

APPROVED

By Naynesh Mehta at 1:23 pm, Feb 07, 2024



MID-CAROLINA WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT BOARD

October 3, 2023

NCWorks Career Center – Cumberland County

490 N. McPherson Church Road- 3rd Floor

Fayetteville, NC 28303

10:00am

Members Present:

Ms. Phyllis Godwin (Representative of Workforce – Registered Apprenticeship)- Virtual
Mr. Naynesh Mehta (Representative of Business)
Mr. Kevin Brooks (Representative of Business) - Virtual
Mr. Hugh Carr (Representative of Business) – Virtual
Dr. Britt Davis (Representative of Education and Training) – Virtual
Mr. Victor Glover (Division of Workforce Solutions)

Members Absent:

Mr. Ken Adelberg (Representative of Business)
Mr. Kevin Brooks (Representative of Business)
Mr. Curtis Brown (Representative of Workforce – Registered Apprenticeship)
Mr. Jimmy Keefe (Representative of Business)
Dr. Jon Matthews (Representative of Education and Training – Adult Education and Literacy)
Mr. Tony McKinnon (Representative of Workforce – Labor)
Mr. Jerry Milton (Representative of Business)
Mr. Jeff Nethercutt (Representative of Business)
Mr. Chuck Spell (Representative of Business)
Mr. Scott Tart (Representative of Business)
Mr. Robert Van Geons (Representative of Education and Training – Economic Development)
Mr. Bartley Warren (Representative of Business)
Ms. Juanita Hooker (Representative of Education and Training – Vocational Rehabilitation)
Ms. Denver Hopkins (Representative of Business)
Mr. Michael Jackson (Representative of Business)
Mr. Gregory McElveen (Representative of Education and Training – Higher Education)
Ms. Michelle Muir (Representative of Ed/Training – Wagner-Peyser Act/State Employment)

Guests Present:

Mr. Raymond Godsave (DWS – Cumberland County)
Ms. Sonja Godsey (Equus)
Ms. Rochelle Brown (Equus)
Ms. Sandra Clyburn (DWS – Montgomery) - Virtual
Ms. Anitra Hart (Harnett County Government) - Virtual
Ms. MaryAnn Lawrence (PowerNotes LLC – Virtual)

Ms. Candance Howell (State Farm)
Mr. Xavier Debrough (Fortuna BMC)

Staff Present:

Mr. Matthew Fowler
Ms. Verna Jones
Mr. Justin Hembree
Ms. Tamara Hodge
Ms. Karmen McRae
Ms. Veronica Rozier
Dr. Orin Gill
Mr. Doug Muessle
Mr. Chris Ornate
Mr. Jessie Garner
Ms. Mary Beth Haire

10:00 am

I. Call to Order and Introductions

Ethics Awareness & Conflict Reminder: In accordance with the State Government Ethics Act, it is the duty of every Board Member to avoid both conflicts of interest and the appearance of conflict. Does any Board Member have any known conflicts of interest or appearance of conflict with respect to any matter coming before the Board? If so, please identify the conflict of appearance or conflict and refrain from any undue participation in the particular matter involved.

II. Approval of Minutes from April 4, 2023 MCWDB Meeting

III. Approval of Minutes from July 11, 2023 MCWDB Meeting

The approval of minutes from April 4, 2023, and July 11, 2023, MCWDB meetings was deferred to the next meeting in January due to board rotation, appointments, and realignment. Mr. Naynesh Mehta addressed the need to vote on the agendas for the aforementioned past meetings and the current meeting during the January session, considering the ongoing board changes and realignment

IV. MCWDB Chair Report – *Naynesh Mehta*

**a. North Carolina Association of Workforce Development Boards
(NCAWDB) Quarterly Chairs Meeting**

Mr. Mehta reported on the NCAWDB Quarterly Chairs Meeting held via Zoom on 9/15/2023. From the Cape Fear Workforce board, Jim Flock highlighted the Cape Fear Manufacturing Partnership's initiatives, focusing on improving and growing the manufacturing base in Southeastern North Carolina. Mr. Mehta also mentioned the MY Futures So Bright

Summer Youth Program funded by a \$90k grant from the City of Fayetteville. The program ran from July 5th to Aug 10, culminating in a graduation ceremony on Aug 11th. The Deputy Director will share further details about the program in the Executive Director's report.

b. Standing Committees

Mr. Mehta explained that due to the recent board realignment and rotation, the standing committees have not convened since the last meeting. Committee meetings are anticipated to resume in November to accommodate the changes.

