

MINUTES
EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE
WORKFORCE INVESTMENT BOARD
March 13, 2001

Chairman Bill Fisher called to order a meeting of the Executive Committee, Arkansas Workforce Investment Board at 9:00 a.m. on Tuesday, March 13, through teleconference originating from the Board Office, 320 Executive Court, Suite 302, Little Rock. Members participating included Joe Dillard, Bill Fisher, Alan Hughes, Gloria Lynn, Kathy Matlock, Karen McFarren, Helen Moore, Bill Sutton, Joe Warren, and Campbell Wilkerson. Members unable to attend included Robert Drechsler, Larry Featherstone, Steve Franks, and Jodie Mahony.

Minutes: The minutes of the February 13 Executive Committee meeting were approved on motion made by Mr. Bill Sutton, seconded by Mrs. Karen McFarren, and carried unanimously.

Report of Executive Director: Dr. Beene began her report by announcing that the person offered the position of Monitor that Kay McVey had previously occupied would start working in the office on March 26. The chosen applicant is Elroy Willoughby, currently employed with the Public Service Commission, with a strong background and experience in working with youth. Dr. Beene announced that the 57-page Request for Proposal (RFP) for marketing and outreach was released on March 12 and proposals are due by 2:00p.m. on March 26 with review completed by March 30. She said the financial information was removed from the document as requested by the Executive Committee. Dr. Beene said plans were being made for a One-Stop conference to be held on May 1-2, 2001 at the Riverfront Hilton in North Little Rock with a targeted audience of local board staff and program providers. Dr. Beene said a business-oriented conference is planned for the fall. She mentioned that there would be out-of-state presenters and Governor Huckabee will be asked to speak. Other presenters would include state-level partners. Most of the conference will involve breakout sessions, with only two plenary sessions scheduled. Chairman Fisher asked that the staff distribute the tentative agenda to the Board as soon as it is complete.

Dr. Beene said she encouraged the partners to participate in the Out-of-State One-Stop visits that were scheduled because it helps give the vision for what Arkansas hopes to accomplish. She said she stressed at the Adult Education Conference where Campbell Wilkerson spoke that participation in the trips would enhance the partners' involvement in the One-Stop Centers. A group had just returned from Missouri, and a trip is scheduled for April 2 to Racine, Wisconsin with two-year college Presidents and Chancellors as well as the rescheduled trip to South Carolina and Georgia on April 11-13. She asked that if anyone has ideas for other locations to please let her know. Mayor Joe Dillard said the trip to Joplin, Missouri was very worthwhile.

Dr. Beene stated that the staff is concerned with the reduction in Workforce Investment Act funding for the Program Year beginning July 1. She said there was a 42.6% reduction in Dislocated Worker funds beginning July 1 which is significant compared to the Adult and Youth funds, which have hold harmless provisions. She said Bryan Hicks, Employment Security Department, did an excellent job exploring the options Arkansas could pursue for recovering some of those funds. One of those options is to apply to the U.S. Department of Labor for emergency fund grants. Mr. Hicks explained there were both strengths and potential weaknesses for Arkansas in requesting this money.

The factors in favor of Arkansas receiving the money include:

- Arkansas had the second largest percentage loss for Dislocated Workers
- Arkansas had a huge increase in dislocated workers

The factors not in favor of Arkansas receiving the money include:

- The slow start in implementing WIA
- There are WIA funds left over to use
- There is \$2 million remaining from the NEG grant for the ice-storm that must be justified as money not able to use for the same purposes

Dr. Beene continued her Director's report by discussing the Legislative Session. She said after Representative Minton was convinced to pull his bill about the Workforce Investment Board, there has not been any other legislation targeted to the Board. She said Phil Price of the Legislative Council Staff brought to her attention House Bill 2527, which would restructure the Transitional Employment Board. Senate Bill 401, which dealt with the merging of Crowley's Ridge Technical Institute and East Arkansas Community College, did not receive the votes to get out of Committee.

Dr. Beene announced that research on the performance standards and measures was being done by Ron Stone, and an analysis comparing Arkansas to Mississippi, Kentucky, Tennessee, and other states in this DOL region would be presented to the Board at the April meeting. When the analysis is completed, it will be sent to the Board for review.

Dr. Beene concluded her Director's report by announcing the Arkansas Workforce Association training session scheduled for March 27 at the Capital Hotel in Little Rock. The topic is the development and implementation of a Memorandum of Understanding. She also said that the September Board meeting is being rescheduled for September 18 because of delay in agenda preparation caused by Labor Day holiday and conflict with the National Association of Workforce Board Chairs and Directors conference.

Report of Strategic Planning Committee: Chairman Fisher announced that Mr. Jim Smith, Chair of the Committee, was unable to participate in the teleconference and Dr. Beene would give the report of the Committee in his absence. Chairman Fisher focused the Committee on the report of the March 1 meeting that was included in the agenda materials. He said the Executive Committee received the list of Agency Director questions for advance review. Dr. Beene said the staff and the observers agreed that the meeting was very worthwhile with members being highly engaged for three hours. She said a lot of ground was covered and the questions that did not get answered will be submitted to the staff in writing by the Agency Directors. Dr. Beene reviewed some of the questions asked to the Agency Directors by the Committee and referred to the report concerning the answers to those questions. She said duplication was another concern stressed by the Committee and Dr. Ed Franklin, Association of Two-Year Colleges, emphasized how important it is to have the two-year colleges participate in the process. Dr. Beene mentioned that there is no state funding given in Arkansas to two-year colleges for non-credit training or instruction. Dr. Matlock said this would serve the needs of business and industry, but there is currently no legislation to change this. Chairman Fisher asked that this issue be placed on the next quarter's agenda as a discussion item and possibly have either Dr. Matlock or another representative of two-year colleges give a presentation concerning this issue. Mr. Wilkerson voiced his concern that the two-year colleges might be helped at the expense of the technical institutes, and he does not want that to happen. Chairman Fisher asked that the Committee continue to seek

answers provided by the state agencies. Dr. Beene said the next meeting of the Committee would be on March 15, and the agenda must include the hold harmless issue, which would delay the Committee in returning to the original task. (A copy of the Strategic Planning Report is carried as Attachment A to the permanent copy of these minutes.)

