

EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

MEETING MINUTES

MAY 28, 2020

A virtual meeting of the Greater Peninsula Workforce Board Executive Committee was convened using Zoom at 9:00 a.m. on May 28, 2020, by Chairman, Dr. John Olson. A roll call was conducted, and a quorum was present with the following attendees:

GPWB EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE MEMBERS PRESENT

Rhonda Bunn	Canon Virginia, Incorporated
Greg Garrett	Garrett Realty Partners
Jesse Goodrich	Riverside Health System
Honorable James Gray	Hampton City Council
Honorable Herbert Green, Jr.	Poquoson City Council
Honorable Ted Maslin	Williamsburg City Council
Honorable John McGlennon	James City County Board of Supervisors
Dr. John Olson	ECPI University
Dr. Jason Perry	Rappahannock Community College
Dale Stone	Walmart Distribution Center
Honorable Tina Vick	Newport News City Council

GPWB MEMBERS PRESENT (Nonvoting)

Rachel Ambrose	Denbigh Learning Center
Robert "Bob" McKenna	Virginia Peninsula Chamber of Commerce
John Myer	SynEnergy Inc.

GPWB EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE MEMBERS ABSENT

Dr. Gregory DeCinque	Thomas Nelson Community College
Dudley Harris	Bay Electric Co., Inc.
Honorable Robert Orth	Gloucester County Board of Supervisors
Dr. Vince Warren	Newport News Shipbuilding
Honorable Jeffery Wassmer	York County Board of Supervisors
1 Vacant	Private Sector

ONE-STOP PARTNER AGENCY (Nonvoting) PRESENT

Casey Roberts	New Horizons Regional Education Centers
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ONE-STOP PARTNER AGENCY (Nonvoting) NOT PRESENT

Dr. Susan English	Thomas Nelson Community College
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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
Sherry Spring	Gloucester County
Barbara Watson	James City County

LEO STAFF REPRESENTATIVES ABSENT (Nonvoting)

Randall Wheeler	City of Poquoson
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HAMPTON ROADS WORKFORCE COUNCIL STAFF PRESENT

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
Randy Troutman	One-Stop Operator

YOUTH WORKFORCE CENTER, NHREC STAFF PRESENT

Valencia Huggins Program Manager

CONSENT AGENDA

Dr. Olson welcomed everyone and advised the committee members that in order to expedite matters requiring a vote during a virtual meeting, he would accept motions and seconds to approve any item brought up for action but then only call for “nay” votes. This would allow the committee to avoid having to go through a roll call vote. He then directed the attention of the committee members to the Consent Agenda. He noted that the Consent Agenda had been emailed to the membership in advance of the meeting and included the following items:

MEETING MINUTES

Joint Executive Committee Meeting minutes for February 27, 2020, and Virtual Executive Committee minutes for April 23, 2020.

FINANCIAL REPORTS

Cumulative Expenditure Reports; New Expenditure, Per Capita, and Private Contribution Report through April 30, 2020.

PROGRAM REPORTS

Weekly registrations, registrations/enrollments by jurisdictions, and ROI Scorecard through April 30, 2020

WAIVER REQUEST

Waiver request to continue providing Individualized Career Services and Follow Up for PY '20.

WIOA TITLE I ELIGIBLE TRAINING PROVIDER PROGRAMS

Approval of one new vendor, Tomorrow’s Image Barber & Beauty Academy of Virginia; approval of new programs for existing vendor, Virginia Technical Academy and recertification of CY '20 Vendors and other related items.

Dr. Olson asked if there were any items that members would like removed from the Consent Agenda. There being none, he asked for a motion to approve the Consent Agenda. A motion was made, seconded and approved.

MEETING AGENDA

I. PROGRAM STATUS UPDATES

A. Adult and Dislocated Worker Services, Virginia Career Works - Greater Peninsula Region- Ms. Harris, GPWB Title I Program Manager, reported that the Virginia Career Works – Hampton Center had a tentative reopening date of June 15, 2020. She expressed appreciation to the Administrative Office for assisting with ordering Personal Protective Equipment (PPE), cleaning supplies and signage for the reopening.

Ms. Harris noted that an on-line customer orientation had been added to our website and that it had been made available to Curtis Wray for his Rapid Response presentations. Ms. Harris recognized staff members, Diana Cordero who headed the effort, Shannon Trochuck, Katie Henderson and Wanda Boulden who had worked over recent months converting the agency’s paper-modules into an electronic version that could be posted to our website. Ms. Harris said that she anticipates training the Career Planners on the new virtual enrollment process.

