

WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT BOARD 21 SPECIAL MEETING

EAST BATON ROUGE PARISH

Location:

Baton Rouge Community College (Acadian Campus) Student Activity Center
3250 N. Acadian E., Baton Rouge, LA 70805

Thursday, July 1, 2021 @ 10:30 a.m.

1. Welcome – Brett Simon, Aptim, WDB21 Vice-Chair

<i>Local Workforce Development 21 Members</i>	<i>Company</i>	<i>July 1, 2021</i>
1 Mrs. Elizabeth Beckham	Turner Industries	P
2. Mr. Steven Bomar	Performance Contractors, INC	A
3. Mrs. Winifred Brooks	Dept. of Children Family Services	A
4. Mr. Kenneth Champagne	US Agencies	A
5. Mrs. Maydel Chatelain-Schexnayder	Louisiana Rehabilitation Services	P
6. Ms. Ashton Lane – Duhon	Gerry Lane Services	A
7. Mr. Andrew Fitzgerald	Baton Rouge Area Chamber	P
8. Mr. Blaine Grimes	Campus Federal Credit Union	P
19. Dr. Dawn Hall Fleming	East Baton Rouge Parish School System	A
10. Mr. Kelly LeDuff (Board Chair)	Open Eyes	A
11. Mr. Kenny Lynch	Louisiana Workforce Commission (Wagner Peyser)	P
12. Mr. Joshua Perck	The Brock Group	A
13. Mr. Louis Reine/ Proxy Attended	Louisiana AFL – CIO	P
14. Mrs. Anne Segura	Baton Rouge General Hospital	P
15. Mr. Brett Simon (Vice-Chair)	Aptim	P
16. Dr. Willie Smith / Proxy Attended Dr. Girard Melancon	Baton Rouge Community College (BRCC)	P
17. Mr. Shanana Waters (Youth Committee Chair)	Laborers Local 99	P
18. Mr. Jonathan Waddell	Plumbers and Steamfitters Local 198	P
19. Mr. Devin Zito	General Informatics	P

2. Introduction of Board Members, Staff and Guests – A quorum was met

Staff Present: Mr. John Williams, Dr. Pamela Ravare- Jones, Vernadine Mabry, Juanita Coverson, Girlie Anderson and Tierra Small

Guest Present: Philip Gore, WIOA Chief Administrator (LWDB 21), Taylor Watts, Industry Sector Coordinator, Louisiana Workforce Commission

3. Message from Mayor Broome

Mayor Broome started with hello everyone and that she wanted to welcome everyone to our WIOA Board Meeting. She stated that she apologizes for not being able to join you, but that she knows that you will use this time to discuss how to further our work to determine how we can continue to address the need of the residents in East Baton Rouge Parish. She stated that she wanted to begin by thanking everyone for their continued dedication throughout this Pandemic. She stated that this season has presented many challenges to our community and she is grateful for the resilience that you all have shown throughout this time. She stated that as you know this Pandemic has affected every facet of our daily lives, especially in terms of our economy and workforce development. She stated that this has only been amplified by a series of natural disasters that have taken place throughout this period. She stated that our residents look to us as leaders and mentors in every function of our community's recovery. Mayor Broome stated that this is why it is especially important for all of us to come together and work diligently to strengthen our re-employment and training services for all of our residents. She stated that our WIOA Team has the potential to make a significant difference for our youth, adults, and dislocated workers who are entering the workforce as we continue to navigate our economic recovery. She stated that she truly believes that we are stronger together and we are capable of achieving anything we set our minds to. Mayor Broome stated that is why she is asking all of you to join her as we roll up our sleeves and get to work. She stated that your dedication has power to lead our economic recovery and guide countless residents to prosperity. She stated that with that being said, in addition to the work, that she is asking all of you to connect with her team to provide leads and connections within our business community. She stated that this will only help us grow a pool of opportunities for our residents. Lastly, she stated that once again that she would like to thank all of you for your dedication, time and effort. Mayor Broome stated that you are all key players in creating a better future for Baton Rouge and that she hopes you all have a productive meeting.

