

# HIGH COUNTRY WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT BOARD

August 9, 2007

## MINUTES

The August 9<sup>th</sup> meeting of the High Country Workforce Development Board was called to order by Vice-Chair Vanya Baker. Ms. Baker introduced new Board member Earl Tipton from Yancey County. Mr. Tipton stated that he is a lifetime member of Yancey County. He served eight years as Yancey County Manager. He is currently Vice-President of Young & McQueen Grading Company in Burnsville where he has been for eleven years. Mr. Tipton stated that he is familiar with the COG along with the WDB and is very glad to be a part. Mr. Tipton stood and recited the WDB Oath of Office with Ms. Baker. On behalf of the WDB Ms. Baker presented umbrella and coaster welcome gifts to Mr. Tipton.

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

Vanya Baker	Marie Gwyn	Carol Peters
Barbara Barlow	Jennie Harpold (YC)	Susan Pittman
Connie Barnette	Gwen Harris	Sam L. Ray
Anne Bowlin	Scott Moncrief	Ben Shoemake
Carol Coulter	Suzanne Owens (YC)	Earl Tipton
Maria Cunningham		

The following Workforce Development staff members were present: Misty Bishop-Price, Carole Coates, Ken Cone, Ruby Greene, Andrea Morgan, Rebecca Bloomquist, and Don Sherrill.

Guests: Laura Graham, John L. Greene, Rick Herndon, Wanda Lowe, Mary Mallory, Patrick McKemie, Chilton Rogers, Rick Roten, Julia Rowland, Ginger Shaffer, Azalee Simandle, and Phil Trew.

Ms. Baker asked for consideration of the June 14, 2007 minutes. Sam Ray made a motion to approve. Carol Coulter seconded. Members voted unanimously with no abstentions to approve the minutes as written.

Ms. Baker reported that the Executive Committee met today from 12:00-1:25 p.m. Ms. Baker reported that the WDB/COG Agreement has been executed. That agenda item was discussed at the last Board meeting. There had been a question regarding the Boards holding each other harmless. Ms. Baker reported that issue has been resolved as the WDB requested. Carole Coates stated that Board staff will put a copy of that executed agreement in the next Board Book so members will have a final copy. Ms. Baker reported that the Executive Committee decided to change its meeting schedule. The committee was previously meeting every other month following all other committee meetings. The Executive Committee will now be meeting on WDB meeting days immediately before the Board meetings. All other committees and workgroups will continue to meet on the second Thursday of alternate months.

Ms. Baker called on Marie Gwyn to give the Youth Council report, who reported that the Youth Council met at 1:30 p.m. today with good attendance and productivity. Ms. Gwyn reported that there have been several staff changes. Two COG staff are currently on maternity leave. In addition to serving youth in Avery, Mitchell, and Yancey, Mayland Community College is temporarily providing youth services in Watauga while HC COG staff are out. Misty Bishop-Price has been working directly with youth in Wilkes County during the interim. Notice will go out soon to hire a staff person for Wilkes. Ms. Gwyn reported that the Youth Council received an update from providers regarding numbers being served, activities scheduled for the upcoming year, and achievements of participants in the WIA program by county. Ms. Gwyn stated this report helps the Youth Council consider and make suggestions on how to work more closely with providers to serve the youth. Ms. Gwyn reported for the third year in a row a High Country WDB Get REAL program youth was selected as Outstanding Youth Participant. The Governor's Award for Excellence in Workforce Development goes to Aren Doolin who has been served by the Mayland provider along with Derick Satterfield as his career coach. Ms. Gwyn reported that the Youth Council continues to look at issues regarding the dropout list, how to access that, and issues regarding when youth can attend community college.

Ms. Baker called on Scott Moncrief to give the Quality Assurance Committee report. Mr. Moncrief reported that the QA Committee met today at 1:30 p.m. He had reported at the last Board meeting that there had been a Swap Meet with service providers with discussions regarding some current issues in workforce development. The presenter from the Northwest North Carolina Advanced Materials Cluster had been unable to attend that Swap Meet. Mr. Moncrief reported that a new Swap Meet has been scheduled for August 24, 2007 with confirmation received that a representative from the Advanced Materials Cluster will be in attendance. This Swap Meet will bring together that economic development initiative and the WDB service providers so providers will be informed. Mr. Moncrief reported that three Incumbent Worker grants were awarded. New guidelines include the maximum award being reduced from \$37,500 to \$25,000 along with additional stipulations being added. Mr. Moncrief reported that WDB staff will now

