

OFFICIAL
MINUTES
ARKANSAS WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT BOARD
July 21, 2020

The Arkansas Workforce Development Board convened the first Full Board meeting through electronic means on July 21, 2020, beginning at 10:06 a.m. The meeting was conducted remotely utilizing Zoom and teleconference. Chair Tom Anderson presided with the following members voicing their presence: Mr. Len Blaylock III, Ms. Karen Breashears, Mr. Scott Bull, Dr. Charisse Childers, Judge Brandon Ellison, Mr. Randy Finegan, Mr. Jeff Griffin, Mr. Randy Henderson, Ms. Abby Houseworth, Mr. Alan Hughes, Ms. Rebecca Ives, Mr. Johnny Key, Ms. Holley Little, Dr. Maria Markham by proxy Ms. Alisha Lewis, Mr. Alan McClain by proxy Mr. Joe Baxter, Dr. Trenia Miles, Mr. George Nunnally, Dr. Julie Roberson, Mayor James Sanders, Mr. Kelley Sharp, Dr. Cassandra Williams-Stokes by proxy Mr. Jim Pearson, and Mr. Robert Thorne.

Mr. Lindsay Brown, Ms. Chanda Chacon, Ms. Melissa Hanesworth, Mr. Brian Marsh, Secretary Mike Preston, Mr. Mike Rogers, and Dr. Diana Wright were unable to attend.

Chair Anderson called the meeting to order at 10:06 a.m. upon seeing a quorum.

Report of Board Director: Chair Tom Anderson recognized the Arkansas Workforce Development Board Director, Arnell Willis. Mr. Willis provided an update to Board Members and attendees on Governor Asa Hutchison's "Executive Order No. 20-10 of March 26, 2020, Amending Executive Order No.20-03 Regarding the Public Health Emergency Concerning COVID-19 for the Purpose of Restricting Gatherings to prevent the Spread of COVID-19." This executive order was replaced with "Executive Order 20-37, To Renew the Disaster and Public Health Emergency to Mitigate the Spread and Impact of COVID-19 (June 18, 2020)" that is set to expire August 17, 2020.

He acknowledged the Local Workforce Development Boards who followed the lead of the State Board by convening their meetings through electronic means in order to continue their efforts in serving Arkansans through innovative means under the guidance of the governor.

Agenda Item 1 – ACTION – Minutes of the April 21, 2020, Full Board Meeting and the minutes of the June 16, 2020, Executive Committee Meeting: Chair Tom Anderson asked if there were any additional corrections or revisions to the April 21, 2020, Full Board meeting minutes.

Hearing none, a motion to accept the April 21, 2020, Full Board meeting minutes with no corrections or revisions was made by Mr. George Nunnally and Mr. Alan Hughes. The motion carried unanimously with none opposed.

The following votes recorded and voiced by Board Members on a roll vote to Approve, Disapprove, or Abstain for no vote: Mr. Len Blaylock III – Approve, Ms. Karen Breashears – No Vote Voiced, Mr. Lindsay Brown – Absent, Mr. Scott Bull – Approve, Dr. Charisse Childers – Approve, Judge Brandon Ellison – Approve, Mr. Randy Finegan – Approve, Mr. Jeff Griffin –

Approve, Ms. Melissa Hanesworth – Absent, Mr. Randy Henderson – Approve, Ms. Abby Houseworth – Approve, Mr. Alan Hughes – Approve, Ms. Rebecca Ives – Approve, Mr. Johnny Key – Approve, Ms. Holley Little – Approve, Dr. Maria Markham by proxy Alisha Lewis – Approve, Mr. Brian Marsh – Absent, Mr. Alan McClain by proxy Mr. Joe Baxter – Approve, Dr. Trenia Miles – Approve, Mr. George Nunnally – Approve, Secretary Mike Preston – Absent, Dr. Julie Roberson – Approve, Mr. Mike Rogers, - Absent, Mayor James Sanders – Approve, Mr. Kelley Sharp – Approve, Dr. Cassandra Williams-Stokes - No vote voiced, Mr. Robert Thorne – Approve, and Dr. Diana Wright - Absent.

Next, Chair Anderson asked for any corrections or revisions to the June 16, 2020, Executive Committee meeting before ratification by the Full Board.

Hearing none, a motion to accept the June 16, 2020, Executive Committee meeting minutes with no corrections or revisions for ratification by the Full Board was made by Mr. Robert Thorne and seconded by Ms. Karen Breashears. The motion carried unanimously with none opposed.

