Executive Committee Meeting Minutes-10-22-09

By: WIA Staff
Contact: Les Thompson

Santee-Lynches Workforce Investment Board
Executive Committee Meeting
October 22, 2009
Sunset Country Club
1005 Golfcrest Road, Sumter, SC 29151

Members Present:
Kershaw: Sid Isler (Chairman), Joe Redfearn
Clarendon: Charlie Gavin
Sumter: Rick Levy, Ryan Cagle, Virginia "Ginny" Dority, Rev. William Randolph

Members Absent:
(None)

Staff Present:
Les Thompson - Workforce Development Director
Gwen Davis - Workforce Development Deputy Director
Hope Turner - Workforce Development Finance Coordinator

I. Welcome and Call to Order:

The Santee-Lynches Workforce Investment Board's Executive Committee meeting began with welcoming remarks by Chairman Sid Isler, followed by an invocation by Rev. William Randolph. The meeting was called to order at 12:20PM.

Mr. Chuck Fienning, Chief Executive of Sumter Packaging

Corporation, paid a brief visit to the meeting to express appreciation for the Workforce Investment's Incumbent Worker Training (IWT) funding to his business. He commented that the grant benefited his company greatly in providing valuable computer training to the workers.

II. Approval of Minutes (M):

Chairman Isler entertained a Motion to approve the Executive Committee meeting minutes of August 5, 2009. The Motion was brought forth by Ms. Ginny Dority, and seconded by Rev. William Randolph. All were in favor. The Motion passed unanimously.

III. Finance:

Ms. Gwen Davis reported on the progress made by the Paxen Learning Corporation in providing youth services to the Santee-Lynches region. The Paxen Corporation transitioned as the sole Workforce Investment Area (WIA) year-round youth services provider for all four counties (Clarendon, Kershaw, Lee and Sumter) for the Santee-Lynches region on July 1, 2009. The first order of business was to complete an inventory of youth participants in the Santee-Lynches youth program and to determine the status of each participant. As a result of the inventory assessment, two hundred fifty seven (257) active participants were confirmed. Of those, two hundred thirty eight (238) were determined to be in the status of receiving follow-up services.

Ms. Davis briefly explained the flow of participants into the WIA youth program based on labor market information and the needs of the individual along with the expected outcome. She added that following the completion of the individual's employment plan and attainment of a credential, he or she is eligible for twelve (12) months of follow-up services. Ms.

Davis stated that a concise number of participants in follow-up status were not clearly known at the time of execution of the grant agreement with the Paxen Corporation due partially to neglect of the previous providers in providing adequate follow-up services. Thus, a thorough review of each participant file and the recorded data in the Virtual One-Stop (VOS) database was necessary. New management tools in the VOS system are now available to closely monitor participant activities and to prevent a future reoccurrence. Meanwhile, in order to serve those active carryover participants in need of eligible follow-up services and to provide additional staff, travel and training, the Workforce Development staff request a Motion to utilize funding carried over from the Program Year 2008 youth program to award the Paxen Corporation up to $85,000 to provide these services. The Motion was made by Mr. Rick Levy and seconded by Mr. Charlie Gavin. All were in favor. The Motion passed unanimously.

An update on the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009 (ARRA) grant was reported on by Ms. Davis. She reported that a primary focus of the ARRA grant was on the youth program. The South Carolina Department of Commerce (SCDOC) set a statewide goal that each local workforce area would expend 90% of its youth fund allocation by September 30, 2009. Preliminary close out figures indicate that the Santee-Lynches region has not met the established goal mark, with only 61% expended in the ARRA youth funding stream as of September 30, 2009. Staff has consulted with the SCDOC to determine alternatives to utilization of unexpended ARRA youth funds. Ms. Davis added that the 90% goal shortfall has been experienced statewide. Ms. Hope Turner, stated that just prior to the meeting she learned from SCDOC via telephone that alternative utilization of funds include: 1) extending grants of current ARRA Youth services providers; 2) awarding all remaining ARRA youth funds to the Paxen Corporation whose ARRA Out-of-School grant has been extended thru December

31, 2009; or 3) utilizing ARRA funding to expand WIA year-round services. Ms. Turner added that additional information needs to be taken into consideration before a decision can be made. Items to consider include the Paxen Corporation having received the grant to provide ARRA services to Kershaw County only. The staff must determine if it would be allowable for Paxen to receive the funding to serve all four counties or if it would be necessary to issue a Request for Proposal (RFP) to award funding to service the other three counties. Upon receipt of further clarification on utilization alternatives of the ARRA grants, the Executive Committee agreed to consider the staff's request and recommendation via electronic mail vote.