V. MCWDB Director Report – *Matthew Folwer*

a. Advance NC

Mr. Folwer explained that Advance NC is a coalition comprising community colleges, universities, and workforce partners aiming to fortify the talent pool in the regional manufacturing sector. Their primary goal is to bolster workforce development efforts for both new and existing manufacturing employers across 18 counties in Central North Carolina.

The coalition comprises 18 community colleges and workforce systems, along with two universities, focusing on four key pillars: awareness, engagement, recruitment, training, and retention through upskilling. They aim to bridge the gap between high school graduates and the workforce, particularly those not pursuing traditional higher education paths.

Their approach involves close collaboration with community colleges to tailor curricula aligned with the needs of local manufacturers. The workforce board actively engages with manufacturers, facilitates program entry for interested individuals, and assists in transitioning them into work experience or on-the-job training opportunities.

The organization recently signed an agreement, marked by a ceremony attended by Governor Cooper, emphasizing collective participation to benefit individual localities. Collaborations extend to economic developers to stay abreast of new businesses and growth opportunities, ensuring alignment between workforce initiatives and economic needs.

Additionally, the organization highlights the importance of recertification for career centers every three years, emphasizing the need for continuous improvement to meet state criteria for service delivery. They stress the importance of reaching beyond physical centers to cater to diverse community needs and emphasize a collaborative approach with various stakeholders.

The emphasis remains on the collective effort of all involved parties—community colleges, universities, workforce boards, economic developers, and board members—to drive effective and impactful change in workforce development.

b. Meetings with Local Economic Developers for Business Services Roundtables

Matthew Fowler provided insight into the recent one-on-one roundtables throughout the jurisdiction. He explained that participation in economic development board meetings, such as the one in Sampson County, proves invaluable for the workforce board system. These engagements yield crucial insights that enhance the efficiency and effectiveness of service delivery within the community. They provide a broader perspective on how the workforce

centers can become more integral to the community and its workforce, emphasizing their role beyond being mere service centers.

The workforce board system actively engages with economic developers, as seen during their recent meeting with Natalie, a local economic developer in Moore County. This interaction sparked enthusiasm about collaborative initiatives. During these discussions, a mutual exchange of support was evident, with both parties asking how they could assist each other and the wider community. This underscores the collaborative nature of their efforts, aiming to benefit each community involved.

These meetings are significant as they generate substantial information and actionable items. The workforce board system ensures that the outcomes of these sessions are compiled for reference. They also make it a point to involve their business service team in conversations with economic developers. This approach ensures cohesive progress toward achieving community goals, fostering an environment where initiatives translate into tangible results.

Overall, these interactions emphasize the importance of collaboration and highlight how these joint efforts lead to actionable plans and progress in the communities they serve.

c. NCWorks Career Center Certification Continuous Improvement

Matthew Fowler discussed the essential recertification process mandated every three years for their career centers. This rigorous procedure, overseen by the state, evaluates whether the centers meet the required criteria for service provision. The board emphasizes the significance of having at least one certified career center within their region to deliver these crucial services effectively.

Recognizing that service delivery extends beyond physical centers, Mr. Fowler stressed the importance of reaching individuals wherever they are. He explained this perspective prompts them to focus on a comprehensive restructuring of their systems, identifying gaps in services for job seekers and businesses. Mr. Fowler then highlighted the necessity of change, acknowledging its difficulty but also emphasizing the importance of managing change effectively.

Mr. Fowler expressed gratitude for their team's efforts, emphasizing collaborative partnerships with community stakeholders, universities, and colleges. They underscore their commitment to continuous improvement, evident in their recent completion of required documentation and staff training for 2023 recertification.

Their dedication to maintaining certification standards is evident in their pledge to adhere to improvement goals, branding guidelines, and sustained collaboration with community partners. They express pride in their board members' contributions, emphasizing their commitment to serving the community's best interests.

d. My Future So Bright Cohort Sumer Program – Verna Jones

Verna Jones outlined the remarkable success of a program in Fayetteville for youths aged 14 to 24, backed by a \$90,000 grant. Despite initial challenges, the team enrolled 19 youths and ensured all completed the program.

