

**Workforce Solutions Deep East Texas
Board Meeting Minutes
415 S. First Street, Suite 110B, Lufkin, TX 75901
December 13, 2022**

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, Lisa Balty, Rebekah Burkhalter, TJ Colwell, Tyane Dietz, Robert Fitzpatrick, Phyllis Grandgeorge, Ethan Herr, Staci Hodges, Eddie Hopkins, Garvey Jackson, Gene Lee, Kelli Marshall, Ellen Mills, Randall Roberts, Jessica Rogers, Rich Scott, John Allen Slocomb, John White

Members Absent: Tim Ditoro, James Gentry, Wayne Haglund, Anita Humphreys, Malcolm Ifoezeh, Kotosha Jeffery, Laurie King, Matthew Lowery, Quincy Martindale, Marisa Phillips

Board Staff Present: Mark Durand, Anna Holderberg, Debb Homman, Aubrey Jones, Lauren Phipps, Karen Stubblefield, Misty Woodard

Visitors: Scott Amey, LaTreasor Cartwright, Rhonda Cartwright, Mike Dobert

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:

Mark Durand welcomed Mike Dobert, owner of HR in Alignment. The Board recently procured human resource services, and HR in Alignment was selected to provide those services.

II. Public Comments
None

III. Discussion/Action: Approval of Minutes – October 18, 2022

Motion: Tyane Dietz made the motion to approve the minutes as presented.
Second: Robert Fitzpatrick
In Favor: All
Oppose: None
Abstain: None
Motion: Passes

IV. Information Item

A. Commissioner Representing Labor Julian Alvarez III Departs TWC

On November 30th, the Texas Workforce Commission (TWC) announced that Commissioner Representing Labor, Julian Alvarez, will not serve another term as Commissioner. Commissioner Alvarez's current term ends effective December 15, 2022. Board Member, Tyane Dietz, added that there has not been an appointment yet to fill the spot as Commissioner Representing Labor, and it will be a difficult task trying to replace Commissioner Alvarez.

V. Board Members Comments on Activity in their Respective Areas

None

VI. Executive Director's Report

A. Contracts/Agreements

The Board has entered into Memorandums of Understanding with the twenty-one (21) partnering independent school districts (ISDs) for the Workforce Career and Education Outreach Specialist program (WCEOS). The Board has entered into two (2) new contracts: (1) IT Enabled Contract for information technology services and (2) HR in Alignment for human resources services. Both contracts were reviewed and approved by legal services.

B. Performance

Child Care:

Child care performance target of 2,349 was not met for October, with actual number of 2,090 (88.97%). There are currently 43 Texas Rising Star (TRS) providers with 1,237 CCS children attending these TRS child care centers. The Board's Child Care Business Specialist is completing her onboarding and orientation, but has contacted four (4) current child care centers that are interested in expanding, opening a new center, or have staffing needs; four (4) organizations or ISDs that are either wanting to open new centers in the near future, or are willing to serve as advisor to new ISDs wanting to open new centers; and two (2) employers that are interested in partnering with a child care provider to provide care to employees.

Workforce:

The August 2022 Monthly Performance Report (MPR) reflected Workforce met all 18 performance measures, making the Workforce Solutions Deep East Texas (WSDet) Board one (1) of four (4) boards to meet all measures. Angelina College was recognized at the TWC Annual Conference for receiving first place in the area of co-enrollments of customers in Adult Education & Literacy (AEL) and WIOA services.

C. Contacts and Coordination Efforts

WSDet has collaborated with Panola College and Portacool on a Skills Development Fund grant to upskill Portacool employees. WSDet also collaborated with Diboll ISD and Angelina College to submit a Pathways in Technology Early College High School application. The goal through this collaboration is to serve fifty 9th grade students in earning certificates in the areas of drafting, electrical technology, welding and other high demand occupations. Several Board Members, Board staff, and contractor staff attended the 2022 Annual TWC Conference. The conference focused heavily on upskilling through apprenticeships, internships, disability awareness, and re-integration of ex-offenders into the workforce.

D. Rules and Legislation Update

TWC Executive Director, Ed Serna, reported that the primary focuses for workforce would be child care, Vocational Rehabilitation (VR) services, and the regulatory funding of pre-apprenticeships, apprenticeships, internships, JET and Skills Development.

E. Funding

The Board partnered with Crockett ISD and Crockett EDC for a High Demand Job Training Grant in the amount of \$15,000 to purchase equipment for Crockett ISD. The Board also partnered with the Deep East Texas College and Career Academy (DETCCA) and Jasper EDC for a High Demand Job Training Grant in the amount of \$56,172 to purchase two computer labs for DETCCA. The Board partnered with Lufkin ISD Education Foundation for a Texas Industry Partnership Grant in the amount of \$2,230 to purchase supplies for Lufkin ISD teachers.

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

Mr. Durand reported the unemployment rate for October 2022 was 4.8%, which is slightly down from the 4.9% unemployment rate for the previous month (September 2022), and down from the 6.0% unemployment rate in October 2021.

VII. Committee Reports

A. Operations Committee

1. Committee Activity

2. Discussion/Possible Action

No action items to be brought before the Board.

