



SANTEE-LYNCHES
WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT BOARD MEETING
Tuesday, January 23, 2024 - 5:00PM
Via Zoom

MINUTES

Members Present:

Dr. Vanessa Canty, Dr. Joshua Castleberry, Charles “Scottie” Hayes, Gail Lemmon, John Hornsby, Debra Young, Tiffany Myers, Robert Edwards, Emily Peele, Kanzora Robinson, Phil Briggs

Members Absent:

Jeff Burgess, Berri Outlaw (excused), Celeste Taylor, Virginia Pryor, Teresa Justice, Samuel Lowery, Mike Murrow

Workforce Development Staff Present:

Dennis Cyphers, SLRCOG Executive Director
Areatha Clark, SLRCOG Deputy Executive Director, Workforce Development Director
Esmonde Levy, SLRCOG RDC Special Projects Director, Workforce & Economic Development Manager
Freda Amerson, SLRCOG Workforce Development Operations Coordinator
Steve Berger, SLRCOG Business Services Lead
Linda Jackson, SLRCOG Administrative Director

Guests:

Brenda Gardner, SC Department of Employment and Workforce
Stacie Batondo, SC Department of Employment and Workforce
Ray Jackson, SC Works Operator/Center Manager, Eckerd Connects-Workforce Development Margarita Servance, Career Coach, Eckerd Connects-Workforce Development

I. Election of Chairman and Vice-Chairman-(M)

Ms. Areatha Clark, Deputy Executive Director, and Workforce Development Director began the meeting with election of Chairman and Vice-Chairman. She stated that the Board Nominating Committee was tasked with finding a Chairman (Former Vice-Chairman/Acting Chairman Calvin Hastie retired from the Board) and a Vice-Chairman. As a result of their work, the following nominations are forthcoming:

Nomination for Board Chairman: Mr. Robert (Bob) Edwards. There were no nominations from the floor.

- Ms. Clark called for a motion to close the floor on set nomination. **A motion was made by Ms. Emily Peele and seconded by Mr. Phil Briggs.** There being no discussion, Ms. Clark called for the vote. **All were in favor and the motion passed unanimously.**

- Ms. Clark called for a motion to nominate Mr. Robert (Bob) Edwards as Chairman. **A motion was made by Mr. Phil Briggs and seconded by Ms. Gail Lemmon.** There being no discussion, Ms. Clark called for the vote. **All were in favor and the motion passed unanimously.**

Nomination for Board Vice-Chairman: Ms. Gail Lemmon. There were no nominations from the floor.

- Ms. Clark called for a motion to close the floor on set nomination. **A motion was made by Mr. Phil Briggs and seconded by Ms. Emily Peele.** There being no discussion, Ms. Clark called for the vote. **All were in favor and the motion passed unanimously.**
- Ms. Clark called for a motion to nominate Ms. Gail Lemmon as Vice-Chairman. **A motion was made by Ms. Emily Peele and seconded by Ms. Debra Young.** There being no discussion, Ms. Clark called for the vote. **All were in favor and the motion passed unanimously.**

II. Welcome and Call to Order

Chairman Robert (Bob) Edwards called the Santee-Lynches Workforce Development Board of Directors Meeting to order at 5:07PM. A quorum was present.

III. Invocation/Pledge of Allegiance

Ms. Clark provided the invocation and led the Pledge of Allegiance.

IV. Introduction of Guests

Ms. Clark introduced new Board Member (Phil Briggs – Bicycle Corporation of America/Kent International), staff and guests.

V. Adoption of Agenda – (M)

Chairman Robert (Bob) Edwards called for a motion to adopt the agenda. **A motion was made by Mr. John Hornsby and seconded by Ms. Debra Young.** There being no discussion, Chairman Edwards called for the vote. **All were in favor and the motion passed unanimously.**

VI. Approval of Minutes – August 22, 2023 (M)

Chairman Robert (Bob) Edwards called for a motion to approve the minutes of December 5, 2023. **A motion was made by Ms. Emily Peele and seconded by Dr. Vanessa Canty.** There being no discussion, Chairman Edwards called for the vote. **All were in favor and the motion passed unanimously.**

VII. Executive Director Updates/Special Presentation

Mr. Dennis Cyphers, Executive Director, started by providing the Board with a recap on several House Bills that were put in place.