The following votes recorded and voiced by Board Members on a roll vote to Approve, Disapprove, or Abstain for no vote: Mr. Len Blaylock III – Approve, Ms. Karen Breashears – No vote voiced, Mr. Lindsay Brown – Absent, Mr. Scott Bull – Approve, Ms. Chanda Chacon – Absent, Dr. Charisse Childers – Approve, Judge Brandon Ellison – Approve, Mr. Randy Finegan – Approve, Mr. Jeff Griffin – Approve, Ms. Melissa Hanesworth – Absent, Mr. Randy Henderson – Approve, Ms. Abby Houseworth - Approve, Mr. Alan Hughes – Approve, Ms. Rebecca Ives – Approve, Mr. Johnny Key – Approve, Ms. Holley Little - Approve, Dr. Maria Markham by proxy Ms. Alisha Lewis – Approve, Mr. Brian Marsh – Absent, Mr. Alan McClain by proxy Mr. Joe Baxter – Approve, Dr. Trenia Miles – Approve, Mr. George Nunnally – Approve, Secretary Mike Preston – Absent, Dr. Julie Roberson – Approve, Mr. Mike Rogers – Absent, Mayor James Sanders – Approve, Mr. Kelly Sharp – Approve, Dr. Cassandra Williams-Stokes – No Vote Voiced, Mr. Robert Thorne – Approve, and Dr. Diana Wright - Absent.

Report of Chairperson: Chair Anderson informed Board Members that he has been monitoring the Local Workforce Development Boards across the state. Most of the meetings have been remote with the Eastern Local Workforce Development Board being the exception. Chair Anderson proceeded with informing Board Members about information distributed by the National Governors Association (NGA). The information provides Board Chairs the various approaches and initiatives each state has regarding the unemployment rate, creativity with jobs, and the continuation of business on a remote basis. Chair Anderson noted for the record the One-Stop Certification document was tabled in April and will be tabled again with the hope of revisiting in the October meeting.

Report of Director: Chair Tom Anderson recognized Board Member and Director of Arkansas Division of Workforce Services (ADWS) Dr. Charisse Childers to address the Full Board. Dr. Childers encouraged Board Members and guests to visit the ADWS website for the news release on unemployment before she provided a brief overview. Dr. Childers stated the unemployment rate jumped to 8% in June 2020 from the 6% rate of May 2020. The Arkansas Workforce Centers across the state have long lines of people in response to the quarter changes and individuals with

fraudulent UI claims due to COVID-19 pandemic. The quarter changes require individuals on Unemployment Insurance (UI) to file new forms, whereas those individuals with fraudulent claims must provide staff proper identification. ADWS has received approximately 26,986 unemployment calls a week for unemployment with the same number of calls for Pandemic Unemployment Assistance (PUA), operated through the Arkansas Department of Finance and Administration (DFA). There have been a little more than 120,000 PUA claims, as previously projected. Approximately 25 percent of PUA claims are fraudulent, according to a national update. Since the pandemic began, approximately 300,000 claims have been filed the week ending mid-March. In comparison, last year at the same time 1,757 claims were made in a week. ADWS received 15,335 UI claims for the week ending July 17, 2020. Dr. Childers provided some examples of fraud and directed Board Members and guests to contact ADWS for questions and concerns, or to report fraud. She encouraged Board Members to visit their local offices and offer encouragement to workers processing claims as quickly as possible.

Report of Staff: Chair Anderson recognized Board Staff Mr. Kris Jones. Mr. Jones reviewed workforce development responsibilities in assisting the Governor with development and implementation of the four-year State Plan, continuous improvement, strategies to support Career Pathways, effective operations of One-Stop Centers through the certification policy, technology improvement, and labor market information improvement. Additionally, he reported the data-driven decision and data-sharing team mocked up the longitudinal database and drafted a duplicate annual Economic Security Report. For the One-Stop Centers certification process, the Board has approved the standard. Centers were given an extension due not being able to fully reopen because of COVID-19, and the standards must be reviewed on-site. Lastly, he informed Board Members and guests the Local Director Technical Assistance meetings were changed from weekly to bi-weekly. Mr. Jones closed his report with an update on the Business Service center in Eastern providing a curbside job fair that was highly effective as an example of best practices that are shared in the bi-weekly meetings.

Report of Committees:

The meetings of the Strategic Planning, TANF Oversight, and Program and Performance Evaluation committees of the Arkansas Workforce Development Board have been canceled indefinitely. Committee meetings have not convened since the first quarter of 2020 due to COVID-19 pandemic.

Agenda Item 2 – INFORMATIONAL – June 16, 2020 Executive Committee Meeting Update: Chair Anderson recognized Board Staff Kris Jones to provide an overview of the Executive Committee meeting on June 16, 2020. Mr. Jones highlighted the State Funding Mechanism, ETP Initial Certification Procedure, and the WIOA State Plan 2020-2023 for efficiency. The WIOA State Plan 2020-2023 had to be approved by the Board before submitting to the U.S. Department of Labor (USDOL). Prior to submission, USDOL recommended some clarification and revisions to the State Funding Mechanism and the ETP Initial Certification Procedure in the plan.

Agenda Item 3 – Informational – Eastern Arkansas Local Workforce Area Curbside Job Fair: Chair Anderson recognized the Workforce Development Board of Eastern Arkansas (WDBEA) Executive Director Mr. Dave Brady to present on their innovative approach in bringing services to their local communities while remaining in compliance with the Governor's Executive Order

for public health and safety. The WDBEA provided a “curbside” job fair that provided a safe environment for employers to reach out to those seeking employment within the Eastern Arkansas Local Workforce Development Area. The first “curbside” job fair was on June 30, 2020, on the Arkansas State University Mid-South campus with more than 200 applicants attending the in-person social distancing and required-mask event. Employers included Hino Motors Manufacturing, Staffmark, Langston Bag, ACSI, West Memphis Steel, and KPower. The Eastern Arkansas Local Workforce Development Area has Arkansas Workforce Centers located in West Memphis, Forrest City, and in West Helena.

