

HIGH COUNTRY WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT BOARD

April 12, 2007

MINUTES

The April 12th meeting of the High Country Workforce Development Board was called to order by Chairman Doug Pratt.

The following Workforce Development Board members and Youth Council members were present:

Barbara Barlow	Steve English	Doug Pratt
Connie Barnette	Marie Gwyn	Sam L. Ray
Anne Bowlin	Jennie Harpold (YC)	Sandra Reese
Carol Coulter	Gwen Harris	Ben Shoemake
Maria Cunningham	Suzanne Owens (YC)	Tommy Williams (YC)

The following Workforce Development staff members were present: Misty Bishop-Price, Carole Coates, Ken Cone (contractual), Ruby Greene, and Andrea Morgan.

Guests: Don Alexander, Catherine Bare, Rebecca Bloomquist, Philip Castro, Calvin Dull, Rick Herndon, Betty Huskins, Pam Lewis, Angie Miller, Lisa Redman, Chilton Rogers, Julia Rowland, Derick Satterfield, Ginger Shaffer, Melody Tippins, Marnie Werth, Pam Wilson.

Mr. Pratt presented the Consent Agenda asking for changes or approval of the February 8, 2007 minutes. Sam Ray made a motion to approve. Sandra Reese seconded. Motion unanimously approved with no abstentions.

Mr. Pratt reported that the Executive Committee notes from February 8 and March 8, 2007 are in the Board Book with recommended goals from the upcoming strategic plan update included in both. The March notes are followed by a draft and updated plan summary that also identifies successes. Staff will be working more on these goals and the details with their National Business Learning Partnership (NBLP) partners and will update as needed. The Youth Council and Quality Assurance Committee will also review the goals under their auspices and make further recommendations if needed during their May meetings. Mr. Pratt asked members on committees to review the goals, success measures, and updated draft response to the State of the Workforce Report recommendations before the May meetings. The Board will take a final vote on the goals and measures at the June Board meeting. Mr. Pratt reported that the North Carolina Association of Workforce Boards will meet Thursday, April 26 from 9 AM to 1 PM at the Chamber of Commerce in High Point. Lunch will be provided. The agenda includes follow-up on the Association's strategic plan as well as presentations and discussions regarding the new standards for local workforce development boards. Mr. Pratt asked members planning to attend that meeting to inform Carole Coates ASAP for lunch reservations. Mr. Pratt reported that the Board Book (pp. 41-42) contains information on the National Association of Workforce Boards 2008 Forum scheduled for February 23-26, 2008 in Washington, DC. Mr. Pratt attended the 2006 forum, and he encouraged other members to attend if possible. Mr. Pratt stated the forum is informative, gives the big picture of what is going on, and provides information on what other boards are doing. Registration, meals, and lodging expenses are covered for private sector members. If interested, contact Ruby Greene. Mr. Pratt reported that the Workforce Development Consortium comprised of the County Commission Chairmen met March 20, 2007. Richard Blackburn, Chairman of the Ashe County Commissioners, was appointed to be their Chief Executive Official. The Consortium voted to retain all public sector seats currently designated for their counties.

Ruby Greene (for Scott Moncrief) reported that the Quality Assurance (QA) Committee reviewed the concerns of issuing JobLink swipe cards and using them consistently. The swipe card system tracks activity of the JobLink Centers. The Board Book contains a memo from QA Committee Chairman Moncrief sent to key JobLink managers asking them to encourage staff to issue the cards and encourage customers to use them. Ms. Greene said the Board looks forward to seeing a substantial increase in swipe card issuance and usage. The committee meeting notes (p. 23) state that the WDB is in the midst of looking at performance in a different way. Performance measures will now look at how much money is spent in training, if training is in high growth industries, how many people went to work in high growth industries that completed the training, are those people working at a self-sufficient wage, and what numbers were retained in jobs once entering work. Those are goals the Board is looking to add to the federal measures that will be implemented July 1, 2007 to help meet the Board's strategic goals. Ms. Greene reported that the QA Committee also reviewed performance reports and monitoring reviews. The next QA Committee meeting will be Thursday, May 10, 2007 at 3 PM. Discussions then will include examining baselines and setting performance goals.

