

EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

MEETING MINUTES

APRIL 23, 2020

A virtual meeting of the Greater Peninsula Workforce Board Executive Committee was convened using Zoom at 9:00 a.m. on April 23, 2020, by Chairman, Dr. John Olson to allow an update on operations during the COVID-19 Pandemic. A quorum was present with the following attendees:

GPWB MEMBERS PRESENT

Rhonda Bunn	Canon Virginia, Incorporated
Dr. Gregory DeCinque	Thomas Nelson Community College
Greg Garrett	Garrett Realty Partners
Jesse Goodrich	Riverside Health System
Honorable James Gray	Hampton City Council
Honorable Herbert Green, Jr.	Poquoson City Council
Dudley Harris	Bay Electric Co., Inc.
Honorable Ted Maslin	Williamsburg City Council
Honorable John McGlennon	James City County Board of Supervisors
Dr. John Olson	ECPI University
Honorable Tina Vick	Newport News City Council
Dr. Vince Warren	Newport News Shipbuilding
Honorable Jeffery Wassmer	York County Board of Supervisors

GPWB MEMBERS PRESENT (Nonvoting)

Rachel Ambrose	Denbigh Learning Center
Robert "Bob" McKenna	Virginia Peninsula Chamber of Commerce

GPWB MEMBERS ABSENT

Honorable Robert Orth	Gloucester County Board of Supervisors
Dr. Jason Perry	Rappahannock Community College
Dale Stone	Walmart Distribution Center
1 Vacant	Private Sector

ONE-STOP PARTNER AGENCY (Nonvoting) PRESENT

Dr. Susan English	Thomas Nelson Community College
-------------------	---------------------------------

ONE-STOP PARTNER AGENCY (Nonvoting) NOT PRESENT

Casey Roberts	New Horizons Regional Education Centers
---------------	---

LEO STAFF REPRESENTATIVES PRESENT (Nonvoting)

Alan Archer	City of Newport News
Pamela Croom	City of Hampton
Wendy Evans	City of Williamsburg
Sherri Newcomb	York County
Barbara Watson	James City County

LEO STAFF REPRESENTATIVES ABSENT (Nonvoting)

Sherry Spring	Gloucester County
Randall Wheeler	City of Poquoson

HAMPTON ROADS WORKFORCE COUNCIL STAFF PRESENT

Shawn Avery President and CEO
Steve Cook Vice President of Workforce Innovation

GREATER PENINSULA WORKFORCE BOARD STAFF PRESENT

Rita Bond Administrative Office Manager
Gary Butler Deputy Director
Cathy Ellis Executive Support Specialist
Angela Sullivan Harris Program Manager
Katherine Henderson Senior Project Manager
William H. Mann, Jr. Executive Director
Terri Partain Accountant

YOUTH WORKFORCE CENTER, NHREC STAFF PRESENT

Valencia Huggins Program Manager

GUESTS PRESENT

Curtis Wray Virginia Employment Commission

MEETING AGENDA

I. UPDATE ON STATUS OF CURRENT OPERATIONS AS PERTAINS TO THE CORONAVIRUS

A. Obligation of Governor’s WIOA Title I Rapid Response Funds - Mr. Mann reported that Governor Northam had announced on March 17th that he was putting together new measures to combat the COVID-19 pandemic within the Commonwealth. Among these measures was an authorization to allocate \$1.5 million from the WIOA Title I Rapid Response Reserve Fund to Virginia’s fifteen local workforce boards. Drawn from the federally funded Dislocated Worker Layoff Aversion Strategies and Activities Program, these funds were authorized for use to prevent or minimize the duration of, unemployment resulting from layoffs due to the COVID-19 Pandemic.

On March 20th, the Greater Peninsula Workforce Board (GPWB) received it’s Notice of Obligation (NOO) in the amount \$87,779 which was about 6% of the total amount of the Rapid Response Funds that were being made available to the local areas. Mr. Mann noted that the Hampton Roads Workforce Council (HRWC) had received 13% of the total availability or approximately \$201,000 as did the Richmond local area, while the lion’s share of the allotment went to Northern Virginia which received 26% of the total or approximately \$396,000. Collectively, the GPWB and the HRWC received close to \$300,000 to serve the 15 localities in southeastern Virginia.

