

**Workforce Solutions Deep East Texas
Board Meeting Minutes
415 S. First Street, Suite 110B, Lufkin, TX 75901
March 12, 2024**

I. CHAIR KELLI MARSHALL CALLED THE BOARD MEETING TO ORDER AT 2:33 P.M.

MS. MARSHALL 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, KELLI MARSHALL, WAS PHYSICALLY PRESENT.

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

Members Present: Joe Clyde Adams, Kerry Ballast, Tyane Dietz, Eddie Hopkins, Kotosha Jeffery, Melody Jenkins, Gene Lee, Matthew Lowery, Kelli Marshall, Quincy Martindale, Keith McLeod, Benjamin Mott, Marisa Phillips, Jessica Rogers, Rich Scott, John Allen Slocumb, John White

Members Absent: Lisa Balty, Rebekah Burkhalter, Ashley Courtney, Tim Ditoro, Phyllis Grandgeorge, Anita Humphreys, Garvey Jackson, Dan Kern, Ellen Mills, Randy Roberts

Board Staff Present: Mark Durand, Dara Harmon, Debb Homman, Cassie Riegle, Maribel Soto-Mendoza, Karen Stubblefield

Visitors: Jessica Blair, Michelle Blanchard, LaTreaser Cartwright, Rhonda Cartwright, Paul Dunn, Michelle Kennedy, Monica Peters-Clark

KELLI MARSHALL REMINDED THE BOARD MEMBERS OF THE CONFLICT OF INTEREST DECLARATION.

Ms. Marshall asked that all members sign a conflict of interest declaration regardless of whether they have a conflict and return the form to Board staff.

WELCOME OF GUESTS:

None.

II. Public Comments

None.

III. Welcome New Board Members

Mark Durand welcomed the new Board members: Kerry Ballast, Melody Jenkins, Dan Kern and Keith McLeod.

IV. Committee Assignments

Executive/Finance Committee: Kelli Marshall, Chair; Ellen Mills, Vice Chair; Kotosha Jeffery, Secretary; Joe Clyde Adams, Lisa Balty, Tyane Dietz, Tim Ditoro, Eddie Hopkins, Garvey Jackson, Gene Lee, and John Allen Slocomb.

Business Services Committee: Tyane Dietz, Chair; Benjamin Mott, Vice Chair; Lisa Balty, Tim Ditoro, Eddie Hopkins, Anita Humphreys, Daniel Kern, Gene Lee, Matthew Lowery, Quincy Martindale, Rich Scott.

Operations Committee: Joe Clyde Adams, Chair; Marisa Phillips, Vice Chair; Kerry Ballast, Rebekah Burkhalter, Ashley Courtney, Phyllis Grandgeorge, Melody Jenkins, Robert (Keith) McLeod, Randy Roberts, Jessica Rogers, John White.

V. Discussion/Action: Approval of Minutes – February 13, 2024

Motion: Tyane Dietz made the motion to approve the minutes as presented.

Second: Benjamin Mott

In Favor: All

Oppose: None

Abstain: None

Motion: Passes

VI. Board Members Comments on Activity in their Respective Areas

Jasper Economic Development Corporation has purchased land to build a Youth Complex to host select tournaments. The plan is to bring families to Jasper and to utilize field and economic growth for businesses. Potential opening of a child care center in the San Augustine ISD was discussed. Board childcare staff met with representatives from First Baptist Church in Hemphill to discuss possible partnership of Texas Rising Star services with the church.

VII. Executive Director's Report

A. Contracts/Agreements

Preparation for this year's Summer Earn and Learn (SEAL) program is underway. The goal this year is 75 participants, and the minimum wage has been raised to \$10/hour. This is a five-week program for those youth who are assessed as being 504 and have potential barriers finding jobs.

A Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) was signed with Angelina College for office space for a case manager to assist students. A case manager will be there on Tuesday and Wednesdays to recruit and diversify our local workforce.

A MOU was also signed with AARP for office space at the Angelina County Workforce Center. This is for AARP to help recruit those aged 55+ finding jobs.

The Certificate of Insurance for Bond Liability was increased to \$2 million (was previously \$1 million) to ensure the Board is adequately insured to cover obligations.

B. Performance

Child Care:

The first quarter (October-January) average for children served per day was 2,604 which equals 97.06% year-to-date (YTD). There were 2,673 enrolled as of January 18, 2024, and our current target is 2,683 (99.62%). There are currently 340 children on the waitlist. We have 99 Child Care Provider Agreements and 47 Texas Rising Star Providers serving 1,579 Child Care Services (CCS) children.

