

**Southern Maryland Workforce Development Board
Tri-County Council for Southern Maryland
Solomons, MD
March 9, 2017**

Minutes

- Members Present:** Mike Benton (Chair), Edie McGreevy, Doris Cammack-Spencer, Lisa Millikan, Christi Lombardi, Larry Greenhill, Stephanie Witte, Stacey Cook, Carrie Willmore, Robin Cullers, John Hartline, Laurel James (representative)
- Members Absent:** Darlene Breck, Francisco Kuidlan, Todd Leitch, Cindy Rauner, Raveen Taylor, Suzie Miller, Marcia Keeth, Alan Crawley, Kelly Winters, Therese Wolf, James Yuhase
- Staff Present:** Ruthy Davis, Pam Wilkerson, Norma Dorsett, Eleanor Nelson, Leonard Green, Melinda Bowling, Lindsey Almond
- Guests Present:** Gretchen Heinze-Hardman, Michelle Quesenberry, Anthony Viverelli

CALL TO ORDER

The meeting was called to order at 8:10 am by Mike Benton, Chairman.

WELCOME

Mike opened the meeting with a warm welcome and acknowledgment of the attendees. Since there was not yet a quorum of members, the business matters were moved to a later time in the agenda.

SPECIAL GUEST INTRODUCTION

Ruthy Davis introduced the Full Board to Gretchen Heinze-Hardman, the Southern Maryland Intergovernmental Representative to the Office of the Governor. Gretchen told the Board that her assignment is to facilitate County governments and municipalities having a voice, and further, for their agendas and needs to be delivered to the Governor's office. She generates weekly reports that are delivered to the Director of Government Affairs, who communicates directly with Governor Hogan. The main initiative of her job assignment is to be the "boots on the ground" to represent all parts of Maryland.

MISSION MOMENT- FARMING FOR HUNGER

Chair Mike Benton introduced Michelle Quesenberry and Anthony Viverelli from Serenity Farm's Farming for Hunger program. They surveyed the room, and the majority of the Board had heard of the farm and some of their initiatives. Michelle and Anthony shared with the Board how their programs were becoming more successful based on the partnership of the WDB Staff Members. A video was shown regarding the formation of the program, an overview of their initiatives, and the impact that has been seen from Farming for Hunger. More than 1.5 million pounds of food for the hungry has been distributed in Southern Maryland.

Farming for Hunger (F4H) has four core initiatives: Food, Youth Outreach, Second Chances, and Community. Each program brings together all walks of life and focuses on restoring humanity through breaking the cycle of addiction. Mr. Viverelli spoke to the Board about the F4H Mission:

“Our Mission is to feed the hungry and help feed the soul. Hunger comes in many different ways. Healing the mind, body and spirit is at the core of Farming 4 Hunger. We believe if you serve others, you too will be fed.”

F4H handles all the logistics, delivering food to the shelters, drop sties, and pantries the organization partners with.

Mr. Viverelli went on to inform the Board about their Youth Outreach programs and how it is flourishing. From primary education to high school youth and beyond, F4H focuses on nutrition, fitness, community, prevention, recovery, and agriculture through activities. This allows the youth to be educated appropriately using the platform of workshops, camps, field trips, events, and life sharing.

Michelle Quesenberry spoke to the Board about her program - The Second Chance Program - where pre-release incarcerated participants receive group and one on one life coaching from an excellent team. A new component and addition to the program has added workforce staff members Pam Wilkerson and Dwayne Brown who have been visiting the farm twice monthly, providing such support as Man Talk 101 as well as the Workplace Excellence series. Workshops such as critical thinking, problem solving, team building, emotional coping, and structured group work, are some of the lifestyle and job readiness skills provided to the participants. Ultimately the number one priority with the 2nd Chance initiative is to engage and successfully equip participants in life skills and trade skills, teach them to work together with their communities; therefore reducing recidivism, increasing valued assets to our workforce, and breaking through the wall of addiction in Southern Maryland. The farm has volunteers providing connections to GED/Adult Education Programs, Technology training, life and financial planning, working towards personal transformations for all participants.

The most recent success story of the Faming 4 Hunger program is their first fully-grant funded position for one of their successful Second Chance participants. Continued funding is being pursued by the farm so that they can continue to grow their programs. The programs are growing at such an exponential rate that the Farm has yet to see its full potential.

