

Youth Council Meeting - Nov. 8, 2010

By: WIA Staff

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Santee-Lynches Workforce Investment Board

Youth Council Meeting

Monday, November 8, 2010 – 5:00 PM

Santee-Lynches Regional Council of Governments

36 West Liberty Street, Sumter, SC 29150

Minutes

Youth Council Members Present:

Beverly Moberg, Chair, Ginny Dority, Rose Ford, Ed Garrison,
Ramona Lies, Sonia Spivey

Staff Present:

James T. Darby, Jr., Executive Director, SLRCOG,
Gwen Davis, Workforce Development Deputy Director
Donna Thames, Workforce Development Administrative
Assistant
Brenda Golden, Workforce Development Youth Director

I. Call to Order & Welcome New Members

Chairman Beverly Moberg called the Santee-Lynches Workforce Investment Board's Youth Council meeting to order at 5:05 PM. She welcomed everyone present and thanked them for their vote of confidence as to her appointment as Chairperson and wanted each member to be a part of the decision making process. Chairman Moberg welcomed any ideas and thanked the members for their input.

II. Introduction of Youth Director

Mr. James T. Darby, Jr., Executive Director introduced Ms. Brenda Golden as the new Youth Program Director, who began on November 1st. Ms. Golden was the Santee-Lynches Regional Education Center Director (SLREC) and will now be a joint employer of SLRCOG and SLREC. She has a strong commitment to Youth and to Education. Mr. Darby noted that based on a recent survey of adult job seekers in the region, half have high school diplomas or less. Our current and future economy will show how successful we are with our Youth population. Mr. Darby again welcomed Ms. Golden as the Youth Director.

III. New Business

A. Paxen Performance/RFP

Ms. Gwen Davis, Workforce Development Deputy Director, gave an update on the Youth Program Performance. She explained to the Youth Council that Paxen Learning Corporation's contract began July 1, 2009 and they struggled for the first year. Paxen was put on a six-month probationary status beginning July 1, 2010 through December 2010 due to significant lack of contractual performance i.e. a limited amount of youth enrollments in Clarendon and Lee Counties. After WIA Staff monitored files at Paxen during September, 2010 and based on sanction documents, the WIB Board voted on October 19, 2010 not to renew future services with the Paxen Learning Corporation and to go out for RFP for Youth Provider Services. An RFP has now been issued with a due date of November 29th, 2010.

Ms. Davis discussed the current participation, by County, as indicated on the pie chart handout as of November 5, 2010. Of 178 total participants, projections were at 20% for Clarendon County, but they are only at 15%; Lee County was projected at 8% and now are at 11%.

Ms. Davis reviewed Paxen's expenditures with the Youth Council as of the last financial reporting of September 30, 2010. She explained that their grant amount was for \$327,000 and \$146,062 has been spent (44%) leaving a balance of \$180,938.00. Of the total amount spent, 30% was for training and supportive services while 70% was for staff salaries and overhead costs. It was noted that Paxen had promoted their GED X-celerator program and had projected 80 participants to earn a GED; however only 23 participants have earned their GED.

Ms. Davis informed the Youth Council that she and Ms. Brenda Golden, Youth Director, met with the Paxen Staff on November 3, 2010 to outline the transition to close the grant on December 31, 2010. The WIB Staff is scheduled to conduct the follow-up monitoring on November 17th – 19th, at which time a full inventory of all files and properties will be conducted. The Paxen Staff has committed to cooperate with the WIB Staff.

Ms. Davis asked if there were any questions. Mr. Ed Garrison asked "what did we miss"? Ms. Davis replied that Paxen sold us on what we felt was a good program, but they have struggled with enrolling participants, personnel issues and have had three program managers since start up. The current Program Manager is doing an excellent job; however, full closing of the gap has not been achieved. In the Pee Dee Area, the Paxen Group has done well over time. Paxen sold us on them being a solid, experienced company and that they could come in and provide the services based on their experience. Chairman Moberg stated that now that there is a Youth Director, she will be able to watch over our youth provider and make sure they are on track. The WIA Staff having been without a Youth Director for almost a year adversely affected close oversight over Paxen's operation.

B. RFP Progress/Timeline

Ms. Brenda Golden, Youth Director, stated that she was delighted to be a part of this program and was excited about working with the Youth Council. She presented a handout indicating the timeline for the Youth Provider RFP. She reviewed milestone dates in order to meet all deadlines.

Milestone dates:

- RFP released on October 25, 2010.
- Mandatory Proposer's Conference will be held on Wednesday, November 10th at 3:00 PM at the COG.
- RFP due date of November 29, 2010. Youth Council will need to select members for the Rating and Ranking Committee.
- Youth Council Rating & Ranking Committee Members will review bid packages from December 1st thru December 6th.
- Youth Council Rating and Ranking Committee will meet as a group on December 7th and vote to recommend a Youth Provider or providers.
- A recommendation in the form of a motion from the Rating and Ranking Committee will be sent to the Executive Committee on December 8th by email for approval.
- Contract(s) will be issued around December 17, 2010
- New Provider(s) will begin their contract on January 1, 2011.

Ms. Golden then presented a slide presentation to the Youth Council to highlight portions of the RFP.

