

Business Development and Workforce Taskforce Meeting Minutes

Meeting Date: May 20, 2024

Meeting Time: 12:35 PM – 2:00 PM

Location: Bobby Snipes Water Resource Center – Presentation Room

YouTube Link: <https://youtube.com/live/jlJFm3vVGfU?feature=share>

Present Taskforce Members:

David Bradley
Sally Kimel-Sheppard
Ilka McConnell
Matthew Epperson
Tim Johnson
Broderick Flanigan
Wesley Mellina
Marvin Nunnally
Michele Pearson-Tucker

Guest & Staff:

Kenshundria Bailey-Allen
Imani Scott-Blackwell
Tamika Money
Linda Stephens
Pat Maddox
Beto Mendoza

Absent Taskforce Members:

Shane Blackwell
Dodd Ferrelle

Meeting Notes

- I. Approve May 20, 2024 Agenda
 - Ilka McConnell motioned
 - 2nd Broderick Flanigan
 - Unanimous motion to approve.
- II. Approve May 13, 2024 meeting minutes
 - Marvin Nunnally motioned
 - 2nd Wesley Mellina
 - Unanimous motion to approve.
- III. Sub-Committee Work
 - Kenshundria Allen, provided new updates on the perspective's document and reminded sub-committees to start filling in the recommendations template before the 06/10 Business Development and Workforce Taskforce Meeting.
- IV. Sub-Committee Debriefs

Worker Empowerment Sub-Committee

- **GOAL:**
- Empowered Local Workforce
- **Problem(s) addressed and Benefit to the Community**
- Increase Knowledge of Worker Rights in Athens Clarke County Adults, Youth & Non-Profit Staff.
- **Strategies**
- Teach about Worker Labor Rights
- **Description**

- EJC – Provide Model of Teaching on topics of Wage Theft, Discrimination, Sexual Harassment, Fair Labor Standards Act, Contractor vs. Employee, FMLA, Benefits and how they work.
 - **Anticipated Components / Youth:**
- EJC to provide program to Youth. Buy in from Athens Community Career Academy at Clarke County School District, Youth Force/Chess and Community, Church Youth Groups, other Youth Serving Organizations.
- Incentives for youth to attend.
- Program offered four times in one year.
 - **Anticipated Components / Adults:**
- EJC to provide programs to Adults, Buy in from Goodwill, Diversion Center, Community Churches, Cooperatives (such as JOMA).
- Incentives for adults to attend.
- Program offered four time annually.
 - **Potential Success Metrics / Youth**
- Buy in from Clarke County School District.
- Number of Youth Attending
- Evaluations of knowledge pre and post training
- Train the trainer (youth spreading knowledge to others)
- **Potential Success Metrics /Adults**
- Buy in from local adult serving agencies and cooperatives to show this practice as a business model.
- Number of Adults Attending
- Evaluations of knowledge pre and post training
- Train the trainer (adults/employees spreading knowledge to others and employers training supervisors to incorporate the training into their onboarding of staff).

High Wage Employment Sub-Committee

GOAL:

- To develop a workforce for in-demand sectors that align with ACC Economic Development Targeted Sectors.
- **Problems Addressed/Benefit to the Community:**
 - Many Athenians currently work but are not earning a living wage or may have to work multiple jobs.
 - **Strategies:** Utilize short term training programs to train or upskill workers in sectors with job openings and high wages.
 - **Anticipated Components:**
 - Identify Short Term Training Programs
 - Collaborate with employers on training objectives that meet the needs of targeted sectors.
 - Create awareness of training programs using social media, flagpole and other local media.
 - Offer transportation vouchers
 - Bring employers together at end of programs for a hiring event.

GOAL:

- Local job seekers informed about high demand job opportunities and support to land positions.
- **Problems Addressed/Benefit to the Community:**
 - Help Athenians find high demand/high wage employment.

- **Strategies:** A jobs database that has backend support to help connect job seekers with available opportunities.
- **Anticipated Components:**
 - Develop platform/dashboard
 - Training for the dashboard service provider
 - Marketing Campaign to inform Athenians of the dashboard.
- **Potential Success Metrics:**
 - Number of Dashboard Users
 - Number of Jobs Filled through the Platform

GOAL:

- Raise awareness of high demand/high wage employment opportunities in Athens Youth.
- **Problems Addressed/Benefit to the community:**
 - Talent and skill leaving Athens Clarke County.
- **Strategies:** Partner with Clarke County School District on age-appropriate career awareness/exploration events that are linked to targeted sectors and high demand/high wage employment.
- **Anticipated Components:**
 - Large Event Space
 - Employer Participation
 - Clarke County School District Participation
 - Athens Technical College
- **Potential Success Metrics**
 - Students signing up for CTAE pathways in 8th grade that align with their interest and high demand careers.
 - Number of employers participating
 - Number of students participating

Small Business Development Sub-Committee

GOAL:

- Expand the revolving loan fund, and create an accompanying grant program, providing preferential procurement status and grant selection to any applicant who is a part of a priority business and/or also addressing the needs of anchor institutions.
- **Problems Addressed/Benefit to the Community:**
 - P: ACC small businesses struggle with access to capital that is on favorable (e.g., patient, low interest, paired with technical assistance) terms, which limits their ability to expand
 - P: There is a social and/or environmental need for all of these types of jobs in ACC. Our current impact criteria are:
 - High wage + health/childcare benefit job creation
 - Worker owned job creation
 - Minority owned job creation
 - Youth job creation
 - 2nd chance job creation
 - Green job creation
 - Childcare job creation
 - B: We can stimulate the economy, and create jobs that either pay living

wages outright, or can "on ramp" to living wages within a few years.
B: The first iteration of the revolving loan fund has been a success, and we can expand on that success.

