

High Country Workforce Development Board Meeting Minutes March 12, 2015

Members Present: Dan Barron (via GoToMeeting), Jason Carlton, Kim Cashatt, Kim Davis, Rhonda Herman, Tom Hughes, Trasa Jones, Mitzi Layell, Dan Little, Justin Ray, Sam Ray, Kory Wilcox, Bernice Wilson, and Sallie Woodring

Staff Present: Misty Bishop-Price, Rebecca Bloomquist, Don Sherrill, and Adrian Tait

Guests: Kim Bell, Anne Bowlin, David Burluson, Elizabeth Coleman, Cynthia Deyton, Mickey Duvall, Mike Fenley, Tanna Greathouse, John Greene, Charlene Gurber, Marty Hemric, Will Jones, Elaine Lockhart, Anita Lowe, Colby Martin, Dana Martinez (via GoToMeeting), Ginger Shaffer, Jim Stout, Pam Wilson, and Debbie Woodard

Call to Order: Chairwoman Rhonda Herman

Approval of December Minutes: Motion for approval was made by Trasa Jones and seconded by Tom Hughes.

New Board Member Oaths of Office: Kory Wilcox of GE Aviation in West Jefferson (Ashe County) and Bernice Wilson of BRP, Inc. in Spruce Pine (Mitchell County)

Special Introduction: Bill Slagle introduced himself as the new regional representative for the Northwest Prosperity Zone for the North Carolina Economic Development Partnership. The Northwest Prosperity Zone consists of the twelve counties in northwest North Carolina (Alleghany, Alexander, Ashe, Avery, Burke, Caldwell, Catawba, McDowell, Mitchell, Watauga, Wilkes, and Yancey). Mr. Slagle's main area of focus will be expansion/recruitment projects, working with Chambers of Commerce regarding tourism, export projects, and agri-business. The Partnership's website is www.edpnc.com.

Presentation: [NCWorks Commission Strategic Plan](#) – Dana Martinez, Policy Analyst – NC Division of Workforce Solutions

Ms. Martinez gave an overview of the NCWorks Commission Strategic Plan, in particular, the Strategic Action Plan containing four elements consisting of twenty steps (see attachment): System Alignment and Transformation, Strengthen Customer Services, Career Pathways, and Accountability.

- NCWorks Commission will be creating four committees based on the four elements, and board members statewide will be invited to attend those meetings.
- Data will be a key part of the Action Plan.
- Local workforce development boards statewide are being asked to adopt the Strategic Plan and have it mesh with their regional plans.

Chairwoman Herman will coordinate and chair a task force to work on the local strategic plan and will reach out to board members to participate.

Dialogue: K-12 Funding and Schedules – Superintendents Dr. David Burleson (Avery County) and Dr. Marty Hemric (Wilkes County)

Dr. Burleson and Dr. Hemric updated the Board on two critical issues now being discussed in committees at the state legislature: reduction in K-12 funding and local control of school calendars.

- K-12 Funding
 - Since 2008, there has been an erosion of operational funding for K-12 schools.
 - Local school systems have lost the ability to teach certain subjects at all levels due to funding cuts.
 - Local school systems need to be able to regain some flexibility at the local level with their budget.
- School Calendars
 - Local school systems no longer have control over the school calendar in their county and need to regain it.
 - The K-12 calendar needs to be able to align with the local community college so students from the high school can take courses at the community college campus.
 - The local school boards need to be able to have the flexibility to adjust for winter weather which would mean earlier start dates for the High Country region – allowing one semester to be completed and assessments taken in a timely manner prior to the Christmas break.

Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA)

Board members were directed to the WIOA – TEGL 19-14 (see attachment) and were provided an overview of the vision document by WDB Director, Adrian Tait. Mr. Tait stated that official guidelines on implementation are expected later in the spring.

Request for Proposals (RFP)

The HCWDB is procuring the delivery of services for WIOA Career Center Operator, Adult/Dislocated Workers/Business Services, and Youth Services for the seven-county region. Mr. Tait reviewed the RFP process and gave a brief overview of the document's specifications and timetable.

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| • March 20, 2015 | RFP Release Date |
| • March 30, 2015 | Bidders Conference – 1:00pm |
| • March 30, 2015 | Letters of Intent Due – 5:00pm |
| • April 24, 2015 | Proposal Deadline – 5:00pm |
| • April 24-May 14, 2015 | Formal Review of Proposals |
| • May 14, 2015 | HCWDB Notice of Selection |
| • May-June 2015 | Contract Negotiations |
| • July 1, 2015 | Anticipated Contract Start Date |

All documents and information pertaining to the RFP will be posted in a special section on the WDB website.

Presentation: Collaboration with Yancey Public Schools - Pam Wilson, WIA Director for Avery, Mitchell, and Yancey counties

Pam Wilson, WIA Director for Avery, Mitchell, and Yancey counties gave a brief presentation about the Mountain Heritage High School Sophomore Project on March 3, 2015.

- Collaborative Effort of NCWorks Career Center Youth Services, Mountain Heritage High School, Mayland Community College, Altec Industries, and New Buck Corporation.
- Approximately 160 sophomore students participated and split up into four groups.
- Agenda for the day:
 - Tours of Altec Industries and New Buck Corporation
 - Workshop on soft skills, local labor market, and appropriate use of social media
 - Tour of Mayland Community College Yancey Campus including the new Anspach Advanced Manufacturing School

Other upcoming events in which the NCWorks Career Center Youth Services in Avery, Mitchell, and Yancey are involved:

- Avery High Career Fair – March 24th
- NCWorks Registration Workshop with 60 Avery High juniors – April 2nd (workshop will be repeated in the summer with Mitchell High)
- Grade 8 Project – April 1st
- Mock Interviewing with Mitchell High seniors – April 1st
- Workshop on interviewing skills – participants will contact interviewer (local businesses are helping out) who will score them on how they do in the interview. The score will be reviewed with their case manager. Participants will earn an interview outfit for taking part in the workshop.

Director's Report

Adrian Tait updated the Board on various items pertaining to career center marketing, the Certified Work Ready Communities initiative, and the certification of local career centers.

Marketing Materials – new posters were designed to focus on high school/early college-aged young adults as well as adults who may have returned to school. These posters have the contact information for all centers in the region and were distributed to staff for placement in the community.

Work Ready Communities – the Work Ready Communities application for Wilkes County was accepted. Watauga and Ashe counties are currently working on applications to submit by the end of March. Mitchell County is discussing submitting an application, and efforts will continue throughout the region.

NCWorks Career Center Certification – Alleghany, Ashe, Avery, Mitchell, and Yancey centers have applied for certification as Level 2 Career Centers and are awaiting site visits at the end of the month. Once this step is completed - and there are no outstanding issues – all centers in the region will be certified.

Public Comment Period

Dr. Dan Barron provided an update of workforce-related activities in the Avery, Mitchell, Yancey library system. In particular, Dr. Barron reported that the library’s bookmobile visits all daycare centers in the three-county region and that it has received a grant to purchase bilingual computers to help children in the region. In addition, the children’s librarian has developed a curriculum that helps young children talk about access to and awareness of jobs/careers.

Adjournment

Trasa Jones made the motion to adjourn.