

## Western Arkansas Workforce Development Board Minutes

ARS office, 400 Rogers Ave, Suite C, Fort Smith, AR 6/13/22

Cathy Creekmore called the meeting to order.

Board members in attendance: Tom Bonkofsky, Dana Byrum, Cathy Creekmore, Brandon Fisher, Debbie Faubus-Kendrick, Rachel Mize, Zach Sloan proxy Kathy Fulks, Erick Wiggins proxy Ben Barlow

Other attendees: Shirley McCutchen, Angie Oliver, Ashlie Ross, Ashley Garris, Dennis Williamson

Cathy stated the minutes of the March 13, 2022, meeting were sent to you electronically. She asked for additions or corrections to the minutes? There were no corrections to the minutes, and she stated they are approved as distributed.

Cathy shared information about the NAWB conference in Washington DC. She spoke about the passion and engagement she was able to see among partners to promote workforce. She noted customer service, maximizing opportunity for clients, and childcare were major topics as well as collaboration between agencies. She stated there was a good presentation on centers being aesthetically pleasing for customers to be more welcoming including assistive signage and cross training of staff to make sure clients received the fullest benefit. It was good conference. Dennis did add on the discussion on WIOA reauthorization at the conference on changes being suggested by congress.

Dennis reported on the NAWDP conference for Greg and talked about a highlight being discussion topics on selfcare during the challenges of today to able to be our best when assisting clients and their challenges. Discussed some case management tools that were highlighted at the conference that the service provider will pilot this year to hopefully provide a better basis for services and review of individuals as they start their journey in the WIOA system. Reignited the need to connect with partner agencies and to make sure we are working to align our services to best meet client needs. Angie reinforced the discussions that were centered around staff care and the need for them to be able to address their concerns and needs so they can better focus on client's needs.

Youth Committee report was provided by Dennis for Stacy. He shared with the board that the youth committee had worked on the Career Connect job fairs at high schools this year. He noted that the youth committee and partners that worked on the career fairs take notes from the fairs and will continue to fine tune these as it expands to more high schools in the future. Also shared with the board the TANF pre-apprenticeship program being led by Nanci. He shared that the applications for the new year are being processed and she is continuing to work to expand this project into more schools. Also gave highlights on changes adapted from initial offering in the spring to different class schedules and the intent to expand into justice involved.

WIOA Delivery System quarterly report updates were sent to the board and Cathy asked if anyone had questions on the one-stop operator report or the Title I report. There were no questions.

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Cathy said the budgets for next cycle were sent to you and asked for a motion to approve the budgets. Dana made the motion to approve the budget as presented and Rachel was a second. Cathy asked if there is any discussion and there was none. She asked for a vote to approve the motion and it passed unanimously.

Cathy stated the new MOU and IFA were sent for review and asked for a motion to approve the MOU and IFA. Debbie made a motion to approve them, and Kathy Fulks was a second. Cathy asked for discussion, Tom asked for an explanation of the expenditure clause. Dennis stated that this was part of the DWS recommended template for the IFA and is there to allow partners to discuss any purchases for the center before anyone would have to pay a portion. It requires all partners agree to such purchases have a benefit to them and that they agree to pay their portion before it could be added to the IFA and cost to all center partners. Any such additions to the IFA would need to be then submitted to the board for final approval. There were She asked for a vote and the board approved the motion unanimously.

Dennis provided an update on ACT Work Ready and NCRC within the region. He shared Crawford County was provided an extension to continue work to certify. He told the board that Scott and Franklin County are now in the program. Scott County has already certified and will be recognized at the Summit this year. He talked on the need to continue to discuss the value to companies and job seekers and that they can help to promote this program. Debbie talked about the work going on in Crawford County with the Adult Education center on providing the training and testing of NCRC with several local companies there and that they agree there is a value. Rachel and Tom talked on the challenge of getting more local companies to take advantage of this training. Dennis mentioned reaching out to ACT to help in some of this training. Dennis did provide a brief of the business outreach work in Scott County using ACT work keys as an introduction to tools the delivery system can provide.

Cathy announced that by unanimous vote the board Chair for this year is Rachel Mize and Vice Chair is John Craig.

Debbie let the board know about welding training classed started at Douglas and Stephens Welding in Van Buren and that there is excitement around the program as they talk with local companies.

Cathy asked for a motion to adjourn. Tom made a motion to adjourn, and Dana seconded. Cathy called the meeting adjourned.



Rachel Mize, Board Chair



Date