

**Workforce Solutions - Deep East Texas**  
**415 S. First Street, Suite 110B**  
**Lufkin, TX 75901**  
**Operations Committee Minutes**  
**February 4, 2022**

**I. CHAIR ROBERT FITZPATRICK CALLED THE OPERATIONS COMMITTEE MEETING TO ORDER AT 10:05 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:** Rebekah Burkhalter, Robert Fitzpatrick, Ethan Herr, Malcolm Ifoezeh, Marisa Phillips, Randall Roberts

**Members Absent:** Joe Clyde Adams, Phyllis Grandgeorge, Jessica Rogers, John White

**Board Staff Present:** Mark Durand, Lashonda Bledsoe, Debb Homman, Lauren Phipps, Karen Stubblefield, Misty Woodard

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

**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 – November 4, 2021**

**Motion:** Ethan Herr made the motion to approve the minutes as presented.

**Second:** Marisa Phillips

**In Favor:** All

**Oppose:** None

**Abstain:** None

**Motion:** Passes

**IV. Information Items**

**A. Child Care Match Contract**

Mr. Mark Durand commended Child Care Coordinator, Debb Homman, in recruiting Match Contributors for Child Care Federal Funds. Workforce Solutions Deep East Texas (WSDet) is required by Texas Workforce Commission (TWC) to obtain at least a 50% match of Child Care Federal Funds. Child Care Match Federal Funds equal \$1,159,460.00 with an amount required by WSDet of \$579,730.00. Mr. Durand stated that WSDet has relied on Angelina College and Stephen F. Austin State University (SFA) in previous years and acknowledged the continued support of Angelina College and SFA for Fiscal Year 2022. Angelina College increased its match contribution this fiscal year to \$150,000. Due to recruitment efforts, WSDet obtained match contributions from Jasper ISD and Tenaha ISD, as well.

**V. Discussion/Possible Action**

**A. Action Item 22-02 Equal Opportunity Policy Revisions**

Mr. Durand stated the Board's Planning and Policy Specialist and Equal Opportunity Officer, Lauren Phipps, has been reviewing the Board's policies and procedures and updating them, as necessary, based on current regulations and TWC guidance. Lauren Phipps summarized the revisions and updates made to the Equal Opportunity Policy and Procedures, including the removal of outdated regulations, the addition of language covering Religious Accommodations, and the revision of the Sexual Harassment section of the policy to cover harassment more broadly. Ms. Phipps also mentioned that a Definitions section and References section were added to the policy for better understanding. Mr. Durand noted that Lauren Phipps has reached out to all six of the workforce centers in the Deep East Texas region to ensure each center is meeting the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) requirements.

Motion: Ethan Herr made the motion to accept the Equal Opportunity Policy as presented.

Second: Randall Roberts

In Favor: All

Oppose: None

Abstain: None

Motion: Passes

**B. Action Item 22-03 Integrated Complaints, Hearings, and Appeals Policy and Procedures**

Mr. Durand stated the purpose of the Integrated Complaints, Hearings, and Appeals Policy and Procedures is to address complaints and to incorporate an effective method of handling complaints, conducting hearings, and taking the appropriate steps required during appeals processes. Lauren Phipps said this policy was updated according to her review of TWC's Chapter 823 rules. Ms. Phipps summarized the revisions made to the policy, including added language in the Complaints section regarding who may file a complaint, updating timeframes for reaching informal resolutions decisions, and the removal of outdated information regarding the Board staff providing information online to Eligible Training Providers. Mr. Durand noted that the reason for this change is due to the state now approving Eligible Training Providers instead of the local Boards, therefore, this information for Eligible Training Providers is now found on TWC's website. This information includes instructions for filing complaints and appeals.

Motion: Marisa Phillips made the motion to accept the Integrated Complaints, Hearings, and Appeals Policy and Procedures as presented.