B. Business Services Committee

1. Committee Activity

Committee Chair, Tyane Dietz, congratulated Randy Roberts and Angelina College on being recognized by TWC for the Adult Education and Literacy (AEL) program. Ms. Dietz also acknowledged workforce contractor staff for conducting outreach and collecting beneficial information from local employers to illustrate the employers' needs. Ms. Dietz emphasized the need to encourage the workforce population, especially the youth, to commit to staying in the Deep East Texas region.

2. Discussion/Possible Action

a. Action Item 22-31 Request to Submit Application for 2023 Teacher Externship

TWC issued a Request for Application (RFA) on November 17, 2022, announcing the RFA 32023-00101 Externships for Teachers program to Local Workforce Development Boards (Boards) to outreach and collaborate with Texas Schools and Employers to provide Externships for Teachers. Boards have until December 27, 2022 to submit a plan to provide Teachers with an Externship that gives them an opportunity to engage in industry-related activities and learn how classroom content is applied in the real world. The grant start date is estimated to be April 2023. The second Workforce Solutions Deep East Texas Teacher Externship was successfully held June 13-17, 2022, in response to employers who said there was a disconnect between workplace expectations and the qualifications of individuals entering the workforce. The employers emphasized the need to address the skills gap in manufacturing, health care, automotive, utilities and information technology industries. Twenty-seven CTE teachers from 11 ISDs and 25 businesses participated. In their program evaluations, 100% of teachers and employers said they would recommend the program to their peers. Among the immediate positive outcomes from the experiences were: skill-specific lessons for the classroom, internships, job opportunities, mock interviews, employers speaking at schools, and student tours during the upcoming school year. Teachers also heard employers talk about the need for soft skills such as reliability, accountability, communication, empathy, attendance, professional behavior, listening, decision-making,

productivity, and problem-solving. Soft skills, the key to workplace success, were also referred to as employability skills, work-readiness skills and job-readiness skills. The Board's 2021-2024 Strategic Plan emphasizes enhancing the alignment between education and industry. During this twelve-month grant, the goal is to place 30 teachers with area businesses in Demand Industries. The grant application request is not to exceed \$60,000.

Motion: The Business Services Committee recommended to approve the Request to Submit Application for 2023 Teacher Externship as presented.

Second: Gene Lee

In Favor: All

Oppose: None

Abstain: None

Motion: Passes

C. Executive/Finance Committee

1. Committee Activity

2. Discussion/Possible Action

a. Action Item 22-32 Draft Modification of Strategic Plan

Board Chair, Kelli Marshall, stated TWC requires the Board to submit modifications of the Board's Strategic Plan for Program Years 2021 – 2024 at the end of the first two years of the four-year plan. The Board must review the plan and submit modifications to reflect changes in labor market and economic conditions, target occupations and in-demand industries, the financing available to support WIOA Title I and partner-provided services, strategies to meet local performance goals, and demonstrate alignment with the Texas Workforce System Strategic Plan Fiscal Years 2016–2023, as developed by the Texas Workforce Investment Council (TWIC). The plan was reviewed prior to the meeting by Board members and suggestions were submitted and added to the plan by the Board staff. Ms. Marshall asked the board if there was any other suggestions. Board Members did not have any questions or concerns. If approved, the next step is for the modified plan to be released for public comment beginning in January.

Motion: The Executive/Finance Committee recommended for approval of the modified Strategic Plan draft as presented.

Second: Robert Fitzpatrick

In Favor: All

Oppose: None

Abstain: None

Motion: Passes

b. Action Item 22-33 Choices/SNAP E&T ITA Policy

As mandated by TWC, the Board is required to issue policies regarding all programs administered by the Board. The Board policy is developed by staff in compliance with these statutes. Choices/TANF and SNAP E&T eligible participants interested in training will be enrolled in a high-growth, high-demand occupation. They will choose a training program that is listed on the statewide Eligible Training Provider List (ETPL). Individual Training Accounts (ITAs) will be utilized to fund the training. Training will be funded through the appropriate eligible grant Choices/TANF or SNAP E&T funds. The use of an ITA is not contingent upon co-enrollment or WIOA-funding for such training programs. The Board's policy was updated to reflect this guidance.

Motion: The Executive/Finance Committee recommended for approval of the Choices/SNAP E&T ITA Policy as presented.

Second: Joe Clyde Adams

In Favor: All

Oppose: None

Abstain: None
Motion: Passes

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

3. Discussion and Acceptance of Financial Reports

a. Financial Reports for September and October 2022

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

Misty Woodard provided financial updates for the months of September and October 2022. Ms. Woodard referenced the variance narrative for each month. The Board is under budget for personnel salaries/wages due to the Board currently having 16 Full Time Employees (FTE) but budgeted for 19 FTEs. The accountant position and the second Child Care Business Specialist positions have not been filled yet, and the Texas Rising Star Mentor position has been filled but the employee will not start working until January 2023. Ms. Woodard noted the \$411 expense for bond increase coverage due to the bond increasing from a one million dollar to a two million dollar bond. Ms. Woodard reviewed the Contracts Outstanding report, stating the SNAP E&T/ABAWD 1722 grant and the Non-Custodial Parent (NCP) 1722 grant were both closed at the end of November. The Board accepted the financial reports.

VIII. Adjourn

Kelli Marshall adjourned the meeting at 3:06 p.m.

Duly passed and approved on this 17 day of January 2023



Kelli Marshall, Chair

Attest



Lauren Phipps, Planning and Policy Specialist