

MINUTES
ARKANSAS WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT BOARD
April 19, 2022

The Arkansas Workforce Development Board convened the Full Board meeting through electronic means on April 19, 2022, beginning at 10:07 a.m. The meeting was conducted via Zoom. Vice-Chairman Scott Bull presided with the following members voicing their presence: Ms. Christy Lamas as proxy for Mr. Joseph Baxter, Mr. Len Blaylock III, Ms. Karen Breashears, Dr. Charisse Childers, Mr. Miles Crawford, Judge Brandon Ellison, Mr. Randy Henderson, Ms. Abby Houseworth, Ms. Rebecca Ives, Ms. Erin Franks as proxy for Mr. Johnny Key, Ms. Candice Lawrence, Ms. Alisha Lewis as proxy for Dr. Maria Markham, Ms. Bridget Criner as proxy for Dr. Trenia Miles, Dr. Julie Roberson, Mr. Kelley Sharp, and Dr. Cassandra Williams-Stokes.

Mr. Thomas Anderson, Mr. Randy Finnegan, Mr. Jeff Griffin, Governor Hutchinson, Mr. Charles Johnson, Ms. Holley Little, Mr. Brian Marsh, Secretary Mike Preston, and Mayor James Sanders were unable to attend.

Chairman's Opening Comments: Vice-Chair Bull informed the Board Members that Chairman Anderson could not attend the meeting; therefore, he would preside over the meeting. Vice-Chairman Bull called the meeting to order at 10:03 a.m. upon seeing a quorum.

Agenda Item 1 – ACTION – Minute Approval: Vice-Chairman Bull asked if there were any additional corrections or revisions to the January 25, 2022, Full Board meeting minutes.

Hearing none, a motion to accept the January 25, 2022, Full Board meeting minutes with no corrections or revisions was made by Mr. Kelley Sharp, followed by a second motion by Ms. Karen Breashears. The motion carried unanimously with none opposed.

The following votes were recorded and voiced by Board Members on a roll vote to Approve, Disapprove, or Abstain for no vote: Chairman Tom Anderson – Absent, Ms. Christy Lamas as proxy for Mr. Joseph Baxter – Approve, Mr. Len Blaylock III – Approve, Ms. Karen Breashears – Approve, Mr. Scott Bull – Approve, Dr. Charisse Childers – Approve, Mr. Miles Crawford – Approve, Judge Brandon Ellison – Approve, Mr. Randy Finegan – Approve, Mr. Jeff Griffin – Absent, Mr. Randy Henderson – Absent, Ms. Abby Houseworth – Approve, Ms. Rebecca Ives – Approve, Mr. Charles Johnson – Absent, Ms. Erin Franks as proxy for Secretary Johnny Key – Approve, Ms. Candice Lawrence – Approve, Ms. Holley Little – Absent, Ms. Alisha Lewis as proxy for Dr. Maria Markham – Approve, Mr. Brian Marsh – Absent, Ms. Bridget Criner as proxy for Dr. Trenia Miles – Approve, Mr. George Nunnally – Approve, Secretary Mike Preston – Approve, Dr. Julie Roberson – Approve, Mayor James Sanders – Approve, Mr. Kelley Sharp – Approve, Dr. Cassandra Williams-Stokes – Approve, and Mr. Robert Thorne – Approve.

Next, Vice-Chairman Bull asked if there were any additional corrections or revisions to the March 11, 2022, Executive Committee meeting minutes.

Hearing none, a motion to accept the January 25, 2022, Full Board meeting minutes with no corrections or revisions was made by Ms. Karen Breashears, followed by a second motion by Dr. Julie Roberson. The motion carried unanimously with none opposed.

The following votes were recorded and voiced by Board Members on a roll vote to Approve, Disapprove, or Abstain for no vote: Chairman Tom Anderson – Absent, Ms. Christy Lamas as proxy for Mr. Joseph Baxter – Approve, Mr. Len Blaylock III – Approve, Ms. Karen Breashears – Approve, Mr. Scott Bull –

Approve, Dr. Charisse Childers – Approve, Mr. Miles Crawford – Approve, Judge Brandon Ellison – Approve, Mr. Randy Finegan – Approve, Mr. Jeff Griffin – Absent, Mr. Randy Henderson – Absent, Ms. Abby Houseworth – Approve, Ms. Rebecca Ives – Approve, Mr. Charles Johnson – Absent, Ms. Erin Franks as proxy for Secretary Johnny Key – Approve, Ms. Candice Lawrence – Approve, Ms. Holley Little – Absent, Ms. Alisha Lewis as proxy for Dr. Maria Markham – Approve, Mr. Brian Marsh – Absent, Ms. Bridget Criner as proxy for Dr. Trenia Miles – Approve, Mr. George Nunnally – Approve, Secretary Mike Preston – Approve, Dr. Julie Roberson – Approve, Mayor James Sanders – Approve, Mr. Kelley Sharp – Approve, Dr. Cassandra Williams-Stokes – Approve, and Mr. Robert Thorne – Approve.

