

SC WORKS

UPPER SAVANNAH

**Upper Savannah Workforce Development Board Meeting
via Conference Call
Monday, February 1, 2021
Meeting: 4:00 PM**

Members Present: John Calhoun, Scott Coleman, Candi Lalonde, Theresa Stover, Kassie Burton, Taiese Kidd, Debbie Walling, Julie Bagwell, Shunna V. Jeter, Betty Carol Jones, Roberta Kinard, Camilla Haigler, Roy Lowe, Chad Ulmer, and Matt Wiggins

Members Absent: Ann Blanton, Dale Callum, Darron Wilson, and Kevin Crouch

Staff Present: Ann Skinner, Billy Morgan, and Linda Lagroon

Guest: Katie Craven and Ursula McFadden, GLEAMNS; and Sam Leaman, Upper Savannah

Welcome, Call to Order and Roll Call

Vice Chair Taiese Kidd welcomed members and guests. The meeting was called to order.

The meeting conference call roll call was conducted by Linda Lagroon.

Approval of Minutes for December 7, 2020: <https://upperscworks.com/workforce-system/board-minutes/>

Ms. Kidd reminded members that minutes are emailed along with the meeting agenda. They are also archived on-line. There was a motion by Debbie Walling, seconded by John Calhoun, to approve the minutes. The minutes were adopted unanimously as submitted.

Reports

Usage Report – Ursula McFadden

Ursula McFadden reviewed the Quarterly Usage Report which covered October through December 2020. The Centers are open daily and doing well. Ms. McFadden said that number unemployed and the unemployment percentage only reflect information for October and November. December information was not available at the time of report completion. Center customer visits are lower than usual because centers are still only allowing customer entrance by appointment. WIOA is still

in the process of enrolling participants; and therefore, referrals are being accepted. With the new system update, data for employer services was not available. The business services staff are continuing to visit and assist employers.

Caseload Report – Linda Lagroon

The contractor enrollment report showed an average of 46 participant enrollments for 4.5 case managers, which is an increase over the last two reports. The expected active caseload per case manager is 55. The contractor is continuing to recruit and enroll clients.

Layoff and Business Expansion News – Billy Morgan

The good news is that there have been no new large-scale layoffs in the Upper Savannah Region since the board last met. In fact, most of these larger employers have called back the workers who may have been laid off temporarily due to COVID-19 and/or supply chain disruptions.

In Greenwood, Michaels Arts and Crafts Store closed in January 2021. Bowers-Rodgers Children’s Home and Resale Store closed in January 2021. New regulations from DSS made it difficult for them to stay in business. Pizza Inn restaurant closed on January 31, 2021.

Muffin Mam in Laurens opened in 2020 amid the COVID-19 outbreak and was kind of at a stall, but now they have made Laurens their main location and closed the location in Greenville County. They have recently worked with the SC Works Center staff to have their job orders listed in the SC Works job portal.

Palmetto Gourmet Foods, formerly Roya Foods, in Saluda has changed names and has new management. They have also worked with the SC Works Center staff to list job opportunities in Saluda County.

Flexible Technologies in Abbeville is hiring. They have several job postings on their website and have cross-posted these in SC Works.

Workforce Board Re-designation – Billy Morgan

Upper Savannah has been designated as a workforce area and is charged with administering the WIOA grant. This allows staff to assist job seekers and businesses in the seven-county region. The counties include Abbeville, Edgefield, Greenwood, Laurens, McCormick, Newberry, and Saluda. We are at a time where we must get each County Council Chairman to sign documents to verify that they want to continue the consortium agreement with the included counties and Upper Savannah Council of Governments Workforce Development for the purpose of carrying out workforce needs and having an SC Works Center and services in each county. Approval documents have been sent to each county and the information was posted on the Upper Savannah SC Works website for public comment on February 1, 2021.

Response to Client Cost Rate and Contract Extension Recommendation – Ann Skinner

The most important job of the workforce board is to make sure funding is spent on services which result in meeting employer demand. The WIOA program has many parts, but a key function is offering skills training. Local areas are expected to spend 30% of adult and dislocated worker program funds on direct client expenses relating to training such as tuition, books, childcare and client travel.

Last year 24% of funds was spent on clients, mostly because of the pandemic. The Board was reminded of what had been done during the past two years to boost training and reduce overhead: contracted services consolidated, eligibility criteria expanded, and supportive services increased. A Client Cost Rate handout was included with the agenda and minutes that were emailed.

Upper Savannah staff are still working to boost enrollment. One barrier has been identified to clients enrolling in training. Childcare costs have gone up significantly due to the pandemic. The Board was asked to consider raising the reimbursement from \$15 to \$25 a day. A Board vote on the corrective action plan and supportive services change is needed. There was a motion by Scott Coleman, seconded by Candi Lalonde, to approve the corrective action plan and supportive services change as presented. The Board unanimously approved. Shunna V. Jeter abstained from the vote.

Ann Skinner followed up with a staff recommendation to renew the contracts held by GLEAMNS Human Resources Commission. Procurement allows contracts to be extended twice in one-year increments. GLEAMNS is now meeting contractual requirements for enrollment, fund utilization and performance. There have been no significant monitoring issues. The current contract ends June 30, 2021 and Upper Savannah staff would recommend contracts be extended to June 30, 2022. There was a motion by Betty Carol Jones, seconded by Scott Coleman, to approve the recommendation. The Board unanimously approved. Shunna V. Jeter abstained from the vote.

Center Plans and Budgets – Ann Skinner

The board was briefed on center locations and expenses. Most centers are located in county buildings. We share space to save on costs. Last year's budget was \$159,570. This year an additional \$63,560 is expected in expenses due to renting more space in Greenwood and the need to pay for security. Centers house staff from different agencies and costs are divided by person. Ann Skinner thought that budgets would be revised further but she wanted a board vote to support the initial estimates and that additional information would be provided after meeting with the partner agencies. A motion by Candi Lalonde was seconded by Debbie Walling to accept the initial budget. The Board unanimously approved.

Grant Updates: OJT, Disaster Employment, EMS Training – Ann Skinner

The Board was updated on grants. The area has additional On-the-Job Training slots and is seeking to place workers temporarily at nonprofits responding to the pandemic. The big news is the area received a half million dollar grant to expand EMT and paramedic training in the region. All citizens benefit from having more skilled medics. The area is still focused on helping manufacturing, and manufacturing needs first responders also. Ann Skinner thanked staff and partners for help keeping centers working while she completed the lengthy grant application.

Adjourn

Taiese Kidd called the meeting to conclusion.

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned.

Respectfully submitted by

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Ann Skinner". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a large initial "A" and "S".

Ann Skinner
Workforce Development Director