Under the guidance received from the Virginia Community College System (VCCS) these funds were primarily meant to be utilized to assist eligible employers, meaning declared essential businesses, to purchase needed professional sanitation services and supplies, and or teleworking technology to remain operational during the present emergency. Having received our NOO, the staff published a request for proposals (RFP) with a simplified application form in late March, which was circulated throughout the local area’s business communities advising them of the available funding and requesting completed applications back by April 3rd.

As was noted in the RFP, a funding range was established for individual awards of between \$500 to an upward limit of \$2,000 for which local businesses could apply. The intent of this award range was to ensure that there would be sufficient funds to meet the needs of eligible businesses in each of the GPWB’s seven localities. Priority for funding was given to small businesses (250 employees or less), delivering essential services/goods to their community and were still open for business. By the end of the

solicitation period 254 grant applications had been received. An application review committee was formed comprised of both GPWB Administrative and Program Staff who reviewed and scored each proposal received. At the end of the process 66 businesses were awarded cost reimbursable grants for authorized expenditures as stipulated under the terms of a memo of understanding between each individual business and the GPWB.

The authorization period for the reimbursement of all approved expenses is March 1 - August 31, 2020. Concluding his report, Mr. Mann noted that \$87,500 had been obligated, impacting 2,176 workers. In a footnote, Mr. Mann reported that a 67th award had been made to a manufacturing company in James City County, which had repurposed its production line from making souvenirs to manufacturing face shields for local healthcare workers. During the review process their application received high marks but their proposed use of the funds being requested was determined to be an ineligible expense under the Rapid Response Fund, and so a \$2,000 award was made from the board's Per Capita Fund.

B. Adult and Dislocated Worker Services, Virginia Career Works - Greater Peninsula Region-

Ms. Harris, GPWB Title I Program Manager, gave an update on how the Virginia Career Works – Hampton Center Staff were operating subsequent to the Coronavirus shutdown. She commended her staff for the outstanding work they were doing, both on-site in their offices as well as virtually from their homes.

During this period the VCW Staff has continued to assist businesses fill vacant positions, provide jobseekers with employment information, attend a variety of training webinars and virtual meetings, and respond to an unprecedented number of calls from dislocated workers needing assistance with their Unemployment Insurance Claims. They were, likewise, staying in constant touch with their VCW Partners, Community Outreach Site Volunteers and other community partners by e-mails and phone calls.

Ms. Harris concluded her remarks noting the staff recently participated in a Virtual Job Fair in Fredericksburg and was planning to participate in a Virtual Military Transition Program to be scheduled this coming May.

C. Youth Services, Youth Workforce Center - Ms. Huggins, NHREC/YWC Director, was recognized to report on the delivery of WIOA In-School and Out-of-School Youth Services since the Coronavirus shutdown. She, likewise, commended her staff for the outstanding work they had done staying in touch with their students throughout this period and transitioning them into virtual classroom training. Ms. Huggins reported that before the shutdown the YWC had five programs in session, four of which they had been successfully able to move to online platforms. These four programs included the Pharmacy Tech, Dental Assistant, Medical Assistant, and GED Programs. The one program that they had not been able to move online was their Welding Class Program.

In her report Ms. Huggins shared data on the number of students enrolled in these programs and the successes they had achieved in completing their training and pursuing their employment goals. Of particular note were 7 Pharmacy Tech Program Students who had completed their training and had been offered positions with CVS and Walgreens. She also noted that 80% of the students enrolled in the Medical Assistant Program had successfully completed their National Certification Exam. The 2 students that didn't pass the exam missed no more than two questions and were scheduled to retake the test on May 19th and were expected to do well.

Ms. Huggins concluded her report noting that the next Medical Assistant class would start online on April 27th. The Pharmacy Tech class which began on March 9th, has 6 students and will end in July. The GED students are currently holding class on Mondays, Tuesdays and Thursdays for one and a half hours each day. In-school tutoring is being continued by instructors on Zoom Classroom or Skype. And, the YWC will be introducing a Podcast that will be dedicated to providing information to youth 18 – 24 in the areas of work readiness and leadership development. It will be hosted by the Work Experience Case Manager,

Travis Johnson. A trailer is already uploaded and online at <https://anchor.fm/ywc>. The trailer is available now and the Podcast will be available in two weeks.

