

**MINUTES**  
**West Central Arkansas Local Workforce Development Board**

Thursday, February 9, 2023

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The West Central Local Arkansas Local Workforce Development Board convened its meeting through in person and electronic means on February 9, 2023, beginning at 10:34 a.m. The meeting was conducted in person at National Park College and via the TEAMS platform and a telephone line for members, non-members and the public.

Mr. Carr presided with the following members present in person platform: Greg Black, Larry Carr, Kelli Embry, Herman Grayer, Neil Harrington, Johnny Harris, Matt Johnson, Stephanie Lipsmeyer, Tammy Passafiume, and Bill Weston. The following members signed in via TEAMS platform voicing their presence by signing in the chat: Karen Breashears, Tanif Crotts, Allan George, William Neal Golden, Lisa Greene, Jeremy Hughes, Alan Nolan, and Gary Troutman.

Board members unable to attend the meeting were: Jimmy Hart, Cathy Jones and Scott White

Staff preset: Martha Boyer, Margaret Dearmon, Cora Easterday, David Moore, Carrie Pratchard, and Joyellen Rosamond

Guests present: Wade Derden, Andy Hightower, Gary Jackson, Thomas Pittman, Bill Ritter, Lori Strumpf, and Ashley Williams,

**Chair Opening Comments:** Chair Larry Carr called the meeting to order at 10:30a.m. he determined a quorum.

**Agenda Item 1- Chair Comments:**

**Approval of Minutes:**

Minutes from the December meeting needed to be approved. A **motion** was made by Kelli Embry to approve the minutes. Motion was seconded by Neal Harrington and carried unanimously.

**Approval of Excused Absences:**

A **motion** by Tammy Passafiume to approve excused absences of Jimmy Hart, Cathy Jones and Scott White for today's meeting and to Kelli Embry for the December 2022 meeting because her email came in after the meeting started. Motion was seconded by Matthew Johnson and carried unanimously.

**Review of PY-22 Budgets**

Mr. Carr reported that the budgets in the packet are different than what we had in the past due to a recommendation from DOL. He asked Carrie Pratchard to go over the budgets. She told the members that if there was any other information they would like to see in the reports to let her

know and she would be happy to accommodate in any way we can. Mr. Carr went over the budgets and reported that we have two years to spend our money, and we can spend our money and not get it recaptured. Mr. Carr said that the new budgets format is good is gives you a great picture of where we are and where we are going. He also stated that we can, if the board so desires, that in addition to these budgets, we could go back and present you with the budgets we had in the past. He said that David Moore said he would be willing to do that. If we are agreeable on what we got now, we can just continue with what Carrie has. He asked if there were any questions on the budgets. Alan Nolan asked what the highlighted cells where and it was explained to the board.

#### Board Training:

Mr. Carr reiterated the importance of attending the board training on February 15, at 9:30. This is something that is required, and we have not been doing it yearly. The purpose of this is to allow the board to understand how they can participate more as individuals, which is important. We talk about being involved in the communities and that is important. That is where the work really gets done. We need each board member to be knowledgeable and be able to share their insights. He said each of us has something to bring to this board that we can use to help those in our communities to make them more efficient and economically stronger. That is the purpose of the training, which will be an opportunity for individuals to talk and to share their ideas and questions that they may have and how they can better participate.

One other item I need to talk about is not on the agenda. We talked about doing the One Stop Center Certification. I had previously appointed an Ad Hoc committee to do that, however, the direction that we received from the State states that only one board member can participate in that committee. The chair of that committee is Lisa Greene. She will be our representative on that committee. David and Margaret will get the other two individuals to be a part of that committee. Mr. Carr said he just wanted the members to be aware of this.

#### **Agenda Item 2 - Action**

##### Executive Committee - Ratification of Committee's Approved Changes:

Mr. Carr said that there are two meetings of the Executive Committee that were held to address items in the DOL Monitoring Report. We have a short timeline to make these changes and that is why the Executive Committee is put into place to be able to make necessary changes and bring them to the board for ratification. The first change was to Section XIII (E), which previously had *The West Central Arkansas Workforce Development Board members may participate in committee meetings by telephone or similar communication device or by Web-based video. Such participation in a meeting shall be deemed present in person at such meeting.* Even though we have met virtually all this time, it was not in the By-Laws. We changed it to read *The West Central Arkansas Workforce Development Board members may participate in regular board meetings or committee meetings by telephone or similar communication device or by Web-based video. Such participation in a meeting shall be deemed present in person at such meeting.*