4. Action Items:

- a. Review and Approval of Previous LWDB 21 Meeting Minutes (March 11, 2021)**
Mr. Brett Simon stated that Tierra had previously emailed out the minutes and the agenda and asked if anyone had any questions or comments.

A motion to approve the Previous LWDB 21 Meeting Minutes (March 11, 2021) was made by Shanan Waters and second by Andrew Fitzgerald. All were in favor. There were none opposed or abstained

b. Review and Approval of One-Stop Operator, Eckerd Connects Contract Optional Renewal Two: July 1, 2021 – June 30, 2022.

Mr. Simon asked if Mr. Zeigler from Eckerd connects would be speaking on this matter. Dr. Jones replied and stated that she would like everyone to vote on this matter after the report presented by Eckerd Connects, Mr. Jonathan Zeigler. At the conclusion of Mrs. Mabry's report, Mr. Simon circled back to this action item. Mr. Simon asked what changes and renewal costs and clauses would change from the current contract? Mr. Zeigler stated nothing would change just the approval to move forward for another year. Mr. Simon asked if there would be a financial or quality of service change. Mr. Zeigler stated that there would be no financial change and asked Mr. Simon to be more specific to what he meant by quality of service. Mr. Simon stated that the action would be to review the contract and that he did not have a copy of the contract. Mr. John Williams presented Mr. Simon with the existing contract. Mr. Fitzgerald then stated that they had already reviewed a number of applicants for the One-Stop through the RFP process done a couple of years ago. He stated that when they selected Eckerd they drafted the contract to the term of one year with the option to renew. Mr. Simon stated that before he would bring this action to a vote, he would want to read the entire clause for specific details for what has changed. Mr. Lynch stated that the entire renewal clause keeps the contract from going through the entire RFP process again so instead they would just renew the contract for a set amount of years. Mr. Simon apologized for having to take a moment to review the contract and renewal clause, to make sure that they have a full understanding before they commit to something they are not sure of. Dr. Jones told Mr. Simon that Mr. John Williams, who is the ACAO in the Mayor's Office who is serving is also an attorney and was previously as Attorney for LWC (WIOA). She stated that he has revised the contract and that it is important that we make a recommendation that then goes to Mayor Broome and then Mayor Broome is the final person to say yes or no. Mr. Simon thanked Dr. Jones for the clarification. Mr. Williams stated that to make sure that everyone is familiar with the Bylaws and to make sure that you all are not caught up in a catch 22 where a decision needs to be made. He advised the Board to be aware of the terms of the contract and to keep it on your radar. Mr. Simon then thanked Mr. Williams for the clarification and stated that he felt comfortable moving this item to a vote. Mr. Fitzgerald asked what was the term for renewal. Mr. Simon stated with the option to renew for an additional year and stated that next year there would be another option for renewal.

A motion to approve the One-Stop Operator, Eckerd Connects Contract Optional Renewal Two: July 1, 2021 – June 30, 2022 was made. All were in favor. There were none opposed or abstained.

c. Review and Approval of Amended Proposed New Meeting Dates (September 9, 2021 & December 9, 2021)

Dr. Jones stated that she would like to propose new meeting dates due to Mr. LeDuff's absence and to make sure that we remain in compliance by moving forward with our next two meetings. Mr. Simon stated that he did not have any issues with the new dates proposed and that he was opening up this item for discussion.

A motion to approve the Amended Proposed New Meeting Dates (September 9, 2021 & December 9, 2021) was made by Brett Simon. All were in favor. There were none opposed or abstained.