Marie Gwyn reported that the Youth Council awarded the WIA Youth contract to Mayland Community College to serve Avery, Mitchell, and Yancey Counties. The Youth Council is working on a monthly reporting tool that will be used with providers to allow the Youth Council to keep up to date with what is going on. The Youth Council set a date of November 8, 2007 for youth providers to give presentations. Ms. Gwyn also reported that the Youth Council discussed potential goals and how they will fit into the WDB strategic goals.

Mr. Pratt introduced Betty Huskins of AdvantageWest to give a presentation on the new Certified Entrepreneurial Community (CEC) program. Ms. Huskins reported that the way the economy is changing one cannot expect too much of the big box stores to come in anymore. The “big elephants” are not out there anymore. AdvantageWest has focused on entrepreneurship for the last 4 ½ years. They have worked through the Blue Ridge Entrepreneurial Council (BREC) and Blue Ridge Angel Investors Network (BRAIN) to put together an organization having access to capital for young entrepreneurs. AdvantageWest continues to work in that arena and take that down to the grass roots level within communities for entrepreneurship. They are instituting a program which will help local communities do that through the Certified Entrepreneurial Community. Ms. Huskins stated that these eligibility criteria includes high performance; reward and recognition for time and effort involved in certification; interest in growing existing businesses; recruitment of entrepreneurs to come in from outside the region; a safe landing zone for new entrepreneurs when they come in; and better jobs and higher pay. AdvantageWest is looking for communities with the following: a desire to collaborate within and outside community boundaries; an interest in working in clusters of development that make sense for their communities; and a willingness to put capital resources on the table for entrepreneurs. Networking, education, and resources are always necessary in order to aid new companies, businesses, and first-time entrepreneurs. AdvantageWest continues to work with federal and state agencies on funding for the CEC program. They are working with the Center for Rural Entrepreneurship headquartered out of Chapel Hill and are setting up a partnership with the NC Rural Center for a revolving loan fund for entrepreneurs. They plan to work with Councils of Government, elected officials, and County Economic Development Commissions or Chambers of Commerce—whichever is applicable within the community. Ms. Huskins discussed the structure for an entrepreneurial leadership team in the communities that are interested in the CEC program. AdvantageWest will be working through the process developed by the Center for Rural Entrepreneurship. Counties or towns can apply for county-wide or city-wide designation. Five steps that communities work through in the CEC program are: 1) Community Readiness Certification (60-120 days); 2) Community Assessment Certification; 3) Community Strategy Certification (includes comprehensive plan for telecom broadband); 4) Community Capacity Certification; and 5) Community Evaluation Process. Short-term community advantages include: signage in the community; special recognition on AdvantageWest’s website; cooperative marketing opportunities to attract entrepreneurs; recognition in AdvantageWest’s annual report and all of their marketing materials; community featured in AdvantageWest’s newsletter and consultant familiarization tours done twice a year; and training for a leadership team through the Center for Rural Entrepreneurship (next session: June 11-13 in Boone). AdvantageWest has made long-term commitments to those communities to work hard on the revolving loan fund; look for funding sources for the last mile telecom broadband for the region; and continue to provide staff assistance for communities in the program through Pam Lewis, Director of Regional Programs and Events (tel: 828-687-7234; email: plewis@awnc.org). Entrepreneurial benefits include improved access to capital, broadband, and a network of people to provide help along with community support. Steps for success for this long-term program consist of education, capital formation, networking, and communication. Ms. Huskins stated that to get started, AdvantageWest will be accepting letters of intent through May 15. Press releases to that regard will be going out this week. The letter of intent must show a commitment to go through the long 5-step process and a willingness to put resources on the table along with setting aside funding to make it happen. Then AdvantageWest will begin training the leadership teams and start rolling out the program. Questions and discussion followed with Ms. Huskins regarding the program (Ray, Williams, Lewis, and Coates).

Mr. Pratt next presented appointments to a new Nominating Committee. Mr. Pratt asked Board members Sam Ray and Gwen Harris to accept appointments. Jayne Phipps-Boger (absent) was also appointed to the Nominating Committee. Mr. Pratt asked for any other members desiring to join the committee. No additional members presented themselves. All new committee members were asked to meet with Ruby Greene directly following the Board meeting.

