

Southwest Arkansas Workforce Development Board
February 8, 2022 – 10:00 a.m.
Hempstead Hall, Hope Arkansas

Members Present: The Southwest Arkansas Workforce Development Board convened a full Board meeting through electronic means on February 8, 2022. The meeting was conducted in-person and remotely utilizing Teams and teleconference. Board Chair, Tammy Waters, presided with the following members voicing their presence: Whitney Peterson, Ophelia Gill, Cory Walker, Barbara Hamilton, Rory Gulick, John Mack, Bentley Wallace, Joshua Taylor, Kensel Green, Tim Golden, Julie Roberson, Kevin Smith, Tracie Lee and Phoebe Bailey. Southwest Staff attended: Renee Dycus, Annette Hughey, LaToyia Williams, Lisa Stamper, Carolyn Woods, Lori White, Molly Clark, and Shelda Garland. Guests attended: Chad Brown, Executive Director for the Arkansas State Workforce Development Board; Eddie Thomas, Assistant Director of the Office of Employment Assistance; Julian Lott, Mayor of Camden, AR; Reese Broadnax, Project Manager for SW; Paul Harness, Driver Safety Instructor-Coca Cola; Greg Ray, Sevier County Judge; Kenyetta Gentry, Yoshiko Neeley, Bradley Warbritton – Arkansas Community Corrections; Dr. Claudia Griffin, ADWS Policy Specialist; Terrie James, University of Arkansas Div. of Agriculture – Staff Chair. A quorum was declared.

Welcome: Chairman Waters called the meeting to order at 10:02 a.m. After roll call by Board Staff, Ms. Garland, Ms. Waters asked for introductions of all present and online.

Action Item #1 – Approval of November 19, 2021 minutes: Rory Gulick made motion, Dr. Wallace seconded. Via a roll call vote, the minutes were approved.

Action Item #2 – ETP Approval of Additional CDL Providers – SW needs additional CDL training providers. There are problems with some of the ones we currently have as well as time issues getting people enrolled/into the class. The list of providers was provided. Dr. Wallace asked the board to consider adding the new CDL training consortium made of four 2-year institutions to the provider list being voted on. The Arkansas Trucking Academy (ArkTA) is a consortium of:Arkansas State University (ASU) Three Rivers, University of Arkansas (UA) Cossatot, UA Rich Mountain and UA Hope/Texarkana. Dr. Wallace recommended each Chancellor be contacted about their programs. Tracie Lee spoke representing the ad hoc committee which is made up of her and one other active member. She recommended, on behalf of that committee, that the action item be approved for the Board to vote on Eligible Training Programs. Mr. Walker seconded. The discussion ensued. Paul Harness, WIOA Success Story and CDL Trainer for Coca Cola, discussed the need for vetting of any provider and recommended each provider on the list, and any others being considered in the future, be vetted before WIOA participants are approved to be trained. After lengthy discussion a call for a motion was made. Rory Gulick made a motion that all providers be approved, including the ArkTA consortium, and that the list of providers is not a conclusive list. The motion made included language that more providers may be added. Phoebe Bailey seconded the motion. Via a roll call vote, the motion passed.

Action Item #3 - Supportive Service Policy: After lengthy discussion by board members and staff, regarding modifications, the intent of recommended changes, and interpreting the requested revisions, the policy was tabled until another meeting. The board wants staff to revisit the proposed policy and resubmit it.

Action Item #4 – Youth Work Experience Policy – Suggestions were made to increase the work experience hours from the minimum of 500 hours to the maximum of 1200 hours. Motion was made by Rory Gulick and seconded by Tracie Lee. Via a roll call vote, the motion passed.

Report from Board Staff – Shelda Garland: Ms. Garland discussed the new board logo plans. She will provide more info later to the board. Ms. Garland also reported that PowerNotes had been procured as the Program and Fiscal Monitor.

