

**Workforce Solutions - Deep East Texas**  
**415 S. First Street, Suite 110B, Lufkin, TX 75901**  
**Operations Committee Minutes**  
**November 14, 2023**

**I. CHAIR ROBERT FITZPATRICK CALLED THE OPERATIONS COMMITTEE MEETING TO ORDER AT 11:00 A.M.**

**MR. FITZPATRICK ANNOUNCED IN ACCORDANCE WITH GUIDANCE FROM THE TEXAS WORKFORCE COMMISSION (WD LETTER 28-19) DATED NOVEMBER 19, 2019, REGARDING THE TEXAS OPEN MEETINGS ACT GOVERNMENT CODE CHAPTER 551 ALLOWING THE USE OF VIDEOCONFERENCING AS A METHOD FOR CONDUCTING BOARD MEETINGS, THE BOARD IS PROVIDING FOR PUBLIC PARTICIPATION IN ITS BOARD MEETING AT THE ADDRESS LISTED ABOVE AND VIA VIRTUAL MEETING WEB LINK. HE ALSO SAID THE MEETING IS BEING RECORDED AND THE OPEN SESSION PORTION OF THE MEETING IS AVAILABLE TO THE PUBLIC UPON REQUEST. THE BOARD SERVES TWELVE (12) COUNTIES AND LISTED THE HOST LOCATION. PRESIDING OFFICER, ROBERT FITZPATRICK, WAS PHYSICALLY PRESENT.**

**AFTER THE ROLL CALL, MR. FITZPATRICK CONFIRMED THAT A QUORUM WAS PRESENT:**

**Members Present:** Joe Clyde Adams, Rebekah Burkhalter, Robert Fitzpatrick, Malcolm Ifoezeh, Marisa Phillips, Randy Roberts

**Members Absent:** Phyllis Grandgeorge, Jessica Rogers, John White

**Board Staff Present:** Mark Durand, Dara Harmon, Debb Homman, Sarah Milligan, Karen Stubblefield

**Visitors:** Scott Amey, LaTreaser Cartwright, Rhonda Cartwright, Mark Christie, Michelle Kennedy, Monica Peters-Clark

**CHAIR ROBERT FITZPATRICK REMINDED THE COMMITTEE MEMBERS OF THE CONFLICT OF INTEREST DECLARATION.**

Chair Robert Fitzpatrick asked that all members sign a conflict of interest declaration regardless of whether they have a conflict and send it to the Board staff for recordkeeping.

**WELCOME OF GUESTS:**

None

**II. Public Comments**

None

**III. Discussion/Action: Approval of Minutes – August 7, 2023**

**Motion:** Joe Clyde Adams made the motion to approve the minutes as presented.

**Second:** Randy Roberts

**In Favor:** All



Oppose: None  
Abstain: None  
Motion: Passes

#### **IV. Information Items**

##### **A. WIOA Data Validation Review**

Mr. Durand stated that the Texas Workforce Commission (TWC) recently completed data validation testing for Fiscal Year 2022, of the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) program for the period of July 1, 2021 through June 30, 2022. Areas of concern were: Trade – 1 of 2 records unmet and Service Tracking 2 of 2 records unmet; Adult – 1 of 3 records unmet; and Youth – 1 of 1 record unmet. Sarah Milligan mentioned that both the Board and Workforce Contractor continually monitor data validation by comparing the participants' records to source documentation to ensure compliance with federal requirements. Mr. Fitzpatrick noted the sample size tested was so small and that was not helpful in determining results.

##### **B. Child Care Improper Payment Testing Review**

TWC completed data validation testing for the Child Care and Development Fund (CCDF) program. This process verifies data and ensures compliance with federal requirements for the Fiscal Year 2023. The testing resulted in no errors or concerns with improper payments.