- The Goal of the Youth Council – “To fund NEW youth program designs which creatively address youth needing basic skills, work experience, skill and knowledge development and job search skills”.
- A pie chart with the distribution of WIA Youth Funds was presented. The estimated number of participants to be served is 230 (breakdown: Sumter 108, Clarendon 47, Kershaw 48 and Lee 27).

- A question was asked if the total of 230 included carryover participants. Ms. Golden responded that it will include anyone who has not completed the program.
- A list of who is an eligible youth was presented along with a flow chart illustrating eligibility.
- The target population was shown and creativity will be emphasized.
- Ms. Golden stressed the importance of having relationships with other agencies, meaning linkages are vital.
- There are three performance measures: 61% must be placed in employment or education; 55% must achieve degree or certificate; and 45% must achieve literacy/numeracy gains.

Ms. Sonia Spivey inquired whether these goals are to be met with it being a six month contract. Ms. Golden replied that participants will be in follow-up for 12 months and the overall performance will be measured on a quarterly basis. Mr. Ed Garrison then questioned if we would have to make another decision in March since a six month contract will be signed with the new provider(s). Ms. Davis responded that after the first quarter the Youth Council will have to decide to stay with the provider, extending their contract for another six months to one year, or go out for an RFP. Mr. Darby stated that there are other Youth Programs in town and students are tired of the traditional programs, so it will be a challenge to the new provider(s) to find excitement for the students. Mr. Garrison questioned if there were red flags that would be obvious for the staff and Youth Council to see on the new provider(s). Ms. Davis responded that we need to stress to the bidders that we are looking for innovative ways for recruitment and retention in the youth program since Paxen struggled with recruitment methods. Chairman Moberg stated that we should interview the bidders and look at the communities that their companies have been involved with. Ms. Ford stated that we must have the right staff. Ms. Lies stated that we should have historical data that can be used to mark red flag areas.

C. Consultant Progress/Timeline

Ms. Brenda Golden reviewed the progress of the Youth Program Consultant, the Corporation for a Skilled Workforce (CSW). After the meeting on August 11th with the Youth Council, the Consultant began designing the strategic plan. On October 5th and 6th, strategic plan focus group meetings were held with school superintendents, principals, teachers, guidance counselors, parents, community organizations, and business leaders to understand and document key regional barriers to high school graduation. The Consultant has gathered the data and has scheduled two days to meet with the Youth Council to develop the strategic plan contents. Dates of these strategic plan meetings will be on December 1st and December 9th from 4:00 PM to 7:00 PM. The Consultant will present the strategic plan to the Youth Council at our next meeting on January 4, 2011. (A topical synthesis from the Focus Group Meetings was given to the Youth Council Members for review prior to the meetings on December 1st and 9th).

Mr. Ed Garrison requested a list of who attended the Youth Strategic Planning Meeting in October. Ms. Ginny Dority stated that according to the information in the handout on pages 10, 12 and 15, the region has made no progress since 2000. Ms. Davis replied that we now have the opportunity to improve. Several quotes from the handout were mentioned – reference page 4 – “this generation lives a 24/48 life – what happens the last 24 hours and the next 48 hours is what’s important”. Another quote – “children live the Burger King way – ‘I want it my way’ and fast and for \$1.00”.

Ms. Golden reminded the Youth Council to mark their calendars for the upcoming two youth strategic planning meetings on December 1, 2010 and December 9, 2010 and

then the next Youth Council Meeting on January 4, 2011. (An email will be sent out as a reminder).

D. Appointment of Rating & Ranking Committee

Chairman Moberg announced the members selected to serve on the Youth Council Rating and Ranking Committee for the Youth Provider RFP. The Rating and Ranking Committee will review the proposers' responses on December 1st – 6th and will meet on December 7th. The Executive Committee will vote on the recommendation from the Rating and Ranking Committee on December 8th.

The WIB/Youth Council Members to serve on the Youth Council Rating and Ranking Committee are Beverly Moberg and John Tindal from Clarendon County, Ed Garrison from Kershaw County, Ginny Dority from Sumter County and Troy Santoscoy from Lee County.

Chairman Moberg called for a motion to approve the Youth Council Rating and Ranking Committee Members. A motion was made by Mr. Ed Garrison and seconded by Ms. Sonia Spivey to approve the members selected for the Youth Council Rating and Ranking Committee. Chairman Moberg asked if there were any questions. There being no further discussions, Chairman Moberg called for a vote. All were in favor and the motion passed unanimously.

IV. Chair's Comments

Chairman Moberg asked if any of the Committee Members had any questions or comments. Ms. Ginny Dority questioned whether Paxen Learning Group could bid on the RFP. Ms. Golden stated that they could bid on the RFP, but they probably would not receive enough points from the Rating and Ranking Committee. Ms. Golden reminded everyone of the mandatory proposers' conference on Wednesday, November 10th. Staff

will have a better understanding of who might be providing a proposal. Mr. Garrison asked what will happen if we don't like any of the proposals received for the RFP. Chairman Moberg replied that we do not want to extend Paxen's contract. Mr. Darby stated that there are several potential Youth Service Providers in the market. However, if no proposer meets the Youth Council's expectation, the Youth Council may decide to bring the Youth Program in-house.

In closing remarks, Mr. Ed Garrison suggested that the Youth Council Meetings be held on the same day as the WIB.

V. Adjourn

There being no further business, the Santee-Lynches Workforce Investment Youth Council Meeting was adjourned at 5:59 PM.