

Workforce Solutions Deep East Texas
415 S. First Street, Suite 110B
Lufkin, TX 75901
Business Services Committee Meeting Minutes
August 7, 2023

I. CHAIR TYANE DIETZ CALLED THE BUSINESS SERVICES COMMITTEE MEETING TO ORDER AT 11:02 A.M.

CHAIR TYANE DIETZ ANNOUNCED IN ACCORDANCE WITH GUIDANCE FROM THE TEXAS WORKFORCE COMMISSION (WD LETTER 28-19) DATED NOVEMBER 19, 2019, REGARDING THE TEXAS OPEN MEETINGS ACT GOVERNMENT CODE CHAPTER 551 ALLOWING THE USE OF VIDEOCONFERENCING AS A METHOD FOR CONDUCTING BOARD MEETINGS, THE BOARD IS PROVIDING FOR PUBLIC PARTICIPATION IN ITS COMMITTEE MEETING AT THE ADDRESS LISTED ABOVE AND VIA VIRTUAL MEETING WEB LINK. SHE ALSO SAID THE MEETING IS BEING RECORDED AND THE OPEN SESSION PORTION OF THE MEETING IS AVAILABLE TO THE PUBLIC UPON REQUEST. PRESIDING OFFICER, TYANE DIETZ, WAS PHYSICALLY PRESENT.

AFTER THE ROLL CALL, MS. DIETZ CONFIRMED THAT A QUORUM WAS PRESENT:

Members Present: TJ Colwell, Tyane Dietz, Tim Ditoro, Staci Hodges, Eddie Hopkins, Quincy Martindale, Benjamin Mott, Rich Scott

Members Absent: Lisa Balty, Wayne Haglund, Anita Humphreys, Matthew Lowery

Board Staff Present: Mark Durand, Dara Harmon, Anna Holderberg, Debb Homman, Lauren Phipps, Maribel Soto-Mendoza, Karen Stubblefield

Visitors: Scott Amey, Jessica Blair, LaTreaser Cartwright, Rhonda Cartwright, Monica Peters-Clark, Shakia Roberts

CHAIR TYANE DIETZ REMINDED THE COMMITTEE MEMBERS OF THE CONFLICT OF INTEREST DECLARATION.

Chair Tyane Dietz asked that all members sign a conflict of interest declaration regardless of whether they have a conflict and send the form to Board Staff.

WELCOME OF GUESTS:

None

II. Public Comments

None

III. Discussion/Action: Approval of Minutes – June 8, 2023

Motion: Eddie Hopkins made the motion to approve the minutes as presented.

Second: Tim Ditoro
In Favor: All
Oppose: None
Abstain: None
Motion: Passes

IV. Information and Briefing Items

A. Rapid Response Update

Rapid Response services are activated when one of the following qualifying events is met: an announcement of a permanent business closure, regardless of the number of workers affected; an announcement of a mass layoff; a mass job dislocation in a particular area resulting from a natural or other disaster; or the filing of a Trade Adjustment Assistance (TAA) petition. There have been 16 Rapid Response reports for 2023, affecting 768 total workers. The facility fire damage of Portacool resulted in roughly 400 displaced employees. Ms. LaTreaser Cartwright reported speaking to Portacool's HR manager, and was informed an additional 137 displaced employees have returned to work at Portacool. Portacool has rented a warehouse near the airport and moved equipment there. Portacool anticipates in 12-14 months having the facility rebuilt.

B. 2023 Teacher Externship

Karen Stubblefield provided an update on the development of the 2023 Teacher Externship program. The Board received \$69,940 in grant funds effective March 1, 2023, for the externship. Through the program, 24 middle and high school teachers were matched with businesses across the region. The teachers and employers are planning to partner on next steps including: internship and job opportunities, job shadowing, mock interviews, employer presentations in the classrooms, and facility tours during the upcoming school year. Ms. Stubblefield said TWC is considering increasing the length of the externship to two weeks next year. Staci Hodges asked that if they are increasing times, if their stipend would increase. Mr. Durand said that that would be something we would discuss when submitting our application. There was concern raised that it would be a harder sell to the employers and teachers to participate. Board Member, Benjamin Mott, asked if that was set in stone, to which Mr. Durand said it was not, that it is in discussion at this time. Ms. Stubblefield emphasized the Employability, Industry and Soft skills and how important those are to potential employers. It was a win to have Aubrey Jones, Student HireAbility Navigator, speak with employers about our Vocational Rehabilitation (VR) services. One employer was able to connect two employees with VR to obtain assistance and continue their employment.

