

**North Central Arkansas
Workforce Development Board
March 13, 2024
Minutes**

The North Central Arkansas Workforce Development Board convened at White River Planning and Development District on March 13, 2024 beginning at 11:00 a.m. The meeting was conducted in person, with a zoom option, and there was a quorum. Chairman Gayle Cooper presided with the following members present:

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|-----------------|---------------------|
| Michael Arnold | Amie McBride |
| Brittany Baker | Trish Miller |
| Gayle Cooper | Karen Palmer |
| Dr. Zach Harber | Chad Vincent (Zoom) |
| Janet Hearyman | Gina Wells |
| Garry Lawrence | Renee' Martin |

Others Present:

Staff included; Janet Smith, Bree DeShazo, Taylor Smith, Chase Shonk, Calvin Wright and Elizabeth Smith. Guests included; Ken Beach from ASU-Newport, Todd Hunt from AEDC, Alex Richardson and Lonnie Emard from the Arkansas Center for Data Sciences.

Members not present:

Stacy Gunderman
Laura McGuire
Amber Neal
Marcus Orf
Wiley Osborn
Jennifer Pike

Since there was a quorum, Chairman Cooper asked the Board for approval of the previous minutes from November of 2023. Chairman Cooper asked if there was any discussion that needed to take place before the voting and there was none.

1st Mr. Garry Lawrence 2nd Mrs. Renee' Martin All members voted yes for approval of the minutes.

Chairman Cooper then called upon the guest speaker who was Mr. Lonnie Emard, joining by zoom, from the Arkansas Center for Data Sciences (ACDS) to share about the program. Mr. Emard spoke about apprenticeships in Arkansas and how the ACDS program can help employers. Mr. Emard told the board about free recruiting services, free project management to implement apprenticeships, and free customized training per apprentice. The board was able to ask pertinent questions and learn about the options available to employers.

Chairman Cooper then called on Mr. Calvin Wright and Mr. Chase Shonk to present the financial report. Mr. Wright explained where North Central was at in terms of spending the allocated funds. Mr. Shonk went over the charts in the board packet and explained that the North Central team was on track to spend all of the funds by the end of June 2024 having to return no money to ADWS.

Chairman Cooper then asked for discussion over the budget to which Mrs. Gina Wells made a motion to approve the budget as is.

1st Mrs. Gina Wells 2nd Mrs. Trish Miller All members voted yes for approval of the financial report.

Chairman Cooper then asked Mrs. Taylor Smith to give a One-Stop update. Mrs. Smith shared the monthly activity report for the Searcy Workforce Center. She explained the job orders and referrals that were taking place as well as the increased outreach efforts of the Searcy Workforce Center to meet the needs of the ten county area. Mrs. Smith also provided a list of activities that were forthcoming.

Chairman Cooper asked Mr. Lynn Poff, Career Specialist, to give an account of his county which is Independence. Mr. Poff gave an overview of his clients detailing what programs they were in. Mr. Poff also talked about the outreach efforts he was conducting and spoke about his partnership with the University of Arkansas Community College at Batesville.

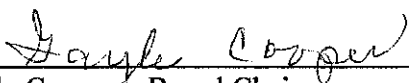
Next, Chairman Cooper called on Mrs. Bree DeShazo to provide a WIOA Title I-B program update. Mrs. DeShazo stated that North Central currently has 182 participants. Mrs. DeShazo then gave an overview of the clients in work experience versus occupational skills training.

Chairman Cooper called upon Ms. Elizabeth Smith to present policies/procedures that needed to be approved. The first policy/procedure was that of Supportive Services for Adults, Dislocated Workers, and Youth. Ms. Smith explained that the North Central team has integrated the policy and procedure into one document making it easier for staff. Chairman Cooper asked for discussion to which Mrs. Renee' Martin made a motion to approve. 1st Mrs. Renee' Martin 2nd Dr. Zach Harber All members voted yes for approval of the Supportive Service policy and procedures. Ms. Smith then spoke about the Procurement policy which had been updated to reflect new forms for staff to use which would make the process easier and add additional firewalls to protect the agency. Chairman Cooper asked for discussion on this policy to which Mr. Garry Lawrence made a motion to approve. 1st Mr. Garry Lawrence 2nd Dr. Zach Harber All members voted yes for approval of the Procurement policy and procedures. Ms. Smith went on to discuss the procedures and how ADWS would like for all procedures to be approved by the local Boards. The Board having read through the procedures prior to the meeting had no further discussion. 1st Dr. Zach Harber 2nd Mrs. Karen Palmer All members voted yes for approval of the North Central procedures.

Chairman Cooper then opened the floor to the public for comments on the local plan. No comments were made.

Having no further business Chairman Cooper asked for a motion to adjourn.

1st Dr. Zach Harber 2nd Mr. Michael Arnold All members were in favor of adjournment.



Gayle Cooper - Board Chair
North Central Arkansas Workforce Development Board