

**North Central Arkansas
Workforce Development Board
September 9, 2021
Minutes**

The North Central Arkansas Workforce Development Board convened at White River Planning and Development District on September 9, 2021, beginning at 10:35 a.m. The meeting was conducted in person and through teleconference. Board Chair Gayle Cooper presided with the following members present: Ben Baxter, Patricia Cargill-Zelasko, Karen Coltharp, Gayle Cooper, Stacy Gunderman, Raye Hagar, Zach Harber, Garry Lawrence, Wiley Osborn, Becky Warren, and Gina Wells. Those attending by teleconference include: Pat Dunegan, Robin Hunt, and Amber Neal.

Others Present: Angela Goodwin, Elizabeth Smith, Byron Southerland, Bree DeShazo, Janet Smith, and Elizabeth E. Smith. Zach Perrine of UACCB joined through teleconference and guest speaker Taj Mecham from TRANSFRVR joined the meeting through Zoom.

Board Chair Gayle Cooper called the meeting to order at 10:35 a.m. upon seeing a quorum.

Board Chair Cooper called upon Elizabeth Smith to present the introduction of guests. Ms. Smith introduced guest Ms. Elizabeth E. Smith of UACCB and Zach Perrine on the phone. She also presented guest speaker Taj Mecham of TRANSFRVS, who was present through Zoom.

Board Chair Gayle Cooper asked if there were any corrections or revisions to the June 16, 2021 board minutes. Becky Warren noted minor errors in the minutes. Board Chair Cooper asked for a motion to approve the minutes as amended. A motion to accept the amended June 16, 2021 minutes was made by Becky Warren and seconded by Zach Harber. The motion carried unanimously with none opposed.

Board Chair Gayle Cooper asked if there were any corrections or revisions to the minutes of the board meeting that took place on July 26, 2021 to approve Exercise Science and Pre-Engineering programs. Hearing none, Garry Lawrence made a motion to accept the July 26, 2021 meeting minutes to approve the programs. Becky Warren seconded. The motion carried unanimously with none opposed.

Board Chair Gayle Cooper then presented the Executive Committee meeting minutes from July 26, 2021. Board Chair Cooper explained that this meeting was called to discuss allowing electronic submission of the One-Stop Operator proposal responses. Garry Lawrence, Alvin Hearyman, and Gayle Cooper voted to allow the responses to be submitted electronically. Board Chair Gayle Cooper asked for a motion to approve the July 26, 2021 Executive Committee meeting minutes. Becky Warren motioned to approve the Executive Committee Minutes approving the electronic submission of One-Stop Operator responses and Stacy Gunderman seconded. All were in favor and the motion carried.

Board Chair Gayle Cooper asked Ms. Elizabeth Smith to present the guest speaker Taj Mecham. Mr. Mecham discussed the program TRANSFRVR, which assists individuals and worksites with hands-on training. Mr. Mecham informed the board that the virtual-reality training headset will be available to the board members to see if it might benefit their worksites or training programs.

Board Chair Gayle Cooper then called upon Byron Southerland to present the Financial Report. Mr. Southerland presented the budget, including the PY21 June 30, 2023 funds that are available when the PY20 June 30, 2022 funds are exhausted. After questions were brought up regarding the TANF

grant listed on the budget, Ms. Elizabeth Smith explained that this was from a previous grant that has closed. Chair Cooper requested a motion to approve the budget. Ben Baxter voted to approve the budget and Becky Warren seconded. All were in favor and the motion carried.

Board Chair Gayle Cooper then called upon Elizabeth Smith to introduce guest speaker Ms. Elizabeth E. Smith, a prior WIOA participant. Ms. Smith shared an inspiring story of her obstacles and provisions that came across her path after she decided to go back to college. She discussed how the Ozarka College TRIO program, WIOA tuition assistance and supportive services, and government benefits allowed her to stay in school and beat the odds that were stacked against her. She transferred to ASU Jonesboro where she finished her bachelor degree earlier than expected. She has earned her masters degree and is working toward a doctorate. "Suddenly things were possible again... None of that was possible without WIOA providing the funds for me to be able to do it and to see that there was a light at the end of the tunnel." She is now the JAG College Career Coach at University of Arkansas Community College at Batesville, and is proud to be able to assist others in finding the financial assistance and encouragement they need to complete their education.

Board Chair Gayle Cooper called upon Angela Goodwin to discuss the approved programs. Ms. Goodwin explained that, while she had intended to have performance information to share with the board on each individual program, the state has recently moved all program information to a different management information system website. Ms. Goodwin informed the board that the new program approval site, ArkansasJobLink, does not present performance results in a manner that could be easily shared with the board. She explained that she will have performance information to provide them at the March 2022 meeting for the annual renewals.