Agenda Item 4 – Informational – WIOA Title II & IV Performance Update: Chair Anderson recognized Dr. Trenia Miles of Adult Education and Ms. Christy Lamas of Arkansas Rehabilitation Services to provide an update to the Full Board on WIOA Title II & IV Performance. Dr. Cassandra Williams-Stokes of the Arkansas Division of Services for the Blind was unable to attend; however, updates were provided in the agenda book. Some updates included statistical information on the Measurable Skills Gains (MSG), MSGs by Barrier to Employment; individuals with disabilities being served who are in-service vs. those who are employed, types of services being provided, performance in the measures of employment rate/retention/median earning, and expenses per service.

Agenda Item 5 – Informational – Source 360 Virtual Job Fair: Chair Anderson recognized Board Staff Kris Jones for insight on how businesses can provide job fairs for potential job seekers while maintaining social distancing, wearing masks, and reducing the risk of contracting COVID-19. Like traditional job fairs, online job fairs are live, fully interactive, and held at specific times. The virtual job fair will allow employers and job seekers to meet and discuss employment opportunities by way of the website created using our platform.

Agenda Item 6 – Informational – Work-Based Learning, Employer Engagement, and Apprenticeships Project Report: Chair Anderson welcomed Ms. Nithya Pramekumar and Ms. Brenda Vogley of Thomas P. Miller & Associates to present the results from the research and analysis conducted on the formation and expansion of certain workforce initiatives. Thomas P Miller has been working with State and Local Workforce representatives on other initiatives such as Work-Based Learning, Business Services, and Apprenticeship.

Agenda Item 7 – Informational – Statewide Arkansas Employer Survey Results: Chair Anderson welcomed the Executive Director of the Arkansas Community Colleges, Ms. Andrea Henderson. Ms. Henderson presented the results of a statewide Employer Survey conducted by the Two-Year Colleges in partnership with the Arkansas State Chamber pertaining to workforce development needs of the State.

Board Open Discussion: Chair Anderson asked board members for any additional items for discussion. Hearing none, Chair Anderson opened the floor to allow the public the opportunity to speak before the Full Board.

Public Speaking Opportunity: Chair Anderson addressed members of the public attending the meeting through electronic means and extended the opportunity to speak before the Full Board.

After opening the floor for the public and a brief silence with the telephone lines unmuted, Chair Anderson moved into the announcements.


Announcements: Chair Anderson announced the committee meetings of the Arkansas Workforce Development Board will convene "as needed" due to the COVID-19 pandemic and out of respect of Board Member's schedules. He added the next Full Board meeting is set for October 20, 2020. Board Staff will keep everyone aware of any changes to the schedule and any changes to the type of meeting, whether virtual or in-person, as the State progresses through COVID-19 under the guidance of Governor Asa Hutchinson.

Adjourn: Chair Tom Anderson adjourned the meeting at 12:11 p.m., on a motion made by Ms. Karen Breashears, seconded by Mr. Robert Thorne, and carried unanimously with none opposed.

The following votes recorded and voiced by Board Members on a roll vote to Approve, Disapprove, or Abstain for no vote: Mr. Len Blaylock III – Approve, Ms. Karen Breashears – Approve, Mr. Lindsay Brown – Absent, Mr. Scott Bull – Approve, Ms. Chanda Chacon – Absent, Dr. Charisse Childers – No Vote Voiced, Judge Brandon Ellison – Approve, Mr. Randy Finegan – Approve, Mr. Jeff Griffin – Approve, Ms. Melissa Hanesworth – Absent, Mr. Randy Henderson – Approve, Ms. Abby Houseworth – Approve, Mr. Alan Hughes – No Vote Voiced, Ms. Rebecca Ives – Approve, Mr. Johnny Key – No Vote Voiced, Ms. Holley Little - Approve, Dr. Maria Markham by proxy Ms. Alisha Lewis – Approve, Mr. Brian Marsh – Absent, Mr. Alan McClain by proxy Mr. Joe Baxter – Approve, Dr. Trenia Miles – Approve, Mr. George Nunnally – No Vote Voiced, Secretary Mike Preston – Absent, Dr. Julie Roberson – Approve, Mr. Mike Rogers – Absent, Mayor James Sanders – Approve, Mr. Kelley Sharp – Approve, Dr. Cassandra Williams-Stoke – No Vote Voice, Mr. Robert Thorne – Approve, and Dr. Diana Wright - Absent.



Tom Anderson, Board Chair
Arkansas Workforce Development Board



Arnell Willis, Director Workforce Development
Arkansas Division of Workforce Services

*Minutes recorded by Monica Humphrey and Rebecca Edwards
Arkansas Division of Workforce Services Staff*