

**CALLED EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE OF THE 10 COUNTY
MIDDLE GEORGIA WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT AREA
FEBRUARY 9, 2023**

MINUTES

A called meeting of the Executive Committee of the 10 County Middle Georgia Workforce Development Area was held at 3:30PM, at the River Edge Behavioral Health-Ocmulgee Room, at 175 Emery Highway, Macon Georgia. The following members were present:

Meeting Attendance Record			
Name	County/City	Present	Absent
Commissioner Henry Craig and Commissioner Emily Davis	Baldwin	X (Both were present)	
Commissioner Dale Jump	Crawford	X	
Commissioner Dan Perdue and Timothy Andrews	Houston	X (Both were present)	
Commissioner Chris Weidner	Jones	X	
Commissioner Greg Tapley	Monroe		X
Commissioner Martin Moseley	Peach	X	
Commissioner Jenna Mashburn	Pulaski		X
Commissioner Bill Sharp	Putnam	X	
Commissioner Ken Fowler	Twiggs	X	
Commissioner Royce Brewer	Wilkinson	X	
Mayor John Reid	Eatonton	X	
Mayor Mary Parham-Copelan	Milledgeville		X

Guest in Attendance

Mayor Lester Miller, City of Macon

Tiffany Andrews, Middle Georgia Regional Commission/Macon-Bibb WorkSource

Laura Mathis, Middle Georgia Regional Commission/Macon-Bibb WorkSource

Chairman Chris Weidner welcomed everyone and turned the floor over to Laura Mathis, of the Middle Georgia Regional Commission/WorkSource Middle Georgia.

WELCOME AND INTRODUCTIONS

- I. *Welcome and Introductions* - Laura Mathis, of the Middle Georgia Regional Commission/WorkSource Middle Georgia welcomed everyone and welcomed the discussion for the opportunity to move forward with the merger. Introductions were made around the room.

CALL TO ORDER

- II. *Call Executive Committee of the 10-County Middle Georgia Workforce Development Area* - Chairman Chris Weidner chaired and there was a quorum present. He asked for a motion to call to order the meeting to order at 3:35PM. A motion was made by Commissioner Martin Mosely and seconded by Tim Andrews to call the meeting to order. There were no opposing votes and the motion carried by voice vote.

AGENDA

A motion was made by Commissioner Martin Moseley and seconded by Tim Andrews to approve the February 9, 2023, agenda as written. There were no opposing votes and the motion carried by voice vote.

MINUTES

No minutes were presented for approval.

OLD BUSINESS

There was none.

NEW BUSINESS

- III. *Brief WorkSource Overview* – Darrell Stillings introduced himself and Tiffany Andrews, of the MGRC/Macon-Bibb WorkSource. Introductions were made around the room. A presentation was conducted which provided an overview of the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act and its predecessors, funding streams, Local Workforce Development Areas and the Local Workforce Development Board and its requirements. She explained that workforce has been around in the United States since 1933 and has been through many iterations and is currently branded as WIOA, the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act of 2014. WIOA of 2014 was set for re-authorization in 2020 but is currently operating under a continuing resolution.

Funding under the Act flows from the USDOL at the federal level and streams through the Governor's office and then down to the local areas. At the State level the Governor appoints the State Workforce Development Board which sets the policies for the program. The Governor also selects the fiscal agent to manage the funds for the State. Currently, the Technical College System of Georgia is named the fiscal agent. The money then comes into the local areas where it is managed by the Chief Local Elected Officials (CLEO) that are in the local area. The CLEO appoints the Local Workforce Development Board and also selects the local area's fiscal agent to manage the funds and also names the administrative entity to manage the program. Currently, there are 19 workforce areas throughout the State and WorkSource Macon-Bibb (Area 10) and WorkSource Middle Georgia (Area 11) are two of the areas and together make up Region 6. In response to a question of if the Middle Georgia area aligns with the RC boundaries, Ms. Andrews added that the WorkSource Middle Georgia and WorkSource Macon-Bibb areas together mimic the Regional Commission boundaries.

She went on to further explained that the Local Workforce Development Board members are appointed by the LEOs and, by Federal Statute, must consist of 51% business representatives, 20% Workforce Representatives and other representatives, which includes adult education, higher education, economic and community development, Wagner-Peyser Employment Services, vocation rehabilitation and others determined appropriate by the LEO Board. Historical funding allocations were also provided and showed that while federal and state dollars have remained consist since 2016 funding for the region has continued to drastically decline which is what has brought the consideration of the merger in to play.