Distribution of \$500,000 to Local Areas for One-Stop Development: Chairman Fisher reminded the Committee that the issue of distributing \$500,000 set-aside for One-Stop Centers was introduced at February's meeting and the staff was charged with creating a recommendation for the distribution of those funds. Chairman Fisher called on Ron Stone to present the information about the staff recommendation for the distribution of these funds, and he referred the Executive Committee to the action item sheet in their agenda materials. He said the staff recommends that each area receive an equal distribution of \$50,000. He clarified that if the funds are distributed on April 1, 2001, then the local areas will have until June 30, 2003 to expend the funds. Mr. Stone also stated the four categories that the money must be used for. They are as follows:

1. Capital Improvements & Renovations
2. Office Furniture/Equipment
3. Personnel/Fringe
4. Resource Materials & Supplies

The limitation for these funds was that no WIA-defined administrative costs may be charged to these grant funds. Chairman Fisher asked how the report on the local partner contribution to One-Stop Centers related to this agenda item. Dr. Beene explained that at the February meeting the question of how much contribution each local area receives from their partners was raised during the discussion of the distribution of the \$500,000. She stated that the information provided in the agenda materials was the first attempt to gather that information. She said Mr. Murray received the information in many different formats and there was some clarification that needed to be done. Chairman Fisher asked Mr. Murray to do some more research on this item and develop a more detailed report over the next quarter and redistribute the information. Dr. Beene explained that some leaders in the national office of the U.S. Department of Labor question the fact that the WIA funds have not been spent as quickly as they thought. She said they requested a survey of each state's local areas which revealed some areas have a balance of WIA money in their accounts. However, she said in some cases this money cannot be used for One-Stop Centers. **Motion was made by Mayor Joe Dillard, seconded by Mr. Campbell Wilkerson, and carried unanimously to distribute an equal amount of \$50,000 to each local area for One-Stop development.** (A copy of the action item sheet on the Distribution of \$500,000 to Local Areas for One-Stop Development is carried as Attachment B to the permanent copy of these minutes.)

Report on American Customer Satisfaction Index (ACSI): Chairman Fisher focused the Committee on the information item sheet in their agenda materials titled Report on American Customer Satisfaction Index. He reminded the Committee that at February's meeting the Committee voted that the state would cover the ACSI licensing cost for the ten local areas. He said the remaining issue was whether to include three or six questions in the survey. He pointed out that there was only a difference of \$1,000 from three to six questions and an official response to a one-year agreement was to be expected soon. He asked if there was any objection to including six questions in the survey and there were none. Chairman Fisher then asked Mr. Stone and the staff to develop the extra questions and present them to the Board for consideration. (A copy of the information item sheet on the American Customer Satisfaction Index is carried as Attachment C to the permanent copy of these minutes.)

Report on Draft of State-Level Memorandum of Understanding (MOU): Chairman Fisher explained that the draft State-Level Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) document in the agenda materials was for review and information. He said Bryan Hicks of the Employment Security Department was present in Paul Murray's absence to answer any questions. Mr. Hicks stated that the Cost-Allocation Committee is composed of representatives of eight state agencies, and the draft was adapted for use by Arkansas from Pennsylvania and Missouri models. Chairman Fisher asked the Committee to continue work with the Department of Labor and to keep the Board updated.

Report on State Team One-Stop Visits: Chairman Fisher told the Committee they had a copy of the report on the Technical Assistance visits that were completed at the end of last year. He asked if there were any additional questions or comments. Board members complimented the staff on the report, saying it was very well prepared and presented. Dr. Beene apologized for the long turnaround time to get it published and stated that improvements have been made at the Centers since the report was created. She said this report will be updated and may even be used in the first annual report to the U.S. Department of Labor. Chairman asked if there was any follow up on the visits and Dr. Beene agreed that would be feasible.

Plan for Meeting Outside of Little Rock: Chairman Fisher reminded the Committee that they voted to hold two of their Executive Committee meetings in locations outside of Little Rock. The first was to be held in the late spring and the second in the fall. He said the staff recommended visiting the University of Arkansas in Monticello on May 8 and asked if there were any objections. With no objections, he asked Ms. Christina Miller to proceed with the arrangements to meet in Monticello on May 8.

Announcements: Chairman Fisher announced that in addition to the local board meetings posted in their agenda materials, Southwest would be meeting at 10:00 a.m. on March 15 at the Southern Arkansas University Tech One-Stop Center in Camden. Chairman Fisher said that the State Board Executive Committee would most likely hold a teleconference meeting at the end of March to accept the recommendation for the marketing and outreach contract. He said the next quarterly meeting would be April 10.

Adjourn: **Motion was made by Mr. Bill Sutton, seconded by Mr. Campbell Wilkerson, and carried unanimously to adjourn the meeting at 10:05 a.m.**

Bill Fisher, Chairman

Dr. Linda Beene, Executive Director

Minutes recorded by Christina Miller
Staff of Workforce Investment Board