review all JobLink Career Center rechartering applications to ensure minimum requirements are met. Staff will present summary profiles to the QA Committee who in turn will make recommendations to the WDB as to whether or not to submit applications for chartering or recommend they go back to the JobLink for clarification of questions. Mr. Moncrief reported that the two JobLink System Liaisons had previously brought up the concern to the QA Committee regarding the lack of swipe card usage in the JobLink Career Centers. The committee had sent out a letter of appeal asking service providers to encourage the use of the swipe cards. Positive feedback was received in a report at today's committee meeting showing a dramatic increase in usage of the cards. Mr. Moncrief reported that Mayland Community College's WIA program identified a new space for WIA services in Yancey County which allows co-location with ESC. Therefore, this facility is now actually a one-stop location. Mr. Moncrief reported that, by default, Mayland has replaced Caldwell as the WIA service provider for Watauga County since the region's other WIA provider (WCC) withdrew its initial expression of interest. Mr. Moncrief reported that the QA Committee is working to get Adult/Dislocated Worker performance reporting information from JobLink Career Centers. The last revision to the quarterly JobLink report was in 2003. Because current year contracts were issued by service, the QA Committee will divide its report into separate sections for adult/dislocated Workers, follow-up services, and business services. Reports are not currently in place for either follow-up or business services. WDB staff is developing questions that need to be asked. The QA Committee agreed to take the staff recommendations and send a letter asking service providers for input on what information would be useful to the QA Committee to ensure service providers are doing their jobs. Board staff will continue to work on this and provide another round of draft reports before the committee brings any recommendation before the Board.

Ms. Baker called on Earl Tipton to give the Strategic Planning Workgroup report. Mr. Tipton reported that the workgroup held its organizational meeting today at 1:30 p.m. The SP Workgroup is charged with fine tuning the Strategic Plan for 2008-2011. The workgroup reviewed draft documents concerning the mission statement and goals. Mr. Tipton reported that much progress had already been made before he joined the WDB. The SP Workgroup will meet again on September 13. Their goal is to present a draft statement to the WDB at its October meeting. Their long-term goal is to have a mockup document ready for the WDB at its February 2008 meeting. Mr. Tipton reported that overall the workgroup is off to a good start.

Ms. Baker then introduced the program on Managing Funding for the Workforce Investment Act (WIA) with three presenters: Carole Coates, Director, High Country Workforce Development Board; Don Sherrill, Financial Systems Manager, High Country Workforce Development Board; and Laura Graham, Finance Director, High Country Council of Governments.

Carole Coates reported that to understand how WIA funds are managed one must know something about the legislation and history. Through WIA and previous workforce legislation, Congress writes and passes the legislation, then passes workforce funds down to Governors. In North Carolina the Department of Commerce is designated to serve as the Governor for purposes of WIA. Within the Department of Commerce is the Division of Employment and Training (DET), soon to have a name change. The legislation also creates a role for Chief Elected Officials: either Mayors or Chairs of County Commissioners. In WIA, Chief Elected Officials are referred to CEOs, and for the High Country Workforce Area, county commission chairmen are the CEOs. The Chief Elected Officials appoint one of their own to serve as *the CEO* of the CEOs. This group is also known as the Workforce Development Consortium. The Consortium agrees on the Local Workforce Area, which by law has to meet certain requirements. There are some parameters about the population and for multiple jurisdictions/counties, units of government must be contiguous (share boundaries). Consortium members appoint members to the Workforce Development Board in accordance with the Workforce Investment Act requirements. Richard Blackburn from Ashe County is currently the Consortium's CEO. The WDB is responsible for independently making policy for broad community workforce issues within its jurisdiction, with specific oversight for WIA. In our case, the Quality Assurance Committee and Youth Council take that role. The Consortium also designates an organization to serve as the administrative/fiscal agent. In the case for the High Country Workforce Area, the Consortium many years ago selected the High Country (then Region D) Council of Governments to act as the fiscal agent and take responsibility for administering funds and hiring staff. There is a similar arrangement in many, but not all, of the workforce areas in North Carolina. That makes staff responsible to the COG in terms of agency personnel policies and procedures.

As fiscal agent, the COG has its own policies for managing funds, which is the subject of today's presentation. The COG has its own governing body called its Executive Board. The COG itself is an organization that represents member towns and counties in seven counties. Each town and county that joins the COG appoints one elected official to serve as its representative on the COG's Executive Board. The COG's Executive Board makes decisions and policies that impact the COG as an organization. All staff of that organization are subject to those policies, and that applies to the WDB staff as well as others. That Executive Board approves the COG's total budget which incorporates the WDB and WIA budget. The Executive Board also approves all budget amendments. An annual independent audit is performed of the COG funding and budgets, including WIA. That audit report is presented to the COG Executive Board on an annual basis. Ms. Coates then reported how money comes to the WDB, noting that Mr. Sherrill would add

