

# West Central Arkansas Workforce Development Board

## Lisa Greene, Chair

The meeting of the West Central Arkansas Workforce Development Board meeting was held on Thursday, June 13, 2024, at National Park College Student Common in Hot Springs and via TEAMS.

**Members Present In-Person:** Brent Black, Kim Darling, Kelli Embry, Cynthia Gleghorn, Lisa Greene, Tim Hall, Neal Harrington, Jeremy Hughes, Mason Robinson, Gary Troutman, Venorris Webb-Delesline and Cindy White-Hamilton

**Members Present via TEAMS:** Karen Breashears, Pati Brown, Ben Freeny, Allan George, Jessica Gunn, and Ron Magby

**Members Absent:** Greg Black, Tanif Crotts, Darla Crump, Herman Grayer, Jimmy Hart, and Tammy Passafiume

**Staff:** Martha Boyer, Margaret Dearmon, Cora Easterday, Erica Parker, and Carrie Pratchard

**Guests:** Ben Buchanan, Jean Campo, Rod, Chupp, Justin Cook, William Golden, Andy Hightower, Thomas Pittman, Bill Ritter, Lori Strumpf, and Ashley Williams

Ms. Greene called the meeting to order at 10:33 a.m. and gave an invocation.

### **Chair Comments:**

#### **Approval of Minutes:**

Ms. Greene asked for a motion to approve the minutes from the April 11, 2024, meeting. Mr. Troutman made a **motion** to approve the minutes and was seconded by Ms. Embry. Motion carried unanimously.

#### **Approval of Excused Absences:**

Ms. Greene said that the following members have requested to be excused from the meeting today: Mr. Crotts, Ms. Crump, Judge Hart, Mr. Grayer, and Ms. Passafiume. Ms. Embry made a **motion** to approve the requested excused absence and was seconded by Mr. Troutman. Motion carried unanimously.

#### **Review of PY-23 Budgets:**

Ms. Greene turned the floor over to Ms. Pratchard, Finance Manager, to review the PY-23 budgets. Ms. Pratchard reported that she is waiting for the authorization to transfer the Dislocated Worker funds to the Adult Funds. She asked if there were any questions and there were none.

### **Board Staff Report:**

**Employer Cheat Sheet for Work Base Learning:** Ms. Easterday mentioned that at the last meeting the board asked for a cheat sheet that could be used with employers for the Work Base

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Learning that Title I-B has in place. Ms. Easterday discussed the cheat sheet in the packet and discussion followed.

Report on NAWDB Conference: Cora gave an update on the NAWDB Conference that was held in San Antonio last month.

Local Board and Arkansas Workforce Center Certifications: Ms. Easterday reported that the Local Board Certification has been submitted to Arkansas Workforce Connection for approval. She asked Ms. Dearmon if she had anything to add on the Board Certification. Ms. Dearmon emphasized the importance of following the requirement to send in a request if you are going to miss a meeting. The By-Laws stipulates that if you miss three unexcused meetings, you are automatically removed from the Board. We had a member that missed the April meeting without letting the Board Chair know and it was his third unexcused absence, so we had to remove him. With that opening for Community Base Organization replacement caused us not to meet the requirements for the Board Certification. We struggled to get a replacement for him at that short notice, but we finally did with the appointment of our newest member, Tim Hall. Again, Ms. Dearmon expressed the importance of submitting a request to be excused if you know you will not be able to attend the meeting.

Ms. Easterday stated that the center reviews have been completed and she is working to get them transferred over to the third or fourth updated document that the State has put out for the re-certification. The original deadline was on May 31, 2024. We had the reviews done by that deadline but now they extended the deadline to July 31, 2024. She stated that she is working to get all the information typed up into the new document so she can get it completed and submitted by the new deadline.

Enrollment: Ms. Easterday stated that we provided you with numbers at the last meeting and this report is different than that report. As the new Workforce Director, my expectations have changed. We want to do a better job of keeping track of what we are doing and reporting those details on what we are doing and getting the information to you. Ms. Easterday went over the report in the packet.

Ms. Easterday gave an update on the One Stop Operator negotiations. She said that she hopefully we will get it completed by the end of the month so there will not be a break in services. We will set up an Executive Committee meeting to review the budgets when the negotiations are completed.