A question was asked by Doris Cammack-Spencer, inquiring whether female programs for their Second Change are being implemented. The answer was given that they are not currently, and this is based essentially on proximity. The program works through the local detention center which is only for males. Conversations are being held with Calvert County Drug Court to assist with their female population

Currently, no State funds are received for the Second Chance program. The Tri-County Council for Southern Maryland hopes to pursue grants for this population in the future.

BUSINESS MATTERS

At 9:26 am a quorum had been reached, and the Board unanimously approved the minutes from the December 8, 2016, Full-Board meeting through a motion by Larry Greenhill, seconded by Edie McGreevy, with no discussion. Directly following, Chairman Benton requested the review of the Consent Agenda Documents previously sent out to Board Members. With no questions or clarifications being necessary, a motion was made by Stacey Cook at 9:27am, with a second by Doris Cammack-Spencer and unanimous approval was given by the Board to approve the Consent Agenda.

WIOA & TRI-COUNTY COUNCIL NEWS

Ruthy Davis reported to the WDB regarding the process for competitive procurement of the One-Stop Operator, required by the regulations of WIOA. Currently, the Tri-County Council for Southern Maryland is the One-Stop Operator. The Council will hire a consultant to write the request for Proposal and put the project out to bid. Additionally, the Consultant will select a neutral party to score the bids. The Executive Committee will provide their recommendation to the Full-Board at the June 2017 meeting. Doris addressed concerns of not having the opportunity to participate in the discussion and provide comments. The Chairman mentioned that the full opportunity for discussion will be at the June 2017 meeting and that a quorum is especially important for a robust conversation.

Mr. John Hartline, Executive Director of TCCSMD, updated the Board on the funding allocations from each of Southern Maryland's three counties. He reviewed with the Board that funding provided by all counties provides indirect logistical and infrastructure costs supporting TCCSMD's federal and state funded programs. Without clear indications of whether all counties will continue providing funds, he stated that the limitations in support may inhibit growth to current programs, as well as support additional future grant applications. To date, St. Mary's and Calvert have voted for continue support at their previous funding levels.

STANDING COMMITTEE UPDATES

Youth and Young Adult Advisory Committee Chair Edie McGreevy reported to the Board that their Committee is ramping up efforts for the 2017 Summer Employment program. Currently, the goal is 25 participants in Charles County, 15 for Calvert County, and 15 for St. Mary's County. Summer Employment is set to begin June 19th. In addition, the Committee has been providing Entrepreneurial training in partnership with CSM. They have also been facilitating work life skills workshops where their participants learn financial literacy, work-life balance skills, and other essential training modules found in the Workplace Excellence Series. Norma Dorsett, Youth Program Manager, took a moment to express appreciation to Ms. Eleanor Nelson, for the evening use of the training room at JobMatch for these workshops.

Workforce Accessibility Committee Chair Lisa Millikan reported to the Board that they have been diligently working towards a Staff Training scheduled for April 28th. Their committee will be providing disability accommodation and accessibility training, requirements under ADA, as well as training for individuals with mental health disabilities. The next WAC meeting will be held March 22, 2017.

Marcia Keeth, Chair of the Strategic Business Engagement Committee, was unable to attend the full-board meeting and updates were provided by Lindsey Almond, staff for the committee. Ms. Almond reported that the meetings had been delayed in returning to their regular schedule, and reiterated to the Board the arduous task of gathering together many business leaders at once. The Chair of the Board suggested investing further time into technological accommodations to increase attendance. The next meeting will be held March 30th, and Ms. Almond affirmed that technological accommodations would be implemented. At the next meeting, Industry Surveys will be assessed and amended as needed for distribution.

CALL TO ACTION

Chairman Benton and Board Members Doris Cammack-Spencer, Stephanie Witte, and Larry Greenhill commented on the lack of discussion from local politicians regarding workforce issues. It wasn't discussed at Charles County's Legislative Breakfast, and this was addressed by Ms. Cammack-Spencer. Ms. Witte discussed her recent involvement with Unemployment Insurance and the difficulty it can be from a business and tax payer's perspective. The Chairman reminded the board that this is a recurring issue; nevertheless, every board member needs to keep in mind that through their involvement with this board, they still have a voice and to stay active.

Ruthy Davis informed the Board about an upcoming large training throughout the state workforce system entitled "Raising the Bar". Every Staff member supporting WIOA will attend from our region. This initiative was brought back by the Maryland Workforce Association, and is shaping up to be a huge success.

ADJOURN

With no public present to comment, Larry Greenhill moved to adjourn the meeting. Stephanie Witte seconded, and the motion carried. The meeting was adjourned at 10:03 am.