5. One-Stop Operator Report – Jonathan Zeigler, VP Operations | Eckerd Connects & Juanita Coverson, One-Stop Manager

Mr. Jonathan Zeigler started with good morning and introduced himself as the VP of Operations for Eckerd Connects. He stated that he appreciates the opportunity to be here today. He stated that Eckerd Connects is something that you may be familiar with what used to be Eckerd's Drugstore. Mr. Zeigler stated that Eckerd was founded by Jack and Ruth Eckerd, who ran Eckerd Drugstore and ran pop-ups from that business and started a non-profit. He stated that in 1968, they started a non-profit with the intent of starting an outdoor wilderness camp that was therapeutic. He stated that from there, they had boys' and girls' programs started. Mr. Zeigler stated that they have two divisions operational.

He stated that they have the child welfare managing entity that started in 2008. He stated that about 200 subcontractors helped with that effort. He stated that on his side of the house he specializes in workforce development in multiple states. He stated that they have about 2,000 full-time employees and serve about 40,000 clients per year with an annual budget of about \$354 million. He stated that they have different market segments which include workforce development, job corps, wraparound services, juvenile justice, child welfare and community-based intervention. He stated that that in 2015, the company he previously worked for merged with Eckerd and that is how he started working for the organization. He stated that Eckerd Connects operated more than 140 programs in twenty states and that workforce services comprise \$40 million of the annual budget, with 100 programs serving 17,000 job seekers annually. Mr. Zeigler stated that Eckerd manages One-Stop operations in five workforce regions within South Carolina, Maryland, Colorado, Kansas, Louisiana (East Baton Rouge and



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Shreveport), California and North Carolina. He stated that they serve over 250,000 job seekers annually through their combined One-Stop Operations. He stated that Eckerd operates 40 adult and dislocated worker programs, serving more than 7,500 WIOA customers annually. He stated that Eckerd operates 46 WIOA youth programs nationally. He stated that Eckerd operates integrated service delivery projects which offer the full continuum of America's Job Center services including serving as the One-Stop Operator as well as providing the adult, dislocated worker, and business services in five workforce regions. He stated that Job Corps completed merger with Odle Management in March 2020. Mr. Zeigler stated that they have the performance wheel which represents administrative support for Eckerd programs and the five spokes of quality, staff, finance, external relations and Growth & Transformation. He stated that they directly assist local operations, with the "HUB" being the participants, families, and communities served. He stated that Eckerd's staff spoke is essential in the advertising, recruitment, and hiring of program staff members, working closely with local leadership to identify a hiring strategy. The finance spoke safeguards funds and assets, ensures the integrity of financial reporting, and provides timely financial data through a highly effective electronic financial management system. The external relations spoke is responsible for administration and planning, including local operations, regional administration of contracted services, and strategic development of Eckerd's national service. The growth and transformation spoke is responsible for administration and planning, including local operations, regional administration of contracted services and strategic development. He stated that the quality spoke ensures the organizational adherence to funder requirements and outcome measures through a system of internal controls and monitoring protocols that are customized based. He stated that Eckerd is data driven and relies on real-time assessment of performance through an established reporting system. He stated that again he appreciates the opportunity and handed over the presentation over to Ms. Coverson.

Mrs. Juanita Coverson started with good morning and introduced herself as the One-Stop Operator for EmployBR. She stated that she was briefly start her report with some of the accomplishments of the year-end review. She stated that they have had the opportunity to complete many of our federal, state and local mandated documents. The first being the nondiscrimination plan. She stated that our Nondiscrimination Plan of course shows what is and not acceptable in the workplace. She stated that we had to discuss our EO Coordinator, Universal Access, ADA Requirements, any of our job training plans, contracts, policies, procedures, the Vocational Rehabilitation Act, complaint processes, corrective actions and sanctions. She stated that those are some of the things that they covered in the Nondiscrimination Plan. She stated that of course our Memorandum of Understanding in between our Board and our One-Stop Partners. She stated that those are concerning the operations of the actual One-Stop Center and what they do as far as the functions and