Report of the Chairperson: Updates will be given by Chairman Anderson in January at the next meeting. Vice-Chair Bull introduced to the Board, Mr. Miles Crawford, as its newest member. Vice-Chair Bull thanked Governor Hutchinson for allowing him to be on the Board as this would be his last meeting.

Report of Director: Vice-Chairman Bull recognized Board Member and Arkansas Division of Workforce Services (ADWS) Director, Dr. Charisse Childers to address the Full Board. Dr. Childers reported that Arkansas' unemployment rate remained stable at 3.1% in March. She followed that a report was put together by the Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS) department explaining the unemployment rate, the labor participation rate and the factors that contribute to both rates. Access to this presentation is provided on the Arkansas Workforce Development Board (AWDB) YouTube page. The Office of Assistant Secretary for Policy has convened a cross department working group on the future of workers. This includes work streams related to workforce, the changing employment structures, the changing classification of workers, the impact of technology on workers and working conditions, and training and job quality. Dr. Childers encouraged members to read the most recent Arkansas Division of Workforce Services (ADWS) Annual Report for 2021 that is available on the ADWS website.

Report of Staff: Vice-Chairman Bull recognized Board Staff, Mr. Eddie Thomas, to address the Full Board. Mr. Eddie Thomas announced the WIOA Spring 2022 Partners Meeting starting April 19th and ending on April 21st. WIOA Title I enrollments over the last four program years have seen a decreased in the adult, dislocated workers, and youth programs. In PY18, there were a total of 2,354 enrollments across all categories, in PY19 there were 2,149 enrollments, in PY20 there were 1,713 enrollments, and in PY21 there were 1,554 enrollments. Outreach is currently the main goal in making sure the services provided are aware to the public. Additionally, WIOA State Plan was submitted on March 15, 2022, and DOL has requested some corrections to certain parts of the plan, so staff will be reaching out for collaboration on information. Mr. Thomas added that over the last few quarters Employment Assistance has updated their monitoring procedures to reflect a transparent way of fiscal monitoring. In PY21, they have launched two pilots that are going to help evaluate how reports are written and how they are approved. Staff will be receiving more professional development as well as training on local areas. Local areas have been engaged in the WIOA Training Academy, a peer-to-peer learning cohort with training by fellow peers and local leaders across the state. United States Department of Labor (USDOL) is working with ADWS to provide the USDOL monitoring Technical Assistance Training (TAT) session. During this session, state staff will be working directly with USDOL to find best practices and to review and evaluate some EA's procedures from the monitoring standpoint. Mr. Thomas stated they have a state funding mechanism policy, which is designed to lay out the procedures in which if there is a local area or local board partner(s) who cannot agree to the terms of the infrastructure funding agreement then the Governor will come in and make the decision. Additionally, Services for the Youth policy will be focusing more on stipends than incentives. The Eligible Training Provider policy has significant changes in the policy and procedures as well, and all of these changes will be discussed at the next board meeting. Mr. Thomas explained there are 700+ enrollments in the Reimagine Grant and that they have partnered with the UofA Global Campus, Shorter College, and iDatafy, LLC. The team is currently monitoring to identify best practices as well as any challenges or issues noticed through the award. Additionally, the Workforce Data Quality Initiative grant was awarded through

the USDOL in the amount of \$2.5 million. Lastly, Mr. Thomas discussed that through his and Director Brown's travels to the local areas they learned in the Eastern Arkansas workforce development area that Mr. Dave Brady, a long-time workforce development stakeholder, will be retiring at the end of the program year. Mr. Thomas expressed his congratulations for him in his new journey.