Workforce:

The Board was placed on a Technical Assistance Plan (TAP) for missing two end-of-year Workforce Innovation & Opportunity Act (WIOA) measures. The Board and workforce contractor have developed an action plan to address these measures.

The Adult Quarter 2 (Q2) Median Earnings performance was met for December. The WIOA Youth Credential Rate also met performance for December.

C. Contacts and Coordination Efforts

Mr. Durand mentioned the Texas Workforce Commission (TWC) annual monitoring that will be coming up March 18-22. The Chief Financial Officer (CFO) and Policy/Planning Specialist attended

the Texas Public Purchasing Association (TxPPA) Procurement Training in Nacogdoches. The Board has conducted conference calls with a new employer, DRAX, regarding workforce, incentives, and potential site locations for new operations.

D. Rules and Legislation Update

Texas Health and Human Services conducted an on-site review of the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) services, and a report will be shared when received. Mr. Durand discussed the Texas Jobs, Energy, Technology, and Innovation (JETI) Act and how it will affect employers like DRAX coming into our region.

E. Funding

The Board has meetings with potential vendors to provide electrician training using Apprenticeship Award funding. TWC and the Board hosted a Jobs & Education for Texans (JET) webinar with local ISDs and community colleges to explain the application changes. Representatives from 31 of 53 ISDs in the Deep East Texas region attended.

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

Mr. Durand reported the January 2024 unemployment rate of 5.1% which likely went up due to seasonal demand. The Texas Conference for Employers hosted by the TWC will be May 17, 2024, in Nacogdoches.

VIII. Committee Reports

A. Business Services Committee

1. Information and Briefing Items

a. Rapid Response Update

Board staff provided a year to date report of rapid response activities. As of February 2024, there were 2 reported closures affecting 57 workers. The 49 health care workers will possibly transition to other health care providers in the area.

b. 2024 Teacher Externship

Cassie Riegle, Business Analyst, reported that 15 employers in six counties have registered to host a total of up to 22 teacher externs. Outreach and recruitment of teachers is under way. The Teacher Externship orientation is scheduled for June 6, and the 5-day externship week is June 10-14, 2024.

c. Career Exploration Report

Karen Stubblefield reported that the Career Coach model is in its third year and incorporates state and local best practices and utilizes TWC tools, resources and labor market information. The main focus is on junior/middle high school students to prepare for secondary and post-secondary pathways; to establish partnerships and connect with industry and post-secondary training providers leading into growth and high-demand occupation areas. The Board is partnering with 22 of 53 ISDs in our region and looking to add more in the following school year. The ability to continue to use TANF (Temporary Assistance for Needy Families) grant funding is a potential concern.

B. Executive/Finance Committee

1. Information and Briefing Items

a. TWC EO Monitoring Review Report

The Texas Workforce Commission Equal Opportunity Compliance Department (EOCD) is required to conduct annual Equal Opportunity (EO) monitoring reviews in accordance with federal and state EO monitoring requirements. The EOCD issued an EO survey and in response the Board's EO Officer provided the supporting documentation. The EOCD determined there were no findings or areas of concern.

b. Tri-Agency Regional Convener Report

The Workforce Solutions Deep East Texas Tri-Agency Regional Conveners submitted the Regional Asset Map and Gap Analysis Report on January 30, 2024. Jobs For the Future (JFF) coach, Ms. Shayna Payne provided feedback regarding the report. The Tri-Agency team is expected to have the revised Asset Map and Gap Analysis re-submitted by March 15, 2024. In February, Jeff Eichman and Josh Fleming traveled to six regional high schools to present a

certificate of achievement to each of the students that submitted their SPEAR team logo. In addition, the contest winner, Ms. Sydney Schriever was presented an additional award for being selected and her teacher, Adam Ramirez, was presented with the \$1,000 work-based learning logo contest stipend to be used by the Center High School design class.

c. WIOA Technical Assistance Plan

At the end of the Board Contract Year (BCY), TWC placed the Board on a TAP for missing two WIOA measures. The Adult Median Earnings goal was \$7,600 vs actual of \$6,567. The Youth Credential Rate goal was 84.79% vs the actual 71.40%. The TAP will remain in place until performance is reported by the end of the BCY Monthly Performance Report (MPR) in September 2024. If the Board meets the measures, TWC will recommend the TAP be removed. The Board will continue to report monthly on the progress of meeting both goals.