Mr. Pratt introduced Carole Coates to present the Workforce Briefings. Ms. Coates reported that the North Carolina Commission on Workforce Development conducted a State of the Workforce Report for the state. The Corporation for Skilled Workforce was one of the two consulting firms that worked on the state’s report. That firm also worked on the WDB’s State of the Workforce Report. Copies of the executive summary of the state’s State of the Workforce Report were placed at members’ seats. The entire report may be accessed online at the Commission’s website at www.nccommerce.com/workforce/reports. Both the executive summary and the full report are online.

The Commission conducted three regional forums across the state with one held in Lenoir. The information provided at forums was helpful and addressed trends along with what could occur if trends continue but actions are not taken. Ms. Coates reported that the Workforce Investment Act Annual Report given to Executive Committee members is also available online at www.ncdet.org. A limited number of hard copies were made available by Ms. Coates for anyone interested. The report has each Workforce Development Area highlighted, including the High Country's youth participant award winners from the past two years and the High Country's youth incentive activities. The back of the report focuses on the performance measures for the state and each of the Workforce Development Areas. Ms. Coates reported that the Commission has developed standards for high performing boards discussed in previous committee meetings. Prior Board Books have contained charts of those standards. Work has been done in preparation to achieve those standards and has included the strategic planning process along with updating the strategic plan. The Executive Committee, Board staff, and the NBLP mentors have been working on the strategic plan. The April Board Book (pp. 18-22) contains a draft strategic plan identifying three goals where the WDB committees would each have primary responsibility for one goal. Committees will review goal statements and corresponding objectives at the May meetings. Committees will discuss and determine what the Board wants to achieve and what success looks like. Ms. Coates said these are backed up by many pages of more specific goals in terms of objectives and work plans to achieve those goals, those responsible, what the timeline is, etc. This is information that would turn into an executive summary similar to what members were provided by the Commission. The summary would address the Board's key goals and provide information to the public so they may follow the progress of the Board. Ms. Coates stated that the Board's State of the Workforce Report addresses four key areas: regionalism; the impact of second home buying/building; supporting a changing economy with small business and entrepreneurship; educational attainment, emerging workforce, and career awareness. Consultants developed a list of recommendations in each of those four areas. The Executive Committee reviewed each recommendation to determine if the WDB or another group needed to take responsibility, if there was redundancy, and how it fits in with the Board's three strategic goals. The Executive Committee's recommendations are in the Board Book for all members to examine and provide comments, questions, or additions. Ms. Coates reported that in order to meet the state's standards for high performing boards, boards need to complete a self-assessment. Ms. Coates will be sending members a self-assessment along with a guide that an ad hoc committee of the Commission developed offering explanation of the strategic planning process. Ms. Coates asked that members familiarize themselves with and complete the self-assessment then return it to Board staff. Determinations will be made regarding where the Board is in relation to high performing board standards and what kind of work the Board needs to do within the next year to meet those standards. The Board has one year to prepare. The goal of the state is that all boards meet the standards by July 2008.

Ms. Coates then introduced Angie Miller, Executive Director of WAMY Community Action, to give a report on a collaborative partnership in Watauga County between WAMY and Oasis. Ms. Miller stated that for the last four years these two organizations have been a part of a non-profit task force looking for property to purchase and build a community resource center or remodel an existing structure to meet their need. Ms. Miller said the property owned by Boone Pediatrics was purchased in January for the partnership. Boone Pediatrics will be building a new facility on the land next to Greenway Business Park where the soccer field currently is. Oasis presently owns one third of the building purchased, and WAMY owns two thirds of the 9,400 sq. ft. facility. They recently had a media campaign which resulted in a number of non-profit agencies calling to express interest in space. WAMY and Oasis will be moving into the new location within the next 14-16 months. By having these non-profit agencies under one roof they will be able to decrease overhead costs. Their ultimate goal is to decrease their debt in order to serve more people. These agencies serve many of the same clients, and many good things are being planned for the new facility. Ms. Miller said that as they progress she would be glad to come back with new partners to inform the Board of what is going on.