Mr. Carr talked about the DOL Monitoring Report he said that there are 13 findings that we have to address. Findings 3 & 5 were related to the functions and roles of the Board. This is the reason why we are having the board training. We talked about different ways to carry that out. We talked about extending the regular board meeting out 30-45 minutes out or have a one-day

professional training. The professional training costs several thousand dollars, which we may need to look at doing at a later time. Right now, Margaret and David are going to do be conducting the training and we got some stuff put together to start that process of training the board. A lot of this stuff we are addressing now, but we had to have the Executive Committee in order to say we were addressing these things that they required us to do in a formal reply. If you have any questions on those, I will give you the opportunity to address those now. It is a lot to take in. This is the first time we have had DOL come to the West Central area. Mr. Carr said the next meeting that was held on December 29<sup>th</sup> and Karen Breashears is on the line and will help address some of this shortly. The Supportive Service policy was changed to include paying for parking permits. The rest of these fall under the Performance, so I will let Karen Breashears talk about this stuff. Karen Breashears said that in a nutshell everything we covered is in the packet. I am not going to go back and read all of it to you. It goes back to the DOL monitoring, she said that we have had three or four meetings and as they go through this, it goes back to what Larry said that if we have any attempt whatsoever to meeting these deadlines, we have got to work those out. There were some things as far as language that we had to clean up. There were some eligible training provider and supportive service things to be modified. We had to do a workflow as to how things work in the centers. All we are doing is going through the DOL monitoring report and trying to mark off one box at a time. Margaret Dearmon also mentioned the changes made to the ETP Policy to include the process when a program is removed from AJL and we still have participants enrolled in the program. Mr. Carr asked for a motion and a second to ratify the Executive Committee's decisions. **Motion** to ratify the committee's decisions was made by Lisa Green and seconded by Karen Breashears. Motion carried unanimously.

*Planning and Performance Committee:*

Mr. Carr said there were several programs from National Park College to be added to the ETP List. He asked for a motion and second to approve those programs. Motion to approve the recommendations on the committee and add National Parks Programs to the ETPL was made by Johnny Harris and seconded by Lisa Greene. Motion carried unanimously with Kelli Embry abstaining from the vote.

*Youth Standing Committee:*

Alan Nolan talked about the timeframe for work experience and after discussion, it was decided that the length of work experience will be six months unless they change jobs, and the maximum would be a year with a three-month extension on case by case basis. Mr. Carr asked for a motion to approve the recommendation on the work experience timeframe. **Motion** to approve the duration period with the special circumstances clause was made by Karen Breashears and seconded by Gary Troutman. Motion carried unanimously.

**Agenda Items 3 - Informational**

*One Stop Operator Report* - Lori Strumpf and Andy Hightower gave their report that was sectioned out into the following sections: Systems and Process Improvement and Operations. Lori went over the Electronic Comment Card and had the results for jobseekers and employers for October through December. We are constantly working to increase the responses. It is also electronic and there is a QRC that the staff are supposed to hand out so they can get to the link.

We ask staff to try and get them to fill out the card. We are getting a lot of staff getting good responses. ADWS is not participating in the electronic comment cards. All other partners are.

MOU - Lori Strumpf said they have gathered all the signatures on the MOU except for ADWS. It was sent to the State for signature on September 8, 2022, and we are still waiting for a response back from them. We send emails and text, and we do not get any response from them. She said that DOL even mentioned not having a fully executed MOU, if I am correct. It is out of your control. We have done everything we can to get it signed.

Strategic Planning - We brought all our partners across the region for a strategic planning session in December. The Plan is included in the packet. Each center has different ways they need to operate, but Andy and I believe that you are a region and under one workforce development board. As a region we should be working closely together to support the board and its effort. We created three strategic goals for the entire partnership.

Operations - The next expungement fair is being planned and Cora will talk about that during her report. The next item was the Center Certification. It is due to the State on March 31, 2023. We have been working on this since April 8, 2022, to get this done. Andy and I have been working off the old application in preparation for when the final application came out and the difference between them. Lori Turned the floor over to Andy Hightower to talk about foot traffic in the centers. Andy reported on the foot traffic in the centers. He said Hot Springs and Russellville centers have had the most increase. Lori asked if there were any questions. Neal Harrington asked if the numbers of surveys were quarterly, and she said it was for the quarter. She said that they send out weekly reports to the partner leaders as part of the way to encourage people to fill out the survey. They are asked to share the reports with their staff and to write a handwritten a thank you note to every staff person if they are mentioned that week and it increases their awareness of being appreciated. We are working hard to get them to give out the card that has the QR Code, remind people to fill out the survey. For some reason, staff are resistant. They ask if they have to give it to them every time they come into the center. We tell them, yes, it is every time so we can get their experience today. Some staff are good at it. Stephanie Brown in the Hot Springs office is great, and the others are coming along. Neal Harrington asked if it could just be a part of the process, and you expect them to fill it out. Lori stated they have asked everybody to put it as a part of their signature block as well, so some of the partners have the link to say we want your feedback, please fill out. Not all partners allowed to do that if they are a State partner. You do not want every customer to feel like they have to fill it out, but you want every staff person to feel like they have to ask people to fill it out. Andy also stated that ADWS will not participate and do not share the link.