In other matters, Ms. Harris expressed her appreciation for our area being able to participate in the regional job fair hosted by the Hampton Roads Workforce Council and recognized Mr. Steve Cook and his team for a successful event. She reported that Ms. Lisa Taylor was continuing to conduct her outreach and was also participating in many virtual events.

In closing, she shared a success story about a customer, a Ms. Robinson, who was unemployed, receiving SNAP benefits and, while having a positive attitude, had many obstacles to confront. She recently had successfully completed truck driver training at the U. S. Truck Driver Training School and had secured employment with Abilene Transport, earning over \$800/week.

Dr. Olson thanked Angela and the entire team for their continued work.

B. Youth Services, Youth Workforce Center - Ms. Huggins, NHREC Youth Workforce Center (YWC) Director, was recognized to report on the delivery of WIOA In-School and Out-of-School Youth Services. She reported that the YWC had made the transition to offering virtual training and had enrolled 21 students who, to date, had completed three weeks of training. The training courses include dental assistant, pharmacy technician and medical assistant. She said the students had only one concern and that was whether they would be able to complete a work experience and externship as part of their training.

Regarding the In-School Program, Ms. Huggins reported that the program had 23 high school graduates and of that total, seventeen (17) were planning to attend college or post-secondary training; two (2) were going into the military and four (4) graduates were starting employment. Ms. Huggins stated that the Youth Workforce Office (YWO) was honoring their graduates with a certificate and their picture on Twitter. She reported that the office would continue to post events and activities on Facebook and use Zoom to connect with students.

Additionally, Ms. Huggins reported that the YWO had begun their first podcast entitled, “Social Media Etiquette – Control Your Profile.” And that the office had resumed recruitment efforts with the first virtual information session to be held on June 4, 2020 at 10:00 a.m.

Ms. Henderson requested the location of the podcast. Ms. Huggins said it is located at Anchor at YWC podcast. Mr. Steve Cook ask that Ms. Huggins email him the social media information so that he may share with their team.

C. Regional Updates - Mr. Cook reported that, as Ms. Harris had previously noted, the virtual job fair was a success and that some hiring had taken place. Mr. Cook said that because of that success, he anticipated continuing offering virtual job fairs on a regular basis.

He reported that the Hampton Roads Workforce Council (HRWC) was continuing to work with the Hampton Roads Economic Development Alliance (now, The Alliance) on business reopening/recovery plans. He said, that as we transition into Phase 2, he anticipated more activity and that the Business Services Team would continue to actively work with area employers developing on-the-job training agreements. Mr. Cook also noted that the team would continue to employ virtual activities to include webinars and workshops, focused on a variety of topics to include resume preparation and interview techniques.

II. PUBLIC COMMENT

Dr. Olson recognized Mr. Bob McKenna, President/CEO of the Virginia Peninsula Chamber of Commerce (VPCC) and asked him to provide an update on the Chamber's local work during the Coronavirus Pandemic.

Mr. McKenna reported that on March 12, 2020, the VPCC began to cancel previously scheduled in-person events. From that time forward the Chamber has focused its attention on compiling COVID-19 information to assist its members. He said that, initially a daily newsletter with vital federal, state, and local news was published Monday through Friday and sent out to all the Chamber's members. The publication has since been reduced to twice a week.

During this period, Mr. McKenna noted that the VPCC became involved with many agencies and participated with The Alliance, the regions two Workforce Boards, the Hampton Roads Chamber, Old Dominion University and other leading business organizations to develop a survey to assess the impact of the pandemic and the resulting restrictions on area businesses. He noted that the results of this and a subsequent survey helped in the creation of the Forward Hampton Roads 757recovery.com website, which has provided a variety of resources to help the business community for over the past eight weeks. These organizations have committed to continuing to collaborate until things return to "normal."

Mr. McKenna said that the VPCC is planning a virtual job fair that would take place over several days in July. He also noted that the Chamber was reaching out to its members via telephone to check in on their status and gather information on their needs as they move towards Phase II reopening. Additionally, the Chamber was conducting virtual events to include its Coffee Connections, Pink Bag Lunches, and Women's Leadership Forums.

In other areas, the VPCC was working to redesign its Lead Peninsula Class of 2020 which has had the largest number of applicants (57), and that they were beginning to recruit for the class of 2021. The VPCC also has two new initiatives, one called "Pen Positive" which is focused on telling good news stories, and another initiative entitled, "We Are Open," to help businesses get the word out to the public that their doors were open for business.

III. COMMITTEE REPORTS

Treasurer, Mr. Dale Stone reported that the Finance and Strategic Planning (F&SP) Committee had reviewed the PY '20 Preliminary Budget that was emailed to the Executive Committee Members, and asked Mr. Mann to provide a summary review of the draft budget.

