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Central Virginia Workforce Development Area VII

*Serving the City of Lynchburg, and Counties of Amherst, Appomattox, Bedford, and Campbell*

**Workforce Development Board Meeting**

**April 8, 2025**

**3:00 p.m. at**

**The Lynchburg Regional Business Alliance**

**Lynchburg, VA 24504**

**Draft – until board approves.**

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| ***Members Present***: Nat Marshall, BWXT (Chair); Jason Shockley, Industrial Plating Corp (Vice Chair); Dr. John Capps, Virginia Community College; Sherie Fulcher, Southern Air, Inc.; Dana Hogan, C.B. Fleet; Kimberly McIvor, Virginia Works; David Sage, LU Virginia Technical Institute; Jeff Spaeth, Aerofin, Inc.; Andrew Crawford, Department of Social Services; Alisha Meador, Lynchburg Office of Economic Development and Tourism; Gary Campbell, Johnson Health Center, Christine Kennedy, Lynchburg Regional Business Alliance; Leidra McQueen, Lynchburg Beacon of Hope; Carrie White, Centra Health; Mike Hertzler, Virginia MetalFab; Annette Bennett, Appomattox County Public Schools; Cheryl Giggetts, CTA Consultants LLC. |
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| ***Members Present/Attending Remotely***: Sam Penn, United Steelworkers Dist. 8; Sonya Todd, L3  Harris; Lauren Anderson, Lynchburg Regional Society of Human Resource Management; Luke Saechao, Adult and Continuing Education of Central VA,  ***CLEO Members Present:*** Jon Hardie, Campbell County Board of Supervisors; John Hinkle, Appomattox County Board of Supervisors, Drew Wade, Amherst County Board of Supervisors.  ***Visiting Guests:*** Visiting Guests: Kimberly Dyke-Harsley, United Cherokee Indian Tribe of Virginia, Inc.; Kaleigh Giles, Cooper Seel of VA, Pedro Ortiz, Registered Apprenticeship. |
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| ***Members Absent, Excused:*** Sterling Wilder, Jubilee Family Development Center; Scott Francis, Integrated Technology Group; Tamara Rosser, Lynchburg Community Action Group; James Davis, ODJC alternate; Tori Gilmartin, LRBA alternate; Christian Wiscovitch, Department of Aging and Rehabilitative Services; Charles Mann, IAM& AW Local Lodge 10; Ron Lovelace, Norvelle, Mathews & Crews, PC; John Redding, Appomattox Resident. |
| ***Staff Present:*** Traci Blido, Executive Director, CVWDB; Tim Saunders, Assistant Director, CVWDB;  CVWDB; Lamont Hobson, HumanKind; Shantel Crews, Human Kind; Sandy Dobyns, CVPDC Finance Director; Patti Lassiter, CVPDC Finance Assistant; Alec Brebner, CPDC Exec. Dir.; Clay Stein (remote). |
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**1. Call to Order and Roll Call**

Nat Marshall welcomed everyone and opened the meeting at 3:05 p.m. Nat informed the Board that Mr. Bryan Little, Center Director at Old Dominion Job Corps Center and a member of the Board had passed away, April 1, 2025. Nat asked for a moment of silence in his honor.

Following the moment of silence, Nat asked everyone in attendance, both in person and virtually, to introduce themselves and share their title. Traci Blido checked attendance and announced excused absences.

2. **Electronic Meeting Participation Acknowledgement**

Nat Marshall read the virtual participation policy to the Board, and asked if based on the policy does the Board comply with having online participation. Due to technical difficulties with connectivity, we may not be able to provide the opportunity to join virtually in the future. Tim Saunders explained that the connection issue is with the audio. Participants will not be able to hear. Participants can see presentations and the actual meeting, but will have little to no sound. Nat requested a motion to eliminate the option for any further meetings. David Sage made the motion, which was seconded by John Capps. The motion was unanimously approved by the board.

**3. Public Comment Period**

Nat Marshall opened the floor for public comment. Traci Blido invited Jon Hardie to provide an update on Campbell County’s Technical Center.

Mr. Hardie reported that Campbell County’s Technical Center is serving a record number of students this year and expressed appreciation for the opportunity to support their education. He noted that over 100 students are enrolled in the CTE Academy at CVCC, a no-cost dual enrollment option for seniors.

