

Southern Maryland Workforce Development Board Meeting
Via Microsoft TEAMS Meeting
March 10, 2022

Minutes

Members Present: Michelle Nicholson, Kelly Williams, Michelle Stewart, Carrie Akins, Marcia Chase, Stacey Cook, Alan Crawley, Pennie Drinkard, Elaine T. Hardee, Christy Lombardi, Brian Miller, Dr. Maureen Murphy, Stephanie Witte, Therese Wolf, Michael E. Young

Members Absent: Robin Cullers, Marcia Keeth, Patti Meszaros, Dr. Christine L. Bergmark, Seth Erlin, Michael Ghosh, Tracey Latham, Cindy Rauner, Mike Scott, Doris Cammack-Spencer

Guests Present: Molly Mesnard, Governor's Workforce Development Board, Michael Digiacomo, Governor's Workforce Development Board, John Garrett, HARC Southern Maryland

Staff Present: John Hartline, Ruthy Davis, Melinda Bowling, Belinda Denton, Sandy Fauchaux, Greg Holtz, Ashley Raley, Daryl Rice, Yvette Turner

CALL TO ORDER

The meeting was called to order at 9:05 am by Michelle Nicholson, Chair.

WELCOME AND ROLL CALL

Michelle Nicholson opened the meeting with a warm welcome and introduction of attendees.

MISSION MOMENT

John Garrett, HARC Southern Maryland, provided insight on the success working with Yvette Turner and the B.E.S. Team (Business Engagement Services Team). By utilizing Employee Training services, HARC was able to upskill its workforce. Eight of their team members successfully completed Medical Technician Training utilizing ARPA funds. Without this funding, they would not have had the means to train their staff. HARC is looking forward to working with Yvette and her team in the future.

BUSINESS

- A quorum was established.
- A motion to approve the minutes from the December 9, 2021, was made by Dr. Maureen Murphy, seconded by Alan Crawley and carried.
- A motion to approve the consent agenda documents was made by Michelle Stewart, seconded by Dr. Maureen Murphy and carried.

“THE GREAT RESIGNATION”

Ruthy Davis provided an overview of “*The Great Resignation*,” how it is affecting our local workforce area and how it is being seen at a national level. Despite the local unemployment rate being at 3.80% with 4% considered full employment, we are seeing businesses in dire need of workforce and job seekers not being engaged. A Today Show segment on the topic was shared providing more insight on why this may be occurring.

SOMD JOBSOURCE PARTICIPANT ENGAGEMENT TASKFORCE

Alan Crawley provided information on one of the initiatives being launched to address the issues of “The Great Resignation.” The JobSource team met to view the Today Show segment, discuss the relevance in our region and ways to overcome it. The front-line team meeting consisted of breakout sessions allowing smaller groups to brainstorm and address the issues. Areas identified thus far:

- no longer do we expect individuals or businesses to come to us
- we need to proactively reach out to connect to jobseekers and businesses
- we will be smart about the task force as to not repeatedly outreach to the same organizations
- we will team together with other partners, organizations, and local resources

The team will reconvene to review information gathered thus far and move forward in planning and executing our engagement efforts.

SOMD JOBSOURCE OUTREACH CAMPAIGN

Belinda Denton provided an update regarding the initiatives being worked on from this marketing and outreach team. Professional videos are being created by AB Productions and will be launched soon. These videos are intended to market the services and funding we have available to help with region’s workforce needs. They anticipate having two videos launched this month to be shared on social media and with our partners. The team continues to brainstorm ways to outreach to both businesses and jobseekers.

The Business Engagement Team is also launching a “Boots on the Ground” initiative. This approach will include surveying the businesses to understand how we can provide services to them to overcome their current challenges. This data will aid in designing a strategic plan moving forward. Another initiative is a “Business Spotlight,” involving a B.E.S. Team member at a business’s location, showcasing the business with a live recording for social media. The goal is additional marketing for that business and their current employment opportunities.

Ashley Dyson provided an update on other initiatives her career services teams are launching including an in-person survey, an outreach bootcamp and spotlighting their customers and training providers. The surveys are intended to shed light on the reasoning behind the lack of engagement by job seekers. Is it because they do not know we exist or really are not looking for employment as seen in “*The Great Resignation?*” This data will then inform our outreach strategies. The bootcamp includes 3 parts: tactics, strategies, and expectations

SUMMER YOUTH EMPLOYMENT PROGRAM (SYEP)

Greg Holtz provided an update on this year’s SYEP. This six-week program will be held from July 5, 2022, to August 21, 2022. With the regional COVID recovery, we are hopeful that more businesses will be willing to provide onsite work experiences for local youth. This is at no cost to the businesses. Along with on site employment, again this year, paid virtual training will be offered utilizing the “*14 Elements*” platform. A flyer will be distributed soon highlighting open registration period from April 4-April 29. This flyer will include QR codes to allow the youth to easily register. May 20th is the deadline for applications. June 6-June 10th will be the signing of paperwork from all youth to solidify their position. Bootcamp this year will be the week of June 30th. The bootcamp will cover such topics as orientation, registration for the “*14 Elements*” platform, how to fill out timesheets, and paid employment paperwork.

With additional funding being sought from the Rural Maryland Council, we will be able to provide 14 additional work experience participants and 78 virtual training participants. We anticipate funding from the three counties again this year and will have specifics on the number of the number of youth that can be served once those funds are solidifies. If board members need help, we can provide the talent at no cost to you.

VIRTUAL REALITY CAREER EXPLORATION

Daryl Rice provided a presentation on a new virtual reality platform being explored. This platform will be utilized for career exploration and will include twenty-three preloaded career exploration simulations in high demand industries including our identified growth industries, with over forty career exploration simulations by the end of 2022. Benefits of virtual career exploration include:

- allows participants to experience real life work environment
- guides participants through step-by-step hands-on applications in completing specific job tasks
- allows participants to demonstrate competency with task related questions
- awards competency levels upon completion

This is an effective tool in assisting undecided participants in choosing a career path and can be utilized in both the youth and adult programs.

There was discussion among the group of how this could be utilized by additional partners and how partners need to be in alignment with such a platform. Additional discussion ensued about the “Blueprint” legislation requiring all middle schoolers are engaged with workforce career services in the near future. A suggestion was made to include Blueprint as an agenda item for the June Full Board meeting.

JOBSOURCE WEBSITE IN DEVELOPMENT

Ruthy Davis informed the board of the new website in development. She shared the homepage and youth page that have been created thus far and requested suggestions for replacement of the tagline “Where People Meet Jobs” that is currently located on the homepage.

Public Comment & Announcements:

There was no public comment

Adjournment:

A motion to adjourn was made by Kelly Williams, seconded by Christy Lombardi, and passed. The meeting adjourned at 10:32 am.