



408 Washington Avenue, Suite 210, West Plains, Missouri 65775 ❖ Phone 417-257-2630 ❖ MO Relay 711

Board Meeting Minutes
1:00 p.m. Tuesday, January 23, 2024
Virtual Meeting by WebEx Due to Weather

Board members present: Becky Brooks, Chair; Steve Halter, Secretary; Sheila Barton as proxy for Dennis Lancaster, Treasurer; Lisa Aden, Diana Ball, Heather Boyd, Trent Courtney, Omar Gala, Ingrid McAllister, Nicole Reese, Jennifer Taylor, Robin Thomas, Aaron Wheeler and Joan Wright.

CLEO members present: The Honorable Jesse Roy, Ripley County; The Honorable Ralph Riggs, Howell County.

SCWIB staff in attendance: Jody James, Executive Director; Donna Smith, Fiscal Officer; Lisa Engelhardt, EO/Fiscal Specialist; Scott Davis, One Stop Operator; Leanna Eckhoff, Monitoring/Compliance.

Guests present: JoAnn Hughey, Job Corps.

Call to Order: Becky Brooks called the meeting to order.

Roll Call: Jody James completed roll call and it was established there was a quorum.

Approval of Minutes: Lisa Aden made a motion to approve the minutes as presented. Trent Courtney seconded the motion. Motion carried.

Meeting Your Members: Jody introduced Joan Wright as the Director of Adult Education and Literacy (AEL). Joan presented a PowerPoint presentation about the AEL program and their purpose in the communities. Joan emphasized the need for additional teachers in order to open classes in more areas. Teachers are required to have a bachelor's degree in any subject in order to facilitate classes. Time was given for questions to be answered about the AEL program.

Executive Director's Report: Jody informed members they would be hiring for the part time 20 hour a week position for the QUEST Grant. The new hire will be introduced at the April meeting. Jody informed members she is working on the Four Year Plan. Jody and Leanna Eckhoff are working together on updating and reviewing all policies. Becky and Jesse have signed a letter for Workforce Development that was forwarded to the Governor asking that our region be redesignated as a local workforce region with our 12 counties included. They will also be signing an updated letter regarding the SCWIB being the fiscal agent for WIOA funding.

Jody reported a Jobs League Audit that we had in Fall of 2022 reveals a disallowed cost of \$65.67 (\$55 Ozark Action, \$10 South Central Community Action Agency) from a payroll error, resulting in invoice inaccuracy to DSS. The \$65.67 was paid back in order to resolve that audit. Jody has been working with the Executive Committee and CLEO's about looking at ways to secure unrestricted funds to be kept in an interest-bearing account to cover costs that may arise like this in the future.

Plant closures were discussed, specifically Starting USA in Poplar Bluff which will lose 45 employees before 12/31/2024, if not sooner. Jody reminded members Scott Davis has stepped out of his role as Compliance and Monitoring and stepped into the role of One Stop Operator. This position is responsible for the daily activities and staff supervision of the Poplar Bluff and West Plains Job Centers. New staff have been hired for both locations. The onboarding and training have been extensive, but she is enthusiastic about the current staff.

Jody explained our current challenge with youth money is that we are not serving as many youth participants as we projected. We are working on securing a worker's compensation carrier in order to make changes. Jody invited Ingrid McAllister, Nicole Reese, and Heather Boyd to work with her in keeping the employee handbook current and updating new policies going forward.

Leanna discussed the WIOA Performance Report. She reported seeing an increase in enrollments, which is encouraged for WIOA program. Leanna's monitoring is going well. She confirmed there are no big issues. The minor things that Leanna has found are being taken care of quickly. Training justifications are going fantastic. Leanna said everything is going very well.

Scott provided WIOA Adult, Dislocated Worker, and Youth Program updates. Our main objective is to exhaust funding from previous year. He says we have spent the bulk of our time training the new staff at the Poplar Bluff and West Plains Centers. We have kept enrolling participants and kept centers open during that process. We have worked to get back local classroom training providers who have not been used in a while. Scott mentioned bringing back WIOA funding to students at Southern Missouri Technical Institute and Texas County Technical Institute. He is training staff to look at all eligibility instead of just the first thing they find to enroll. Scott is looking to match potentials trainees to the OJT employers. He is hoping to get work experience rolling as well. We have a long way to go on the budget. The most pressure will be on the youth program. The Youth Committee has provided a lot of ideas to increase enrollment and encouraged braiding services. Numbers are improving. There have been 9 Adult enrollments, 1 Dislocated Worker, and 2 Youth in just the first few weeks of January. He is hopeful and enthusiastic we will get back to where we need to be.

Donna and Lisa presented the financial report. We are still operating on carry over money. Adult PY22 is expended 100%. Donna has high hopes we will not have to return any money this year. Youth is the problem area with 100% carry over money that was available in the beginning of this year. There is \$214,000 left on books for Youth. With 6.26% on Work Experience, however it needs to be 20% by the end of the year (last year it was 13-14% and we returned \$118,000). Donna suggested Worker's Comp needs to be ironed out in order to enroll youth.

Becky presented the One Stop Committee report from the January 9, 2024 meeting. The committee discussed relocating the Poplar Bluff Job Center due to problems with little to no confidentiality with participants and issues with signage. The community is often unaware of the current location. Jody was instructed to start looking at other options and locations. The board was reminded that state staff are expected to be back in facility in January 2026.

Joan presented the Youth Committee report from the January 23, 2024 meeting. The SCWIB has hired three new staff in West Plains and three new staff in Poplar Bluff. The meeting was a short meeting but effective with goals set and mentioning going out to the high schools for recruitment.

Robin presented the Inclusion Committee report from the January 23, 2024 meeting. Robin introduced the new committee members. They discussed a new list of resources becoming available that will provide information to Job Centers for many topics. Providers include: Mental Health, Transportation, Individuals with Disabilities, Employers, Education, Legal, and Senior Citizens.

Becky presented the Executive Committee report from the January 9, 2024 meeting. The committee discussion centered around development of an employee handbook and uniform procedures for new hires and benefit packets. The committee also discussed next steps for the Request for Proposal process. The Executive Committee agrees that going forward, if in favor of the board, keeping these programs in house will be beneficial to providing the best services to customers. It is a bonus that we know our communities, we know our partners, and we learn new resources daily.

Jody informed members she is providing updates to the Office of Workforce Development. The Director, Julie Carter, has approved allowing the WIB to temporarily operate programs. Julie stated the key to successful programs in-house is a strong One Stop Operator. Jody asked the board to discuss the Executive Committees recommendation to have to the WIB operate programs. After discussing the matter, Trent made a motion that the South Central Workforce Investment Board continue to be the One Stop Operator and provide WIOA services for Adult, Youth, and Dislocated Workers at West Plains and Poplar Bluff Job Centers. Lisa seconded the motion. The motion passed.

State Workforce Board Update: Garland Barton will be invited to the April meeting.

As there was no further business Diana made a motion to adjourn. Trent seconded the motion and the meeting adjourned.

**Next meeting WIB Tuesday, April 23rd, 2024 at 1:00 p.m. at
Twin Pines Conservation Center - Winona**

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