Second: Ethan Herr

In Favor: All

Oppose: None

Abstain: None

Motion: Passes

**C. Action Item 22-04 Protection of Personally Identifiable Information Policy and Procedures**

Mr. Durand pointed out the necessity for procedures in safe-guarding personally identifiable information (PII) to ensure PII is kept confidential and is protected against hackers or data breaches. Lauren Phipps stated the revisions to this policy were made following her review of TWC's WD Letter

02-18, TWC's Information Security Standards version 3.0, and the Department of Labor's Training and Employment Guidance Letter (TEGL) 39-11. Revisions included update of the link to TWC's Information Security Standards and Guidelines, correcting the Definitions section regarding two definitions, removing any reference to WD Letter 13-13 as it has been rescinded, adding references to WD Letter 02-18, and including additional information regarding Recommended Best Practices. Mr. Durand advised that following approval of the revised policies, the Board will issue Board Issuances to the workforce and child care staff to ensure all staff is aware of changes and training can be implemented, as necessary, regarding changes.

Motion: Ethan Herr made the motion to accept the Protection of Personally Identifiable Information Policy and Procedures as presented.

Second: Randall Roberts

In Favor: All

Oppose: None

Abstain: None

Motion: Passes

**D. Action Item 22-05 Child Care Policy Revisions**

Chair Robert Fitzpatrick announced the removal of Action Item 22-05 from the Agenda.

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

None

**VI. Board Reports**

**A. Workforce Center Report**

A video of a CHOICES Program Customer success story was shared with the Committee. Mark Durand noted the focus applied to utilizing the direct client services funding and implementing ways to continue to increase assistance through this funding. Ms. LaTreasor Cartwright reported that 11 measures on the Monthly Performance Report (MPR) are being met, exceeding performance in six (6) of those measures. Measures not being met are Dislocated Worker Q4, Adult Q4, Youth Q2, and All Employed/Enrolled Q2 and Q2-Q4. Mr. Durand explained that Q2 and Q4 refers to number of quarters that have passed since customers received services, and that multiple techniques are being utilized to track participants once they have completed training and begin working. Ms. Cartwright reviewed the Greeter Reports, indicating the numbers of customer visits to the workforce centers. Ms. Cartwright also reported the numbers of WIOA enrollments for the first quarter of 2022, with Program enrollments being 32 for Adult, 8 for Dislocated Worker, and 7 for Youth, and Training/Work Experience enrollments being 16 for Adult, 7 for Dislocated Worker, and 17 for Youth.

**B. Child Care Services Report**

Ms. Michelle Kennedy and Ms. Laura Cole reported on the Child Care Services Performance Data. Ms. Kennedy reported that Child Care Services (CCS) exceeded the target number of 1867 children enrolled for October and November 2021, with 1969 children enrolled in October and 1953 children enrolled in November. TWC raised the goal of children enrolled to 1960 in December 2021. December ended with 1905 children enrolled in CCS (97% of Target Performance). Ms. Kennedy noted the decrease in number of children enrolled is due to several factors, including the re-implementation of the 40 absences rule and parents not recertifying. Ms. Laura Cole, Child Care Services Manager, summarized the Service Industry Recovery (SIR) enrollment numbers, with 327 children currently enrolled in child care through SIR and year-to-date enrollments of 341 for January 2021. Ms. Cole reviewed the provider data, noting 84 total provider agreements, 77 of which are in the Deep East Texas Region. Of the 84 providers, 72 are child care centers, three (3) are licensed homes, and two (2) are registered homes. Ms. Debb Homman provided updates regarding the Texas Rising Star (TRS) program. There are currently 41 TRS providers, including one new TRS center. Four centers are currently working to become TRS centers. Ms. Homman introduced the newest TRS Mentor, Lashonda Bledsoe. Ms. Homman summarized upcoming events and projects involving the TRS Staff. TWC issued TRS Support Funds to the Board. These funds will be utilized, in part, by giving a \$300.00 incentive to TRS

child care provider employees that have been employed with the provider as of March 2020 and are still employed.

**C. Student HireAbility Report**

Mr. Durand reported that Ms. Aubrey Jones, the Board's Student Hireability Navigator (SHN), has collaborated with the regional Vocational Rehabilitation transition and marketing specialist, as well as the other three SHNs within the region, and will be hosting a five-part job readiness series from January to May.

**VII. Adjourn**

Chair Robert Fitzpatrick adjourned the Operations Committee Meeting at 10:55 a.m.

Duly passed and approved on this 7<sup>th</sup> day of April 2022

  
Robert Fitzpatrick, Chair

Attest

  
Lauren Phipps, Planning and Policy Specialist