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Operations of our center. Ms. Coverson stated that we also have had the opportunity to complete our Local and Regional Plan. She stated that we of course are Region 2 in the state of Louisiana and with that particular plan EmployBR and Geaux Jobs, which is Local Workforce Development Area 20. She stated that LWDA 20 encompasses Denham Springs and surrounding areas. She stated that they really talk about what they do as far as our Local Regional Plan any of our Regional and Local components. She stated that they also discuss what is required the US Department of Labor and Education and local compliance. She stated they also have the Standard Operating Procedure that is specific to EmployBR and that particular SOP provides direction and guidance to our staff, visitors, partners and guests. This is to ensure that they all know what is required and expected when working in the American Job Center. Ms. Coverson stated that could mean anything related to an active shooter, natural disasters, such as earthquakes, or anything that provides safety in operations of the center specific to EmployBR both at the satellite site (Woodale Office) as well as the comprehensive center at EmployBR on Plank Rd. Ms. Coverson stated that they also had the opportunity to work as far as the Disaster Dislocated Worker Grant. She stated that this grant provides employment and training services to those who have lost their job due to Covid-19. Ms. Coverson stated that Mrs. Mabry would go into more detail about it later. Lastly, Ms. Coverson stated that they had been working with Ochsner in regards to the Customized Training. She stated that the program helps participants who are coming from New Orleans to Baton Rouge and making sure that we have an actual training set up with BRCC. She stated that this program offers an eight-week training course and the employment opportunity for them is \$12.00 per hour as a Patient Care Technician. She stated that during Covid-19 they never closed and that they proceeded to provide services. She stated that they restructured the way that they have provided their services and learned what they could do virtually. She stated that the clients were patient and accepting of the new process. She stated that throughout that time they were able to assist 3,306 participants while they were closed. She stated that of course we know going into the new fiscal year we will exceed those numbers. Ms. Coverson stated that

Business Services was more of a department that had more state merit employees. She stated this is the first year that it has been a part of the City of Baton Rouge. She stated that the Business Services Team has been working at about 20 contacts per month. They had been working on getting some On-the- Job Training (OJT) contracts. She stated that some of our present, past and pending OJT contracts include Compliance Envirosystems, Brightside, Everso, BrandSafway, Ruth Sisters Transitional Housing and a few more. She stated that they are working to increase the number of OJT contracts. She stated that they have been considered as one of the best practices in the state of Louisiana with the Drive-thru Job Fairs. She stated that they have had over 350 or more participants at those job fairs, which average at about \$10.50 per hour for the hiring rate for all of those positions. She stated that they have had 38 verified employment placement and they are working with the employers in the way that they report their new hires to us. Ms. Coverson stated that they pride themselves in administering staff training in coordination with EmployBR. She stated that Eckerd provides staff training as well



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as technical assistance by LWC and trainings provided by DHDS. Ms. Coverson stated that Quarter 1 pertained to building Business Services, Quarter 2 provided Warn Notice training for the Business Services Team. She stated that as a company closes or have mass lay-offs, the Business Services Team has been able to provide some of the training opportunities, create job fairs, without interruption for employment. She stated that in Quarter 3 they were providing more services and understanding TEGs and TENs as well as effective communication. She stated that in Quarter 4, they began going into more customer service skills and making sure the staff knows about the Work Opportunity Tax Credit and the co-enrollment of the Trade Adjustment Act in Dislocated Worker. She stated that soon they will be back open for in-person services and that they will notify the Board when that will happen. She stated that they are excited and ready to reopen. She stated that at this time she will entertain any comments and or questions. Dr. Jones asked Ms. Coverson to clarify the 3,306 number of participants. Ms. Coverson stated that the number does not just reflect the number of participants. She stated that the number could reflect the number of individuals that come in just wanting to receive general information, pick up applications or to pick up flyers. She stated that they try to track every single person that has come in. She stated that the number could reflect the individuals who are needing services from the partners. She also stated that at their building they have the Office of Social Services, Ryan-White Program, and several other programs that they partner with as well. She stated that if there is something that they can do at EmployBR for some of those clients they assist them and that it is a broad spectrum of not only participants but customers that are seeking services that they could possibly have the opportunity to have as well. Ms. Beckham stated that she wanted to follow up on that 3,306. She asked if the amount would not be an accurate reflection. Ms. Coverson stated that originally, they had challenges tracking because it was something that was new for them, so they were not able to track all of their initial numbers for the clients that were receiving services. Ms. Coverson stated that the original numbers they did miss and they were able to create better processes to retrack and receive those numbers.