more detail. Ms. Coates stated that the US Department of Labor, which is the administering entity on behalf of Congress, appropriates funds to the states based on a formula in the legislation. The Board's funding comes in two cycles including July (the beginning of the WDB fiscal year) and October (the beginning of the federal fiscal year). This does not mean that funds are available July 1. Funds are typically made available in late July. The same thing happens with the second pot of money that comes in October. The WDB also receives multiple pots of money through the year for various special projects. Each time this happens it prompts a whole series of events, processes, and modifications to the budget as Mr. Sherrill will discuss. Essentially, for each event the Division of Employment and Training (DET) in Raleigh forwards allocations of the funding amount to the Local Workforce Area. For each fund source that the WDB operates, the Local Area has to complete a document referred to as an Administrative Adjustment (like a budget amendment) to send back to DET. DET hopefully responds to that document with an approval letter. Then WDB staff member Don Sherrill forwards that information to the COG Finance Director, Laura Graham, to incorporate into the COG budget. That action prompts an amendment to the COG budget that Ms. Graham takes to the COG Executive Board. If that incoming money affects contracts, Mr. Sherrill amends the contract documents and forwards those to the WDB service providers. Service providers in turn must amend their budgets and make appropriate accommodations to get that contract signed and returned to WDB staff. Ms. Coates then introduced Don Sherrill to provide more detail of the process and to discuss two charts:

TYPE OF FUNDING	WIA CODE	COG CODE
<b>ADMINISTRATIVE (formula funds)</b>	<b>2010</b>	<b>74</b>
<b>PROGRAM (formula funds)</b>		
• ADULT	2020	75
• DISLOCATED WORKER	2030	76
• YOUTH	2040	77/78/79
<b>STATE SET-ASIDES</b>		
*ADD'L ASSISTANCE/EMERGENCY DW	2031	86
TRANSFERS FROM OTHER LOCAL AREAS		
*INCENTIVES	2050	39
*JOBLINK RECHARTERING AWARD	2050	82
*WDB CAPACITY BUILDING/TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE-ACCOUNTABILITY/ECONOMIC MODELING	2050	34
*WDB CAPACITY BUILDING-BUSINESS SERVICES	2050	38
*ONE-STOP (JOBLINK) ENHANCEMENT	2050	85
*YOUTH SYSTEM BUILDING	2050	69
*YOUTH DEMONSTRATION PROJECT	2050	73
**INCUMBENT WORKER GRANTS	2050 ('05 FUNDS)	87
**INCUMBENT WORKER GRANTS	2050 ('06 FUNDS)	81
<b>NATIONAL EMERGENCY GRANTS</b>		
FRANCES/IVAN (PROGRAM)	3732	89
FRANCES/IVAN (ADMINISTRATIVE)	3732	42
KATRINA (PROGRAM)	2068	91
KATRINA (ADMINISTRATIVE)	2068	90

\*SPECIAL INITIATIVE—VALUE-ADD (COG WDB STAFF BASED)

\*\*INDIVIDUAL PROCESSES AND CONTRACTS PER BUSINESS

Don Sherrill noted that the list of fund codes is extensive. Mr. Sherrill shared the funding codes chart (above) stating that the WDB does not have every item on this list for the current program year. He said funds that serve as the basis for WDB programs are identified as formula funds. This means that the U.S. Department of Labor uses a formula to determine what each state gets for each program or fiscal year. The program year for the WDB starts on July 1 and ends on June 30 of the next year. The program year 2007 began on July 1, 2007. Because of the economy, population, and other factors, the formula is never the same. North Carolina does not always get the same amount of money each year. Likewise for the local level. Some years the area has a higher unemployment rate than in other years. Some years other regions have higher unemployment rates. The WDB gains and loses money. Unfortunately, the High Country Workforce Area has been losing money on a regular basis for the past five years. Mr. Sherrill explained the four types of funding:

1. ADMINISTRATIVE (formula funds)
2. PROGRAM (formula funds)
  - Adult (someone over 18 years old; not economically sufficient)
  - Dislocated Worker (someone displaced from a job due to layoff or closure)
  - Youth (youth with some type of barrier; exp. basic skills deficient, low income, and between 14-21 years old)
3. STATE SET-ASIDES (special project funds)
4. NATIONAL EMERGENCY GRANTS (special project funds)

Mr. Sherrill stated that all funds (Administrative, Program, State Set-Asides, and National Emergency Grants) originate from the three fund sources which include Adult, Dislocated Worker, and Youth. Mr. Sherrill said this is where things get a little complicated. The WDB's fiscal year runs July through June. Youth funds become effective April 1 of every year; however, those funds are not typically received until July of that year. When the legislation was written, Adult and Dislocated Worker funding was designated out of two federal fiscal years. The Local Workforce Area receives its first round of funding in July, usually getting to North Carolina the third week in July. About 16% of the year's Adult funds and 25% of the year's Dislocated Worker funds are received in July. These are the only funds available to run the program until the second allocation is received in late October. A complicating factor is that the previous year's program is being closed out during this time. Any unexpended funds are carried over into the new program year, but this information isn't finalized until after service providers submit their final invoice in August. Service providers are always reimbursed a month after expenses are reported.