Mr. Mann proceeded to review the preliminary budget which was based upon estimated allocations, carry over, and projected expenditures for the period July 1, 2020 – June 30, 2021. He noted that the budget did not include any merit or COLA increases and that the F&SP Committee would consider any such increases in its deliberations on final budget recommendations to the Executive Committee.

Mr. Mann went on to review the annual budget process, noting that the staff would prepare a final budget, utilizing actual PY '20 allocations and PY '19 carry over for review by the F&SP Committee later this summer. Following their review, the F&SP Committee would present the final budget with their recommendations to the Executive Committee for approval at their August or September meeting. Concluding his remarks, Mr. Mann noted the various funding streams that supported local board approved operations and expressed his appreciation to each of the localities for their continued per capita contributions for PY '20, especially given the current pandemic situation.

Following Mr. Mann's review, Mr. Stone stated that the Committee recommended that the Executive Committee approve the PY '20 Preliminary Budget. A motion was made, seconded and passed to approve the PY '20 Preliminary Budget.

IV. OLD BUSINESS

A. Update on Expenditure of Governor's WIOA Title I Rapid Response Funds - Mr. Mann recalled that our area had received a Notice of Obligation in the amount of \$87,779 in March and that a Request for Proposals had been issued which resulted in 254 responses. The purpose of this program was to assist local "essential" businesses to remain open during the pandemic shutdown by providing them with financial assistance to acquire needed sanitization services, cleaning supplies, personal protective equipment (PPE), and IT hardware to allow their employees to telework from home.

After conducting a review of all the proposals received, a total of \$87,500 was obligated to 66 businesses. To-date Mr. Mann reported that \$21,122 or 24% of the awards made had been reimbursed. The authorization period for this grant runs through August 31, 2020. Grants were awarded in \$500 increments, ranging in amounts from \$500 to \$2,000. Employers were instructed to submit an invoice with receipts to request reimbursement equal to the amount of their individual award. Mr. Mann expressed his appreciation to the staff for their work on this initiative.

B. Update from Ad Hoc Board Realignment Committee – Dr. Olson reported that the committee is continuing to meet to discuss the structure for the impending Board that will replace the region's two existing boards next program year, effective July 1, 2021. He noted that currently, 8 of the region's 15 localities had approved the resolution to merge and he anticipated that York County would follow suit next week.

Dr. Olson said that the local elected officials in the Peninsula localities of Hampton, Newport News, and James City County still needed to act on the resolution, while on the Southside, action was still needed by Virginia Beach, Chesapeake, Portsmouth and Suffolk. Dr. Olson said that copies of the approved resolution would need to be received so that they could be submitted to the Governor's office by July 15, 2020. Dr. Olson said that the committee anticipated reviewing a new organizational structure at their next meeting in June.

V. NEW BUSINESS

A. Update on VEC's Intentions to Contract the WIOA Title III Wagner-Peyser Program to Local Workforce Boards – Mr. Mann reported that in January 2020 the Department of Labor issued new rules providing states with greater flexibility as to how they could deliver employment services funded under the Wagner-Peyser Act. These new rules included allowing the states to contract with local Workforce Boards to operate the Employment Services Program.

While here in Virginia, this new flexibility was not given much attention by either the VEC or the Governor's Office at the time it was issued, it has since gotten considerable attention as a result of the unprecedented number of pandemic related business closures and the related number of workers who have been either laid off or furloughed and have filed Unemployment Insurance (U. I.) Claims with the

VEC. As noted in the news, the VEC has been simply overwhelmed by this situation and is having considerable difficulty in processing the number of U. I. Claims they have and continue to receive, to say nothing of resolving the mounting number of problems associated with many of those claims.

Consequently, in order to utilize as much of their manpower as possible to address U. I. issues, the VEC, with the Governor's approval, has decided to contract the Wagner-Peyser funded Employment Services Program with the Commonwealth's 15 local Workforce Boards. The contract period will run from June 1, 2020 – December 31, 2020.

While this turn of events certainly complicates the staff's work to physically reopen the area's One-Stop Center to offer on-site WIOA services and now Wagner-Peyser services as well, Mr. Mann opined that if the local Workforce Board Staffs could do a good job delivering the Employment Services Program, perhaps this new contractual arrangement would continue beyond December 31st, which he felt would be advantageous to the local boards.

Mr. Mann concluded his report, noting that board staff were presently attending online Wagner-Peyser Training provided by the VEC and that plans were being made to deliver employment services, as part of the reopening of the One-Stop Center, as soon as a contract could be executed with the VEC.