D. Regional Updates - Mr. Shawn Avery reported that the Business Services team had been busy helping regional businesses and economic development offices during the shutdown. He noted that the regional Business Services Team have been holding conference calls twice a week and that they had worked closely together in conducting the Rapid Response Reserve Fund solicitation process to assist essential businesses to remain open. The Team continues to work virtually on various economic development projects and that the team was looking into purchasing software to host virtual job fairs. Also, the HRWC and GPWB have both begun doing virtual workshops.

E. Regional Boards' Realignment - Mr. Mann reported that work was still moving forward on realigning the two existing boards into one new board to serve the 15 localities within LWDAs #14 and #16. Staff members from both boards are reviewing a draft staff organizational chart that would support all of the current and future programs and activities that the GPWB and HRWC are or would like to undertake. This organizational chart was presented to the Ad Hoc Realignment Oversight Committee, which is composed of leadership from both Boards, on April 13th and met with their approval. The next meeting of the committee is scheduled for May 4th, and will focus on the membership of the new board.

Finally, while the staff is continuing to work on this initiative, the process of obtaining the approval of the realignment resolution by the governing bodies within the region has come to a stop because of the inability of local governments to transact business that doesn't pertain to addressing the current pandemic emergency as a result of the Governor's shutdown orders. Presently only five of the fifteen governing bodies have act on the resolution with all five approving the document. It is expected that when the shutdown order is lifted the ten remaining localities will take up this matter and, likewise, approve the resolution.

F. Open Discussion - Dr. Olson recognized Mr. Bob McKenna, President/CEO of the Virginia Peninsula Chamber of Commerce (VPCC) and asked him to speak on the Chamber's work during the Coronavirus and what he was hearing from local businesses. Mr. McKenna commended the Executive Committee members for the great work they were doing on behalf of the local area's businesses and workers during this crisis. He indicated that for past five weeks, the Chamber has been compiling COVID-19 information from the federal, state and local governments and also from businesses into a newsletter called COVID Response. While originally a daily newsletter it is now being sent out to all their members three days a week.

Mr. McKenna also noted that the Chamber is conducting a Peninsula Biz Buzz podcast with local leaders who have important information to share with the community. This podcast is available on VPCC's website, LinkedIn and Facebook. In May, VPCC plans to virtually move back to their normal program schedule – Coffee Connections, Chamber Chat (15-20 businesses to talk about best practices, lessons learned). They are also planning to do a Peninsula Executive Leadership Forum. Mr. McKenna stated that the first live event the Chamber is hoping to do would be a job fair in July.

Following Mr. McKenna's remarks, Mr. Mann commented that he and Mr. McKenna were working with other regional leaders that included the Hampton Roads Economic Development Alliance (the Alliance), the HRWC, Reinvent Hampton Roads, the Hampton Roads Chamber of Commerce, ODU, and the Hampton Roads Military and Federal Facilities Alliance on business surveys to ascertain the economic impact of the shutdown on area businesses and a website that would be used to help orchestrate a recovery plan for the region. Doug Smith, President and CEO, The Alliance, was leading this effort. The first survey report was out with an executive summary that examines the impact of the pandemic on businesses in our region. The report is available at what is known as the 757 Business Recovery Forum; the address is www.757recovery.com. Mr. Mann mentioned that a second survey will be coming out to get more detail on how things are progressing which will help lay the ground work for regional

organizations to work together to help plan a recovery strategy plan to move from surviving the virus to getting back on our feet and sustaining a recovery. He encouraged the Committee members to participate in the second survey.

Mr. Mann indicated that he, Mr. Avery and the other 13 local workforce board directors were also working closely with the Governor's Office and various state agencies, to include the VEC and VCCS, on a recovery plan to physically reopen the Virginia Career Works Centers sometime this coming June.

Dr. Gregory DeCinque, Interim TNCC President indicated that in terms of recovering from the present situation, TNCC was looking at what role it would need to play in terms of meeting the anticipated number of unemployed people who would need training to re-enter the workforce. He indicated that many of these individuals would not be going back to the same occupations that they were previously held, so it will be important to include in our recovery plans part programs that will address how to quickly retrain these people for new jobs within in-demand occupations. Presently, and for the foreseeable future, Dr. DeCinque stated that TNCC would be operating 100% online.

II. ANNOUNCEMENTS

Dr. Olson said that the next Executive Committee meeting would be held on May 28, 2020. The meeting is tentatively scheduled for 8:00 a.m.

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 10:00 a.m.

Respectfully Submitted,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "W. H. Mann, Jr." with a stylized flourish at the end.

William H. Mann, Jr.
Secretary