

Western AR Workforce Development Board Meeting

September 21, 2021 1:00 PM

114 W. Main, Booneville, AR

Cathy Nesbit called the meeting to order.

Board member attendance: Greg Aleshire, Tom Bonkofsky, Dana Byrum, John Craig, Debbie Faubus-Kendrick, Brandon Fisher, Rachel Mize proxy Glenna Stovall, Cathy Nesbit, Erick Wiggins proxy Benjamin Barlow, Dwayne Young. Other attendees: Sasha Grist, Shirley McCutchen, Susan Bulger, Dennis Williamson

Approval of minutes for the 6/22/21 meeting – Cathy stated the board minutes of the previous meeting and committee minutes from the same quarter were emailed to you. She asked for any additions or corrections to them. There were none so she stated since there are no changes, the minutes are approved as distributed.

Cathy presented the executive committee minutes from August 30, 2021, to the board stating the committee reviewed an addendum to the local plan. Dennis explained the purpose for the addendum was to meet a requirement of DOL to the State for the youth spending variance on in-school youth for up to 50%. It was stated that the purpose for the spending variance was due to the high number of underserved in-school youth with significant barriers. Cathy asked for a motion to approve the addendum as written. Dana Byrum made the motion to approve the addendum, John Craig seconded the motion. Cathy asked for any discussion and there was none. The committee voted unanimously to approve the addendum as presented. The committee meeting was adjourned.

Cathy said a copy of the addendum was sent to the board members to review and it was posted to the board website. She asked the board to ratify the decision of the executive committee to approve the addendum. She asked for discussion and there was none. The board unanimously approved to ratify the decision of the executive committee to approve the addendum.

Shirley made a one-stop operator report informing the board of the numbers of clients for each partner within the center at Fort Smith. She did say she was not able to get a report for the Mena center. She spoke on the customer surveys being offered to clients using the centers and shared that many responses were positive of their experience. She also talked about the referral process and that there is on-going training for each partner to better utilize the form and process created and approved by the board. She said partners are getting better with it as they increase their use of it. Only DWS-Wagner-Peyser is not using it at all. She stated she was working with center partners to address that items noted in the last one-stop center monitoring reports.

The title I program report was given by Dennis. He stated we are no longer under the youth waiver, so we are following the 75% on out of school youth requirement with PY21 funds. He has asked for the state to request a variance again but has not received affirmation on the outcome. We are working with TANF on a pre-apprenticeship project and expect to get it kicked off soon. The staff is meeting with area high schools to inform students about the different programs and services available. They are also meeting with

agencies such as the Fort Smith juvenile system and continue to work with foster care agencies in the region. We are still working with ADWS to close out the PY19 monitoring report that discussed in the March board meeting as well as questions they had on the PY20 monitoring that occurred in February. The financial report for the quarter ending June 30 was presented to the board and they had no questions.

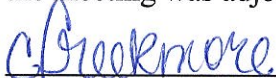
Cathy stated local plan updates were sent to you for review by email. She said the changes on page 3 are data updates related to current employment information. She stated pages 10, 26, 50, and 59 reflect technical changes to minimize confusion and to represent more clearly the board's intent to provide flexibility to providers of services to meet client's needs. She asked for a motion to approve the plan changes as written. John Craig made the motion and Dwayne Young seconded it. She asked for discussion and there was none, so she called for a vote. The board voted unanimously to approve the motion.

Data collected from the Job Seeker survey created by board members was presented. Glenna asked why we received such a small amount of responses. It was stated that the survey was made available through area chambers, workforce partners and community organizations, as well as the board members and CEOs. Most responses came from partner connections. The survey was only run for 30 days. The responses did reflect challenging concerns such as availability of childcare and transportation. Dana said that agencies provide services to help job seekers overcome barriers but some still do not take jobs offered. There was discussion about client's unrealistic view of their ability to get higher paying jobs relative to their skill sets and that this could be a reason they do not apply for entry level positions. It was discussed that more investigation needs to take place in our region.

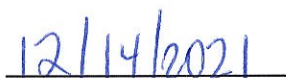
Information about a virtual WIOA board/CEO training was presented to the board. The National Association of Workforce Boards put the training together partnering with DOL and other agencies. The board was told it is self-paced and provides reinforcement to the other training received. Dennis shared his experience taking the training and said it was a more concise, well presented, easy to navigate and covered the key elements of the member's role and responsibility as a workforce board representative. Cathy asked that board participate in taking this training. She asked Dennis to send the link to each member and he would help if needed.

Debbie Faubus provided information to the board about a recent recognition that the Crawford County Adult Education program received. She told the board they received the national recognition of Adult Ed Innovation for their unique alternative sentencing program and that they were chosen over other projects presented from around the US.

Cathy asked if there is any other business to be discussed. She stated since there was none the meeting was adjourned.



Cathy Creekmore, Chair



Date