Additionally, Ms. Davis reported to the Committee that the South Carolina Department of Commerce (SCDOC) has notified all local workforce investment areas that the current flexibility of transferring funding between funding streams are subject to be reduced from 100% transfer allowance to a transfer ceiling of 50% or less. Workforce Development/Finance staff has reviewed the current spending patterns and determined that a transfer of funding is not warranted at the present time. Historically, late December to early January time frame is a more appropriate time to consider transfer needs. As a result, the staff requests authorization from the Executive Committee to be allowed to transfer funding should it be determined that a transfer is necessary at a later time. Chairman Isler entertained a Motion to authorize the staff to transfer funding between funding streams when deemed necessary. A Motion was brought forth by Rev. William Randolph and seconded by Ms. Ginny Dority. Mr. Gavin inquired of any harm in holding off on a vote until the staff determines that a transfer is indeed needed and knows precisely the amount of transfer necessary. Mr. Les Thompson responded that waiting until there is more certainty of the need for a transfer will not cause any problems. Ms. Turner added that in the previous year a transfer was

conducted as late as February and therefore should not have an impact. Chairman Isler then entertained removal of the Motion. Rev. Randolph and Ms. Dority withdrew the Motion. The Executive Committee agreed to consider a Motion via electronic mail whenever it is determined that a transfer is necessary.

IV. Director's Comments:

Mr. Les Thompson provided an update to the Committee on the Strategic Plan and Process. The draft Plan prepared by the Corporation of a Skilled Workforce was distributed for review and comments. Mr. Thompson encouraged the Committee to share their suggestions and/or comments following a review of the Plan, particularly as it relates to the cluster development. He added that the process beyond creation of the Plan to development of a cluster strategy is a new endeavor for the staff and outside of his expertise. Thus this may require additional funding to secure the necessary guidance and follow-thru of the cluster development. Mr. Thompson reported that the funds remaining, due to the cost of facilitating being less than anticipated, may be sufficient to secure the needed guidance. Although having limited exposure to cluster development, doing the task right is the ultimate desire.

Additionally, Mr. Thompson stated to the Committee that the changes to the Workforce Investment Board (WIB) and committee structure as a result of the Strategic Plan will dictate changes be made to the By-Laws. He added that the changes to the By-Laws will be brought forth by a Motion and vote from the Executive Committee via electronic mail.

Mr. Thompson mentioned that the next WIB meeting will be a joint meeting with the Council of Government (COG) Board on November 2, 2009. The proposed new format of quarterly WIB

meetings as outlined by the Strategic Plan will be effective January 2010.

Measurement tools, i.e. charts and graphs to report program activities were presented to the Committee and explained by Mr. Thompson. He stated that training outcomes must overlay job development outcomes. A Plan must be established to effectively measure spending and the return on the investment. The WIB will be provided a quarterly snapshot of the results. In addition, U.S. Department of Labor (USDOL) indicators will be provided via quarterly performance reports. Measurement charts and graphs will be emailed in advance of WIB meetings, per Mr. Thompson.

V. Committee Reports:

There were no committee reports.

VI. New Business:

Mr. Thompson informed the Committee that sector strategies, including “Green Industry” in an abstract sense, transportation, distribution and logistics will be the topic of discussion at the joint COG/WIB meeting on November 2, 2009.

Mr. Thompson also shared that an Unemployment Benefits meeting held by the S.C. Department of Commerce emphasized the urgency of strengthening job development, which has been an on-going weakness of the South Carolina Employment Security Commission. It is vital that job developers be engaged in the business community. He added that the One-Stop Committee’s and WIB's support is needed to move the Workforce Investment Area ahead in this area.

In other new business, Mr. Thompson announced that currently there are vacancies on the WIB Board and the Committee's

help is needed to recruit members to fill the vacant slots in Clarendon, Kershaw and Lee counties.

Mr. Thompson also reported on the Youth Program, stating that there are areas for improvement such as establishing a mentoring program. He explained that a mentoring program through First Baptist Church in Sumter is being explored. The pastor of that church has adopted Lemira School to engage a mentoring program.

Per Mr. Thompson, hiring of a new Administrative Assistant is progressing and a new prospective Administrative Assistant is expected to begin on November 9, 2009.

Mr. Thompson commended Chairman Isler on recent benchmarking efforts and encouraged the Committee and the WIB as a whole to engage in benchmarking and attending conferences.

Finally, in other business, Mr. Thompson advised the Committee that the Weylchem Corporation, who is a current Incumbent Worker Training (IWT) grant recipient, is facing tax issues in Kershaw County, which has required a suspension of IWT reimbursements. He added that although SCDOC doesn't require it, future awards of IWT funding in the Santee-Lynches region will require documentation to attest to a company's tax status.

VII. Chairman's Comments/Adjourn:

Chairman Isler commended Mr. Thompson and the Workforce Development staff for its due diligence. As a recap of today's meeting, he added that strategic planning is instrumental to the Santee-Lynches WIB becoming the best WIB in the state. Meeting changes will be beneficial to moving the WIB ahead. Additionally, he stated that engaging Economic

Developers and the Education system to job development is very important. Dr. Peggy Torrey, Deputy Secretary of the South Carolina Department of Commerce is the person to move the State Workforce Investment Board forward and she is committed to doing so. Mr. Gavin reiterated that Santee-Lynches being the best WIB in the state will require strategic planning and the WIB's commitment.

There being no other business, the Santee-Lynches Workforce Investment Board Executive Committee meeting was adjourned at 1:25PM.

Respectfully submitted,

Gwen Davis, Workforce Development Deputy Dir. Date