Report from One Stop Operator – Sherry Bailey: Ms. Bailey presented information about working on a Customer Service Survey. These are done at the local Workforce Centers. She announced she hosted a Partner Meeting last week with 29 in attendance (in person and online). She met with Annette Hughey and Shelda Garland to discuss participating on the BSIT in the future. She is also going to be working with Tamara Bowers (DWS) to work on planning a job fair.

Report from Title I Service Provider – LaToyia Williams: Ms. Williams reported that DLW enrollment has increased, OSY at 14% and increasing. OSY in December 2021 was at 10%. She also reported 2 participants that were working with Youth Build have finished successfully.

Report from Business Services - Annette Hughey: Ms. Hughey gave the BSIT Report. She attended the Partner Meeting last week and has spoken with Core and Required partners. She sent an email to get a meeting on the calendar in the next few weeks. She has February 23, 24, or 25 as tentative meeting dates and invitations will be sent once a date is confirmed. The BSIT group will decide whether meetings will be monthly or quarterly.

Report from Finance – Lisa Stamper: Ms. Stamper provided an overview of the Financial Report. There is \$683,543 of Youth funds remaining to be spent (this does not include the PY22 funds to be awarded). At the rate funds are being spent, the program will need to spend \$34,000 each month for the next 5 months in the PY 20-21 for Youth. In the Fall of 2020, we moved over \$250,000 from the Dislocated Worker (DLW) funds to the Adult funds, and we need to spend an average of \$56,000/month over the next 5 months.

Report from Title II (Adult Ed) – Barbara Hamilton: Ms. Hamilton reported that their focus has been on increasing the number of credentials and certifications their students are earning. A lot of the Adult Ed programs have Integrated Education and Training (IET) programs. This combines the basic academics, training them for workforce employability, as well as the actual technical training, all combined into one. They revamped the WAGE program to include some type of certification for all of their level 2 credentials so students not only leave with employability certificates but they also have an actual credential that they will earn going through the WAGE process. They have recently submitted a grant proposal to upgrade their technology/computers and to offer laptops for students to check out. In addition to that, offer mobile hotspots for their students that may be in rural areas and don't have access to the internet. They are also planning to establish a mobile GED testing unit, so they will be able to go out and actually administer the official GED exam, instead of their students coming to them. Several of their programs have [Kenneth King] funding that gives their students access to supportive services, if they meet eligibility, so Adult Ed. can provide or cover the cost of certification exams, equipment, and any other supplies needed for short-term training.

Report from Disability Committee Chair – Kensel Green: Ms. Green shared ARS has open positions. Currently recruiting Counselors. Job retention is getting better. They are looking to increase their case numbers and need to increase the number of referrals. The goal is to meet performance indicators.

Presentations: Presentation from Mayor Julian Lott, Board Member Ophelia Gill and WIDA Project Manager Rodriquess Broadnax – This group represented SW Arkansas at the National Association of Workforce Development Professional’s Annual Youth Summit in December 2021 in Chicago, IL. Director Dycus requested they provide a brief overview of their session entitled, “Recruiting (Rural) Youth: Go The Extra Mile”.

Lori White, WIDA Career Planner from the Hope Workforce Center gave a presentation about the job and role of a WIOA Career Planner in SW Arkansas. Following the presentation, she introduced a former participant of hers, Mr. Paul Harness, who is a local program “success story”.

Mr. Harness gave his testimony about enrollment in WIOA and how he is now gainfully employed as a Driver Safety Instructor for Coca-Cola Southwest Beverages. Mr. Harness expressed his gratitude for the training and told how it came at a critical time in his life, following being laid off from his former employer and facing extreme personal difficulties. His testimony was very inspiring.

Chairman Waters and Shelda Garland conversed, briefly, and decided considering the meeting length, that Shelda will give her scheduled presentation on “Understanding Your Valuable Role” during a later meeting, for her to have ample time to present the important content.

Other Business:

The next meeting date was announced for May 10, 2022.

Adjournment:

Chairman Waters called for a motion to adjourn. Dr. Wallace made the motion and Cory Walker seconded that motion. Via a roll call vote, the meeting was adjourned at 12:15 pm.



SWAWDB Chair

6/21/22

Date