforce development programs. He emphasizes the importance of direct accountability from the staff level to elected officials, providing a system of checks and balances.

The chief elected official board, as described by Justin, has had its initial meeting, where formalities were addressed, and the board members were appointed. The board aims to meet three to four times a year, aligning its schedule with the Workforce Development Board to facilitate interaction. Justin highlights the board's interest in diverse representation, both in terms of the economic base and geographical presence within the five counties.

Furthermore, Justin outlines the ongoing efforts to recruit members to the Workforce Development Board, ensuring representation from all counties, especially those currently underrepresented. He discusses the appointment processes that occur annually and addresses the challenges of meeting federal requirements for private sector employer representation while managing the diverse and numerous partners in the region.

In conclusion, Mr. Hembree emphasized the chief elected official board's role not just as an administrative necessity but as a means to engage local elected officials directly, ensuring both physical and programmatic accountability and ultimately meeting the workforce needs of the communities in the five counties.

IV. Equus Solutions (Title 1 Training Provider) Review and Projections

Sonya Godsey, provides an update on the organization's second-quarter activities. She highlights successful presentations at the NCWorks Partnership conference, showcasing achievements in cohorts like the Military Spouses program and the summer internship program. Collaborations with Cumberland Nursing Academy to support young adults in obtaining their CNA one licensure are underway, incorporating soft skills training and a work-based learning component. A creative hiring event in Moore County called "Trunk or Treat," successfully connected employers and job seekers. Sonya also mentions the Next Gen team's participation in the youth forum in February and introduces Elisa Boyd, Vice President of Operations, expressing gratitude for the team's growth and accomplishments.

Elisa Boyd, reflected on her year with the organization, expressing excitement about its growth. She extends thanks for the support and shares an optimistic outlook for the future.

The discussion then transitions to projections for the organization's centers, where they foresee positive trends in enrollments and placements for occupational skills training and work-based learning. Staffing concerns in Moore County and Montgomery County have been addressed, and active staff are successfully engaging with the community. Sonja emphasizes the organization's optimistic outlook to close the year near their set goals.

V. Career Center Reports

a. Cumberland – Raymond Godsave

Raymond Godsave provides a comprehensive report on the activities and focus areas of the organization during the last quarter. A significant portion of the quarter centered around veterans-centric events, including a roundtable discussion with the governor, Secretary Saunders, and Secretary Haskins. The discussion aimed at generating ideas to attract transitioning service members, a critical aspect given the 8,000 veterans transitioning out of Fort Liberty in North Carolina annually.

The report also mentions a visit from the governor's policy advisor, Dr. DeSantis, who discussed veteran and military spouses' transition. In addition to other ongoing initiatives, such as hiring events and increased outreach to community organizations, Raymond highlights the organization's success in maintaining high weekly numbers (150-200) at the Career Center.

The report anticipates the upcoming audit by the Department of Labor Veterans Program, a triennial event assessing the organization's performance and priority of service for veterans. Raymond emphasizes the organization's continued preparation for this audit and mentions a technical visit from the Career Center Director as part of the process. Raymond notes the recent addition of second-chance features on NC Works, allowing employers to highlight second-chance opportunities and job seekers to indicate their interest in such opportunities. Looking ahead to the next quarter, the organization plans to enhance its presence in community resource sites and conduct quarterly meetings with career center partners.

The report concludes with Raymond mentioning the success of the first career center partners quarterly meeting, where discussions centered around collaboration and referral processes. The organization aims to build on this momentum in future

b. Harnett – Anitra Hart

Anitra Hart delivers a comprehensive report on the program's review and progress during the recent quarter. The enrollment status indicates that there are currently five subscribers waiting to start, and the expenditures are on target, ranging between 12,000 and 13,000. The growth and expenditures for the youth extension program are also on track, with only ten enrollees left to complete the program.

Anitra emphasizes the organization's continuous outreach efforts within the community, participating in food banks, community events, and upcoming county forums to spread awareness about the program and recruit potential participants.

She shares success stories from the adult programs, highlighting individuals who completed training and secured employment in various fields. Notable achievements include an adult completing the CMA class, a traveling CMA earning \$25 per hour, and another adult working as an income maintenance technician with full benefits. Anitra also mentions successful outcomes for a truck driver, a phlebotomist, and a veteran trained in basic construction.

In the Next Gen Youth program, achievements include a young lady completing truck driver training and ongoing talks with a company for on-the-job training. Another participant secured employment as a caretaker in grooming, earning \$12 per hour. Anitra details the progress of a young lady working in the healthcare sector, completing secondary education, and pursuing certification as a CNA.

The report concludes with overall program statistics, highlighting the significant number of individuals assisted, services provided, and successful placements. Anitra mentions the organization's commitment to customer service, evidenced by the initiatives taken during Customer Service Week in October, where staff funded various activities to show appreciation to program participants.

Looking ahead, Anitra expresses confidence in continuing to provide services, meet performance targets, and contribute to the community's workforce development.

c. Montgomery – Sonya Godsey

d. Moore -Sonya Godsey

e. Sampson – Sonya Godsey

In Sonja Godsey's report, she outlines plans for the upcoming months, particularly the rollout of the "Futures So Bright" summer internship program across the counties. The organization aims to duplicate the success of the previous summer, particularly in Montgomery County, and expresses the need for assistance in work-based learning placements.