Mr. Sherrill reported that there are also fund codes assigned by DET. Administrative funds originate out of the Adult, Dislocated Worker, and Youth funds at a 10% rate. Ten percent of the total of those funds is put into an Administrative Cost Pool. DET's accounting system fund codes include 2010 (Administrative), 2020 (Adult), 2030 (Dislocated Worker), and 2040 (Youth). The COG also has an accounting system with codes for each of those funds including 74 (Administrative), 75 (Adult), 76 (Dislocated Worker), and 77/78/79 (Youth). The youth program has several codes for a number of reasons. WDB staff member Misty Bishop-Price works in-house to oversee the Youth Program. COG employees who serve as WIA youth career coaches work off-site and have a different indirect cost rate, requiring an additional code. When WIA legislation was established, a small amount of money was reserved for states to set aside for special projects. There is typically a pool of money set aside for Dislocated Workers which is not disbursed as part of the formula, but held at DET. Local workforce board areas can apply for those funds as needed if there are layoffs and some additional funds are needed to serve Dislocated Workers. For the current program year, Mr. Sherrill has already applied for and received approval for \$200,000 of emergency Dislocated Worker funds. He noted that the region's allocation for Dislocated Workers is about 32% less this year than last. We also lost smaller percentages of funding for Adult and Youth programming. Some parts of the region, such as Wilkes, need a greater percentage of funding for adults, while others need more Dislocated Worker funds. For instance, last year, Ethan Allen laid off around 300 workers in the southern part of the region. Mr. Sherrill puts a great deal of energy into getting the right money in the right places to meet those customer needs.

Mr. Sherrill reported that apart from State Set-Aside funds for Additional Assistance/Dislocated Workers (2031), there are numerous state Set-Aside projects with the same 2050 code. Mr. Sherrill said it is an accounting nightmare when multiple projects have the same fund code. The COG has to assign separate fund codes in its accounting system for each project. The state FMIS (Financial Management Information System) has about four categories under 2050 and about 10 numbers under that. These different projects must be individually tracked by the COG. Most are value-added projects to build the capacity of the workforce board. Incentive funds are received based on meeting performance measures. Several years ago the state set aside money to award each JobLink Career Center \$25,000 for achieving Level 2 or 3 rechartering. The High Country has three Centers that have received that \$25,000 award. Mr. Sherrill stated that Capacity Building/Technical Assistance funds are provided to do required tasks such as data validation, oversight of the client management system, monitoring, and economic modeling. The WDB has also been providing and overseeing Board-level business services in the region. Mr. Sherrill shared that One-Stop Enhancement funds have been available for some time but have decreased substantially as rechartering awards became available. Mr. Sherrill stated that Youth System Building funds are used to enhance the work of and staff the Youth Council. He reported that the WDB applied for and participated in a Youth Demonstration Project for dropouts lasting about 1 ½ years. He said there are also Incumbent Worker Grant funds. Local Areas typically have two years to expend funds for any one program year. He noted that not only does the WDB have the codes previously referenced, but there may be funds from three different program years that must continue to be tracked by the program year. This is why the chart shows Incumbent Worker Grant funds several times including for PY 2005 and PY 2006. As new projects are approved later in the year, PY 2007 funds will be added to the list. Mr. Sherrill reported that all of the WDB's National Emergency Grants have been closed out. When the High Country experienced Hurricanes Frances and Ivan in 2004, National Emergency Grants were received to put people to work and clean up. He pointed out that these kinds of programs only provide 5% for administration costs. North Carolina also received a small grant after Hurricane Katrina to assist people who were displaced to our state.

Mr. Sherrill next discussed how everything works together to ensure accountability in the system. He presented a second chart:

<b>WIA FUNDING ACCOUNTABILITY</b>
*BUDGET REQUEST/MODIFICATION TO DET
*WIA PLAN & BUDGET SIGNED BY WDB CHAIR & CEO
*WRITTEN APPROVAL FROM DET
*"ADMINISTRATIVE ADJUSTMENT" TO DET (PY'06=14 TRANSACTIONS)
*NOTICE OF FUND AVAILABILITY FROM DET
*COLLABORATION WITH COG FINANCE OFFICER (TO INCORPORATE CHANGES IN COG BUDGET/ACCOUNTING SYSTEM) -PER TRANSACTION (14 IN PY'06)
*ALL CONTRACTS, TRAVEL REQUESTS, MAJOR PURCHASES APPROVED BY COG DIRECTOR (INTERNAL CONTROL)
*DET WIA MONITORING (AT LEAST ANNUALLY)
*AGENCY-WIDE AUDIT (ANNUAL) (RECONCILED WITH DET FINANCE REPORTS)
*COG REVIEW OF WIA SERVICE PROVIDER AUDITS (DET MONITORS THIS FUNCTION)
*BUDGET REPORTS & AMENDMENTS PROVIDED BY FISCAL AGENT (COG) TO ITS BOARD
*POTENTIAL MONITORING REVIEWS AND/OR AUDITS BY <a href="#">USDOL</a> , <a href="#">OMB</a> , OR <a href="#">OIG</a>

Each spring, local workforce areas are required to complete either a workforce development plan or a plan modification. This year a modification was completed. Plans and modifications include fund distributions to workforce areas. Board staff completes a budget request and modification which is submitted to DET. DET then gives written approval through a "Notice of Fund Availability," which is the point where the workforce area actually knows it has the funds. At this point Mr. Sherrill completes and submits an Administrative Adjustment to DET. He referred to this entire process as a transaction. Each time during the year that funds are released to a workforce area, a new transaction which includes all of these steps is required. Last year 14 separate transactions were completed.

Each transaction also prompts an additional response at the COG level. Funds must be incorporated into the COG budget, a COG budget amendment must be completed and presented to the COG Executive Board, then the funds are incorporated into the COG accounting system. If the funds are designated for participant services, service provider contracts are amended and sent out for signatures. Internally all contracts, travel requests, and major purchases are approved by the COG Executive Director and signed off by the COG Finance Director. DET completes at least one monitoring visit annually. DET completes additional monitoring reviews when the region receives special funds, such as a National Emergency Grant. DET monitoring reviews include both financial and program records. Mr. Sherrill said any organization which spends at least \$500,000 in federal funds during a single fiscal year must have a single audit conducted. In those cases, DET finance staff review the audit against what was reported to DET to ensure the numbers match and no compliance issues exist. WDB staff also review whatever audits are required from the WIA service providers. In addition, WDB staff monitors financial records as a part of its monitoring process. Other monitoring reviews may be conducted by USDOL, Office of Management and Budget (OMB), or the Office of Inspector General (OIG) since all workforce development funds are federal funds.

Laura Graham stated that those present have most likely seen her name on the bottom of checks for travel reimbursement, staff paychecks, or provider services. Above that signature on the check is a statement that reads, "This disbursement has been approved as required by the Local Government and Budget Fiscal Control Act." That statement is a commitment from Ms. Graham that the money for that check is available, the check has been written for the purpose intended, and it is an appropriate purpose for the expenditures of these monies. If something goes awry then Ms. Graham is the person held responsible. That is what the Finance Officer is for a governmental agency. G.S. 159 of the North Carolina General Statutes requires that each governmental unit and authority have a Finance Officer who is legally responsible for establishing and maintaining the accounting system, controlling expenditures, managing cash and other assets, and preparing financial reports. The Local Government Budget and Fiscal Control Act is a part of the state statutes that dictate how the COG does its finance. The COG has to comply with the same rules that towns, counties, and other similar public authorities follow. That means the COG has to have a budget approved by the governing body. Preferably, the budget is approved before the beginning of a fiscal year. Budgets have to be balanced, meaning revenues must exist to support all projected expenditures. There must also be some kind of documentation that those revenues are real and going to come in. Then there must be a system in place for disbursing those funds. The COG's purchase order system requires that all purchases be approved. The process is fairly easy if something has been budgeted for. Anything unusual or outside the budget must be approved by the department head and COG Executive Director. Ms. Graham reported that she thought requests for steel toe boots and chain saws with the National Emergency Grants were a little unusual the first time she saw them. Ms. Graham reported that the COG as local government has a *Single Audit* which includes a compliance piece. Auditors look at compliance issues involving the amount of money spent, how the money is being spent, exactly what the money is for, and if all the

guidelines or requirements are being met for that particular program. There are many requirements to keep track of as funds move from Congress, Governor, Consortium, and then on down. The second part of the audit is financial. Each fund is audited individually and reported in the audit. Ms. Graham distributed an organizational chart for the COG depicting the towns and counties in Region D making up its governing body. One member from each Town Council and County Commission are on the COG Board. The COG has an Executive Director. The COG has many departments including the Area Agency on Aging, Child Development, IT, Planning and Development, Finance and Personnel, and Workforce Development. Last year Workforce Development total expenditures were around \$3.7 million. Exact final numbers are not yet available. Ms. Graham said every penny of that money (plus the other \$4-5 million) coming into or going out of the agency must be accounted for.