- a. ***H.3726: Statewide Education and Workforce Development Act*** - Mr. Dennis Cyphers informed the Board that this bill was approved and signed in 2023. The bill established an office of statewide workforce development and coordination, a new division under the SC Department of Workforce Development. Mr. Cyphers stated that the legislation provides an annual industry and education analysis to determine what jobs are open and how many graduates are available to fill those jobs. He also informed the Board that the Act requires the office of Statewide Workforce Development Coordination establish a 10-year labor force goal and a 10-years participation goal for the number of South Carolinians with a high quality or post-secondary degree. Mr. Cyphers stated that the state labor force participation rate is the 4th lowest in the country. He explained that the bill attacks some of the issues in the workforce. It focuses on creating an educational programs alignment toolkit to serve as an infrastructure of resources. These resources will enable K-12, technical colleges, and higher education system, both individually and collectively, to ensure programs and curriculum are matching the workforce needs.

b. H.4060: Statewide Workforce Readiness Goals- Mr. Cyphers explained to the Board that this bill provides remediation courses to high school seniors in literacy and math who may be seeking post-secondary studies but lacking the prerequisite. The bill focuses on academic preparation and allows coursework that will meet the high school graduation requirements. It will allow students to take classes that they will be able to apply to their high school curriculum. Mr. Cyphers explained that it provides free online access to information regarding the economic value of college majors to students to show what is being paid to those with degrees or certifications. He stated that the bill requires all seniors to apply for federal student loans and transfers some adult education programs to the State Board for Technical and Comprehensive Education. Mr. Cyphers stated that it maximizes the use of career and technology centers to improve and update careers in technical education. He stated that the House gave final approval and sent the bill to the Senate where it is currently waiting for approval from the Senate Education Committee. Mr. Cyphers pointed out Section 7 of the bill explaining that it focused on working age adults with a post-secondary degree or some type of credential. He said that there will be a study or plan implemented to determine the best way to transfer adult basic and secondary education from state board education to what is being created for the state board for technical and comprehensive education. Mr. Cyphers pointed out components that the report will require to include funding, how it will facilitate partners under the Federal Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act. He explained that there are some amendments that applies directly to Santee-Lynches from now until the end of the Legislation session. He also stated that both bills will focus on eliminating duplication of services, give consistent access to data, and allow students to be introduced to technical and trade careers while in high school.

VIII. Reports

SC Works Operator Report

Mr. Ray Jackson, SC Works Operator/Center Manager presented the SC Works Center Report for July 1, 2023 through January 5, 2024.

Chart 1: Area Labor Force, Employment and Unemployment Data Table (November 2023)

Area Profile for Santee-Lynches, SC

Area Labor Force, Employment and Unemployment Data Table

The table below shows the monthly not seasonally adjusted Labor Force, Employment and Unemployment data for Sumter, SC in November 2023.

Area	Civilian Labor Force	Number Employed	Number Unemployed	Unemployment Rate	Preliminary
Clarendon	12,127	11,658	469	3.9%	Yes
Lee	6,557	6,308	249	3.8%	Yes
Sumter	42,906	41,347	1,559	3.6%	Yes
Kershaw	30,206	29,295	911	3.0%	Yes
Santee-Lynches	91,796	88,608	3,188	3.5%	Yes
South Carolina	2,469,257	2,396,802	72,455	3.0%	Yes
United States	167,977,000	161,149,000	5,827,000	3.5%	No

Source: Bureau of Labor Statistics, SC Dept of Employment & Workforce

Mr. Jackson stated that the chart above shows Area Labor Force, Employment and Unemployment data reported by each county in the region. Mr. Jackson reported updated numbers for the month of November for unemployment: Clarendon County's unemployment rate is 3.9%; Lee County's is at 3.8%; Sumter County's is 3.6%; and Kershaw County's is 3.0%. Santee-Lynches is 3.5%; the State is 3.0% and the Nation is 3.5%.