She explained how it involved a two-week classroom session on essential skills followed by a four-week work experience. The participants' stories were moving, showcasing resilience despite facing hardships like self-reliance and foster care.

Verna said the program's impact extended beyond job experience, fostering personal growth, confidence, and self-worth. It gained attention from other regions interested in replicating its success, prompting political support for expansion.

In essence, the program not only empowered the youths involved but also highlighted the potential for similar initiatives to positively impact communities.

e. Introduction of New Staff Members – Verna Jones

Verna Jones introduced the New Staff Members for the Workforce and Talent Development Department:

Mary Beth Haire, Admin Support Coordinator

Doug Muessle, Fiscal Coordinator

Dr. Orin Gill, Business Services Manager

Veronica Rozier, Business Services Representative

Karmen McRae, Projects Manager

Tamara Hodge, Quality Assurance Team Leader

VI. Contracted Technical Assistant Advisor Overview – Mary Ann Lawrence

a. Realignment and Restructure of Workforce Board Systems

Mary Ann Lawrence opened the session by confirming their presence from Saint Louis, Missouri, with imminent travel plans to Columbus, Ohio. They expressed gratitude for the opportunity to address the gathering and humorously remarked about time constraints due to budgetary concerns. Acknowledging their extensive 46-year tenure in the workforce industry across all 50 states and various levels of government, Mary Ann Lawrence reflected on the successful collaboration with Matthew and Verna, highlighting the importance of laughter in fostering a productive business environment.

The consultant provided an overview of the initial phase, emphasizing the restructuring of the board support team, policy updates, and alignment with federal and state regulations under the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA). Special attention was given to Verna's initial skepticism about proposed changes, ultimately resulting in constructive dialogue and the development of a more efficient administrative setup aimed at enhancing performance.

The focus shifted to the transitional phase, outlining plans for operational enhancements and service delivery. Mary Ann Lawrence emphasized the core objective of positively impacting lives, commending Verna's program and emphasizing the importance of accessibility for job seekers and businesses across all counties.

b. RFP -One Stop Update

Updates were shared regarding the enhanced website, ongoing procurement processes for the one-stop operator, and the imminent system evaluation at various access points. The consultant detailed plans to optimize business services, aiming for a more cohesive and

streamlined approach among program partners to benefit employers and facilitate economic development.

Lastly, Mary Ann Lawrence highlighted their role in ensuring compliance with state and federal laws, offering training and oversight support to guarantee alignment with regulatory frameworks. They concluded by welcoming any inquiries or additional points for discussion.

VII. Harnett County Title 1 Review and Projections – *Charlotte Leach*

Anitra Heart spoke in the absence of Charlotte Leach, Harnett County Workforce Development has achieved significant milestones in 2022. They met enrollment goals at 100% for Career Workforce (CW) and surpassed targets for Next Gen Youth, reaching 155% enrollment. The achievements include exceeding median earnings for adults in various programs. However, some goals were missed, notably in adult enrollment and education/training services, encountering challenges in documentation collection and contacting individuals with changing contact details.

Efforts to meet these goals involved extensive community outreach, including school fairs, distribution of supplies, and collaborations with local organizations. Despite challenges, success stories emerged, such as individuals completing training programs and securing employment with notable salary increments.

The agency aims to adjust its adult enrollment targets and intensify outreach efforts to meet performance objectives. Notably, success stories include individuals finding employment post-training, like a truck driver earning \$23/hour and justice-involved individuals now earning \$65,000/year."

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

The discussion began with a comprehensive overview of the initiatives and achievements in 2021 and forthcoming plans. In Cumberland County, emphasis was placed on the Trans Tech program aiding transitioning soldiers entering civilian life through education. The county successfully placed 24 individuals and is ambitiously working on adult enrollment goals, having achieved 1,920% of the set target. The discussion highlighted the pride in the project's success and the remarkable progress of the individuals involved. Notably, many participants were still in high school, demonstrating commendable dedication by managing work alongside their studies. Some have moved on to college, while one individual secured a job at their work experience placement, showcasing the program's efficacy.