Ms. Baker then accepted questions and comments from the Board regarding the program presentation. Sam Ray commented that Laura Graham has been with the COG for many years and is doing an outstanding job. Connie Barnette asked if the funds that come in are based on program outcomes and measures or is an amount that Congress sets for the year based on the situation in the country. Carole Coates responded that the actual allocation is based on a nationwide formula that takes into account population of a given area, excess unemployment rate in that area, and poverty rate. There are two parts to that unemployment piece which is the *heavy* part as opposed to the poverty rate. Money goes to the states then local workforce areas based on that formula. Individual workforce areas do get Incentive funds (one of the 2050 funds referred to earlier) for exceeding the 17 performance measures established by USDOL. If all Local Areas in the state meet the performance measures, then there is less money per area. If a Local Area only meets a certain number of performance measures, then it gets a pro-rata share of available funds. If a Local Area fails to meet performance measures for 2 to 3 years, then the Governor can take one of several actions including reorganizing the Workforce Area and Workforce Development Board to find improvement. Suzanne Owens asked if service providers can bill the COG for salaries of staff prior to paying those salaries.

Ms. Coates responded that payments are made on a reimbursement basis only, although a service provider can invoice the COG for expenses incurred but not yet paid. Ms. Graham asked for clarification of the question. Dr. Owens asked if Mayland service provider staff receive paychecks on July 1 for services provided in June, can the COG be billed on June 1. Ms. Graham answered that they could bill July 1 but not June 1 since the COG pays service providers only on a reimbursement basis. Dr. Owens stated that this is a difficult situation for service providers who do not have the cash flow to keep things going. Ms. Graham responded that any agency in this kind of business must have some operating capital and that the sooner after the end of a billing period the invoices are turned in the sooner the COG can reimburse. Don Sherrill added that the turnaround time has actually been cut by about two weeks from what it used to be since we began using online budgeting and invoicing software. Scott Moncrief asked if WDB service providers are being paid 15 days from the date of invoice. Mr. Sherrill responded that payment depends on the time of the month the invoice is received at the COG. Mr. Sherrill added that WDB staff are also held to a time schedule from the state. The COG used to be able to pay twice a week, but the state now issues payments only once a week. Typically, if invoices are processed on Monday, checks are written by the Finance Department on Friday. Mr. Sherrill answered that it is not always 15 days but pretty close to that unless there are problems. Problems are typically when something is overspent and the budget is incorrect and that invoice must be returned. Ms. Graham stated COG staff would streamline their end of the process within the limits that they have to work if Mayland can streamline its end. Ms. Coates noted that when the term *money* is used, it is not really money. The term actually refers to *allocations* of money. Ms. Coates said actual dollars are available to the COG only when it makes a request to DET for reimbursement.

Ms. Baker introduced Phil Trew, Planning and Development Director for the COG, to present the Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (CEDS). Mr. Trew reported that the COG is designated by the U.S. Economic Development Administration (EDA) as an economic development district. The COG gets planning funds from EDA to provide assistance to its local governments. One requirement to receive those planning funds is that the COG develops a regional Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy on an annual basis. Beginning last year EDA required that the COG have a Strategy Committee to examine the CEDS and make a recommendation to the COG's governing board prior to the adoption. That Strategy Committee had to primarily be private sector representatives. The WDB agreed to serve as that committee. The agenda packets mailed out to members included handouts with an explanation of and purpose for the CEDS, the WDB's role in the CEDS, and an executive summary. The agenda packet handouts did not contain the entire CEDS draft. The entire document (about 50 pages) contains demographic information, population information, workforce information, employment rates, etc. The document contains information on the region's infrastructure, transportation networks, transportation plans, water and sewer systems (analysis of current municipal system capacities and current usages), and telecommunications systems all being provided by the private sector. Mr. Trew noted that there is excellent Internet access in the region with 72-94% of households having access. The CEDS also includes a listing of available industrial sites and buildings provided by the NC Department of Commerce. The CEDS includes an explanation of the different economic sectors in the region including manufacturing, tourism, arts and crafts, agriculture, and small business. Related to the small business sector, the