Mr. Carr thank Andy and Lori for their report. He asked that the board members take a look at what they have in the packet, if they haven't already done so. It has a lot of information on what they are doing and plan to do.

*Business Engagement Coordinator Report:* Cora Easterday provided an update on old business. She reported that they had an ArDot Hiring Event: December 7th in Pencil Bluff, AR and they successfully filled 2 full time positions with benefits in Montgomery County. She talked about the ACT WorkReady Communities: Pro Bono Boot Camp coming up on March 28 & 29 at

National Park College and the benefits of being a work ready community. She gave a report on the Expungement Fair/Sealing Clinic in Hot Springs. She mentioned the success story included in the packet that came out of that clinic. We were able to work with around 40 people to successfully seal records and change their lives. We will be hosting another Expungement Fair/Sealing Clinic Russellville on April 28, 2023. We are still working with the Clark County Workforce Training group, and we are hoping to host a Clark County Career and Industry Day in the fall. Cora stated that with the events we are continuing to host, I think it is good that we brand our local Workforce Development Board. She stated that she has worked with the IT person in our office to come up with the logo that is also included in the packet. We have signed up the following three new employers for Work Based Learning Opportunities with WIOA: Ross Family Electric: Malvern, Arkansas Logo Logic: Hot Springs, Keener Construction: Russellville. Cora talked about the Targeted Populations Outreach Plan that we are required to develop. We are working to include digital print and outreach activity, so we are trying to gather that data over the next three to six months in order to see what is working and what is not working on the outreach of the targeted population. As we move in that direction, there will be a need to allocate funds for business and client outreach into the programs and services that we provide. She also reported that as part of the center certification that that she must complete ADA Compliance Review of the centers. She said she will start off with a smaller version of that in order to complete the center certification. She will complete the full ADA Compliance Review at a later date.

BUSINESS SOLUTIONS TEAM - Cora stated that she wanted to mention that Stephanie Brown was our resource room facilitator in the Hot Springs office. She has received a promotion and is now the Resource Room Facilitator and my Business Engagement Assistant. I am extremely happy. She is working well on the JAZZ HR platform, which is our recruiting platform. She has been very helpful and instrumental in working with the clients coming into the workforce center and making sure that they know the jobs we are hiring for, or they have access to them.

JAZZ HR - Cora mentioned that she had Margaret Dearmon to run a Tableau report for the period of December 1, 2022 - January 31, 2023, and we had the following:

- AJL Job Orders: 650 Job Orders made throughout the 10 County Region.
- AJL Referrals: Referrals made throughout the 10 County Region.
- AJL Placements: 139 Placements made throughout the 10 County Region.
- JAZZ HR: 15 Job Orders Currently Listed in Jazz HR.

Cora said that we need to review the logos on the back page that she mentioned earlier. Mr. Carr asked if they were approving both logos. She said she would do both, that way if we need to use the square or the long one based on the document. Greg Black **motioned** seconded by Lisa Greene to approve the logos. Motion carried unanimously.

Discussion of Workforce Development in Local Communities - Mr. Carr asked if any of the board members would like to talk about any workforce development going on out in their local areas. Gary Troutman said he appreciates Cora bringing up the ACT Readiness and National Park for hosting. That all came out of an ACT Workforce Conference we had in New Orleans back in October. Gary Jackson is our new Workforce Director here at the Hot Springs Metro

Partnership. We have been working with Lake Hamilton School for Draft Day 2023 happening on April 24<sup>th</sup> - 26<sup>th</sup>. As of yesterday, there were twelve schools confirmed out of the 30 schools we have invited. We already have 25 companies participating and our goal is somewhere between 60 and 75. We would love for this board to back us up on this event.

Martha Boyer asked if she could get clarification on the youth work experience. When you said six months to a year, if we have a youth that is working at the Workforce Center, and they have worked for 3 months and there is a conflict, or they can't do the job and we move them to job. Are you saying that they will get an additional six months once they are moved even though they only worked three months at the first? You are not saying a total year? You are saying six months per job total. Mr. Carr asked Alan Nolan if that was correct. Alan said we are saying a maximum of a year **if** they change jobs more than once. He said in your scenario, they would have up to a year, but not an additional year. So, in this case if they leave a job after working 3 months, then they can work up to the year mark. Alan said he would hope that they could be in unsubsidized employment within 6 months, but it may take longer.

**Adjournment:**

The meeting was adjourned at 11.52 a.m.

  
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Larry Carr, Chairman

LC/md