Report of Board Director: Vice-Chairman Bull recognized Board Director Chad Brown and asked him to provide his report. Director Brown acknowledged Mr. Bull for his service to the Board and wished him well in his endeavors. Director Brown explained the main purpose for him and Mr. Thomas traveling to the local areas is to not only meet everybody, but also see what the Board can do better to make the partnership excel. He reminded members of the Board's social media accounts in addition to the newly made YouTube account featuring the Board meetings and other essential training presentations. Directed Brown told the Board that he, Mr. Thomas, and Chairman Anderson, went to the NGA Conference in D.C. April 26th through the 29th. He expressed how great of a job they did holding the conference and the knowledge learned. Director Brown let the members know if there are items they wish to hear and/or discuss on the agenda to please provide them to staff or himself so it can be addressed. Lastly, Director Brown explained the ongoing conversations regarding continuing virtual meetings vs. holding them in person as some local areas have begun restarting.

Director Brown continued the gratitude to Mr. Dave Brady for his service to the state and Board. Mr. Brady gave his mutual thanks and wished everyone well going forward. Vice-Chairman Bull reiterated Director Brown's sentiments.

Agenda Item 2 – Informational – Board Member Orientation: Vice-Chairman Bull recognized Board Director Chad Brown to discuss the new Board member orientation process for the new year. Director Brown explained this year he invited the Board members to participate in the WIOA Spring Partners Meeting as previously mentioned by Mr. Thomas. He stated this would be a great educational experience for members to listen directly to presenters from the programs and be able to ask questions.

Agenda Item 3 – Informational – PY2020-2023 WIOA State Plan:

Vice-Chairman Bull recognized Board staff Elroy Willoughby to discuss with the Board the WIOA State Plan Modifications. Mr. Willoughby reminded the Board that the Executive Committee met on March 11th, 2022, to review and approved the 429-page Plan due to its March 15th submission deadline. Mr. Willoughby explained one of the major changes to the plan was to address changes in the workforce development system due to the COVID pandemic. Specifically, he explained that the U.S. Department of Labor required States to explain how they adjusted their service delivery models and modified existing policies to be more responsive to the pandemic. Another area where changes were made was in business engagement and sector partnerships. Again, the COVID pandemic resulted in a need to change the way the workforce development system engaged with businesses. Based upon federal guidance, the State was asked to develop and implement strategies designed to improve the coordination on the state and local levels. Mr. Willoughby explained that the program evaluation, skills gap analysis and customer satisfaction surveys that were completed by the University of Arkansas – Fayetteville was a major new component in the revised State Plan. This project provided valuable information and data that will be used to improve the overall workforce development system. Finally, Mr. Willoughby explained the inclusion of updated Labor Market Information that considered some of the economic changes borne out of the ongoing COVID pandemic.

Agenda Item 4 – Action – One-Stop Center Certification Application:

Vice-Chairman Bull recognized Board staff Elroy Willoughby to present the One-Stop Center Certification Application to the Board. Mr. Willoughby explained that the federal regulations required the Board to

approve the One-Stop Certification Application that is used by Local Workforce Boards to certify their Local One-Stops. He furthered explained the process whereby this document was sent to each of the ten (10) local workforce directors, with a request for them to distribute the application among their Chief Elected Officials and Local Workforce Board membership, for comment. Mr. Willoughby explained that only two comments were received. One commentor recommended grammatical error corrections while the other commentor simply wanted to express their support for the opportunity to comment as well as express their support for the State's workforce development system.

Vice-Chairman Bull asked if there were any questions regarding the One-Stop Center Certification Application.

Hearing none, a motion to accept the One-Stop Center Certification Application was made by Ms. Karen Breashears, followed by a second motion by Mr. Miles Crawford. The motion carried unanimously with none opposed.

The following votes were recorded and voiced by Board Members on a roll vote to Approve, Disapprove, or Abstain for no vote: Chairman Tom Anderson – Absent, Ms. Christy Lamas as proxy for Mr. Joseph Baxter – Approve, Mr. Len Blaylock III – Approve, Ms. Karen Breashears – Approve, Mr. Scott Bull – Approve, Dr. Charisse Childers – Approve, Mr. Miles Crawford – Approve, Judge Brandon Ellison – Approve, Mr. Randy Finegan – Approve, Mr. Jeff Griffin – Absent, Mr. Randy Henderson – Absent, Ms. Abby Houseworth – Approve, Ms. Rebecca Ives – Approve, Mr. Charles Johnson – Absent, Ms. Erin Franks as proxy for Secretary Johnny Key – Approve, Ms. Candice Lawrence – Approve, Ms. Holley Little – Absent, Ms. Alisha Lewis as proxy for Dr. Maria Markham – Approve, Mr. Brian Marsh – Absent, Ms. Bridget Criner as proxy for Dr. Trenia Miles – Approve, Mr. George Nunnally – Approve, Secretary Mike Preston – Approve, Dr. Julie Roberson – Approve, Mayor James Sanders – Approve, Mr. Kelley Sharp – Approve, Dr. Cassondra Williams-Stokes – Approve, and Mr. Robert Thorne – Absent.