Ms. Beckham asked if EmployBR will still continue to diversify how their reaching out? Ms. Coverson stated they are letting the public know that if they would like to come in-person that they have the opportunity and that they would offer virtual resources to them as well. Ms. Coverson stated that even if we have some employers that are not wanting to do face to face job fairs and recruitment events, they have a new software called BRAZEN for recruiting. This would be for employers who would feel more comfortable providing recruiting online. Mr. Fitzgerald asked what would be a good thing to benchmark in 2022 for a non Covid-19 year. Ms. Coverson stated that in the past years with traffic count we have been closer to about 5,500 participants. Ms. Coverson stated that when she says past years she was referring to when she was the Assistant Operator under Urban League. Dr. Jones stated that she had a question for Mr. Zeigler and that she knows that they are getting ready to do a lot of training. Dr. Jones asked Mr. Zeigler in his opinion how and what would he recommend for our area

compared to other states. Mr. Zeigler stated that he would recommend that staff stick to a constricted training plan and that everyone knows in totality what services are provided. Dr. Jones said thank you and the report was concluded.

6. Program Report – Vernadine Mabry, DHDS Director

Mrs. Mabry stated that she would start by just giving an update on what is happening on the program side. Mrs. Mabry stated that the most significant thing that they have done so far is fully execute the CaseWorthy System. She stated that CaseWorthy is our internal system for interpreting data where they can track all the services they are providing to their participants. She stated that this would be a game changer for us because in years past they would have to wait for the state to tell them how they are performing and now they can manage the system internally themselves. She stated that she can not wait six months down the road for performance to be indicated. She stated that the system in real-time will tell you exactly where we are so that they can focus on the areas they need to focus on. She stated that as of now they have received a total of 1,065 applications since January. 400 of these are employed. She stated that under the National Disaster Dislocated Worker Grant they have only been able to put 10 individuals to work. She stated that this is due to people not ready to go back to work just yet. She stated that with the Summer Youth program they would normally have 250 plus participants, she stated that this year they had 97 participants. She stated that there are some discrepancies and that as soon as unemployment goes away and as the community starts opening up jobs they will start coming in for services. She again then stated that she believed that CaseWorthy would be a game changer not just for EmployBR but for the department as a whole because they will be able to identify the services that may not be accessible through EmployBR or may be available through another department within DHDS. She stated that internally they would be able to connect and see the same customers that come through each one of those doors without having to physically go to each one of those doors. Mrs. Mabry stated that the goal of CaseWorthy is to build a network of different service providers externally and share this information throughout the community. She stated that she is excited about this system and the impact that it could have on the community because we have to get to the point where we are communicating with each other and not in siloes. She stated that we have to focus on outcomes and that it is not good enough that we just put someone in training. She stated that we have to stay engaged and see the interaction between the case managers and the participants to find out exactly what we are doing and what we could do differently to improve. Mrs. Mabry asked if there were any questions. Ms. Beckham asked who was spearheading the rollout production and use of CaseWorthy. Mrs. Mabry stated that she would be. She stated that she has two partners that are ready to come onboard and that she was being strategic about the program. She stated that she has to come up with the data sharing agreement and the confidentiality agreement and all that. She stated that she was being very cautious and that she has to make sure internally they have mastered the utilization of the system. Mr. Simon asked what would be the wait time for the referrals. Mrs. Mabry stated that they would happen in real-time. Mr. Simon stated that he