Darrell Stillings added that in December of 2015 the Middle Georgia area without Macon-Bibb received \$2.5 Million and served 267 participants. In 2020 Middle Georgia area received \$2 Million and served 689 participants due to a change in program design which allowed for more participants to be served. During COVID there was a sharp decline in enrollments and funding. During COVID Middle Georgia received \$1.7 Million and served 303 participants.

- IV. *Overview of Merger Discussion to Date* – Tiffany Andrews, in an effort to bring everyone up to date as to how we arrived at today's meeting, explained that in December, Mayor Miller, the Macon-Bibb CLEO, sent a letter to the Middle Georgia CLEO, Chris Weidner, requesting exploration of merging the two areas and, in turn, the Middle Georgia LEO met and voted to

approve exploring merging the two area together. Then both area CLEOs, fiscal agents and area directors met to discussed the next steps which was for all LEOs from Middle Georgia and the CLEO from Macon-Bibb meet today for a preplanning work session to address any questions. After today the next step would be Middle Georgia LEO meet on February 28 to determine how to move forward.

V. *Items to Consider Prior to Merger – Darrell Stillings read out the list of items that will need to be considered. They were as follows:*

- a. LEO Board Structure of Newly Merged Area – Darrell Stillings explained that currently we have ten commission chairs and two Mayors on the LEO Board. If the two areas merge the State will no longer require two mayors on the LEO Board since the Mayor of Macon-Bibb will be a member. In response to a question of if Mayors are still able to participate in some manner, Darrell added that anybody can participate but for the purpose of the Board membership it would have to be equal representation across the region. He further explained that some time ago there were no mayors on the board but when the new State leadership came to be they started requiring that a least two mayors be on the board because of how the law was written at the time. To be in compliance, two rotating mayors were added to the board to meet the new requirement. Since then, the law has been reinterpreted and it is no longer being required.

In response to a question of if the merger will increase our chance to increase funding, Darrell Stillings added that if combining both areas and will eliminate duplicated administrative costs and costs for duplicated services. Statistically, how we perform as a region will dictate how the funding comes. Unfortunately, the better an area performs such as good economy, low unemployment rate and low poverty then the less money the area receives but the good thing is we Middle Georgia is doing good.

In response to a question of if there is opportunity in the law to include other mayors, Darrell Stillings added that the Board can set the membership to include a commissioner and a mayor from each county but that would increase the membership to 22 members instead of 11 members. The proposal of one person per county is to keep the membership at manageable size while maintaining fairness for each county. Tiffany Andrews added that the law does say that there can only be one commissioner and one mayor for each county so if a county has more than one mayor they will have to decide among each other which one will serve.

Mayor Miller spoke in favor of the merger and becoming a united region again for the advancement of all of the counties in Middle Georgia and that is the purpose of asking to explore the possibility of merging. He vowed that if an agreement can't be reached that Macon-Bibb will continue to work with Middle Georgia as they have in the past. If merger does go forward, he proposed that Macon-Bibb have four business slots on the Workforce Development Board, that there be a location in Macon, and that both the Macon-Bibb County Director as well as the Middle Georgia Executive Director to remain as co-directors for a period of time.

Mayor Reid spoke in favor of maintaining mayor representation on the Board in some capacity.

Darrell Stillings added that this will need to be voted on at the February 28, 2023 meeting.

Fiscal Agent – Darrell Stillings explained that currently Baldwin County serves as fiscal agent for the Middle Georgia area and the Middle Georgia Regional Commission serves as fiscal agent for Macon-Bibb area. A fiscal agent will need to be selected for the new consolidated area and will need to be voted on at the February 28, 2023 meeting.

In response to if the Board will vote on February 28 to the fact that they will decide this or to the fact of who the fiscal agent will be, Darrell Stillings added that they will be voting on who it will be.

In response to a question of if Baldwin County relished the opportunity or rose to the cause to serve as the fiscal agent and if they want to continue to serve, Commissioner Emily Davis added that it was a little of both because she served on the Board and she had a passion for the Board due to the fact that they served so many youth and it was opportunity to help those that are less fortunate. Commissioner Henry Craig added that he would like to talk with their staff before answering if they would continue to serve and Commissioner Davis can advise of their decision prior to the February 28 meeting.