He also shared that Campbell County recently hosted a successful College and Career Day, with 86 employers and technical schools engaging with students. The event attracted more than 800 students, offering each high school an hour to meet with employers and explore a range of career pathways. Highlights included participation from representatives across diverse industries, such as a member of the WNBA’s Los Angeles Sparks.

Mr. Hardie emphasized the importance of aligning career and technical education programs with local workforce needs, noting that workforce challenges impact the entire region. He also announced an upcoming welding competition at the Campbell County Technical Center that will feature high school, collegiate, and professional participants, providing an opportunity for students to demonstrate their skills and for employers to connect with emerging talent.

Traci thanked Mr. Hardie for his presentation and for sharing updates on Campbell County’s workforce development efforts.

**4. Special Presentation**

Kaleigh Giles, Human Resource Manager at Cooper Steel of Virginia, provided an overview of the company, which was established in 2018 as a continuation of Lynchburg Steel and is part of Cooper Steel Fabricators based in Tennessee. Cooper Steel, founded in 1960 by Kennedy Cooper, employs more than 600 people company-wide and is led by CEO Gary Cooper, CFO Jordan Cooper, and COO Corey. The Virginia operation, located in Amherst County, has grown to 84 employees and recently completed a major office renovation.

Kaleigh highlighted the company’s focus on employee engagement, mentorship, and community involvement, noting that employees are encouraged to participate in local initiatives such as volunteering at the Humane Society and supporting career fairs. She emphasized Cooper Steel’s commitment to workforce development through partnerships with local career and technical education programs and shared that the company is preparing to compete in the upcoming Welding Wars at CVCC. Traci thanked Kaleigh for sharing insights into Cooper Steel’s growth, operations, and HR practices.

**5. Approval of October 8, 2024, Minutes**

Nat Marshall entertained a motion for approval of the October 8, 2024, meeting minutes. Mike Hertzler motioned to approve the draft minutes as presented and Sherie Fulcher seconded. The motion was unanimously approved.

**6. Director’s Report**

Traci Blido provided a brief update on several key initiatives. She reported that the Education & Workforce Summit, held earlier in the day at the Lynchburg Regional Business Alliance and organized by Christine, Tori, and Megan, was a success, with strong participation from educators and businesses.

Traci also shared that the recent monitoring process for equal opportunity and program administration went smoothly, with thanks extended to Clay and Sandy for assisting with documentation. The monitoring team reviewed records and interviewed staff and clients, and Traci anticipates a positive final report, noting significant improvements this year.

Additionally, the team successfully submitted the required LWDA7 Local Plan to the governor’s office, along with an application for the one-stop center certification. Traci noted that a bi-annual state review and certification process for the local board was forthcoming.

Traci reminded the board of the requirement to spend 40% of WIOA formula funds on training. While meeting this goal can be challenging, she highlighted initiatives such as on-the-job training and incumbent worker training. Despite strong progress, Traci said that barriers such as childcare and transportation continue to impact clients, and career navigators remain essential in helping individuals achieve their goals.

**7. Finance Report**

Sandy Dobyns provided an update on the February finance report, which was included in board member packets before the meeting. She noted that the March report was also distributed at the meeting. Sandy reviewed the year-to-date figures through March and reported that progress is tracking similarly to last year. She explained that it typically takes about 18 months to spend annual funds, with a two-year window for full utilization, and confirmed that spending is approximately halfway to the fiscal year goals. Sandy expressed confidence that fiscal year 2024 targets will be met ahead of schedule and anticipates no issues in achieving the required 20% and 40% expenditure benchmarks. No questions were raised.

**8. One Stop Center and Title I Services Success**

Shantel Crews announced that the One-Stop Center is now fully staffed, with Lamont Hobson stepping into the role of One-Stop Coordinator. Two new youth career navigators, Renee Riegel and Katelyn Windsor, were hired at the end of March to replace departing employees Rachel Jameson and Jordan Johnson.

Shantel addressed a change in leadership. Keith Cook, who served as Director of Workforce Operations since 2018, has transitioned to lead HumanKind’s Sponsored Homes program. Shantel is now serving as the new Director of Workforce Operations.