Ms. Coates continued by reporting that upcoming monitoring events include a visit by the Division of Employment and Training (DET) on April 24-26, 2007 to conduct a programmatic and financial monitoring review of region-wide services. DET will also be in the Boone office on May 1-2, 2007 to conduct Equal Opportunity monitoring. DET will conduct monitoring of the National Emergency Grant for Hurricane Katrina May 22-23. Ms. Coates reported that the annual plan to DET is due on May 4, 2007. This report is to be reviewed and signed by the WDB Chairman and the Workforce Development Consortium CEO, Richard Blackburn. The current draft version of the document is an update of the Board's 2005 plan. That 2005 plan is on the High Country Council of Governments website located at www.regiond.org under the Workforce Development program division. The online document is essentially the current plan without the updates that are presently being worked on. Ms. Coates encouraged members to review the online plan and submit any suggestions or additions. There are not any new questions or changes to the plan that require Board action. All policies in the plan still stand as previous decisions made by the WDB. Ms. Coates reported that there will be a site visit in Boone on May 30-31, 2007 by the National Business Learning Partnership (NBLP) mentors from Portland, Oregon and Vancouver, Washington. Board staff and mentors will be reviewing the

draft of the strategic plan updated goals. The mentors have provided guidance on this during the previous site visit and from their own goals. Board committees will have met by that time and provided their input as well. The Board's NBLP goals are to update its goals and strategic plan so there is locally meaningful data; to look at the Board's value add; to develop meaningful local performance standards for the Board, service providers, and JobLink Career Centers. The Quality Assurance Committee and Youth Council have been focusing on this in their work. Ms. Coates said the NBLP mentors will be participating with Board staff at the Watauga County JobLink Week and attending the Business Appreciation Luncheon on May 31 so they can also get ideas to take back with them. Ms. Coates reported that May is National Workforce Development Professionals Month. The JobLink System Liaisons have been working to get recognition for workforce development professionals in the JobLink Career Centers and elsewhere. Last year most of the area's county commissions proclaimed May as Workforce Development Professionals Month. Some of those resolutions still stand. Where they do not, the liaisons are going back to meet with those county commissions regarding the resolution. Ms. Coates reported that Board staff member Don Sherrill had hip replacement surgery a little over a month ago. Mr. Sherrill came back to work last week and worked almost fulltime. Today he has a follow-up visit. Ms. Coates stated that Mr. Sherrill is doing very well.

Mr. Pratt then asked for Other Board Member Business with none being given.

Mr. Pratt asked for public comments. Derick Satterfield distributed new brochures for the Avery and Mitchell County JobLink Career Centers along with cups from the Avery County JobLink Career Center. Mr. Satterfield invited all to come and visit the two centers. He reported that there will be a health care job fair at the Rock Gym in Newland on May 1 and invited everyone to attend. Ruby Greene introduced Melody Tippins, the new service provider from Caldwell Community College serving clients in Watauga County. Sam Ray thanked Mitchell County Manager Phil Castro for attending the meeting.

There being no other public comments, the meeting was adjourned.

The next Board meeting will be Thursday, June 14, 2007 at 3 PM at the High Country Council of Governments in Boone.

**High Country Workforce Development Board
Attendance Sheet
April 12, 2007**

%	Name	April 06	May 06	June 06	July 06	Aug 06	Sep 14 06	Sep 28 06	Nov 06	Dec 06	Feb 07	April 07
64%	Jim Halsey											
73%	Scott Moncrief (eff 3/06)											
64%	Jayne Phipps-Boger											
100%	Barbara Barlow (eff 9/28/06)											
80%	Carol Peters (eff 9/28/06)											
64%	Carol Coulter							:46 after start				
82%	Sam Ray								after start			
55%	Susan Pittman											
91%	Marie Gwyn											
89%	Vacant (Mitchell Private)											
100%	Steve English (eff 2/5/07)											
55%	Connie Barnette	4/28 only										
82%	Doug Pratt											
82%	Sandra Reese	4/28 only										
67%	Ben Shoemake (eff 12/06)											
73%	Vanya Baker	4/27 only										
67%	Maria Cunningham (eff 12/06)											
91%	Anne Bowlin											
82%	Gwen Harris											
55%	Wendell Wilson											
0%	Vacant (Yancey Private)											
18%	Melanie McFadyen					Maternity Leave	Maternity Leave	via phone				
0%	Vacant (At Large Labor)											
		43%	63%	67%	56%	88%	71%	89%	78%	80%	75%	60%

PRESENT
ABSENT
VACANCY

Youth Council Members Present

Jennie Harpold, Suzanne Owens, and Tommy Williams