The success of this program will be showcased at the NC Works Partnership Conference, where the team plans to discuss the power of groups in influencing and facilitating connections. This will include insights on the organic bond formed among program participants within a short span, which led to their immediate social media connectivity. Additionally, attention will be given to the military spouses group in Cumberland County.

The briefing also covered staffing updates, aiming to fill vacancies for talent development and engagement positions, acknowledging the challenges faced in this area. In Sampson County,

the focus is on assisting adult and dislocated clients, with progress marked at 50% and 75% enrollment respectively. Efforts are underway to guide youth towards occupational skills training.

Montgomery County is gearing up for a unique hiring event, scheduled for October 27th, combining hiring prospects with a trunk or treat event. Noteworthy employers like Dick's Sporting Goods and Kohl's are participating, targeting the local youth population. The aim is to creatively engage with the community and promote employment opportunities.

IX. Community College Engagement Report – *Karmen McRae*

Karmen McRae lead the discussion focused on establishing contact persons at individual community colleges to ensure the smooth input of Title One programs into the system. This effort aims to reduce delays for participants progressing through the program. Engagement with colleges is ongoing, addressing queries and facilitating the process. Most colleges have been contacted, with ongoing efforts for the remaining one.

Monthly meetings with community colleges are being arranged to foster open communication. These sessions will function as Q&A opportunities, allowing colleges to ask questions and enabling our team to seek feedback on enhancing partnerships and identifying areas for collaboration, such as grants or training programs.

Efforts are underway, possibly in collaboration with Equus, to establish a physical or virtual presence on college campuses. This setup will facilitate student access to information, financial aid, and immediate enrollment assistance for our programs.

Collaboration with FTCC includes exploring opportunities aligned with their Perkins funding. Discussions with FTCC's Linda Gibson highlighted how our Title One services can complement their CTE programs by providing financial aid and input on program effectiveness.

Mid-Carolina's involvement in the new CTE advisory board signals progress. Exploration of Perkins opportunities with other colleges, such as Sandhills, is also on the agenda for future discussions.

The focus remains on nurturing relationships with community colleges, generating new initiatives, and strengthening partnerships to benefit all involved parties.

Action items include ongoing communication, exploring new opportunities, and confirming partnerships with colleges.

X. Career Center Reports

a. Cumberland

Raymond Godsave spoke to provide an update on the activities and achievements of the Cumberland County, NC Career Center in the past quarter. He explained the following:

- Eight single employer hiring events were conducted at the Career Center, along with support for a large hiring event at Valley Medical Center, assisting over 350 job seekers.
- A veteran's hiring event through the Vet program engaged 25 employers.

- Ongoing outreach efforts by veteran staff expanded into community colleges and transition programs at Fort Liberty, promoting Career Center services beyond the veteran community.
- Our veteran career advisor participated in the NC Towers Committee's quarterly meeting, focusing on transitioning service members into the solar and green energy industries.
- Despite staffing challenges, the Career Center maintained a consistent flow of 120-130 individuals weekly, post-Covid.
- Staff engagement activities included team-building exercises throughout September, receiving positive feedback for improvement suggestions.
- Preparations are underway for the US Department of Labor audit, crucial for the largest veteran-staffed Career Center.
- Quarterly Career Center partners' meetings and military spouse events aim to broaden outreach.
- Collaborations with community colleges include planning an internship fair for students after the first part of the year.
- The Career Center's presence at Fort Liberty involves disabled veteran outreach specialists aiding veterans with employment barriers. Services include workshops, computer access, and outreach efforts within the installation.
- Commerce has leased four offices, three occupied by Career Center personnel, with additional partners like North Carolina for Military Employment using space part-time, catering to military spouses on-site.
- Offices at Fort Liberty were established to provide easier access for military spouses, eliminating the need for a 20-mile round trip to the Fayetteville location for registration and service inquiries.

Efforts continue to ensure comprehensive services for both veterans and the broader community, overcoming challenges and expanding our outreach. Thank you.

- b. Harnett
- c. Montgomery
- d. Moore
- e. Sampson

XI. Follow up and Open Discussion

XII. Adjourn

<p>SAVE THE DATE: MCWDB MEETING TUESDAY, JANUARY 9TH, 2024 MOORE COUNTY LOCATION TO BE DETERMINED</p>