Shantel provided an overview of current center activities and shared updated statistics. Since the start of the program year, the center has served 4,771 individuals. Through online referrals, 308 individuals have enrolled in WIOA services, been referred to partner agencies, or received employment assistance. The WIOA Title I adult program currently has 54 enrolled participants, 61 active cases, and two participants who have earned credentials this year. Efforts to engage dislocated workers continue, with one recent enrollment noted. The youth program has 31 participants, and it is expected that the addition of new staff will help grow enrollment.

Shantel highlighted the range of services offered, including labor market information, job placement assistance, and supportive services such as childcare, transportation, and housing support. A detailed breakdown of these services was included in the board report. No questions were raised at this time.

**9. Approval of Runk & Pratt as Eligible Training Provider**

Tim Saunders presented a request from Runk & Pratt Health Care Enterprises, Inc. to add its Certified Nursing Assistant (CNA) program to the state eligible training provider list for WIOA. Runk & Pratt, which operates assisted living facilities in the region, offers a 140-hour CNA program that leads to Nurse Aide certification through the Virginia Board of Nursing. The program includes classroom instruction, skills training, lab work, and hands-on clinical experience. While graduates are encouraged to seek employment with Runk & Pratt, they are also prepared for CNA roles with other employers.

The program cost is $1,500, covering all necessary fees, testing, and supplies, and is eligible for Title I funding. Tim explained that adding Runk & Pratt provides another important training option for participants, especially as other funding sources, such as FastForward and G3, have covered many previous programs, limiting WIOA expenditure opportunities. Ensuring sufficient training options is essential for meeting the federal requirement to spend 40% of Title I funds on training.

A motion to approve adding the Runk & Pratt CNA program to the eligible training provider list was made by Dr. John Capps, seconded by Mike Hertzler, and unanimously approved by the board.

**10. Approval of change to Work Ready Services Policy 102**

Traci Blido shared a presentation on the board’s Program Policy 102 for “Work Ready Services,” which provides between $25 and $2,500 per participant for supportive services such as transportation, clothing, and testing fees. Following a monitoring review that noted payment for a client to take a test three times, Traci and Shantel recommended adding a provision to limit coverage to one retest per participant for licensing exams, such as CNA or LPN. David Sage made a motion to approve the policy revision.

After discussion, Traci clarified the language to specify that while participants may retake exams as often as needed, CVWDB will fund only the initial test and one retest. David Sage amended his motion to reflect this clarification. Christine Kennedy seconded the motion, and it was unanimously approved by the board.

**11. Committee Reports**

a. **Executive –** Nothing to report currently. Hopefully to schedule meeting in next few weeks and months.

**b. Youth** – Sherie Fulcher provided an overview of current funding opportunities available for registered apprenticeship programs. She noted that the Virginia Manufacturers Association is offering $500 per apprentice in manufacturing-related occupations, including HVAC, plumbing, and electrical. Virginia Works has announced funding of up to $4,000 for two apprentices to assist with expenses and supportive services, while Jobs for the Future is offering up to $2,800 per apprentice for individuals over 18 who face financial barriers. Sherie emphasized that many of these apprenticeship pathways lead to automatic licensure upon completion, with grant funding available to cover associated fees. She highlighted the opportunity for youth to begin their career pathways early, such as 16-year-olds working toward a journeyman’s license, and encouraged those without registered apprenticeship programs to consider developing them.

**c. Operations & Performance**—Nothing to report currently.

**d. Finance** – Nothing to report currently.

e. **Other** - David Sage shared that Central Virginia Community College (CVCC) and Liberty University have entered into a contractual agreement that allows students and apprentices needing financial aid to register through CVCC’s portal to access funding for training on Liberty’s campus. He expressed appreciation to Dr. John Capps for his role in fostering this collaboration with local industry and also thanked Jason Ferguson for his efforts in partnership with Liberty. David noted that this agreement is designed to expand access to training and create additional opportunities for students and apprentices.

12. **Adjournment**

Prior to adjourning the meeting, Nat Marshall mentioned that the next meeting will be July 8. David Sage motioned to approve adjournment and Sherie Fulcher seconded. The motion was unanimously approved.

The meeting ended at 4:16 pm.