

**North Central Arkansas  
Workforce Development Board  
September 13, 2023  
Minutes**

The North Central Arkansas Workforce Development Board convened at White River Planning and Development District on September 13, 2023 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:

Gayle Cooper	Dr. Zach Harber
Garry Lawrence	Michael Arnold
Marcus Orf	Amber Neal
Stacy Gunderman	Wiley Osborn
Gina Wells (Via Zoom)	Jennifer Pike
Renee' Martin	Trish Miller
Brittany Baker (Via Zoom)	

**Others Present:**

Staff included; Janet Smith, Bree DeShazo, Chase Shonk, Byron Southerland, Taylor Smith, Jamie Hill, and Elizabeth Smith. Guests included; Tom Pittman (ADWS), Charles Walker (ASUN), Brian Shonk (UACCB), Zach Perrine (UACCB), Todd Hunter (AEDC), Ben Baxter (UACCB), and Dominique Euell (ADWS).

**Members not present:**

Chad Vincent  
Laura McGuire  
PaTricia Cargill-Zelasko  
Gina Wells  
Karen Palmer  
Cecilia Brunson  
Shayne Gaither

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

1<sup>st</sup> Mr. Garry Lawrence 2<sup>nd</sup> Mrs. Stacey Gunderman All members voted yes for approval of the minutes.

Chairman Cooper then called upon the guest speaker Mr. Ben Baxter. Mr. Baxter works for the University of Arkansas Community College at Batesville as the SNAP E&T coordinator. Mr. Baxter presented about his program and gave an update on the new law changes that will affect any able working body who is receiving SNAP benefits. Mr. Baxter told the Board about the influx of people to expect who are looking for either a job or a volunteer position in order to keep their benefits.

Chairman Cooper called upon Ms. Elizabeth Smith to discuss policy changes and the PY22 monitoring report issued by ADWS. Ms. Smith stated that the policy changes included removing and

adding additional language that ADWS requested to the Follow Up policy and the Supportive Services Policy. Ms. Smith informed the Board that previously North Central had two separate Supportive Services policies, one for adults and one for youth. Ms. Smith stated that this was not necessary and asked the Board to approve the combination of the policies. Ms. Smith then spoke about the PY22 monitoring report that was dispersed to the full Board. Having no further discussion Chairman Cooper asked for a motion to approve the policies.

1<sup>st</sup> Mr. Wiley Osborn 2<sup>nd</sup> Dr. Zach Harber All members voted yes for approval of the two policies.

Chairman Cooper then called on Mr. Chase Shonk to present the financial report. Mr. Shonk explained via charts and an excel file the breakdown of where North Central is at in terms of spending the grant funds. Mr. Shonk explained that North Central is on track to spend all the funds by the end of June 2024. Mr. Cooper asked the Board to approve the budget.

1<sup>st</sup> Mr. Garry Lawrence 2<sup>nd</sup> Dr. Zach Harber All members votes yes for approval of the policy.

Chairman Cooper then asked Mrs. Taylor Smith to give a One-Stop update. Mrs. Smith started her presentation with sharing specific information from the remaining Comprehensive Center in the North Central area. She elaborated on the general center services that are offered in Searcy and presented the Board with accurate numbers of visitors. Mrs. Smith then informed the Board of upcoming hiring events in the area.

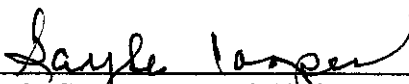
Chairman Cooper then called upon Mrs. Jamie Hill to share an overview of the WIOA program in White County. Mrs. Hill is the Career Specialist for White County and she presented the top programs, her caseload which comes to 97 individuals who are active and in follow-up, as well as the outreach she has been conducting.

Next, Chairman Cooper called on Mrs. Bree DeShazo to provide a WIOA review and an ETPL update. Mrs. DeShazo stated that North Central currently has 182 participants, all doing various WIOA activities which include; occupational skills training, work experience, GED, and on the job training. Mrs. DeShazo then presented the ETPL to the Board. Chairman Cooper asked for discussion before approval of the ETPL.

1<sup>st</sup> Mr. Marcus Orf 2<sup>nd</sup> Mrs. Stacey Gunderman All members voted yes for approval of the ETPL.

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

1<sup>st</sup> Mrs. Stacy Gunderman 2<sup>nd</sup> Dr. Zach Harber All members were in favor of adjournment.

  
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Gayle Cooper – Board Chair

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