

East Tennessee Local Workforce Board Meeting Minutes
Tuesday 9 March 2021
Delivered by WebEx in accordance with the Governor's Executive Order

Present

Martha Axford
Pete Barille
Jimmy C. Brooks
Sean Hensley
Jessica Belitz
Chris Griffey
Gary Human
Angie Respress
Mike Raiford
J.J.Walker
Virginia Housley for Tanika Walthall
Joe Daugherty
Tonya Garrett
David Garcia

Absent

Cindy Holt
Mark Palmer
Josh Rule
Paul Boyles
Kevin Kilpatrick
Jerry Sexton
Sam Alexander
Anthony Mountain
Brian Shoffner

The meeting began at 4:32 EST with Director Walker asking callers to identify themselves; some technical difficulties arose and were solved. Ms. Axford welcomed Glenn Jacobs, Knox County Mayor, as our new CLEO. Mayor Jacobs thanked her and told the Board that he looks forward to working with them.

Director Walker spoke with our outgoing CLEO, Mrs. Terry Frank, Mayor, and Anderson County. He thanked her for her service to the Board and presented her with a new engraved meeting gavel.

Ms. Axford called for the approval of our December Board meeting minutes. Joe Daugherty made the motion to accept the minutes as presented and Sean Hensley seconded it. Motion passed.

Kathie Hollander was to present a budget update, but was unable to, due to technical difficulties.

Kristy Jansen addressed the changes to the Youth Policy noting the changes were marked in red font on the last two pages of the policy. Ms. Axford called for a motion to pass the changes to the Youth Policy. Pete Barille made the motion to accept and Sean Hensley seconded the motion. Motion passed.

The next policy discussed was the Board Meeting Information Access. The policy ensures that meetings will be carried out in an open manner and that information and meeting minutes will be accessible to the general public within fourteen (14) days following quarterly Board meetings. Notices will be posted a minimum of fourteen days (14) days prior to Board meeting dates. Ms. Axford called for a motion to accept the policy. Chris Griffey made the motion to accept and Sean Hensley seconded the motion. Motion passed.

Susan Cowden presented the contractor report. She stated that the minimum cost rate for participants was at a 42-41%, above the required 40% margin. In the youth program, 20% of the budget needed to be spent on paid work experience. Because of the COVID-19 pandemic, the expenditure rate had been 10.5 to 16.79% in December and had increased to 19% in January. She also told the Board of nine LWDAs in the state, only two were meeting all of the measures, East and Northern Middle.

Victor Oakley presented the Federal Negotiated Performance Measures report for Q2 PY 2020-2021. He noted that East was one of two LWDAs in the state to attain a 100% passing score on the 15 metrics in the scoring matrix. His review of participant enrollment for PY 2020-2021 revealed, despite the initial shuttering and subsequent reduced traffic within the eleven American Job Centers in the East, the Area's enrollment is only 10% less than the average of the last two full program years, 2018-2019 and 2019-2020.

He introduced two new training programs for approval on the ETPL. The first program, Building Construction Technology, is offered by the Tennessee College of Applied Technology in Harriman. Ms. Axford called for a motion. Pete Barille made the motion to accept and Sean Hensley seconded the motion. Motion passed.

The second program through Walters State Community College is an online class for medical reporting. Staff to the Board received Walters State's request to add this program to the ETPL after the Director Walker had emailed the Board meeting packet to members. No motions were made at this time due to the late entry of the program. The approval of the training was tabled and will be taken before the Executive Committee in its next meeting. Ms. Axford asked if not approving the training in this meeting would impact any students. Victor Oakley responded that the class would not begin before the fall semester, so there would be no negative impact.

Tonya Randolph presented the year-to-date Consolidated Business Grant report.

- Thirteen grants were funded through the CARES Act money for \$192,240.00. Three of the grants were in At-Risk or distressed counties of Scott, Claiborne, and Cocke with \$49,112.00 being spent in these counties.
- From the Formula funds (adult and dislocated worker grant funds), 21 grants were written totaling \$309,119.00. Eight grants underwrite training in the at-risk or distressed counties of Scott, Claiborne, Cocke, and Campbell, totaling \$103,383.00.
- One Apprenticeship has been funded at \$17,800.00.

The total grant funding from September 2020 through March 2021 currently stands at \$519,159.00. Director Walker noted that historically this is the largest appropriation in East to the Consolidated Business Grant program.

Director Walker discussed the WIOA Contractor Procurement process. He started the discussion with a history of the realignment of the State workforce development areas that occurred in 2018. At that time, entities managing Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) funds had to recognize a firewall that separates the fiscal agent from the provider of customer services. The Chief Local Elected official, after consultation with the Area's other 15 County Mayors, selected the East Tennessee Human Resource Agency to the East Fiscal Agent. Similarly, the eight other LWDAs across the State were chosen to the Fiscal Agent of their respective Areas. Working from a Request for Proposal activity, the East Board contracted with MidCumberland Human Resources Agency in 2018 to provide career and One-Stop Operator services.

A 2020 revision to the State policy requires that the Career Services and One Stop Operator separated among contractors. Since 2018, MidCumberland has managed both career and One-Stop Operator responsibilities and duties in East. In June 2021, the contract with Mid Cumberland will end. Director Walker presented two options for procurement of career services and One-Stop Operator functions:

- Option 1: allow Mid Cumberland to keep the contract for a full year—beginning 1 July 2021 and ending 30 June 2022—thus fulfilling the original 3-year contract. Re-procurement would take place with a Request for Proposal to split the career services and One-Stop Operator roles so that the Area is compliant with State policy on 1 July 2022.
- Option 2: give a 6-month extension to Mid Cumberland for July 2021 through December 2021 and begin a Request for Proposal to identify career service providers and One-Stop Operator beginning 1 January 2022.

Ms. Axford called for discussion. Pete Barille asked if progress had occurred since the Board first discussed MidCumberland shortcomings in October of 2020. Director Walker stated that with management changes within Mid Cumberland, beginning with hiring of Susan Cowden, there has been a great deal of Improvement. He also told the Board that there are no Career Services providers across the state that are unblemished. He also discussed the problems with procurement aligned with Option 2 above in relation to the \$2.9 million contract for dislocated workers. Pete Barille suggested that the Board allows Mid Cumberland to retain the contract for another year. Ms. Axford called for a motion to extend the contract for a full year. Pete Barille made the motion and Sean Hensley seconded it. The motion passed.

The Board meeting scheduled for 8 June 2021 will stand. Director Walker hopes that the meeting can be conducted in person with safety protocols in place. A decision for an in-person meeting will be decided closer to June. Director Walker also asked that the conflict of interest forms be signed and returned. He also asked the Board Members who were business related to answer the polling questions that appeared during the meeting.

Jennifer Eppley was asked to update the Board with the American Job Center report. She discussed the cross training that has been occurring quarterly. Career Service teams within the AJC's hold monthly meetings. She discussed how well the virtual job fairs are doing with both employers and job seekers. The SNAP Employment and Training program in the East region is number one in the state, and Tennessee's SNAP E&T program is number one in the nation.

Ms. Axford called for meeting adjournment. The motion was made by Joe Daugherty and seconded by Mike Raiford. Meeting adjourned.