

**MEETING MINUTES OF THE
GEORGIA VOCATIONAL REHABILITATION SERVICES BOARD**

March 12, 2025

10:45 AM – 3:00 PM

Athens Technical College – Elberton Campus
1317 Athens Highway, Elberton, Georgia 30635

BOARD MEMBERS PRESENT:

Tom Wilson, Chair
Sandy Adams, Secretary
Jane McCall
Chris Wells, GVRA Executive Director
& Ex Officio Member

Faye Perdue, Vice Chair (virtually)
Suzanne Dooley (virtually)
Louise Hill (virtually)
Vincent Martin (virtually)

BOARD MEMBERS ABSENT:

Craig Camuso
James Defoor, Chair Emeritus

Johnathan Taylor

Tour of Campus

Ms. Tina Bone, Athens Technical College – Elbert County Campus Coordinator, provided a tour of the campus to Board members.

Invocation

Mrs. Sandy Adams, Secretary of the GVRS Board, offered the invocation for the March Board meeting.

Opening and Welcome

GVRS Board Chair Tom Wilson welcomed everyone in attendance, and the meeting was called to order at 1:02 p.m.

Al McCall, Athens Technical College Vice President of Economic Development and Elberton Campus, offered a welcome to all attendees.

Approval of Agenda and Consent Agenda

Chairman Wilson performed a roll call and recommended the approval of the agenda.

On motion of Secretary Adams, seconded by Mrs. McCall, and unanimously carried, the Board approved the Agenda as amended.

Chairman Wilson recommended the approval of the Consent Agenda, consisting of the following:

- Approve Board Meeting Minutes from Previous Session
- Approve Budget Report

On motion of Mrs. McCall, seconded by Secretary Adams, and unanimously carried, the Board approved the Consent Agenda as presented.

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GVRA Staff Updates/Reports:

Executive Director Report – Executive Director Chris Wells

Budget Reports

Executive Director Wells reviewed the FY2025 Budget as of February 28, 2025.

Agency Spotlights

- Executive Director Wells highlighted those chosen as Employees of the Month for December 2024 through January 2025:
 - Greg Teems, Facility Manager of Cave Spring Center, December 2024 Employee of the Month
 - Tunesia Durham, Intake Unit Specialist, January 2025 Employee of the Month
- Executive Director Wells shared examples of Staff Recognition and Celebrations with the Board.
- Executive Director Wells shared the NextGen Inquirer, a newsletter to provide employees with the latest updates and accomplishments across the NextGen Project. He also shared a Ga@Work Kickoff Video to heighten awareness of the project and prepare employees for the next steps.

Legislative Updates

- Executive Director Wells provided a legislative update to the Board, covering Crossover Day (March 6th) and key legislation that can become effective this year.
 - SB 12: A bill that seeks to clarify definitions and responsibilities related to maintaining and inspecting public records.
 - SB 28: The Red Tape Rollback Act, which seeks to revise the process of enacting laws and the process of agencies adopting new rules and regulations.
 - SB 46: The Government Serves the People Act, which seeks to establish a new position within GTA to monitor the service delivery of agencies.
 - SB 55: The Dignity and Pay Act, which eliminates 14(c) subminimum wage payments by gradually ending the issuance of certification to employers and raising employee wages from July 1, 2025, to July 1, 2027.
 - SB 96: Seeks to modernize and update various boards and commissions, dissolving the Employment First Council and reassigning its duties to the GVRS Board on July 1.
 - HB 67: AFY2025 Budget, signed into law by Governor Kemp at 9:30 am on Crossover Day.

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Sensory Services

- Ms. Shirley Robinson, Blind Services Coordinator for GVRA, presented the details of Project Independence. Project Independence is a Georgia vision program for those 55 years of age and over, administered by GVRA, which provides services that may help a client remain independent and continue doing what they like to do.
- Mr. Leon Allen, Business Enterprise Program (BEP) Director, provided an update on the BEP to Board members. BEP is designed to provide individuals with disabilities the opportunity to become self-employed and operate their own businesses.
- Mr. Greg Teems, Cave Spring Center (CSC) Manager, provided the schools served by the Pre-ETS program through CSC, the pathways and certifications offered to day students at CSC, and the preparation for implementing BEP at CSC. Mr. Teems further shared GVRA's future plans for CSC.
- Mr. Dan West, Georgia Industries for the Blind (GIB) Plant Manager, presented the variety of products manufactured at GIB, several success stories of employees at GIB, and important updates for GIB.

Multiplechoices Center for Independent Living (CIL)

- Mr. Garrick Scott, Executive Director of Multiplechoices CIL, presented the five core services offered to clients in 10 northeast Georgia counties:
 - Peer Support,
 - Information and Referral,
 - Independent Living Skills Training,
 - Systems and Individual Advocacy, and
 - Community and Youth Transition.

As funding permits, Multiplechoices CIL also facilitates: transportation, home modification, and micro-enterprise development.

Old Business/New Business

Chairman Wilson reminded the Board about upcoming Board meeting dates for 2025:

- May 14, 2025 – Virtual Meeting
- August 13, 2025 – Roosevelt Warm Springs, Warm Springs, Georgia
- October 8, 2025 – Georgia National Fair, Perry, Georgia

Public Comment & Adjournment

Chairman Wilson opened the floor for public comment. As there was no public comment, he called for a motion to adjourn.

On motion of Secretary Adams, seconded by Mrs. McCall, the board unanimously voted to adjourn the meeting at 2:23 p.m.