CEDS has a discussion on current entrepreneurship promotion initiatives from statewide to local levels. For discussions regarding increasing and declining employment sectors, Mr. Trew incorporated information from the industry growth analysis completed for the WDB a few years ago. The CEDS also includes statewide economic development programs with discussions on involvement of the NC Department of Commerce. Regional economic development programs and partners discussed in the CEDS include Advanced Materials Cluster, AdvantageWest, and Future Forward Economic Alliance. Local programs include funding sources for economic development projects. Goals and objectives are included in the executive summary. The actions plan is a listing of approximately 200 projects sorted by category. Mr. Trew stated that one main reason to complete the CEDS is if a local government goes to EDA asking for project funding, the first question EDA asks is if the project is included in the CEDS. This establishes a baseline for eligibility for EDA funding. The bulk of available EDA funding is for infrastructure projects; therefore, the bulk of the projects included in the CEDS are under the infrastructure goal. Mr. Trew asked for questions from the Board with none being asked. Scott Moncrief made a motion that based on the CEDS executive summary that the WDB recommend that the CEDS be forwarded on to the High Country COG Executive Board for consideration of approval. Gwen Harris seconded; Ben Shoemake requested a copy of the full CEDS. Mr. Trew stated that the High Country COG Executive Board will consider the CEDS on August 20, 2007. Once adopted Mr. Trew will send out a copy of the full CEDS version to all town and county managers, related state agencies, and all Workforce Development Board members. There was no further discussion. Motion passed unanimously with no abstentions.

Ms. Baker introduced Carole Coates to present the Workforce Briefings. Ms. Coates reported on upcoming dates of interest. September 13, 2007 is the date of the next WDB committee/workgroup meetings. Those meetings will be preceded by a luncheon meeting for WDB member orientation. Any members who have joined in the last several months are strongly encouraged to attend. Any long-term Board members wanting a refresher course are also encouraged to attend that meeting. Orientation will provide an overview of the Board's purpose and foundation and respond to any questions members have. Written orientation meeting invitations will be sent to members. Following orientation the committees will meet including the Youth Council and Quality Assurance Committee. In addition the Strategic Planning Workgroup will meet (Earl Tipton, Chair; Carol Coulter; Jim Halsey; Susan Pittman; and Wendell Wilson). Ms. Coates reported that the state Workforce Development Partnership Conference will be October 17-19, 2007 in Greensboro. On the morning of October 17 preceding the conference there will be a meeting of the state Workforce Development Board Association from 9 a.m. to 12 p.m. which will include a presentation on globalization by Robert Knight, former Executive Director of the National Association of Workforce Boards and now with Arbor Employment and Training. Dr. Helen Parker, Atlanta Regional Administrator for the U.S. Department of Labor, will also be presenting. All WDB members are encouraged to attend. Ms. Coates reported that there will be a meeting of the State Association next Thursday, August 16 at the High Point Chamber of Commerce if any members are available to attend. Ms. Coates reported that the National Association of Workforce Boards Forum will be held February 23-26, 2008 in Washington, DC. Members are **strongly** encouraged to attend the forum and represent the High Country WDB. Ms. Coates stated that the forum is an excellent meeting and **the** national meeting specifically for workforce development board members. The forum provides an excellent opportunity to meet peers and find out what is going on with boards all across the nation. Ms. Coates reported that WDB staff changes include the resignation of Julia Rowland, JobLink System Liaison for Avery, Mitchell, Watauga, and Yancey Counties, effective August 10, 2007. Ms. Rowland will be joining Appalachian State University's Center for Entrepreneurship. Ken Cone, WDB Business Consultant, has also resigned in order to enter a second retirement. He will remain on a part-time basis through the end of September 2007. These changes will result in restructuring of WDB staff. Due to funding cuts the two vacancies will not be filled at this time. Rebecca Bloomquist will provide technical assistance for all JobLink Centers in the region. She will also continue to work with the website developer to develop, implement, and maintain the WDB website along with providing training to JobLink Career Centers for their websites. Ms. Bloomquist will take on some business services functions particularly the economic modeling and forecasting piece. Other business services roles will be spread among other staff. In addition, Ms. Coates stated that the JobLink Business Service Representatives, Rick Roten and John Greene, are being asked to represent the WDB and its initiatives in their regular community efforts. Mr. Roten, Mr. Greene, and Ms. Bloomquist will form a sector strategy "team," where each becomes a specialist in one of three key sectors identified in the region and will provide guidance to the other two so the WDB will continue to have a high level of expertise and assistance for both service providers and business communities. Ms. Coates reported that the region is involved in three separate grant opportunities which have recently been made available by the Commission on Workforce Development. The Isothermal Workforce Development Board, Western Piedmont Workforce Development Board, the High Country Workforce Development Board, and AdvantageWest are participating in a Regional Workforce Development Collaboration Planning Grant, for which the High Country will act as fiscal agent. The Commission is expected to approve that grant next week and give the green light for the 15 month grant. The grant will particularly involve the WDB Executive Committee as those boards work through the Future Forward Initiative which recommended formation of an informal type of *super* workforce board for regional collaboration. Ms. Coates reported on the Commission's Allied Health Care Planning Regional Sector Strategies Grant. WDB staff convened a meeting with representatives from several different kinds of organizations to discuss interest in that grant. AdvantageWest convened a similar meeting for the southwestern part of the state. The