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could see the passion that she had for this program and assured her to remain working in caution. He stated that in his industry work is picking up and he recommends that they do a stress test on the system because he thinks once the benefits are done, everything is going to be nonstop. Mrs. Mabry stated that what they have been talking about in the office is that they have to be more strategic in terms of their case management. She stated that all of our participants just do not need training and that some of them just need to go back to work. She stated that she was going to rely on business services to connect the customers to employers to help put them back to work. Mr. Simon stated that he agrees with OJT and that this will be an important ally. He stated that if they have an individual that they believe has the skillset to work in their organization to give them a call because OJT is not just the end all be all for his organization. Mrs. Mabry stated that this was a good thing because everyone that walks through the door will not be eligible for WIOA/EmployBR services. She stated that they need to be able to find ways to accommodate them as well. Mr. Fitzgerald stated that upcoming this September he was working with a company to introduce one of the most comprehensive job board probably in the country. He stated it was a software developer company for job sites with fortune 500 companies. He stated that essentially how it works is that it connects the individual's resume to match skills with the actual job postings. Mr. Lynch asked if you refer the individual to another agency, will you receive feedback from that agency. Mrs. Mabry stated yes and that was the good thing about CaseWorthy is that it allows the systems to communicate between agencies. Mrs. Mabry stated that you will be able to see everything that an individual has done between agencies through case notes that are put in from all the departments the individual has received services through. Mrs. Mabry then concluded her report.

7. Vice Chairman's Report – Brett Simon, WDB 21 - Vice Chair

Mr. Simon stated that he wanted to take the time to thank everyone. He stated that he appreciates everyone.

8. Public Comments

There were no public comments.

9. Closing Remarks

Dr. Jones stated that at the start of the meeting she started talking about our new additions to the team. She stated to her right and to her left she is very excited to have Mr. John Williams here as the fellow ACAO. She stated that John has come in and been a trooper in terms of attending meetings and meeting with staff from the WIOA Administrative side and been able to connect with the One-Stop Operator and Jonathan. She stated that he has taken the time to look at the budget and they have spent a lot of time going in and making efforts as how they can make improvements. She stated that they have had meetings with Kelly LeDuff (Board Chair) and Mrs. Mabry and her team. She stated that she feels that this team that is coming in will be able to help update and bring

this organization to a new level. She stated that she believes that they have been very strategic with how they plan to move forward. She stated that one of the specific things that Mayor Broome has requested is greater board engagement. She stated that board subcommittees that Mr. LeDuff was planning to talk about is what she sees as being a huge push for accelerating the work that they do. She stated that Mr. Gore would be starting on Monday, July 5th. She stated that Mr. Williams and herself would like to engage and meet with the board for more engagement. Mr. Gore stated that he is just jumping in and that agrees with Dr. Jones with the idea of realizing our goals and what we can do to improve. He stated that he is looking forward to it and is excited to be here. Mr. Gore stated that he was originally from French Settlement, LA; a small town outside of Baton Rouge. He stated that he has a degree in Business Administration and that he previously worked for Aramark in higher education and healthcare for a little over 20 years. He recently moved back to Louisiana and that for the past 17 years he has lived in Alabama. Lastly, he stated that it was good to be back home. Mr. Williams stated he previously worked for LWC for about 7 or 8 years. He stated that prior to working for LWC, he was from Ferriday, LA. He stated that he graduated from Southern University back in 1995. He met his wife and have been married and have two children. He attended Southern University Law School, he opened a private practice around the time of Hurricane Katrina. He applied for a position with FEMA and helped specifically with individuals that were impacted by Hurricane Katrina. He stated that when he worked at LWC that's when things got interesting because that is when he learned more about WIOA and the multiple streams of funding and programs. He stated that he is excited about this role and that he is glad to be here. Dr. Jones lastly stated she was very excited and congratulated Mr. Williams and Mr. Gore. She also thanked Ms. Juanita and Ms. Small for the work they have done. Mr. Grimes echoed Dr. Jones sentiments and acknowledged the staff.

10. Adjournment

The meeting was adjourned at 11:45 a.m.

Next Meeting Date: Thursday, October 21, 2021; EBRPL (Main Library) Goodwood Library (Large Meeting Room) 7711 Goodwood Blvd., Baton Rouge, LA 70806; 10:30 A.M