

## West Central Workforce Development Board Minutes

April 14, 2022

TEAMS Meeting

**WDB members present:** Jonathan Bibb, Greg Black, Karen Breashears, Larry Carr, Tanif Crotts, Darla Crump, Kelli Embry, Allan George, William Neil Golden, Herman Grayer, Lisa Green, Neal Harrington, Jimmy Hart, Karen Hofford, Jeremy Hughes, Cynthia Lanphear, Wendy Lopez, Margot McLeod, Alan Nolan, Tammy Passafiume, Dr. Lewis Shepherd, Jr., Bill Weston, Scott White

**WDB members absent:** Aleah Davis, Mike Lipton, Nicole McGough

**WCAPDD staff present:** Margaret Dearmon, Cora Easterday, David Moore, Dwayne Pratt and Carrie Pratchard

**Guests:** Joyce Akidi, Andy Hightower, Gretchen Hunt, Freddie Otts, Thomas Pittman, Justin Smith, Lori Strumpf, Ashley Williams

Ms. Dearmon took roll call and turned the floor over to Mr. Weston who called the meeting to order at 10:32 a.m. Mr. Weston gave the invocation.

### Agenda Item 1 – Chair Comments

Mr. Carr said the first item was the to review and approve the unofficial minutes from the February meeting. He asked if there were any additions or changes to the minutes. Mr. Carr said that he was going to wait to do the roll call vote because there are a couple more items to go over and we will do one roll call vote for all of them. Mr. Carr said he received requests for excused absences because of conflicts from Aleah Davis and Wendy Lopez. He asked Ms. Dearmon if anymore had come in and she replied that here were not anymore requests received. Mr. Carr said the excused absences will be a part of the vote in just a moment. The other item that we have as a part of the chair comments has to do with the Adult and DLW Work Experience policy. There have been a couple of minor additions and Ms. Dearmon will go over them. Ms. Dearmon went over the different types of work experiences. The Board approved this policy back in 2020, but we didn't have the different types of work experiences defined. A question came up from a board member about the internship, so I added the three different types of work experience. Mr. Carr asked Ms. Dearmon to send the policy out to the members. Mr. Carr asked if anybody have any questions before we vote. Ms. Dearmon said that she just noticed that the date of the meeting at the top of the first page wasn't changed from the December date. Ms. Dearmon said she would fix that when she got back to the office. **Mr. Crotts motioned, seconded by Ms. Breashears to approve the minutes with the changes made to the date of the meeting, excused absences, addition to Work Experience policy. Ms. Dearmon took roll call from each member and the motion carried unanimously with none opposed.**

Mr. Carr turned the floor over to Mr. Moore to talk about changes to the Malvern office. Mr. Moore stated that we were informed by Division of Workforce Services that they were going to shut down their operations in our Malvern Workforce effective May 31, 2022. The partners in the Malvern office is WIOA, DWS and Adult Education. We are having a meeting with statewide director of Adult Education and all other interested parties on this on May 4 because we want to keep a presence in Malvern. Just because DWS is leaving doesn't mean we have to shut down that workforce center. We want to remain partners with Adult Education if permitted to do so. We are going to put our heads together and discuss who will pay for what and how much space we need. We are going to push to keep our Malvern office. We cover 10 counties and four workforce centers. I think as a minimum, we need as long as we can afford it because one of the biggest barriers our clients have is transportation. If you take the Malvern

office away, that will put all five of our southern counties to have to drive to Hot Springs and I feel that is to much of a barrier. We are going to do our best to keep it open. I will keep you updated as these progresses.

Mr. Carr and Mr. Moore went over the budgets.

### **Agenda Item 2 – Committee Reports**

*One Stop Committee* – Mr. Weston said we went out on RFP to get a monitor. According to David, there was a lot of interest, but only one application received. She helped us in the past when we were doing another RFP and she knew what she was doing. She was very impressive with what she does. She operates under a single member LLC called PowerNotes, LLC. She is out of St. Louis, MO. She has a lot of credentials listed in her proposals. He turned the floor over to Mr. Moore to talk about the fees. Her proposal is tremendously lower than others we have received in the past. Y'all have already approved one that the State said they would not allow because it was Lily Kersh and she retired from Rehabilitation Services and they fell under Department of Commerce, so that is why we had to go back out. In the Law once you go out on RFP and select a vendor, as long as you are satisfied with the work they do, you can just appoint the vendor on a yearly basis for an additional three years without having to RFP for three years. Mr. Weston said that the committee met a couple of days ago and we received the application. We vetted it and she got almost a perfect score and an approval to recommend to the board. Discussion followed. **Mr. Carr said that we have a motion from Mr. Weston and the one stop committee to approve Mary Ann Lawrence of PowerNotes, LLC as the monitoring entity, seconded by Ms. Crump Ms. Dearmon took roll call from each member and the motion carried with Mr. Bibb abstaining.**

*Planning and Performance Committee* – Ms. Breashears reported that the committee met to discuss initial applications from Gateway Allied Health for Certified Pharmacy Technician, Certified EKG Technician, Certified Media Assistant Technician and Certified Phlebotomy Technician. We reviewed their information; their cost and it is the recommendation of the committee to approve the applications. **Ms. Breashears said she would like to put that make that forth to a motion to the full board. Mr. Carr asked for a second and Mr. George seconded. Ms. Dearmon took roll call from each member and the motion carried with Ms. Embry abstaining.**