Sonja highlights efforts to address challenges in youth numbers by actively connecting with various community groups. One noteworthy initiative is the collaboration with the Native American High School graduate group in Cumberland County, with a presentation scheduled for the first week of February. The goal is to identify and engage special populations of young adults seeking workforce connections, extending these efforts across all counties.

Sharing a compelling success story from Sampson County, Sonja recounts the determination of a young lady who completed a dental assistant program while expecting. Despite initial doubts, she not only convinced the team of her commitment but returned to class soon after giving birth and is now employed at a dental facility in Sampson County.

Sonja also addresses the support staff for Montgomery and Moore counties, introducing Shelby Hollingsworth as the support person for Moore County. The organization is actively seeking access points in local community resource areas, such as libraries and community centers, to serve individuals where they are.

Concerning the "My Future's So Bright" program, Matthew and Verna assures the availability of funding for the coming year, using WIOA funding and exploring additional resources, including ARPA funds and collaborations with other agencies. She mentions an ongoing effort to close out last year's cohort with approximately \$17,000 remaining and emphasizes the commitment to extend the program across the five-county region. Plans for a program, extending beyond Cumberland County and involving collaboration with partners, including Equus is being discussed. The organization is actively engaged in discussions with Harnett County and seeks contributions from agencies and entities to ensure the success of the program. There is a question raised about the My Future Abroad program. The individual inquiring seeks clarification on the specific target population for the program. It is explained that the program is designed for youth, specifically those aged between 14 and 23, and the focus is to provide opportunities for this demographic.

VI. Workforce Development Staff Reports

- **Business Services – Dr. Orin Gill**

The discussion shifts to a report on workforce development, specifically addressing recent workforce changes in certain companies, presented by Veronica Rozier. Veronica mentioned in particular, there are notifications of layoffs. Efforts are being made to assist affected employees through hiring events, skills development, and job placement services and staff training.

Matthew acknowledges the proactive efforts of Savannah Heath and the positive impact on employees in Sampson County. Kudos are given to HR for engaging with each employee individually and facilitating connections with other employers. Savannah Heath then highlights ongoing collaborations with community colleges to offer relevant classes to affected employees.

The discussion then turns to a job fair scheduled for the impacted employees, organized by the town of Montpelier and Paperworks. The fair is strategically planned to accommodate all three shifts and involves 14 industries. Savannah expresses optimism about the fair's potential to connect employees with new job opportunities.

Lastly, Veronica acknowledges the collaboration with the state to conduct a full rapid response as the layoff period approaches. Gratitude is extended to the team members and agencies involved in planning and executing these initiatives, ensuring a smooth transition for affected workers. Ryan Anderson from NC Works is specifically mentioned for his helpful contributions to the efforts.

- **Programs Manager – Karmen McRae**

Karmen McRae, Programs Manager, started by providing an overview of the CSEP program. The CSEP program targets individuals aged 55 and above, offering assistance to those seeking employment or additional income. Karmen emphasized the need for partnerships with nonprofit and government agencies to support advanced individuals in the community.

The second program discussed was a specialized initiative focused on reentry and substance use disorder for small businesses with 25 or fewer employees. Karmen highlighted the goal of providing training, work experience, and on-the-job training for this specific population and the ARPA program.

Efforts to engage with the community included collaboration with local councils and the establishment of reading individuals in community centers to facilitate information dissemination. Karmen expressed the importance of programmatic and CSEP monitoring, with plans to reengage with community colleges.

Regarding potential collaborations, Karmen mentioned a meeting with Sandhills Community College, exploring the Teen Challenge program as a potential fit for their initiative. Referrals to the career center under the ARPA program were also discussed.

The meeting transitioned to Senara, who provided updates on compliance monitoring for both Title I and the CSEP program. The organization is in the process of creating a compliance officer position to strengthen oversight. Senara discussed the importance of internal monitoring aligning with state and federal processes.

- **Compliance – Tamara Hodge**

Tamara provided updates on compliance monitoring for both Title I and the CSEP program. The organization is in the process of creating a compliance officer position to strengthen oversight. Tarmara discussed the importance of internal monitoring aligning with state and federal processes.

VII. Follow-up and Open Discussion

The meeting continued with a discussion on the quarterly newsletter, expressing appreciation for Marybeth's efforts in compiling valuable information about the organization's work. The newsletter serves as a comprehensive overview of the activities and achievements of the various teams, emphasizing the dedication and hard work invested in its creation. The importance of the newsletter as a tool for understanding the organization's initiatives and impact was highlighted.

Following this, the floor was opened for any follow-up or discussion questions on the information presented during the meeting. A member inquired about obtaining performance-based data to support decision-making. In response, it was mentioned that the organization is working on a universal report that will provide

consistent performance data across all five counties. The goal is to have a standardized report that captures key metrics such as job placements and initial assessments.

The discussion then shifted to the ongoing efforts to stay informed about the performance and address any potential issues promptly. The engagement of the board and the constant communication between staff and board members were emphasized. The importance of keeping the board informed of any developments, particularly those requiring action, was underscored.

A question was raised about the timeline for implementing a reporting structure, possibly resembling a dashboard, to track dislocated worker programs and funding. The response indicated that the organization is actively working on this and aims to provide more details in the coming weeks.

The meeting concluded with a mention of the next meeting scheduled for April 2nd in Harnett County. Notably, there is a time change, moving the meeting from 10 a.m. to 11 a.m.

VIII. Adjourn

Motion to Adjourn by Dana Dawson, seconded by Lee Spruill. The vote was unanimous and passed.