Chart 2: Area Profile –Labor Force, Employment and Unemployment Distribution Table (October 2023)

Area Profile for Santee-Lynches, SC

Labor Force, Employment and Unemployment Distribution Table

The table below shows the workforce development areas with the highest preliminary unemployment rate in South Carolina for October 2023. These figures are not seasonally adjusted.

Rank	Area	Civilian Labor Force	Number Employed	Number Unemployed	Unemployment Rate	Preliminary
1	Lower Savannah	129,125	124,415	4,710	3.6%	Yes
2	Santee-Lynches	91,526	88,320	3,206	3.5%	Yes
3	Pee Dee	154,164	148,858	5,306	3.4%	Yes
4	Waccamaw	193,707	187,403	6,304	3.3%	Yes
5	Upstate	195,024	188,815	6,209	3.2%	Yes
6	Upper Savannah	112,436	108,807	3,629	3.2%	Yes
7	Worklink	189,996	184,348	5,648	3.0%	Yes
8	Catawba	212,302	205,912	6,390	3.0%	Yes
9	Midlands	365,923	355,220	10,703	2.9%	Yes
10	Lowcountry	117,153	113,843	3,310	2.8%	Yes
11	Greenville	267,964	260,636	7,328	2.7%	Yes
12	Trident	435,789	424,802	10,987	2.5%	Yes

Source: Bureau of Labor Statistics, SC Dept of Employment & Workforce

Santee-Lynches currently ranks second at a 3.5% unemployment rate. Mr. Jackson also stated that the highest rate was obtained by Lower Savannah at 3.6% and the lowest was Trident at 2.5%.

Chart 3: Area Profile Employers by Number of Job Openings Table

Area Profile for Santee-Lynches, SC

Employers by Number of Job Openings Table

The table below shows the employers with the highest number of job openings advertised online in Santee-Lynches, SC on January 7, 2024 (Jobs De-duplication Level 2) Opens in a new browser window.

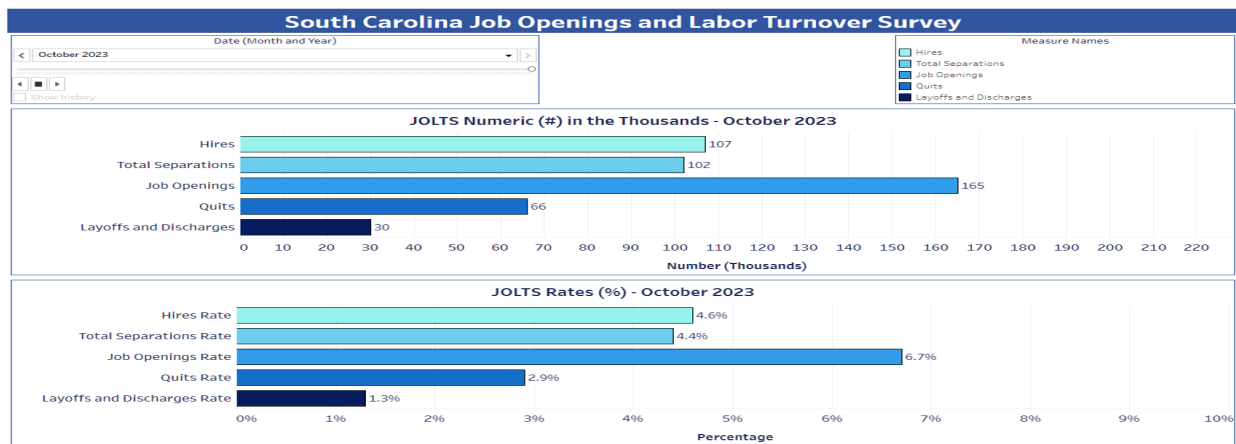
Rank	Employer Name	Job Openings
1	Prisma Health	92
2	Integral Federal, Inc.	83
3	Kershaw County School District	55
4	Integral Consulting Services, Inc.	42
5	Food Lion	35
6	McLeod Health	30
7	City of Sumter, SC	29
8	Morris College	29
9	Lee County School District	28
10	McDonald's Corporation	28
11	Clarendon County School District	26
12	UIC Alaska	24
13	UIC Technical Services	24
14	Central Carolina Technical College	23
15	Kershaw County, SC	21
16	Sonic Corp.	20
17	Love's Travel Stops & Country Stores, Inc.	19
18	Agile Defense, Inc.	18
19	The University of South Carolina	18
20	V2X	18
21	Serco Inc.	17
22	gTANGIBLE Corporation	16
23	Wendy's International, Inc.	15
24	Dollar Tree, Inc.	14
25	Clean Harbors	13