- **Strategies:**

- Increase the \$ in the revolving loan fund
- Define "impact criteria" to determine preferential scoring status for loan fund dollars
- Conduct outreach to ensure eligible small businesses are aware of the increase in funds, and preferential procurement policy
- Review eligibility and lending terms to ensure the desired types of businesses are both eligible for, and good candidates for the lending criteria, and as necessary, amend lending requirements.
- Database creation/data gathering on current ACC businesses which fit into desired preferential procurement categories.

- **Anticipated Components**

- Allocation of additional dollars (\$1MM?) into the fund, and support staff time to add funds into the loan fund
- Support staff time (research time)
- Support staff time conducting outreach, paid media
- Support staff time, potentially lending software upgrades
- Support staff time (research time)

- **Potential Success Metrics**

- Qualified businesses applying for and receiving loans
- Impact criteria defined, and a number of potentially eligible businesses estimated based on impact criteria
- A number of strategies, e.g., at least 5, have been implemented, and awareness has been raised in the ACC small business community.
- Feedback from small business community shows that the revolving loan fund eligibility, terms and conditions are fair and likely to be qualified for, if impact businesses apply for this funding.
- As stated above, a number of potentially eligible businesses is defined based on impact criteria.

GOAL:

- Business succession through employee ownership (EO) training program (including both knowledge and access to capital)
- **Problems Addressed/Benefit to the Community:**
 - · P: There is a coming "silver tsunami" which according to the 2018 Annual Business Survey of Clarke County found 1,032 businesses in Clarke County owned by someone age 55 or older, and whose workforce includes over 12,000 employees, \$382MM in payroll, and \$3B in revenue.
 - · B: EO succession can retain some of those 12K jobs, keeping income and tax revenue as well as beloved businesses open in the community
 - · B: EO succession also often improves the companies' post-transition in terms of profitability, employee tenure, retirement savings, among other benefits
 - · P: Most small business owners broadly, as well as in ACC, are unaware that they can sell to their employees, and still make a fair market value on the transaction, so more education is needed
 - · B: Most small business owners will only start one business in their lives, and EO succession allows them to preserve their legacy, and on a flexible timeline

- · B: There are great tax incentives for EO conversions for selling owners, which will improve the retirement financial situation of the selling business owner, and generate revenue for service providers.
- **Strategies:**
 - Identify high priority small business owners in Clarke County who are age 55 or older, and who have the most employees whose jobs could be retained by EO succession
 - Clarify which if any small business lending programs could be used to loan or guarantee a loan for an employee ownership transition
 - Conduct at least 5 targeted (e.g., by industry) business succession via EO workshops for ACC business owners
 - Enroll at least 15 small business owners into the training program
 - Identify an optimal structure for the training program
 - Interview at least 2 current programs based in the US which are conducting this sort of training program, document: best practices, lessons learned, challenges overcome
- **Description:**
 - Work with the Chamber on potential data sources to be able to glean this information. Potentially deploy an online voluntary survey, or roll this question into a standard annual business process (E.g., local property tax return)
 - Consult with SBDC and local lenders to see which programs may be applicable
 - Use available information about locally owned and most numerous employing businesses to determine industry outreach, hire a firm or person to conduct workshops about succession via EO
 - Receive a commitment from owners that they will attend these sessions
 - Identify the location, time, and frequency required for the training program
 - Speak to groups such as Project Equity or Co-op Development Institute and at least 1 other group, to determine best practices, lessons learned, challenges overcome and any other relevant topics.
- **Anticipated Components:**
 - A number of targeted businesses is defined
 - A list of potential capital sources is created
 - At least 5 workshops are completed
 - At least 15 small business owners are enrolled in the training program
 - The structure of the program is defined
 - Program design is informed by industry best practices

V. Adjourn

Kenshundria Allen proposed to adjourn the meeting.

- Wesley Mellina motioned
- 2nd Marvin Nunnally
- Unanimous vote to approve.

TIMELINE:

Task Force Meetings – *updated as of 4/26/2024*

- June 3 – Sub-Committee Working Meeting
- June 10 – Full Task Force Meeting – Sub-Committee Presentations
- June 17 – Full Task Force Meeting – Prioritizing

Recommendation to Mayor & Commission – *updated as of 4/26/2024*

- June 26 – Report Due
- July 9 – Mayor & Commission Work Session
- July 16 – Mayor & Commission Agenda-Setting Session
- August 6 – Mayor & Commission Voting Session

Next Taskforce Meeting:

June 3, 2024 12:30 PM – 2:00 PM Bobby Snipes Water Resource Center Presentation Room