#### **V. Discussion/Possible Action**

*No actions brought before the committee.*

#### **VI. Board Reports**

##### **A. Workforce Center Report**

Ms. LaTreasor Cartwright, Project Director, summarized the Program Year 2022-2023 year-end report. Workforce staff is working diligently with the region's job seekers to assist with work-related expenses via the Middle Skills Employment Supplies Grant which is designed to assist those not already enrolled in our current WIOA programs. There are eligibility requirements, but the grant also assists those who have greater than a high school diploma, but less than an Associate's Degree. With this grant, staff were able to assist apprentices enrolled in the carpentry apprentices with tools. Mr. Durand added that this program was originally set to end in November of this year but has been extended through March of 2024. Staff are currently utilizing the max allowed of \$300 for each individual for tools and supplies. There were 115 participants that received and completed WIOA training and there are still 25 (21 adult and 4 dislocated worker) remaining that are enrolled in training. Staff provided a summary of the trainees' new occupations, employers, starting wages and titles. Staff are required to follow up with the graduates for up to 12 months to see how they are doing and if they need any additional training or child care assistance. The average salary is \$20.50/hour for those that have completed training. Mr. Durand added that over \$400,000 has been utilized this year on training, and LaTreasor and her team have done an excellent job assisting the participants and increasing participation. Rhonda Cartwright summarized the Choices enrollment numbers and activities for fourth quarter of FY23. She mentioned the incentives to meet measures while still working, using TANF grants. Many are already working, but aren't making enough for a sustainable wage. Ms. Cartwright reported that the CHOICES performance rate was met for the YTD measure. Enrollments and Activities participation rate for the year was 57%. Mr. Durand added that last year they had been below 50%, so this was encouraging. Last year for the in-person workshops and Metrix learning, there were 212 registered for a total of over 735 hours of training completed. Some of the topics most frequented were business, technology, manufacturing, worksite safety and soft skills. There were 37 enrolled in certifications with 3 completing their certification. Ms. Cartwright reported on Rural Services, noting 184 services issued. Involvement is increasing, in part, because of the use of Engage by Cell. Mr. Fitzpatrick mentioned that he spoke to a librarian in San Augustine and they are extremely pleased to have Workforce Solutions Deep East Texas there. Ms. Rhonda Cartwright continued regarding the Greeter Report for Foot Traffic. Due to the self-check-in sometimes all the options are not getting selected, so the numbers reported are not up to date because they are only tracking



one area. Mr. Durand mentioned that Ms. Cartwright has already put things in place with the staff so that more than one option can be selected by customers. LaTreasurer continued reporting on the MPR measures – which is the report card used for contractors. It shows there was one measure that was not met, but after some work, it has been improved. Deep East is ranked in the top 10 of the 28 Workforce Boards for the July 2023 MPR. Goal is to increase our Outreach presence in our rural service counties and make our presence known.

**B. Child Care Services Report**

Debb Homman reported that the Child Care Expenditures for the year were \$14,749,561. Of those funds, \$12,991,000 were Child Care Formula (CCF) Funds, \$1,184,972 were Direct Child Care Match (CCM) Funds, and \$573,589 were Child Care Quality (CCQ) Funds that went toward supplies. Michelle Kennedy reported on the Child Care Services (CCS) number of children served, with October 2022 through May 2023 target of 2,277 and June through September 2023 target of 2,349. An average of 2,379 children per day and ended our year at 102.85%. We have 87 provider agreements. One of our success stories is that 9 of the 11 Initial Job Search enrollments recertified due to finding employment. This is a new program that began last year, which would help give parents more hours and helps with job search. 858 new children were enrolled into care. Our difficult area is Nacogdoches where there are no openings. Currently there are 48 Texas Rising Star (TRS) Centers/Homes, with another 39 entry level designations. We currently have 1,321 children in those TRS centers. We have trained 178 child care staff trained in CPR/First Aid. There are approximately 50 child care staff working toward their CDA. Ms. Homman continued that their annual banquet was a great success and 348 providers attended. Ms. Kennedy explained some of their new strategies for FY'24 will be a new application process for enrolling children into care – changing from a 40-day to a 20-day outreach time frame and encouraging providers to update their openings on the Availability Portal. Ms. Homman continued that in August, the target increased to 2,683 average per day. We are currently at 2,587 and the waitlist is 583. Child Care Providers have requested assistance with Family Engagement activities and an event is planned for the spring of 2024. We are trying to develop ways to help child care centers/home to recruit and retain staff. Also, assistance will be provided to help child care staff with education and professional development.

**C. Career Coach Report**

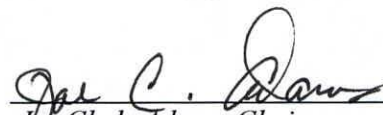
Karen Stubblefield reported that our two Career Coaches (formerly Workforce Career and Education Outreach Specialists) provided 692 workshops with 14,286 students attending between October 2022 and September of 2023. They visited 45 different school campuses and have partnered with 21 ISDs. With the incorporation of virtual reality job simulations and games into the 6<sup>th</sup>-8<sup>th</sup> grade workshops, the level of engagement with the students has greatly increased, and teachers have commended the effectiveness of the workshops. The virtual reality headsets have been updated and are now better quality and more in sync with in-demand occupations. We are looking to purchase more virtual reality devices and partner with more aspects of schools – not just the teachers.

**VII. Adjourn**

Chair Robert Fitzpatrick adjourned the Operations Committee Meeting at 12:00 noon.

Duly passed and approved on this 9<sup>th</sup> day of May 2024

Attest

  
Joe Clyde Adams, Chair

  
Dara Harmon, Exec. Administrative Assistant