

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

**I. CHAIR KELLI MARSHALL CALLED THE BOARD MEETING TO ORDER AT 2:35 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, Rebekah Burkhalter, Ashley Courtney, Tyane Dietz, Eddie Hopkins, Garvey Jackson, Kotosha Jeffery, Melody Jenkins, Dan Kern, Gene Lee, Kelli Marshall, Robert McLeod, Benjamin Mott, John Allen Slocomb, John White

**Members Absent:** Lisa Balty, Tim Ditoro, Phyllis Grandgeorge, Anita Humphreys, Matthew Lowery, Quincy Martindale, Ellen Mills, Marisa Phillips, Jessica Rogers, Rich Scott

**Board Staff Present:** Jeff Eichman, Dara Harmon, Emily Harmon, Marilyn Hartsook, Debb Homman, Sam Inguanzo, Sarah Milligan, Lauren Phipps, Maribel Soto-Mendoza,

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

**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. Discussion/Action: Approval of Minutes – October 8 and October 23, 2024**

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

Second: Melody Jenkins

In Favor: All  
Oppose: None  
Abstain: None  
Motion: Passes

#### IV. Board Members Comments on Activity in their Respective Areas

Garvey Jackson reported a new Ace Hardware store opened in Livingston, and Kelli Marshall reported a new restaurant, called Greenalicious, opened in Newton.

#### V. Discussion/Possible Action

##### A. Action Item 24-27 WIOA Policy Update

As required by the Texas Workforce Commission (TWC), the Board must issue policy to follow the guidelines set forth by TWC regarding all programs administered by the Board. The Board policy is developed by staff in compliance with these statutes. Staff recently reviewed the Workforce Innovation & Opportunity Act (WIOA) Policy for technical changes and clarifications. The policy was updated as follows:

1. Added language under the Work Experience section to include:  
*After the initial 520 hours, youth (only) will be reevaluated to determine if the participant has developed the necessary work habits and gained the work-related skills to obtain unsubsidized employment. If the youth have not obtained the work skills needed, they may work up to an additional 520 hours (page 20).*
2. Corrections of other minor language throughout the policy.

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

Second: Benjamin Mott

In Favor: All

Oppose: None

Abstain: None

Motion: Passes

##### B. Action Item 24-28 Work Experience and Work Activity Policy Update

The Board is required to issue policy to follow the guidelines set forth by TWC regarding all programs administered by the Board. The Board policy is developed by staff in compliance with these statutes. Staff recently reviewed the Work Experience and Work Activity Policy for technical changes and clarifications. The policy was updated as follows:

1. Added language under the General section to include:  
*Transitional Jobs to the list of services not provided under this policy. Transitional Jobs are time-limited work experiences that are subsidized for adults and dislocated workers who have barriers to employment because of chronic unemployment or inconsistent work history (pages 1-2).*
2. Added language under WIOA Work Experience section to include:  
*Career counselors will need to identify the skills that are needed by the customer to obtain unsubsidized employment, and then determine the length of time needed for the customer to learn those skills - based on test scores, abilities, aptitudes, and related skills (page 2).*  
*After the initial 520 hours, youth (only) will be reevaluated to determine if the participant has developed the necessary work habits and gained the work-related skills to obtain unsubsidized employment. If the youth have not obtained the work skills needed, the youth may work up to an additional 520 hours for a total of 1,040 maximum hours (page 2).*
3. Added language under the Length of Training/Work Experience section to include:  
*After the initial 520 hours, youth (only) will be reevaluated to determine if the participant has developed the necessary work habits and gained the work-related skills to obtain unsubsidized employment. If the youth have not obtained the work skills needed, the youth may work up to an additional 520 hours for a total of 1,040 maximum hours (page 2).*



4. Corrections of other minor language throughout the policy.

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

Second: Ashley Courtney

In Favor: All

Oppose: None

Abstain: None

Motion: Passes

### **C. Action Item 24-29 Support Services Policy Update**

The Board is required to issue policy to follow the guidelines set forth by TWC regarding all programs administered by the Board. The Board policy is developed by staff in compliance with these statutes. Staff recently reviewed the Supportive Services Policy for technical changes and clarifications.

The policy was updated as follows:

1. Deleted Personal Vehicle Expenses and replaced with Vehicle-related Transportation Assistance.

2. Updated language under the Vehicle-related Transportation Assistance section to include:

*Vehicle-related Transportation Assistance includes repairs, driver's license fees (including renewals), inspection, registration tags, insurance, batteries, and tires. Minor car repairs or maintenance must correct a mechanical or other defect that prevents the car from passing state inspection or otherwise makes the car inoperable or unsafe. Items that are not allowed are vehicle bodywork, unless needed to make the vehicle operable or air-conditioning installation, repair, or maintenance unless medically necessary.*

*Participants must demonstrate ownership of a vehicle before any payment of expenses for repairs, insurance, or registration (page 6).*