Laura Mathis added that in addition to serving as fiscal agent for Macon-Bibb that they serve as fiscal agent for a lot of programs and organizations. She would be fine with being the fiscal agent for the entire region or she would be fine with someone else doing it. The need for the decision to be made on February 28 is that if this moves forward on the timeline the RC would need to do some staffing up and adjusting because of the increase in the volume of workload from a finance side.

In response to a question of if Baldwin County can't facilitate would that open the door for other counties to provide the service and if so, would it be appropriate for County Commission Chairs to go back and talk with their finance directors to see if they can do it. Tiffany Andrews added that they will send out the criteria so their staff can make an informed decision.

Program Administrator – Darrell Stilling explained that currently the Middle Georgia Consortium is the program administrator for Middle Georgia and the Middle Georgia Regional Commission is the program administrator for Macon-Bibb. A program administrator will need to be named and will need to be voted on at the February 23, 2023 meeting.

- b. Workforce Board Structure of Newly Merged Area – Darrell Stillings explained that in a lot of instances people are serving on both boards such as the required partners like Job Corps, CGTC and Legacy Links so it will only be a matter of going to that organization and asking them who they want to serve. Currently, our Bylaws states we will maintain the required nineteen members. However, there will be a little structure change and this will need to be voted on at the February 23, 2023 meeting. Macon-Bibb has requested four business representative slots and this number will be easy to accommodate and the Board will remain in compliance with the law.
- c. Office Location(s) – Darrell Stillings explained that currently we have an administrative office in Houston County as well as a comprehensive one-stop center at the Georgia Department of Labor. Macon-Bibb has an administrative office at the Regional Commission that will be moving to the old Macon Mall. It was proposed that there be a co-location at the Macon Mall which will be a type of government center with different types of social programs so it can serve as a comprehensive one-stop center also. He also noted that the One-Stop Memorandum of Understanding will have to be updated to include the Macon-Bibb additional comprehensive one-stop center. Also, Middle Georgia has an affiliate one-stop site in Baldwin County at the Georgia Department of Labor. This will need to be voted on at the February 28, 2023 meeting.

Mayor Miller spoke to having a location in Macon as being one of the requirements on his part for moving forward with the merger and if it's decided that there will not be a location in Macon then he would not be interested in the merger.

- d. Staff Structure – Darrell Stillings explained that currently there are four personnel members at Macon-Bibb office and the Middle Georgia Consortium would absorb them. He presented

- an organization chart depicting the four personnel members in vacant spots within our current structure. This will need to be voted on at the February 28, 2023 meeting.
- e. **Obligation of Disallowed Costs** – Darrell Stillings explained that any disallowed costs associated with a period prior to the merger will be the respective area’s sole responsibility to cover those costs. Any disallowed costs after the effective merger date of July 1, 2023, will be the responsibility of all the member counties.
 - f. **Existing Contracts** – Darrell Stillings explained that there are regional contracts currently in place that will continue after the merger. However, Macon-Bibb does have youth contracts that are not regional contracts with the Board of Education and Eckerd Connects Paxen. They also have a contract for one-stop operator services with the Georgia Department of Labor. All three contracts will end June 30, 2023 and will not be renewed unless the new board decides to keep them. This will need to be voted on at the February 28, 2023 meeting.
 - g. **Procure Services from Legal Counsel** – Darrell Stillings explained that if the decision is made to move forward with the merger, then a lot of documents will have to be revised to include Macon-Bibb and make sure we are in compliance with all State and Federal laws. It was proposed that the cost be shared 50/50. This will need to be voted on at the February 28, 2023 meeting.
 - h. **Timeline for Review/Process of Updating Organizational Documents** – Darrell Stillings presented the list of documents that will need to be updated by July 1 if the merger takes place. The documents listed were the Bylaws, Operating Policies, and Agreements between Fiscal Agent, Workforce Board and the LEO Bylaws and etc.
 - i. **Draft Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) to Cover Services Between vote to Merge and July 1** – Darrell Stillings explained that not only will a MOU be needed to cover the services between the vote and July 1, the Memorandum of Understanding between area partners will have to be revised to include Macon-Bibb. The MOU to Cover Services will outline what responsibility will have to be done collectively and what each local workforce area will be solely responsible for individually.