organizations ultimately decided to submit one grant for the \$50,000 to address workforce needs of allied health care professions. AdvantageWest is the applicant and grant recipient for those funds on behalf of 25-27 counties in western North Carolina. Ms. Coates reported that the Disabilities Navigator Grant was repeatedly put on hold by USDOL unfortunately became available following the other two grant announcements and prior commitments by boards. That grant for \$50,000 is to provide technical assistance to JobLink Career Centers regarding accessibility issues and providing services to people with disabilities. Grant recipients will be expected to serve multiple workforce areas. The Mountain Area Workforce Development Board (based in Asheville and serving four counties) is acting as the grant applicant for an area that will include the High Country WDB and will serve about 20 counties. The service area would include the whole western part of the state.

Ms. Coates pointed out that page 26 of the Board Book shows a chart provided by Connectinc which depicts the follow-up process for WIA participants in the four counties served by Connectinc. Ms. Coates also referenced two PowerPoint presentations in the Board Book: one from the University of North Carolina given at ASU's Leadership Forum on the University's economic development goals; the other from The North Carolina Rural Center, which was also presented at that event. Ms. Coates pointed out that the Board Book (pp. 27-28) contains information on commuting patterns as follow-up to the Board's self-assessment which was included in the previous Board Book. She noted that at that time, members had different perceptions of the region's labor market area, depending on where the member is located. The map was developed by the COG's High Country Rural Planning Organization. Ms. Coates thanked Phil Trew and his staff for making that happen. Ms. Coates stated that the map shows the numbers of people commuting from one county in this region to either another county in this region or a county that joins any of the region's counties. She noted that there are people commuting even farther away, but that would have been too complicated to depict. The next Board Book page was put together by AdvantageWest and looks at *pattern sets*. One single county may be in several pattern sets. The WDB Strategic Planning Workgroup will consider these commuting patterns and report back to the Board in preparation for the Board Standards set by the Commission on Workforce Development. The Standards ask if Boards are doing regional planning (*regional* meaning beyond existing boundaries) and if a board's labor market area naturally extends beyond its boundaries. The Board needs to make some decisions about whether the natural labor market area is actually incorporated within the area's seven counties, if it incorporates other counties inside or outside the state, and if so then plans need to be made to coordinate and collaborate with those areas so the Board's work includes its labor market area. Ms. Coates asked members to examine this information in preparation for further discussions in the future.

Ms. Baker addressed Other Member Business by reminding members to send in their reservations for the COG Annual Banquet to be held September 7, 2007 at Linville Ridge. Ms. Baker stated that the banquet is supposed to be quite nice and encouraged all members to attend. Carol Coulter reported that she has posters available to those interested regarding a seminar series on food-based businesses (basic business, marketing and packaging, regulatory compliance, branding, and conducting taste testing). Classes are free. The information can be applied to any other kinds of business and not just food. Seminars begin in October and have been moved to Saturdays for convenience. They will also set up a date for a 2-day graphics class for developing logos, brochures, and business cards.

Ms. Baker asked for public comments. With no comments given, the meeting was adjourned.

**The next Board meeting will be Thursday, October 11, 2007 at 3:00 p.m. at the High Country Council of Governments in Boone.**

**High Country Workforce Development Board  
Attendance Sheet  
August 9, 2007**

%	Name	Aug 06	Sep 14 06	Sep 28 06	Nov 06	Dec 06	Feb 07	April 07	June 07	Aug 07
56%	Jim Halsey									
89%	Scott Moncrief (eff 3/06)									
78%	Jayne Phipps-Boger									
100%	Barbara Barlow (eff 9/28/06)									
86%	Carol Peters (eff 9/28/06)									
100%	Carol Coulter			:46 after start						
78%	Sam Ray				after start					
56%	Susan Pittman									
100%	Marie Gwyn									
80%	Vacant (Mitchell Private)									
75%	Steve English (eff 2/5/07)									
56%	Connie Barnette									after start
89%	Doug Pratt									
78%	Sandra Reese									
60%	Ben Shoemake (eff 12/06)									
67%	Vanya Baker									
80%	Maria Cunningham (eff 12/06)									
100%	Anne Bowlin									
100%	Gwen Harris									
33%	Wendell Wilson									
100%	Earl Tipton (eff 8/07)									
14%	Vacant (At Large CBO)	Maternity Leave	Maternity Leave	via phone						
0%	Vacant (At Large Labor)									
		88%	71%	89%	78%	80%	75%	60%	74%	70%

PRESENT
ABSENT
VACANCY

**Youth Council Members Present**

Jennie Harpold and Suzanne Owens