C. Child Care Business Services Report

The overall goal of the Child Care Business Outreach Specialist (CCBOS) is to increase capacity of child care placements by fostering relationships with child care providers and assisting them with business development needs. Ms. Holderberg (CCBOS) has met with 91 child care providers to date, in every county in our region. All have various needs and issues to address, including start-up operation and finding qualified staff. Ms. Holderberg will continue to meet and build relationships with the owners/directors over the next months, as well as creating and strengthening partnerships. There are currently 4 centers that have received the Child Care Expansion grant by expanding 0-17 month slots or because they are in a desert. The total amount awarded to the four centers was \$325,000. The CCBOS has been instrumental in opening Shepherd ISD's new child care center and San Augustine ISD's opening - connecting them with licensing, funding opportunities, professional development, business coaching and the food program.

D. Apprenticeship Updates

Karen Stubblefield mentioned that the Board is managing two registered apprenticeship expansion grants, IT and Carpentry. Legacy sponsors IT and carpentry Registered Apprenticeship Programs (RAP) that are approved by the U.S. Department of Labor (DOL). The IT RAP grant ends August 31, 2023 and has met their goal of serving 50 Apprentices. The apprentices have earned 38 certifications, including Comp TIA ITF+, Network+, Fundamental of Web Design (Duda), Platform Specialist (Duda), and Adobe iAnimate. With regard to the carpentry RAP, some unexpected hurdles slowed the start of the apprenticeship training. While the RAP was registered with DOL, additional requirements were needed before beginning the carpentry apprenticeship training, including accreditation through the National Center for Construction Education & Research (NCCER). That process was completed in March 2023. The instructor completed his NCCER credentialing in March 2023. The training facility at 805 Sayers Street in Lufkin required some construction. The facility includes an instructional classroom, hands-on classroom, and an inventory and supply closet. The first cohort's core training began April 3, 2023. Between April 2023 and June 2023, Legacy LIFE Build has served 12 apprentices. Legacy hosted a Carpentry Employer Roundtable at the Board Office on July 21, 2023. Employers were informed about the benefits of hiring an apprentice and invited to participate as an employer partner. They also discussed their workforce needs. Legacy is working about 10 employer partners.

V. Discussion and Possible Action

A. Open Session Action, if any, as a result of Closed Session

None

VI. Reports

A. Business Services Initiatives

Monica Peters-Clark reported on Employer Relationships, and how workforce staff are fostering those relationships to increase employers' utilization of workforce services. Ms. Peters-Clark reviewed the goals and results, starting with the number of new employers in Work in Texas. The goal is 400 new employers for End of Year (EOY) and 100 each quarter. For the third quarter of FY23 (Q3), 79 new employers were registered in Work in Texas bringing the Year-to-Date (YTD) total to 313. The number of employers receiving workforce assistance is 2,317. Ms. Peters-Clark said regarding employer relationships, that they are focusing on 15-day and 30-day status updates and extending dates on job orders, which seems to help with the job fill rate. The number of job fairs and recruiting events total 125 for Q3, with an end of year goal of 92. From these events, 129 hires were reported. Ms. Dietz asked if we were tracking those employees that are traveling over the Louisiana border for work. Mr. Durand said we are not, but would follow-up and send the committee the information. Shakia Roberts reported on WIOA training completion and placements. The total number of WIOA training participants through June was 101. Of those participants, 71 have completed training and fourteen did not complete training. Of the 71 participants that completed training, 45 have been placed in employment. Mr. Hopkins asked if we lost any participants enrolled at the Livingston Nursing program since Angelina College withdrew from the Livingston location. Ms. Roberts said no, we did not have any students registered in Livingston. Mr. Hopkins asked if tuition was paid up front or in increments. Mr. Durand said that some are paid up front, and some by semester. Mr. Hopkins also asked how much money was being lost for the students that are not completing training. Mr. Durand said we would report back to the board with this amount. Ms. Roberts mentioned that if a customer does not complete training, workforce staff continues to offer job search assistance to the customer to help in finding employment.

VII. Take Up Other Action, As Needed

None

VIII. Adjourn

Tyane Dietz adjourned the Business Services Committee Meeting at 12:11 PM.

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Duly passed and approved on this 8th day of March ²⁰²⁴~~2023~~

Tyane Dietz
Tyane Dietz, Committee Chair

Attest

Dara Harmon
Dara Harmon, Exec. Administrative Assistant