VI. *What’s Next* – Middle Georgia LEO will meet February 28, 2023, at 10AM, at the Middle Georgia Consortium office in Warner Robins.

Mayor Miller was asked if all his concerns were addressed. He noted that the organizational chart was too small to determine if the co-Executive Director issue was addressed. Darrell Stillings explained that currently there are two executive directors and they have work closely for the past four years and have developed a great working relationship. He further explained that when he took the job in 2018, he vowed that when he left, he would have an exit strategy. He announced that he plans to retire in the next 12 months and is hopeful that Tiffany Andrews will continue the work they have started in the region and with that in mind he proposed that him and Tiffany co-director the consolidated area. Henry Craig expressed his disappointment in Darrell Stillings leaving the organization.

In response to the question of how Workforce Development Board members are selected, Darrell Stillings added that we try to have representation from all counties based on each county’s population and the larger counties do have more representation because of the size of their population. Currently, the law states we have to have a minimum of nineteen members and as long as we keep the required balance of 51% business and 20% Workforce we remain in compliance.

In response to the question of who nominates the members, Darrell Stillings added that each county nominates the members for their county but the full Board approves all nominations. Tim Andrews added that attendance on the Workforce Board is mandatory and administration keeps up with it and if a member misses three consecutive meetings unexcused then they are automatically voted off. Tiffany Andrews added that with the law requiring a minimum of 19 members then the two boards don’t need to be combined because it’d be difficult to get a quorum.

Mayor Miller was asked if he saw the In-School Youth contract as important. Laura Mathis added that it would have to be procured this year anyway and in speaking with Darrell Stillings there is capacity in the current regional contract to absorb the participants and then when it's time to procure the services again then it could be determined how it would be done. The Bibb County Board of Education contract is for career coaches and is a very successful program but is very costly and can't be mimicked across the region. They have already been contacted to let them know that if the merger goes forward then the contract will not be renewed. She also added that the existing contracts is one of those things they need know by the 28th if the merger is not going to move forward then they will have to come up with a game plan to provide those services by July 1, so the sooner the decision is made the better it will be.

In response to a question of if the merger will provide an opportunity to bring in additional revenue or if it is more of an opportunity to save on expenses, Tiffany Andrews added that they were initially concerned with it having a negative impact on funding so they contacted the State and was told that it would not. However, as Darrell stated, if the economic conditions change then it could mean more funding.

Tim Andrews added that since he's been on the Board, the Executive Director has always been under annual review by the State for their performance and since Darrell Stillings has been the Executive Director and even other directors prior to him there has very seldom been any findings that warrant any concerns - fiscally, managerially or personnel wise. He's always been a big advocate for the person operating the program is doing it from a level of familiarity with the program vice someone that is just sitting there referring to their right hand or left hand person.

In response to the question of if the Workforce Development Board would stay the same with the exception of adding four additional members for Bibb County, Darrell Stillings added that it will not stay exactly the same because there are "agencies" that serve on both Board but the person may not be same. In those instances, the agency will decide who will serve on the new board. County business representatives will remain the same but four business representatives will be added for Macon-Bibb. Laura Mathis added an example of where it may change is in the instance of Central Georgia Technical College which currently Andrea Griner serves on the Macon-Bibb Board and Dr. Allen serves on the Middle Georgia Board so Dr. Allen would be contacted and he would decide who would sit on the new Board.

In response to the question of if there is a place for the Mayors to serve on the Workforce Board rather than on the LEO Board, Darrell Stillings added that he was not sure but would look into it. Commissioner Henry Craig added that nothing stops any Mayor from coming to the meetings with their commissioner. They wouldn't have a vote but they could attend. If the commissioner chooses, the Mayor could serve as their proxy except when electing a chair. Darrell Stillings will conduct an orientation session with the new members - Royce Brewer, Bill Sharp and Dale Jump.

- VII. *Adjournment* – There was no further business and a motion was made by Commissioner Dan Perdue and seconded by Commissioner Bill Sharp to adjourn at 4:42PM. There were no opposing votes and the motion carried by voice vote.

Darrell Stillings added that the county commission chairs will need to attend the February 28 meeting, at 10AM, at the Middle Georgia Consortium office in Warner Robins, Georgia.