Source: Online advertised jobs data

Chart 3 lists the top Employers by Number of Job Openings in our region through January 7, 2024. He highlighted that Prisma Health has 92 job openings, Integral Federal Inc. (Contractor on Shaw) has 83 job openings, Kershaw County School District has 55 job openings, Integral Consulting Services has 42 job openings, Food Lion has 35 job openings, and McLeod Health has 30 job openings in our region. Mr. Jackson stated that by reviewing the report, he has determined that Shaw has contracted with 7 companies for over 240 job

postings. He stated that Workforce staff is working with Shaw to determine how many of those posting is civilian and how many are military. Mr. Jackson also stated that once this is determined then Workforce staff will be better able to place civilians in those positions. This chart helps when talking to clients about companies that are hiring.

Chart 4: South Carolina Job Openings and Labor Turnover Survey (October 2023)



Mr. Jackson reported that this chart lists the state’s job openings and labor turnover for the month of October 2023. There were 107,000 new hires; 102,000 total separations; 165,000 job openings; 66,000 quits; and 30,000 layoffs and discharges. Mr. Jackson stated that between separations, quits, and layoffs, roughly 203,000 people left the workforce for the month of October. He informed the Board that a career fair was held in Lee County for the month of December at the Adult Education building, and they just got approval to host a career fair for Adult Education in Sumter. Mr. Jackson stated that the career fair will be held on February 29th, but workforce will be providing updated information once they have received it.

WIOA Adult, Dislocated Worker and Youth Program Report

Mr. Ray Jackson presented the WIOA Adult, Dislocated Workers, and Youth Program Report for July 1, 2023, through January 5, 2024.

Adult/Dislocated Worker

Chart 1: Total Active Adult/Dislocated Worker Enrollments

New- 46 Actual- 122 Goal- 185

Chart 2: Performance Outcome Updates

Adult/DW Credentials - 63 Measure Skill Gain - 187

Chart 3: Received Training

Received Training - 52

Training was primarily provided in the Healthcare and Transportation sectors: Clinical Medical Assistant, Patient Care and CDL Training were the predominant training fields trained in.

Adult Program Highlight

Mr. Nakia Johnson

Mr. Johnson obtained his high school diploma in 1993 then entered the WIOA program as a Veteran and Ex-

Offender. Nakia started 3 months of welding training in June 2023 while also working a full-time job. He successfully completed his welding training and received his Welding Certificate in September 2023. Nakia began working for Field Force on September 20, 2023 as a traveling welder. He is excited about the opportunity to be a welder and gives thanks to the WIOA program for helping him to achieve his dream. Nakia is making \$26.99 per hour.

Youth

Chart 4: Total Active Youth Enrollments

New – 42 Actual- 76 Goal- 142

Chart 5: Performance Outcomes Updates

Youth Credential - 41 Measurable Skills Gain - 118 WEX/OJT – 19 Resumes created/updated - 60 Career Smart - 40 Adult Education - 12

Chart 6: Received Training

Received Training - 22

Mr. Jackson stated that currently 22 individuals have received training and based on the chart, the medical industry has the largest training areas with Patient Care Technicians at 32%.

Youth Program Highlight

Mr. Nygel Kennedy

Mr. Nygel enrolled into the WIOA youth program in March 2023. His barriers were low income and basic skill deficiency. He started as a virtual WEX participant, where he learned about working in a professional environment. Nygel then decided to enroll at ArcLabs for welding. He completed his training on October 26, 2023. Nygel began working as a welder in Louisiana for the CCC Group, Inc. on November 6, 2023. Nygel is currently making \$32 per hour.