### **Agenda Item 3 – Informational**

Mr. Weston turned the floor over to Mr. Hightower to give the One Stop Operator report. Mr. Hightower said that Ms. Strumpf sends her apologies because she is not able to be with us today. We have been busy working on a lot of different things. One of the big things is that we launched an electronic customer feedback system on March 21<sup>st</sup>. We've put it in place. We've printed some posters and cards that are up in each of the centers so people can use their phones to scan a QR Code to take them right to the easy questions. It has been up for three weeks, that means we have generated three reports and that have been distributed. There is not a lot of response yet. We have had one response form an employer and 7 responses from a job seeker. ADWS is still not using or promoting it. Vocational Rehabilitation Services is, as well as Adult Education and over the next several weeks we are going to work on greater option and greater use. So far, we have had a couple of responses and good feedback from them. We have been working with Adult Education in Hot Springs on a referral system for the Career Readiness Certificates. We have met with the partners and mapped the flow so people will know who to contact so we are not dropping people off or sending them in the wrong direction and they can get their CRC training and test done. We are working with Ms. Easterday to complete the Business Services Team self-assessment, which was required by the State. We have been working with the partners and the State to create a common referral form to use by the

partners so that we can have a better paper trail and have customers to agree to have us share information, so it doesn't have to be entered more than once. Some partners will be able to use and some will not, but that is our ongoing tasks to get the process easier. We continue to support Ready for Life pilot in Russellville. We are beginning to work on center certification for Hot Springs because of Covid and the move in 2020, it is currently not certified. However, the state just sent out an email with the new certification process. We will put it on hold until we make sure the State has their act in order before we move forward on there. They haven't given a particular timeline or deadline. We had our first partner meeting, and we continue to work on the MOU/IFA with the idea that the partners will share in the systemwide cost like the customer feedback system and other things we have put in place that is really going to support all the partners and all our efforts across the system. Mr. Carr thanked him for the work they are doing and is looking forward to seeing more. Mr. Hightower said that they will give a report at the next meeting.

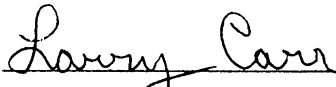
Mr. Carr turned the floor over to Ms. Easterday to give her report for the Business Engagement Team. Ms. Easterday gave a report on the Jazz HR program, which is an online platform that we have been using to post jobs to different platforms such as Indeed, LinkedIn, Monster, etc. We have been using it partnered with Central Business Service Team as a part of their team, so I was able to use that when I started in June and really started picking it up in November last year. Since using that program, we have been able to place 17 individuals into jobs throughout our 10-county region with 15 different job openings with a couple working multiple jobs. With the movement of unemployment moving to the State in Little Rock, the inflow of people into the workforce centers has been limited, so part of our job in business services is to find qualified candidates for the employers that we are working with in our area. One of the ways we have been innovated by doing that is using this platform. Ms. Easterday said she would like to see West Central's board to purchase for us to use in the future instead of using it through the Central Business Services Team. Discussion followed. Mr. Carr asked for a motion to approve the purchase of Jazz HR. **Ms. Breashears motioned, seconded by Mr. Bibb to approve the purchase of Jazz HR. Ms. Dearmon took roll call from each member and the motion carried with none opposed.**

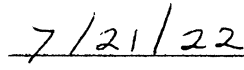
Mr. Carr asked the next part of the agenda is the discussion of workforce development in the local areas. Ms. Breashears said she wanted to give a thank you because that she has had to attend so many board trainings over the last 20+ years and she can honestly say that the one we had a week or so ago was the best one I ever attended. It didn't bore me to sleep. They done an excellent job and covered the material that needed to be covered. They actually engaged the participants. She said whoever was responsible for putting that together, hats off, job well done. On behalf of me and everyone else on the training thank you for doing an excellent presentation. Mr. Hightower said thank you and that Ms. Strumpf is good at what she does, and he will let her know. Ms. Greene seconded what Ms. Breashears said because she did do a great job. Ms. Green also said she had something else to bring to the board too. They are having an Industry Day in Morrilton. She is working with Ms. Easterday and it is going to work out to talk to around 275 high school kids signed up to come and probably even more to talk about jobs in Arkansas and the services that the workforce centers can provide to them that they don't know about. Mr. Hughes said they are slated to move into our new Carpenters and Millwrights Apprenticeship building over on I-40 in Russellville. When they get a grand opening date, he would like to extend an invitation for anyone who would like to come is welcome. Mr. Carr said thank you. Ms. Easterday said that they are hosting a Community Connection Day at the Caddo Academy. I believe there will an opportunity in May that we are going to open our workforce center and have ADWS mobile bus there, but we are working with the students like we are doing in Morrilton. At the end of the day, we are going to open it up to the community and allow the community to come in and participate as well. Ms. Passafiume said she would like to mention what they have going on and in another way to ask for volunteers as well. Several people on this call have helped us in the past. She said that Diamond Lakes is back to doing in person Reality Fairs. They have one schedule for Lake Hamilton High School for 300 of their seniors. We've done it before for their big event, but the more people that can come and help in different related fields whether you work in housing, auto sales, insurance sales, anything like that, it just adds to the fair. We also have a pet table where they can purchase pets and the

expenses that comes along with having a pet. I had to give my fish back before because I couldn't afford it. We had a veterinary come and brought a service dog and a snake. We are getting those on the calendar, and it is getting full, but if you would like an opportunity to help with any of those, we would love to have the help. Mr. Carr asked if anybody else had anything to bring and nobody spoke up.

Mr. Carr said he would like to have the board to meet back in person in June, if possible. If you have any comments, send it to Margaret. There are so many new members that have not the opportunity to have an in-person meeting. We have a couple of options. We have been offered to have it at National Park College and at our normal place – Smokin in Style BBQ. Ms. Dearmon said that she would send out a survey to see how many are ready to meet in-person.

**Mr. Crotts motioned, seconded by Ms. Breashears to adjourn the meeting.** Mr. Carr adjourned the meeting at 12:29 p.m.

  
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Larry Carr, Chair

  
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Date