

**North Central Arkansas
Workforce Development Board
December 14, 2022
Minutes**

The North Central Arkansas Workforce Development Board convened at White River Planning and Development District on December 14, 2022 beginning at 11:00 a.m. The meeting was conducted in person, with a zoom option, and there was a quorum. The Board meeting took place after the committee meetings which were held at 10:30 a.m. Chairman Gayle Cooper presided with the following members present:

Shayne Gaither	Gayle Cooper
Garry Lawrence	Pat Dunegan
Marcus Orf	Dr. John Kelly
Stacy Gunderman	Raye Ann Hager
Wiley Osborn	Stacey Gunderman
Jamie Rayford	

Zoom:
Laura McGuire
Amber Neal

Others Present:

Staff includes; Janet Smith, Byron Southerland, Taylor Smith, Calvin Wright, Bree DeShazo, Elizabeth Smith, and Keydra Looney. Guests include; Jon Chadwell (Director of the Newport Economic Development Commission and the guest speaker), Todd Hunter (Arkansas Economic Development Commission), Brittany Baker (Lion Transport LLC), Judy Fulbright (ADWS TEA Workforce Specialist), Tanya Plunkett (Director of Internal Audit and Financial Monitoring for ADWS).

Members not present:

Patricia Cargill-Zelasko	Renee' Martin
Karen Coltharp	Chad Vincent
Jill Dockins	Gina Wells
Dr. Zach Harber	Robin Hunt
Alvin Hearyman	

Since there was a quorum, Chairman Cooper asked the Board for approval of the previous minutes. Chairman Cooper asked if there were any discussion that needed to take place before the voting and there was none.

1st Mr. Garry Lawrence 2nd Mr. Shayne Gaither All members voted yes for approval of the minutes.

Chairman Cooper then called on Ms. Elizabeth Smith to introduce the guest speaker. Ms. Smith introduced Mr. Jon Chadwell who is the Director of the Newport Economic Development Commission. Mr. Chadwell spoke about the new Tech Depot in Newport and each of the services this project would be offering to eligible residents of Jackson County. Mr. Chadwell informed the Board of the apprenticeship model that operates under the Arkansas Center for Data Sciences. He

stated that eight companies have joined to take part. Mr. Chadwell stated that the educational portion is contracted locally through the Arkansas State University Newport's campus. The idea behind the structure is to organize the trainings to meet the needs of local businesses whether that be training for new employees or existing ones. Mr. Chadwell also stated that other components of the Tech Depot are to offer an I.T. certification to which seven individuals had completed and three of those participants were offered a forty percent raise due to their new certification. Mr. Chadwell likewise discussed the summer STEM program for Youth that was a huge hit with over a hundred school age children. The last aspect Mr. Chadwell spoke on was a new TANF grant the Tech Depot was receiving from the Arkansas Division of Workforce Services. Due to seventy percent of women in Jackson County not in the workforce, this grant would allow for childcare and transportation so these individuals could attend an evening training to get their I.T. certification. Board member Jamie Rayford asked Mr. Chadwell how he was successful in getting local partners on board to which Mr. Chadwell explained the efforts of his team and contracts with local entities.

Chairman Cooper then called upon Mr. Byron Southerland to present the financial report. Mr. Southerland presented to the board how North Central is behind on dislocated worker funds due to the lack of layoffs in our area. Mr. Southerland explained that we would need to move the dislocated worker funds to the adult category. Mr. Southerland then spoke about the TANF funds and stated that we would be requesting an extension from ADWS. Mr. Southerland asked if there were any questions about the spreadsheet he produced to the Board and having no questions, Chairman Cooper asked for approval of the financial report.

1st Mrs. Stacey Gunderman 2nd Mrs. Jamie Rayford All members voted yes to the approval of the financial report.

Following the agenda, Chairman Cooper called on Mrs. Taylor Smith to give a One-Stop update. Mrs. Taylor provided the Board with monthly activity reports of the three centers in the North Central area. Mrs. Smith spoke about the new referral system that she organized and stated that since instituting this system with the partners she was able to record thirty referrals. Mrs. Smith updated the Board on the Business Services Team and announced that she was happy to have Board member Patricia Cargill as a new member of the team.

After Mrs. Taylor Smith spoke, and there were no questions posed, then Chairman Cooper called upon Mrs. Keydra Looney to give a TANF update. Mrs. Looney gave an update on the current number of TANF participants, which was seven. Mrs. Looney stated that she has been able to place each participant into a worksite within a week of him or her applying. Dr. John Kelly asked Mrs. Looney to provide the names of the worksites that she is collaborating with. Mrs. Looney stated Hawgs Exxon, Fresh Start Resale, Crumbs Up Bakery, and UACCB were TANF worksites.

Chairman Cooper called upon Mrs. Bree DeShazo, Records Manager, to present a program update to the Board. Mrs. DeShazo stated that North Central had the most clients in the State at two hundred participants. Mrs. DeShazo then gave an update on what area of training those participants were primarily in which ranged from work experience, occupational skills training, and on the job training.

Chairman Cooper then asked Ms. Elizabeth Smith to present the next item on the agenda, which were policy updates, and old business items that needed addressed. Ms. Smith first shared with the Board a report that was provided by the State of Arkansas. In this report, it showed the barrier counts for the previous funding year broken down by local area. With no discussion about the barrier counts, Ms. Smith explained the supportive services policy that needed Board approval. She explained that, per ADWS, the local areas could not have the clause "supportive services are as follows but not limited to". The Board questioned how we were able to adequately serve an issue that might arise for participants if that clause was not in the policy. Ms. Smith explained that a new

clause was added that gave the Executive Committee the right to temporarily approve new services via an email vote. The Board was pleased with this and Chair Gayle Cooper asked for a vote on the Youth and Adult/Dislocated Worker Supportive Service Policies.

1st Mrs. Jamie Rayford 2nd Mr. Wiley Osborn All members voted yes to the approval of the two supportive services policies.

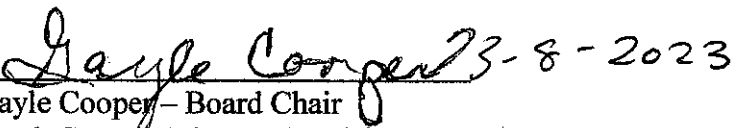
Moving along in the agenda, Ms. Elizabeth Smith then presented the Board with a monitoring update. She let the Board members know that the recent monitoring that was conducted by Hightower Workforce Initiatives yielded no findings. Ms. Smith had previously sent the report to the Board. The Board was pleased to see that there were no findings and that the monitors had suggested ways to improve the program.

For the last item, Chairman. Gayle Cooper asked for the voting of the previous minutes for June and September of 2022. No questions were raised about the minutes.

1st Mrs. Stacey Gunderman 2nd Mr. Shayne Gaither All members voted yes to the approval of the two previous minutes.

Having no further business to discuss, Chairman Gayle Cooper asked if anyone from the public would like to speak to the Board. There was no response. Chair Cooper then asked for a motion to adjourn the meeting at 12:15 p.m.

1st Mrs. Jamie Rayford 2nd Dr. John Kelly All members voted yes to the adjournment.


Gayle Cooper – Board Chair
North Central Arkansas Workforce Development Board