

**Governor’s State Workforce Development Board
March 29, 2022 State Workforce Development Board Meeting Minutes**

MEMBERS PRESENT:

Mr. Thomas Freeland	Mr. John Uprichard
Mr. Dan Ellzey	Mr. Gregory Clark
Col. Craig Currey	Mr. Cliff Bourke, Jr.
Dr. Windsor Sherrill	Ms. Valerie Richardson
Mr. Archie Maddox	Mr. Warren Snead
Mr. Pat Michaels	Mr. Charles Brave, Jr.
Mr. Jay Holloway	Mr. Gregory Tinnell
Mr. Mike King	Mr. Michael Sexton
Ms. Felicia Johnson	Mr. H. Perry Shuping

MEMBERS EXCUSED:

Sen. Ross Turner
Rep. Joe Daning

Welcome and Opening Remarks **Mr. Thomas Freeland, SWDB Chair**
Chairman Thomas Freeland called the meeting to order at 11:00 a.m. A quorum was present, with members participating in-person and virtually.

Approval of Minutes from December 14, 2021* **Mr. Freeland**
Mr. Charles Brave, Jr. motioned to approve the December 14, 2021, meeting minutes, seconded by Mr. Greg Clark, and unanimously approved by the State Workforce Development Board.

DEW Director’s Report..... **Mr. Dan Ellzey**
Mr. Dan Ellzey, Executive Director, SC Department of Employment and Workforce, delivered a presentation on the status of Unemployment Insurance claims, South Carolina employment levels, and reemployment initiatives. His presentation covered the following points:

- For the week ending March 19, 2022, 1,577 individuals filed initial claims. The UI Trust Fund has a balance of more than \$1.2B. The preliminary Unemployment Rate for February 2022 is 3.5%, the lowest rate since the pandemic. As of March 25, 2022, there are more than 112,800 jobs posted in SCWOS, which is approximately 40,000 more than pre-pandemic.
- There are two lawsuits against the agency for the calculation of the weekly benefit amount. A federal court issued a motion to dismiss one of the lawsuits. The other is pending in state court.
- South Carolina’s Labor Force Participation Rate is 57.2%, which is slightly lower than the pre-pandemic rate and significantly lower than the national rate. DEW has convened the South Carolina Labor Force Participation (LFP) Taskforce to evaluate SC’s labor force participation, research how to engage the sideliners and ensure the State will have the labor to meet business demand. The SC Council on Competitiveness is assisting DEW in this effort.
- The largest industries in terms of employment are Trade, Transportation & Utilities, Government, and Professional and Business Services. Leisure and Hospitality employment has decreased since the pandemic from 12.5% to 11.7%. Manufacturing employment has remained consistent at 11.7% pre-pandemic and 11.6% post-pandemic.
- Rural engagement is a priority of the agency and the SWDB. The following programs support rural engagement:

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- Deployment of the Career Coach to rural areas
- Referral of UI claimants to employment or relevant training through the Workforce Reemployment Assistance Program (WRAP)
- Outreach to small businesses through weekly messaging about SC Works services
- Analysis of the rural workforce conducted by the USC Darla Moore School of Business
- South Carolina will highlight the State’s workforce development activities for job seekers, employers and workforce professionals during Workforce Development Month in September 2022.

Reflections on RegionalismMr. Steve Pelissier

Chairman Freeland commented on his visits to SC Works centers and the level of dedication and creativity applied toward helping people find jobs. He acknowledged that the pandemic has resulted in stronger partnerships and the utilization of technology to improve service delivery. Coupled with the continuous decline in WIOA funding, local areas are exploring ways to share operational costs. Chairman Freeland recognized Mr. Dean Jones and Ms. Ann Angermeier, Workforce Development Administrators for Greenville and Upstate Local Workforce Development Areas, for their model of regionalism and participation in the March 2022 Regionalism Forum. He introduced Mr. Steve Pelissier, Executive Director, SC Appalachian Council of Governments.

Mr. Pelissier discussed the challenge of providing excellent and evolving services that meet the changing needs of the workforce. He commented that other states are experiencing the same declines in WIOA funding and that Councils of Government are experiencing similar changes in the distribution of funds in other programs. The affiliation between the COGs and Workforce Development Boards provides a strong foundation to explore new things and ideas to meet the challenges every area is facing. Local areas are in the early stages of discussing opportunities to work together to combine resources and identify areas of strength where one COG might serve another, but there are existing examples where collaboration is occurring successfully:

- Several COGs partner with Catawba to administer the revolving loan funds program for small businesses and entrepreneurs.
- The Appalachian COG provides GIS and statistical data support to other areas.

To continue these discussions is a natural outgrowth of existing collaboration. A risk of collaboration through regionalism is local staff losing knowledge about the needs of their region and the relationships that have been established. Other aspects of regionalism to consider are control over service delivery, allocation of funding, differences in policy or board priority, and a system for monitoring, evaluating, and adjusting. Mr. Pelissier reiterated that the network and trust between Workforce Directors and COG Directors are in place for progress and success as it relates to regionalism.

Mr. Pelissier provided examples of how local areas are providing excellent services to meet the demand of the workforce:

- Upper Savannah is using LWDA Resiliency Grant funds to focus on the foster care and homeless populations.

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- Catawba holds joint South Carolina/North Carolina job fairs with bordering areas.
- WorkLink is working with Lutheran Services to assist Afghan refugees that have been resettled in the WorkLink area.

Mr. Ellzey explained that there has been a 42% reduction in local WIOA funding since 2010. He emphasized that the agency did not propose consolidation of local areas for many reasons, including the potential loss of staff knowledge about a local area. The concept of regionalism is a far better way to achieve system cost-efficiency. The agency is committed to supporting the local areas in this process.

Recognition of Board Members.....Mr. Freeland
Chairman Freeland recognized the resignations of past board members:

- Dr. Joseph “Joe” Patton, a US Army Veteran, was appointed to the Board in 2007 and served faithfully until his passing in December 2021. During his tenure on the Board, he was the CEO of GLEAMNS Human Resources Commission, Inc. in Greenwood, South Carolina. He was also an active member of several other Boards and commissions, including the Upper Savannah Workforce Development Board. In 2015, Dr. Patton received the Order of the Palmetto Award, our State’s highest civilian honor, for his outstanding service as a community, civic, and business leader. Dr. Patton will be remembered as a passionate and dedicated public servant.
- Mr. John Durst was appointed to the Board in February 2020 and resigned in January 2022. He served as the President & CEO of the SC Restaurant & Lodging Association. In the early months of the pandemic, Mr. Durst was instrumental in launching the Governor’s Palmetto Priority Program – an effort to increase safe, healthy, and enjoyable dining experiences during the pandemic and, in turn, get hospitality workers back on the job.

Other Business/Adjourn.....Mr. Freeland
Chairman Freeland reminded members to complete the SWDB Satisfaction and Board Development Survey by April 1, 2022. The next SWDB meeting is on June 28, 2022, and in-person attendance is encouraged. The Board did not discuss any other business. The meeting adjourned at 11:45 a.m.