Ms. Angela Goodwin then discussed the policy updates which had been previously distributed. Ms. Goodwin explained that the Roles and Responsibilities Policy contains wording discussing the roles of the One-Stop Operator and that the entity who serves in this function must be listed. Due to the fact that the One-Stop Operator procurement was not finalized, this policy was not complete. Ms. Goodwin suggested that the policy could be presented by email at a later date to the full board for approval. Board Chair Gayle Cooper requested a motion to approve the updated policy by email once completed. Becky Warren motioned to review for approval the policy update by email and Stacy Gunderman seconded. All were in favor and the motion carried.

Ms. Angela Goodwin then discussed the change in the Dislocated Worker Eligibility Policy. She explained that the state had previously requested all eligibility criteria be included, and that the resulting policy update was approved at the previous board meeting. However, the state has since clarified that they strongly encourage the board to update the policy to be all-inclusive, so that the policy does not only include the required definitions and documentation, but explains in full detail how a dislocated worker may be eligible. Board Chair Gayle Cooper requested a motion to approve the updated Dislocated Worker Eligibility Policy. Garry Lawrence motioned to approve the updated policy and Stacy Gunderman seconded. Having no further discussion, the motion carried.

Board Chair Cooper called upon Elizabeth Smith to update the board on monitoring. Ms. Smith presented the monitoring packet that had been previously distributed. She explained that the report shows positive outcomes, stating that most of the issues will be resolved. She drew the board's attention to the items that need to be addressed moving forward. Ms. Elizabeth Smith discussed that one of the issues listed was Career Services. She explained that this was not broken down by cost per partner on the Infrastructure Funding Agreement which is a statewide issue and that technical assistance has been requested. She discussed that the district leases for building and equipment use is also a statewide issue and that WRPDD is working with the state to resolve these concerns.

Ms. Elizabeth Smith then discussed the organizational chart and job descriptions of WIOA personnel that had been previously distributed. This had been previously requested of the board so that the board can better understand the structure of the local WIOA program.

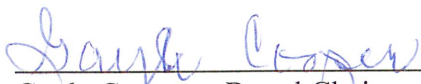
Chair Gayle Cooper called upon Ben Baxter, the chair of the One-Stop Committee, to discuss the recent One-Stop Operator procurement. Mr. Ben Baxter informed the board that the committee had received technical assistance from the state. There were three responses received. Procurement specialist Debbie Webb had prepared a score sheet for the responses. Stacy Gunderman, Gayle Cooper, and Ben Baxter scored the responses. Mr. Baxter explained that Hightower missed a step in the response requirements, which prevented them in moving forward in the review process. Mr. Baxter presented the board with copies of the tallied scores. He explained that based on the total scores, the committee determined to propose to the full board that WRPDD be awarded the One-Stop Operator contract. Mr. Baxter explained that, based on the response from WRPDD, this should not exceed \$45,000 per year. Chair Gayle Cooper requested a motion to approve WRPDD as the One-Stop Operator. Garry Lawrence voiced that he will abstain from voting, due to his membership on the WRPDD board. Stacy Gunderman motioned to approve WRPDD as the One-Stop Operator and Becky Warren seconded the motion. None were opposed and the motion carried.

Chair Cooper asked if there was any other business. Ben Baxter recommended the incentive policy be updated to better serve youth who are in Adult Education. He suggested a \$200 incentive for completing their GED. Becky Warren made a motion to move forward to update the policy. She requested the staff review the regulation and include the incentive for completion of the GED. PaTricia Cargill-Zelasko seconded. All were in favor and the motion carried.

PaTricia Cargill-Zelasko recommended creating an ad-hoc committee to help those in the drug court program. She explained that the focus of the committee would be to help people that have graduated or are in the final phase of completing the program. Becky Warren added that if they are in college when they were convicted of drug charges, they no longer have the same access to tuition assistance they may have been eligible for prior to their conviction. Becky Warren, Gina Wells, and Elizabeth Smith stated they wanted to be on the committee. The board agreed to form the ad-hoc Drug Court Committee. Chair Gayle Cooper appointed PaTricia Cargill-Zelasko as the committee chair.

Angela Goodwin then stated that the committee roster needed to be updated. Ms. Goodwin presented the current committee roster and described the open positions. She listed the members that have not been appointed to a current committee. After discussion regarding individual preferences and interests in the committees, Gayle Cooper appointed Raye Ann Hager as the One-Stop Committee Vice-Chair, Becky Warren as the Youth Committee Vice-Chair, Renee' Martin as the executive committee secretary, and Wiley Osborn as executive committee member. Zach Harber and Karen Coltharp were added to the One-Stop Committee. PaTricia Cargill-Zelasko, Gina Wells, Julie Bonds, Latasha Robinson, and Chad Vincent were added to the Youth Committee. Marcus Orf, Sheila Phillips, and Wiley Osborn were added to the Disability Services Committee.

Having no further business to discuss, Board Chair Gayle Cooper asked for a motion to adjourn the meeting. Ben Baxter motioned to adjourn at 12:17 p.m. and Garry Lawrence seconded. The meeting was adjourned.



Gayle Cooper – Board Chair

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