Mr. Jackson explained that WDB invites 60 to 70 individuals in for open house every other Monday to an orientation to assess their goals, the type of training needed, and to determine what will best work for them. He stated that these orientations allow the opportunity for a one-on-one interaction to meet the need of each individual and help them pursue their career.

Financial Report

Mr. Esmonde Levy, Workforce and Economic Development Manager, presented the Financial Report for the Program Year 2023 through 12/31/23:

Chart 1: Percent Expended

Eckerd Adult - 35.37% (YTD: \$113,173.83; Balance: \$206,826.17)

Eckerd DW - 29.57% (YTD: \$29,573.77; Balance: \$70,426.23)

Eckerd Youth - 45.28% (YTD: \$181,129.41; Balance: \$218,870.59)

Chart 2: Engage, Build, and Serve Total Percent Expended

Mr. Levy informed the Board that the Engage, Build and Serve (EBS) grants will expire in March 2024. He stated that they are extremely close to closing them out. Mr. Levy stated that the EBS Youth Grant is projected to close in January and the EBS Adult /DW will be closing within the next month. He projected that both grants would be closed within the next two months.

EBS Adult/DW

Eckerd has expended \$202,632.63, with a balance of \$13,209.37 (93.88% expended)

EBS Youth

Eckerd has expended \$38,616.40, with a balance of \$112.60 (99.71% expended)

IX. Other Business: Ratification of Email Vote – Dislocated Worker to Adult Funding Transfer (M)

Mr. Levy stated the Board voted and approved via email to transfer \$140,000 from the Dislocated Worker program funding to the Adult program. As a result, staff is requesting ratification of the email vote. Chairman Edwards called for a motion to ratify the email vote to transfer \$140,000 in funding from the Dislocated Worker program to the Adult program. **The motion was made by Ms. Tiffany Myers and seconded by Dr. Vanessa Canty.** There being no discussion, Chairman Edwards called for the vote. **All were in favor and the motion passed unanimously.**

X. Chairman’s Comments

Chairman Edwards began his comments by welcoming new members and guests. He suggested that knowing the changes in venue with the new legislation may be beneficial to the Board members. Chairman Edwards explained that if there was an emailed list of items provided for the Board to review, Ms. Canty would be able to clarify the opposes and provide a clear explanation of the opposition. Ms. Areatha Clark agreed and informed Chairman Edwards that she and Ms. Canty will follow-up with his suggestion. Chairman Edwards pointed out the highlight from the youth program on Mr. Nygel Kennedy and how WIOA assisted in his career success. He touched on local welding companies in the region and compared the pay scale versus what other companies outside the region were paying employees in the same field. He suggested to the board that it would be nice if they could collaborate with local companies to increase pay for welding positions in the region. Chairman Edwards thinks that this approach will be able to keep trained workers in state versus losing them.

Ms. Aretha Clark, Deputy Executive Director, and Workforce Development Director opened the floor for any other questions following Chairman Edwards comments. Dr. Vanessa Canty began by informing the Board that there were 38 graduates at Sumter Adult Ed from July 1 until now. She stated that they hit 18 diploma and 20 GED on the evening before and explained that they would be testing on Friday and Monday. She projects that there will be a total of 5 graduates for the GED program. Mr. Canty informed the board of the processes implemented once these adults have graduated that will help them with employment and gain certification for jobs. She stated that she did not want too much time to pass between the individual graduate and moving to the next level. She informed the board that they currently have 3 students who just enrolled in the Mechatronics program at Central Carolina Technical College preparing for a career with Continental Tires. Dr. Canty explained that last year they were at 48 and currently they are at 38, and she is feeling good about where they currently are.

X1. Adjournment

The Santee-Lynches Workforce Development Board of Directors’ meeting was adjourned at 5:40PM.

Recorded by,

Lennett Butler, Administrative Assistant I-PR,
Santee-Lynches Regional Council of Governments