

**Workforce Solutions Deep East Texas
Board Meeting Minutes
Lufkin/Angelina County Chamber of Commerce
1615 S. Chestnut, Lufkin, TX 75901
September 19, 2023**

I. VICE-CHAIR ELLEN MILLS CALLED THE BOARD MEETING TO ORDER AT 2:32 P.M.

MS. MILLS 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 VIDEO-CONFERENCING 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. SHE 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; AND PRESIDING OFFICER, ELLEN MILLS, WAS PHYSICALLY PRESENT.

AFTER THE ROLL CALL, MS. MILLS CONFIRMED THAT A QUORUM WAS PRESENT:

Members Present: Joe Clyde Adams, Lisa Balty, Tim Ditoro, Robert Fitzpatrick, James Gentry, Phyllis Grandgeorge, Ethan Herr, Eddie Hopkins, Malcolm Ifoezeh, Garvey Jackson, Gene Lee, Matthew Lowery, Kelli Marshall, Ellen Mills, Benjamin Mott, Marisa Phillips, John Allen Slocomb, John White

Members Absent: Rebekah Burkhalter, TJ Colwell, Tyane Dietz, Wayne Haglund, Staci Hodges, Anita Humphreys, Kotosha Jeffery, Quincy Martindale, Randy Roberts, Jessica Rogers, Rich Scott

Board Staff Present: Mark Durand, Jeff Eichman, Dara Harmon, Debb Homman, Charles Jones, Sarah Milligan, Lauren Phipps, Maribel Soto-Mendoza, Karen Stubblefield

Visitors: Scott Amey, Jessica Blair, Kevin Bradford, LaTreaser Cartwright, Rhonda Cartwright, Mark Christie, Amy David, Michelle Kennedy, Monica Peters-Clark

ELLEN MILLS REMINDED THE BOARD MEMBERS OF THE CONFLICT OF INTEREST DECLARATION.

Ms. Mills asked that all members sign a conflict of interest declaration and return the form to Board staff.

WELCOME OF GUESTS:

None

II. Public Comments

None

III. Discussion/Action: Approval of Minutes – August 8, 2023

Motion: Garvey Jackson made the motion to approve the minutes as presented.

Second: Joe Clyde Adams

In Favor: All

Oppose: None
Abstain: None
Motion: Passes

IV. Board Members Comments on Activity in their Respective Areas

Board Member, Eddie Hopkins commented on the presentation of the High Demand Job Training Grant check presented by Chair Bryan Daniel to the Deep East Texas College and Career Alliance for new computers to train students.

Tim Ditoro mentioned that Angelina College had a ribbon cutting for the new Network Administration Program which will be incorporating Software Development into the curriculum in the near future. Lisa Balty noted that Stephen F. Austin State University is celebrating their 100th Anniversary.

V. Executive Director's Report

A. Contracts/Agreements

The Board renewed the Memorandum of Understanding and Infrastructure Agreement (MOU/IFA) with the Alcohol & Drug Abuse Council for rental space at the Polk County Workforce Center.

B. Performance

Child Care:

Mr. Durand stated that The Texas Workforce Commission (TWC) issued a new target for the average number of children in care for PY'24(2,683) the current target is 2,349. The July 2023 average number of children served per day was 2,372 (102.86%). There are currently 48 Texas Rising Star (TRS) providers. There are new procedures in place to keep more children enrolled to reduce the number of children on the waiting list. The Texas Rising Star Quality Banquet, held on September 9th, was a great success, with 54 child care centers represented and over 400 in attendance.

Workforce:

Mr. Durand stated that the July 2023 Monthly Performance Report (MPR) reflects exceeding or meeting 17 of the 18 workforce measures at the time of printing. The Youth Post Exit measure is not meeting performance due to 4 customers. Actions are being taken to ensure reporting is correct and to meet this measure by end of year.

C. Contacts and Coordination Efforts

Mr. Durand attended Economic Development Forums in several counties. Mr. Durand and Board Members, Ms. Dietz and Ms. Marshall, attended the Texas Association of Workforce Boards (TAWB) Quarterly Meeting in August. Board staff, TWC and Alabama Coushatta Tribe met to discuss child care partnership for future workforce and child care needs as they expand. This will take legislation to be able to create the partnership.

D. Rules and Legislation Update

Mr. Durand mentioned HB 1615 which requires Boards to consist of a minimum of 27 members. The Board will be required to update the bylaws, which currently requires a minimum of 25 board members.

TWC has contracted with Children's Learning Institute to centralize assessors, effective September 2023.

E. Funding

The Student HireAbility Navigator contract was approved for \$113,000 for personnel, travel and administrative costs. An Interagency Cooperation Agreement was entered into with Texas Vocational Rehabilitation for \$475,863.52 annually for co-location of services in Angelina, Nacogdoches and Polk County Workforce Centers to cover rent, utilities and supplies. Non-Custodial Parent Grant for \$165,165 (no change in amount from previous award).