2. Discussion/Possible Action

a. Action Item 24-08 Diaz, Smith and Associates Non-Custodial Parent Follow-Up Monitoring Report

Diaz, Smith and Associates (DSA) conducted a PY24 Follow-up Program Monitoring evaluation for the Non-Custodial Parent (NCP) Choices program. The scope of the review was for the period of November 2023 – January 2024. DSA reviewed all eleven active NCP cases for areas of timely notification to the Office of Attorney General of NCP non-compliance and accurate documentation of customer contact and service provision in TWIST and COLTS. The review showed no errors and DSA's response was that corrective actions are in place to adequately resolve the findings of the NCP program. Board and workforce contractor will continue to review cases monthly to ensure corrective action is being taken.

Motion: The Executive/Finance Committee recommended for acceptance of the report as presented.

Second: Eddie Hopkins

In Favor: All

Oppose: None

Abstain: None

Motion: Passes

b. Action Item 24-09 Employee Handbook Revisions

Discussion and review of Board Employee Handbook with the Board's HR Consultant, it was determined that the following revisions were needed to ensure our Employee Handbook has the required updates to communicate company policy and expectations and minimize the risk for the Board: Section 1.12 Equal Employment Opportunity, added to include that DETLWDB is an Equal Opportunity Employer and does not discriminate on the basis of race *including race-based hair discrimination*; Section 1.21 added the Pregnant Workers Fairness Act (PWFA) language to the handbook; Section 4.6 Use of Paid-Time-Off (PTO) – Unused PTO may not be carried over into the following calendar year. *Any remaining balance of unused PTO will only be paid at the time of voluntary separation of employment from the Board with a successfully served two-week written notice of resignation period. The payout amount will be calculated on a pro-rated basis determined by the number of full calendar months served in the current calendar year from the date of the eligible grant. If the amount of PTO used in the current calendar year equals or exceeds the pro-rated calculation, no payout will occur. The maximum payout is capped at eighty (80) hours as available in the calculated payout amount. Exceptions to this policy may be made by the Executive Director.*

Motion: The Executive/Finance Committee recommended for acceptance of the revised Employee Handbook as presented.

Second: Joe Clyde Adams

In Favor: All

Oppose: None

Abstain: None

Motion: Passes

c. Action Item 24-10 Rural Training Lab Application

TWC has dedicated WIOA funds to address skill gaps and industry needs in rural areas of Texas. Rural is defined as municipalities with a population of less than 25,000 or unincorporated areas of counties with a population of less than 200,000. TWC has allocated \$1 million in WIOA Statewide funds to develop local community training programs to address workforce challenges and opportunities.

Workforce Boards are eligible to apply for up to \$250,000 for a grant period up to 18 months. The core of this initiative is to establish and fund training labs that are designed as short-term, turnkey training opportunities created by the Local Workforce Board in partnership with local governments, community colleges, and other approved training providers. The Board plans to utilize the Tri-Agency Regional Convener Asset Map and Gap Analysis and other regional resources to identify needs of training. Boards may submit applications from March 1 to May 31, 2024. The Board recommends a vote to approve the Board staff to submit a Rural Training Application.

Motion: The Executive/Finance Committee recommended for approval to accept the plan to submit as presented.

Second: Benjamin Mott

In Favor: All

Oppose: None

Abstain: None

Motion: Passes

d. Action Item 24-05 Closed Session – Deliberation Regarding Executive Director Employment and Evaluation Concerning Action Item 24-05. Gov't Code Section 551.074

Not Discussed.

e. Open Session Action, if any, as a result of Closed Session
None.

3. Discussion and Acceptance of Financial Reports

a. Financial Reports for January 2024

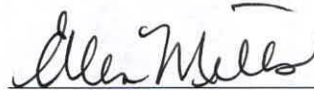
- Statement of Financial Position
- Budget vs. Actual
- Grant Report

Maribel Soto-Mendoza, CFO, provided financial updates for January 2024, stating no concerns.

IX. Adjourn

Kelli Marshall adjourned the Board Meeting at 3:58 p.m.

Duly passed and approved on this 14 day of May 2024



Kelli Marshall, Chair

Attest



Dara Harmon, Exec. Administrative Assistant