VI. ANNOUNCEMENTS

A. New One-Stop Operator – Mr. Butler announced that The WorkPlace had hired a new employee to serve as our One-Stop Operator (OSO) and asked Ms. Katherine Henderson to introduce Mr. Randy Troutman. Ms. Henderson introduced Mr. Troutman, noting that he was a Gloucester County resident and that as a result of recently being laid off and seeking assistance from our program, was led to apply for the OSO Position. His previous experience included 14 years working as the Site Manager at the Gloucester Canon Office and a 26 year career in the U. S. Air Force. Mr. Troutman spoke, noting that he was very happy to be part of our team, was learning a lot about what we do and was looking forward to meeting everyone.

B. Dislocated Worker Study – Dr. Olson next recognized Mr. Garrett, who asked if anyone had any hard data on how many currently unemployed workers would not have jobs to go back to following the reopening of area businesses under the Governor's "Forward Virginia" Recovery Plan? He noted that many businesses have had to permanently close as a result of the pandemic and the orders that were issued by the state to shut down all non-essential business operations.

Mr. Garrett noted that this was important information to have in order for the staff to be properly prepared to meet the needs of these individuals. He went on to say that the debate about protecting everyone -vs- allowing businesses to reopen had to stop and that we needed to figure out ways to achieve both of these objectives. Also, Mr. Garrett ask what we were doing as an organization to highlight companies that have successfully achieved both and were successfully weathering the pandemic.

Mr. Mann commented that Mr. Garrett had raised some very good questions and that we presently did not have any statistics about businesses that may have permanently closed as a result of the pandemic and the resulting number of workers that may not be going back to their former employers and or occupations. In terms of having adequate resources, he noted that the board had the ability to transfer WIOA Adult Funds to the Dislocated Worker Program to assist such individuals.

In terms of protecting everyone and reopening, Mr. Mann noted that our area, along with the other 14 local Workforce Boards, had submitted an application to the VCCS for funds to purchase PPE and other needed supplies/materials to protect both staff and customers following the reopening of the VCW – Hampton Center. Mr. Mann also cited the work of the area's chambers of commerce publishing various reopening guides and newsletters that highlighted best practices employed by businesses in the area to

stay open and operational, along with the previously noted initiative being led by The Alliance that included business surveys and the creation of a website that compiled and provided links to additional resources for area businesses; all of which was designed to support an action plan to help the region regain the economic momentum it had before the pandemic.

Regarding the grant application submitted to the VCCS, Mr. Butler noted that we were not waiting for a response from the VCCS but had moved forward to purchase needed PPE supplies and equipment with current available funding, and that we should have everything needed to reopen in mid-June with all of our safety protocols in place. He also pointed out that during Mr. McKenna's his earlier remarks, he had said that they were collecting business success stories via their new initiative called "Pen Positive" and also had a new data base initiative entitled, "We Are Open."

Mr. Garrett proposed that our Board reach out to other agencies throughout Hampton Roads to commission a study, perhaps with a local university (i.e. Old Dominion or Hampton Universities) to review the situation as to the number of permanent business closures and estimated number of dislocated workers that will need to retrain for new employment opportunities. He noted that such a study could assist our Board in applying for future grants to address this situation should they become available.

Dr. Jason Perry, Rappahannock Community College (RCC), recommended that the Board consider commissioning such a study with Chmura Economics & Analytics. He noted that RCC had partnered with their Local Planning District Commissions in a contract with Chmura utilizing their JobsEQ Program to produce workforce information.

Mr. Butler noted that we do have a regional relationship with Chmura who was commissioned to do an ROI Study for the two Workforce Boards. Mr. Mann said that he could follow-up with Chmura to see if they would undertake the subject study. Mr. Garrett said that he thought that was a good idea and that people needed optimism and hope at this time, that better days were ahead.

Dr. Olson ask Mr. Mann and Mr. Butler to get with Mr. Avery to discuss the possibility of working with Chmura Economics & Analytics to gather this information. Mr. Garrett ask that the study gather information on both office and industrial real estate space.

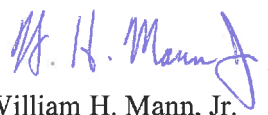
C. Good Life Solutions Program – Mr. Casey Roberts announced that NHREC is having a virtual selection day for over 83 students entering the workforce and the event would be held June 1st.

D. Contact Tracer's – Mr. Maslin announced that contact tracers were being hired at \$26.00/hour and that this would be a particularly good opportunity for local college students looking for work. Citing a recent conversation, he had with a Williamsburg business owner, he also suggested that we, as mentors, do what we can to encourage workers to return to work as businesses begin to reopen.

E. Next Meeting – Dr. Olson announced the next meeting would be a full board meeting of the Greater Peninsula Workforce Board on June 25, 2020.

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 10:20 a.m.

Respectfully Submitted,



William H. Mann, Jr.
Secretary