3. Corrections of other minor language throughout the policy.

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

Second: Tyane Dietz

In Favor: All

Oppose: None

Abstain: None

Motion: Passes

### **D. Action Item 24-30 Child Care Quality Implementation and Expenditure Plan**

TWC issued WD Letter 09-24 to provide guidance on planning and reporting requirements for non-direct care Child Care Quality (CCQ) funds to Boards. The TWC three-member commission approved increasing the local workforce development board's allocation for quality from 4% to 6% of a Board's Child Care and Development Fund allocation. This funding must be expended by October 31, 2025. 6% CCQ = \$985,268

The purpose of this plan is to provide funds to improve the quality of childcare services for all children in the following categories:

1. Training and Professional Development - training, professional development, and/or postsecondary education opportunities provided to childcare provider staff that do not include infant- and toddler-specific training.

2. Tiered Quality Rating and Improvement System (QRIS) - Texas Rising Star recognition, maintenance, and mentor and assessor staff.

3. Infant and Toddler Quality Improvements - specifically addressing infant and toddler program establishment or expansion, infant and toddler training, early intervention partnerships, or infant and toddler materials.

4. Supporting Health and Safety - assisting early learning programs maintain childcare licensing compliance or providing high-quality health and safety provisions that do not include activities specific to infants and toddlers.

5. Supporting National Accreditation - assisting early learning programs in obtaining or maintaining national accreditation
6. Other Activities for childcare staff:
  - Pre-K partnerships Incentives
  - Wage supports, staff recruitment incentives, and retention incentives.

The Board has identified areas of need and also solicited input from child care providers and the Child Care Advisory Committee of how to utilize the funds to provide quality child care to the children served through Child Care Services.

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

Second: Joe Clyde Adams

In Favor: All

Oppose: None

Abstain: Ashley Courtney

Motion: Passes

*Ashley Courtney abstained due to a potential conflict of interest.*

## VI. Discussion and Acceptance of Financial Reports

### a. Financial Reports for September 2024 / End-of-Year

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

Chief Financial Officer, Maribel Soto-Mendoza, provided financial updates for September 2024, which included End-of-Year reporting.

## VII. Executive Director's Report

### A. Contracts/Agreements

Contract with Equus Workforce Solutions to lease space in Angelina County Workforce Center to administer Job Corps services. The janitorial contract was renewed for Jasper County, and a new janitorial contract was executed for Houston County. A Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) was entered into with Greater East Texas Community Action Program (GETCAP).

### B. Performance

#### Child Care:

The Board's current Year-to-Date (YTD) target goal is 2,683 average children per day. As of the August Child Care Enrollment Report, the actual average number of children per day is 2,689, which is 100.22% of the YTD target goal. There are currently 1,059 children on the waiting list. The new target goal is 2,945 children served per day.

#### Workforce:

The Board was placed on a Technical Assistance Plan (TAP) for missing two (2) end-of-year Workforce Innovation & Opportunity Act (WIOA) measures in 2023. The Board and contractor have developed an action plan and, as of August, both measures were being met.

As of the August Monthly Performance Report (MPR), three (3) performance measures are not being met: Dislocated Worker Employed Quarter 2 Post Exit; Career and Training Employed/Enrolled Quarter 2 Post Exit; and Youth Employed/Enrolled Quarter 4 Post Exit. Efforts are being made to meet these measures.

### C. Contacts and Coordination Efforts

Board Staff is continually active in the Deep East region.

Michelle Kennedy gave EOY report on Child Care Services; Monica Peters-Clark gave EOY report for Business Engagement; Shakia Roberts gave EOY report for WIOA; Mark Christie gave EOY report for Choices & NCP; Jessica Blair gave the EOY report for Community Engagement Services; and LaTreasar Cartwright gave the remaining EOY reports for Work in Texas (WIT) and Special Grants.



**D. Rules and Legislation Update**

None

**E. Funding**

Disaster Recovery Dislocated Worker Grant Hurricane Beryl funding - \$52,778. Trade Act Services for Dislocated Workers Grant - \$5,000. Workforce Commission Initiatives (WCI) Grant - \$49,260. RESEA Grant - \$261,030.

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

The September 2024 unemployment rate was 4.9%, which is down from the month prior (5.3%). Board Members are encouraged to RSVP for the National Association of Workforce Boards (NAWB) Forum in Washington D.C. March 29 – April 1, 2025.

**VIII. Adjourn**

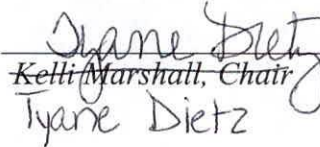
Kelli Marshall adjourned the Board Meeting at 3:57 p.m.

*Duly passed and approved on this* 11<sup>th</sup> *day of* February 2025.

Attest



*Dara Harmon, Exec. Administrative Assistant*

  
~~Kelli Marshall, Chair~~  
Tyane Dietz