

**Workforce Solutions Deep East Texas  
Executive/Finance Committee Meeting Minutes  
415 S. First Street, Suite 110B, Lufkin, TX 75901  
October 8, 2024**

**I. VICE-CHAIR ELLEN MILLS CALLED THE EXECUTIVE/FINANCE COMMITTEE MEETING TO ORDER AT 1:04 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, Tyane Dietz, Tim Ditoro, Eddie Hopkins, Garvey Jackson, Kelli Marshall, Ellen Mills, John Allen Slocomb

**Members Absent:** Lisa Balty, Kotosha Jeffery, Gene Lee

**Board Staff Present:** Mark Durand, Jeff Eichman, Dara Harmon, Debb Homman, Lauren Phipps, Maribel Soto, Karen Stubblefield

**Visitors:** Kevin Bradford, Monica Peters-Clark, LaTreaser Cartwright, Rhonda Cartwright, Paul Dunn, Michelle Kennedy

**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 submit the form to Board Staff.

**WELCOME OF GUESTS:**

None.

**II. Public Comments**

None.

**III. Discussion/Action: Approval of Minutes – September 10, 2024**

**Motion:** Ellen Mills made the motion to approve the minutes as presented.

**Second:** Joe Clyde Adams

**In Favor:** All

**Oppose:** None

**Abstain:** None

**Motion:** Passes

**IV. Information and Briefing Items**



#### **A. Apprenticeship Board Service Award**

The Texas Workforce Commission awarded Workforce Solutions Deep East Texas with a Third Place Board Service Award (BSA) and \$50,000 BSA grant for increasing the availability of registered apprenticeships in the region for the grant period of January 1 - December 31, 2024. Pre-apprenticeships (\$33,700). Form partnerships and implement pre-apprenticeship programs related to high demand occupations for high school students starting in the Fall of 2024. Pre-apprenticeships are successful in high schools because they offer hands-on learning opportunities for students on a career pathway and lead to certifications, employment and further training:

**Diboll ISD - Electronic Assembler** - 30 students. Training with employer partner IPC International and Lockheed Martin. Through P-TECH (Pathways in Technology Early College High School), Diboll students begin working on workforce ready college courses their freshman year of high school. The goal is for students to graduate high school with an Associate in Applied Science degree as well as level-1 certifications in Electronics Assembler and in Computer Maintenance. Graduates of this apprenticeship program will gain valuable field experience and classroom knowledge to better equip them to be successful Electronics Assemblers;

**Nacogdoches ISD - Electrician** - 20 students. Training and employer partner: TRIO Education and Stiles Electric. In partnership with TRIO Education, NISD is launching an electrical pre-apprenticeship training program as part of its Construction Technology Program of Study. This two-year program allows high school students to complete the TRIO Electrical Pre-Apprenticeship, earning 540 transferable hours toward a four-year electrical apprenticeship. This comprehensive approach provides students with a well-rounded foundation, equipping them for success in the skilled trades industry;

**Apprenticeship Success Story Video** to highlight the experiences of an apprentice from the Legacy Institute's IT Registered Apprenticeship Program and their employer;

**Texas Workforce Commission Apprenticeship Conference** (October 3-4, 2024, Dallas) Hosted high demand industry employers for the Apprenticeship Texas Conference and enable to them to learn more about registered apprenticeships and how other employers are using the tool to equip their workforce with advanced skills. Funds will provide complimentary registration, travel and hotel expenses.

#### **B. Tri-Agency Regional Convener Grant Information**

Since our last update, the Board's Regional Conveners staff, along with SPEAR Team members completed and submitted the 2024-2029 WSDet DRAFT Regional Strategic Plan. We also submitted our DRAFT 2-Year Implementation Plan, Data Infrastructure Update, and DRAFT Data Dashboard report. We were asked for our 2-Year Implementation Plan to include defining our SPEAR team members' roles and regional stakeholder roles, sustainability strategies, decision matrix and timeline for updating our targeted industries and occupations, regional work-based learning strategy, regional data management strategy, regional communication strategy, and our regional employer engagement strategies. Board staff has recently met with our Jobs For the Future (JFF) coach to receive feedback about all the recently submitted deliverables. Our team will be working on the final deliverable, Regional Strategic Plan, with 2-year Implementation Plan, that is to be submitted by December 31, 2024.

Board staff and SFASU Center for Applied Research & Rural Innovation (CARRI) have recently hosted two Jobs and Education Forums (JEF). The purpose of the forums is to assemble all regional stakeholder groups together for collaboration opportunities. The focus of these collaborations is to initiate purposeful conversations and gather invaluable feedback about the employer/employee relationship mindset. We have two more Jobs & Education Forums planned, October 15, 2024, in Jasper, TX and on November 6, 2024, in Crockett, TX. Everyone's support is appreciated.

There was discussion on how to track post-graduate student and if they're working in the field they studied.

#### **C. Student HireAbility Navigator Update**

Since our last board informational update, the Student HireAbility Navigator, Lisa Crawford, along with the Texas Workforce Commission's Vocational Rehabilitation staff, Partners for Rural Impact and Partners Resource Network held a disabled youth employment and resource fair on September 18, 2024, at the Stephen F. Austin State University Baker Pattillo Student Center in Nacogdoches. In attendance



were 104 students and adults, along with 43 exhibit tables and guest speakers. We received a lot of very positive feedback about the event and plan to host another similar event next year in Lufkin. October is National Disability Employment Awareness Month (NDEAM), and the U.S. Department of Labor's Office of Disability Employment Policy (ODEP) encourages businesses and organizations across the country to participate. Therefore, the Student HireAbility Navigator, in partnership with the Texas Workforce Commission's Vocational Rehabilitation staff, is hosting an event for National Disability Employment Awareness Month (NDEAM) on October 10, 2024, at the C.L. Simon Recreation Center in Nacogdoches from 8:30 am to 1:00 pm. We hope to have up to 100 regional employers of all sizes and representing a variety of industries in attendance. Employers will learn how we can assist their businesses through workforce programs, incentives when hiring people with disabilities and customizable employment services. They will also hear employment success stories from people with disabilities. The event will feature 8 presentations from Workforce Solutions Deep East Texas staff members, TWC Vocational Rehabilitation staff members and outside participants.

**V. Discussion and Possible Action**

**A. Action Item 24-25 Equal Opportunity Policy Update**

Following the issuance of Workforce Development (WD) Letter 02-19, Change 1: Babel Notices - Update. Changes are listed here and noted in the revised policy presented for approval:

1. The Board must now include a Babel Notice in Vietnamese, in addition to the previously required Babel Notice in English and Spanish.
2. The information contained in WD Letter 02-19, Change 1, Attachment 1, regarding what does, and does not, require a Babel Notice was added to the Policy.
3. Babel Notice in Vietnamese was added to the Policy.

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

Second: Garvey Jackson

In Favor: All

Oppose: None

Abstain: None

Motion: Passes

**VI. Discussion and Acceptance of Financial Reports**

**A. Financial Reports for August 2024**

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

Chief Financial Officer, Maribel Soto-Mendoza provided financial updates for August 2024.

**VII. Discussion of issues to be brought before the Committee**

None.

**VIII. Adjourn**

Ellen Mills adjourned the Executive/Finance Committee Meeting at 2:18 p.m.

Duly passed and approved on this 12 day of November 2024

Attest

  
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Kelli Marshall, Chair

  
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Dara Harmon, Exec. Administrative Assistant