Agenda Item 4 – Informational – Local Workforce Area Reports:

Vice-Chairman Bull recognized North Central Local Workforce Development Board and the Southwest Workforce Development Board to provide reports on their areas. First, staff from the North Central Area, Ms. Jan Smith and Ms. Liz Smith, presented their reports.

Ms. Jan Smith and Ms. Liz Smith introduced themselves to the Board and prepared a video for Board members encasing the success stories of community members in the White River area who participated in various WIOA programs. The video is included in the video recording of the Board meeting and can be found on the AWDB YouTube page.

Ms. Jan Smith reiterated quotes from the various success stories included in the video to highlight the help the WIOA programs have provided for members to close their report.

Vice-Chair Bull recognized staff members from the Southwest Arkansas Workforce Development Area, Ms. Renee Dycus and Ms. Shelda Garland. Ms. Garland introduced her guest, Mr. Paul Harness, a former Dislocated Worker participant, to share his experience with the WIOA program.

Mr. Harness stated his journey with the program began in 2020 at the Hope workforce office. He began his journey through the program as a truck driver and is now a Safety Director with Coca-Cola Co. He provided his thanks to those who helped him in the program for getting him where he is today and to what the Board continues to do for Arkansans.

Ms. Garland thanked Mr. Harness for sharing his story and thanked the Board for listening.

Board Open Discussion: Vice-Chairman Bull asked Board Members for any additional items for discussion.

Ms. Candice Lawrence informed the Board that the Arkansas State Chamber of Commerce has scheduled their 66th Annual Washington Fly-in for May10 through May 12. Registration and any information is on the state website.

Vice-Chairman Bull stated that as a new addition to the Board Open Discussion, Director Brown has asked Staff to include any WIOA-related policies that have been released by ADWS on the meeting agendas. While these policies do not require Board Approval, Staff has begun adding them to the meeting agenda packet as an FYI for Board Members. Vice-Chairman Bull directed the Board Members attention to the *Arkansas High-Poverty Areas from 2016-2020 American Community Survey* policy that was included in the agenda book.

Public Speaking Opportunity: Vice-Chairman Bull addressed members of the public attending the meeting through electronic means and extended the opportunity to speak before the Full Board.


Announcements: Vice-Chairman Bull stated the next Full Board meeting is set for July 19, 2022. Board Staff will keep everyone aware of any changes to the schedule or the type of meeting, whether virtual or in-person.

Adjourn: As presented, Vice-Chairman Bull adjourned the AWDB Full Board meeting at 11:40 a.m., on a motion made by Mr. Kelley Sharp, followed by Ms. Karen Breashears making the second motion. The motion carried unanimously with none opposed.

The following votes were recorded and voiced by Board Members on a roll vote to Approve, Disapprove, or Abstain for no vote: Chairman Tom Anderson – Absent, Ms. Christy Lamas as proxy for Mr. Joseph Baxter – Approve, Mr. Len Blaylock III – Approve, Ms. Karen Breashears – Approve, Mr. Scott Bull – Approve, Dr. Charisse Childers – Approve, Mr. Miles Crawford – Approve, Judge Brandon Ellison – Approve, Mr. Randy Finegan – Absent, Mr. Jeff Griffin – Absent, Mr. Randy Henderson – Absent, Ms. Abby Houseworth – Approve, Ms. Rebecca Ives – Approve, Mr. Charles Johnson – Absent, Ms. Erin Franks as proxy for Secretary Johnny Key – Approve, Ms. Candice Lawrence – Approve, Ms. Holley Little – Absent, Ms. Alisha Lewis as proxy for Dr. Maria Markham – Approve, Mr. Brian Marsh – Absent, Ms. Bridget Criner as proxy for Dr. Trenia Miles – Approve, Mr. George Nunnally – Approve, Secretary Mike Preston – Approve, Dr. Julie Roberson – Approve, Mayor James Sanders – Approve, Mr. Kelley Sharp – Approve, Dr. Cassandra Williams-Stokes – Approve, and Mr. Robert Thorne – Absent.



Scott Bull, Board Vice-Chairman
Arkansas Workforce Development Board



Chad Brown, Director Workforce Development
Arkansas Division of Workforce Services

*Minutes recorded by Tyler Gibbons
Arkansas Division of Workforce Services Staff*