Ms. Easterday gave a report on the Malvern Workforce Center and said that we no longer have staff in that office. She talked about the issues with the building that the office is currently in and that she has tried several times to get a hold of the landlord for the past three weeks and they will not respond back to her. We were slated to move out of this facility in July of this year with Adult Education into a new building. The funding was reallocated somewhere else, and we were left to defend for ourselves. We have talked about making workforce centers that we can be proud of, and we cannot be positive about having staff in that facility any longer. In the other centers we have three or more staff, and this one only has one. She said that she has no way of holding staff accountable in an office by themselves. She said she is asking the board to close the

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Malvern Workforce Center as an affiliate site and move the staff to the Hot Springs Workforce Center. She would work in each of the counties to set up connection points, so the individuals could still be served. Discussion followed. Ms. Breashears motioned, seconded by Ms. Embry, to move the personnel to the Hot Springs office and fill that position as needed. Motion carried unanimously.

Ms. Easterday reported that Ms. Smith, who has recently gotten married, has taken a new job in Benton. Ms. Easterday stated that they will be advertising for a new Business and Communications Manager in the near future and asked the board members if they know anyone that might be able to fill that position to let her know. She said that she will give a report at the next meeting.

### **Committee Reports**

#### **Planning/Performance/Finance Committee:**

Ms. Breashears reported that the committee met on April 25<sup>th</sup> and discussed the process that we have gone through to get a monitor for Fiscal and Programmatic and we received an excellent one, which is in the packet. The problem is that we do not have the money to pay for what they can do. So, we ended the meeting giving the staff the authority to negotiate with the proposer. They wanted to look at every participant's file. That isn't anything that is even done because it usually is a percentage. Through several emails and a call with ADWS, this same organization can actually do both. Ms. Breashears discussed the final email this organization can do both the programmatic and financial review. If we based it on 20%, we could actually get both done for \$45,390.13. Ms. Breashears turned the floor over to staff to answer any questions. Discussion followed. Ms. Greene asked all in favor to approve the recommendation from Ms. Breashears on behalf of the committee. The **motion** to approve Witt O'Brien's proposal was carried unanimously.

### **New Business**

#### **One Stop Operator's Report:**

Mr. Hightower reported that each center uses paper comment cards now. The center Manager is required to send a summary of the data to us, and we combine it and report it to the board. Hot Springs provided six comments. Morrilton reported that they had no comments. Ms. Hightower stated that no report was received from Russellville and Malvern during the reporting period of April and May 2024.

Mr. Hightower gave an update on the MOU and Infrastructure Development and Negotiations. He reported that the WDB still had not received any comments from the state regarding the final that was sent to them on March 2, 2024 other than confirmation that the state is reviewing it on April 30. He stated that the OSO is currently collecting new information required by the state detailing the budget of each partner's expenditures on Career Services.

Mr. Hightower gave a report on the Operations of the OSO that covered Partnership, Support to the WDB staff, Center Updates, Customer Traffic Reports and Accomplishments of the Partner's Strategic Plan for the following strategic goals: Build Awareness of All Workforce Services,

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Increase Access to Services for Customers and Improve and Implement Strategies for Outreach, Communications and Services to Underserved Populations.

### Discussion of Workforce Development in Local Communities:

Mr. Troutman stated it is ironic that we are the Workforce Board and Ms. Easterday is down two staff members. I have been involved with them through workshops and it is no reflection on you or your operations. It was better for Ms. Vaughn to work in Benton. Mr. Troutman also gave an update that Garland County just hit their goal of being an ACT Work Ready Community. Ms. Easterday was asked to tell what it means to be an ACT Work Ready Community and gave an update on the other counties progress of meeting their goals.

Ms. Easterday introduced Erica Parker as the newest member of the WCAPDD team. She works with Ms. Pratchard in the Finance Department.

Ms. Easterday also mentioned that she has been thinking for some time now how I can engage the other core partners other than just title I-B. I will be reaching out to the members on the board that represent the core partners and ask them to give a brief five minute presentation of what they have going on in their program. I thought that would be the best way to help us know what is going on outside of just title I-B.


### Open Floor for Discussion and Adjournment:

Ms. Greene asked if anyone had anything to discuss and there was no response, and she called the meeting adjourned at 11:40

### Adjournment:

Ms. Troutman made a **motion** to adjourn, seconded by Ms. Breashears. Motion carried unanimously. The meeting was adjourned at 12:12p.m.

  
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Lisa Greene, Chair

  
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Date

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