F. Other Activity and Administrative Matters not requiring action by the Board

Mr. Durand reported the July 2023 unemployment rate of 5.6%, which is an increase from the prior months, however the labor force and actual number of employed has increased. 137 Portacool employees have been called back to work.

VI. Committee Reports

A. Business Services Committee

1. Committee Activity

Information and Briefing Items

a. WD Letter 21-23 Local Workforce Development Board Membership

Mr. Durand explained that because of House Bill (HB 1615), it will require each Board to expand its membership to include a representative of the child care workforce. They must be a current owner/director in good standing. The Board has already reached out to a member of its current Child Care Advisory Team and is awaiting a response. Boards must now be composed of a minimum of 27 members. This new requirement will require a change in our bylaws, which currently require a minimum of 25. The new Child Care representative must be appointed by November 30, 2023.

2. Discussion/Possible Action

a. Action Item 23-18 Equal Opportunity Policy Update

Lauren Phipps reported the Board's Equal Opportunity (EO) Policy was updated pursuant to a recommendation from the Texas Workforce Commission's EO Division to include the following language:

The Board shall not provide different, segregated, or separate services or training to individuals with disabilities unless such action is necessary to provide qualified individuals with disabilities with services or training that are as effective as those provided to others (29 CFR 38.12(a)(4)).

Also included was an update to the EO Tagline to be more concise and include the Relay Texas phone numbers for reference.

Motion: The Executive/Finance Committee recommended acceptance of the updated EO Policy as presented.

Second: Robert Fitzpatrick

In Favor: All

Oppose: None

Abstain: None

Motion: Passes

b. Action Item 23-19 Polk County Workforce Center Lease

Mark Durand explained that the Board released a Request for Proposal (RFP), soliciting proposals for lease space for the Polk County Workforce Center on May 26, 2023. The Board received two proposals; however one proposal was unacceptable because it arrived after the deadline. The remaining proposal was received from Verna Faye Jackson, who is the current landlord for the Polk County Workforce Center facility. The Polk County Workforce Center has been located at this site since 2016. Currently the Board pays a total monthly payment (including maintenance and common area usage) of \$7,675 (\$1.09/per square foot). The proposal submitted was for a total of \$10,255 per month. After negotiations, the proposed rent would total \$8,500 per month (\$1.21/per square foot). Mr. Durand added that some price increase is in anticipation for necessary building improvements (HVAC, etc.). The Board has MOU/IFA agreements with the Alcohol & Drug Abuse Council (ADAC), Management and Employment Training (MET), and Vocational Rehabilitation partners that subsidize rent, it will help offset the increase. Mr. Durand requested the Board approve the lease for a five-year term with an option of an additional five years.

Motion: The Executive/Finance Committee recommends for acceptance of the proposed lease as presented.

Second: Joe Clyde Adams

In Favor: All

Oppose: None

Abstain: Garvey Jackson

Motion: Passes

Board Member, Garvey Jackson, abstained from voting on Action Item 23-19 due to a conflict of interest.

c. Action Item 23-20 FY 2024 Annual Budget

Mark Durand stated that the Board had good participation in the Budget Workshop which helped explain and answer most questions that came of the proposed 2024 budget. Mark Durand and Maribel Soto presented the FY'24 annual budget. The budget is a zero balance budget with revenue and expenditures projected \$28,703,258. Mr. Durand explained the revenue changed from the August budget workshop due to the Texas Workforce Commission decreasing Child Care Formula Funds from the original allocation. The Board addressed this by annualizing the CCF grant which provided carry-over to offset the decrease in funding. Another notable change is the Full-Time Equivalency Rate (FTE) from 19 to 20.5 employees. The additional 1.5 FTE's is based on adding a Part-Time Accountant and a Business Service Specialist.

Motion: The Executive/Finance Committee recommends for acceptance of the FY 2024 Annual Budget as presented.

Second: Garvey Jackson

In Favor: All

Oppose: None

Abstain: Ethan Herr

Motion: Passes

Board Member, Ethan Herr, abstained from voting on Action Item 23-20 due to a conflict of interest.

d. Open Session Action, if any, as a result of Closed Session

None

3. Discussion and Acceptance of Financial Reports

a. Financial Reports for July 2023

- **Statement of Financial Position**
- **Budget vs. Actual**
- **Grant Report**

Finance Director, Maribel Soto-Mendoza, provided financial updates for July of 2023. She and Mr. Durand reviewed the reports. The Board accepted the July financial reports.

4. Adjourn

Ellen Mills adjourned the meeting at 3:31 p.m.

Duly passed and approved on this 19th day of September 2023

Kelli Marshall
Kelli Marshall, Chair

Attest

Dara Harmon

Dara Harmon, Exec. Administrative Assistant