

MINUTES  
EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE  
ARKANSAS WORKFORCE INVESTMENT BOARD  
SEPTEMBER 12, 2000

Chairman Bill Fisher called to order a regular meeting of the Executive Committee, Arkansas Workforce Investment Board at 9:00 a.m. on Tuesday, September 12, at the Arkansas Activities Association building, North Little Rock. Members present included Florine Tousant Bingham, Joe Dillard, Robert Drechsler, Larry Featherstone, Lisa Ferrell, Bill Fisher, Alan Hughes, Gloria Lynn, Kathy Matlock, Karen McFarren, Helen Moore, Bill Sutton and about 30 public representatives. Members unable to attend included Steve Franks, Jodie Mahony, and Campbell Wilkerson.

**Minutes: The minutes of the August 15 regular meeting of the Executive Committee were approved unanimously on motion made by Helen Moore and seconded by Joe Dillard.**

Report of Executive Director: Dr. Beene reported to the Committee that the staff had experienced a very busy month. She described the SkillsNet program and said a few of the Committee members are very excited about the idea of Arkansas' implementation of the program. She said the program addresses the need of a platform for the manufacturing industries to communicate with training providers. She added that a demonstration opportunity will be held on October 9 from 3:00 to 5:00 p.m. for the manufacturing business members of the Board and their Human Resource Managers. Mr. Drechsler added that SkillsNet is a good gauge to base proficiency of potential employees. Dr. Beene said that Sharon Shurr, Department of Labor-Dallas, held a Youth Council technical assistance session with the local boards. She described the Leadership Development workshops and how they promoted skill development and relationship building. Dr. Beene mentioned a financial procedures manual that Cindy Varner, Board staff, had created. Dr. Beene said she was approached by the Foundation for the Mid-South about co-sponsoring a series of six events in Eastern Arkansas in October and November for a discussion of the Workforce Investment Act. She said a Legislative Forum would be held later and hoped that Representative Ferrell would participate. Dr. Beene said she agreed to be the keynote speaker for these events, which would provide good public relations opportunities. Another item Dr. Beene discussed was the out-of-state One-Stop Center visits planned for the next couple of months. Four excursions were designed to help Arkansans learn from other states that are similar to Arkansas. She mentioned a handout about these visits and asked for those interested to contact the staff. Dr. Beene talked about her recent trip to Idaho for the National Governors' Association meeting of Workforce Chairs and Directors Conference, describing it as a good learning experience. She also attended the Idaho Workforce Investment Board meeting, which included performance standards and a JAG Program presentation on the agenda. (A copy of the Out-of-State One-Stop Visit profile is carried as Attachment A to the permanent copy of these minutes.)

Local Performance Standards for PY2001 and PY2002: Chairman Fisher explained that representatives of local areas were asked to review performance levels for the program years 2001 and 2002 before the August 15 meeting, and he said that no concerns were received. **The Local Performance Standards for PY2001 and PY2002 were approved on motion made by**

**Mr. Bill Sutton, seconded by Mr. Bob Drechsler, and carried unanimously.** (A copy of the Performance Standards for PY2001 and PY2002 are carried as Attachment B to the permanent copy of these minutes.)

Consideration of Transitional Approval for Ten Local Area Plans: Chairman Fisher stated that local area funding was approved through September 30, 2000, but additional federal approval now allows transitional approval to areas whose plans do not yet contain all the required criteria. Therefore, the recommendation is for transitional approval to all ten areas through December 31, 2000. Representative Lisa Ferrell asked for a timeline on when the local areas first received information about the Workforce Investment Act. She concluded from the dates provided that the local areas had known about the changes for over a year and still had no solid plans ready for approval. Dr. Beene reiterated that some plans had come in recently and could be in full compliance because there had been a lot of communication between the staff of the state board and the local areas. Dr. Beene said the Local Plan Review Committee would be involved in the process and follow the timeline provided. The Executive Committee would approve the plans in two separate groups, those that required governance restructuring and those that did not. The first group (plans without governance restructuring) would be approved at the November 14 meeting, while the second group would be approved at the December 12 meeting. Sharon Williams stated that the local areas are trying to respond the best they could, but there are other "hoops for them to jump through." She said the State Board and the Local Boards should be partners and work together. The Committee agreed that was good to hear. **After further discussion, the transitional approval for the ten local areas through December 31, 2000, was approved unanimously on motion made by Mayor Joe Dillard and seconded by Representative Lisa Ferrell.** (A copy of the Transitional Approval Plan for the Ten Local Areas is carried as Attachment C to the permanent copy of these minutes.)

Design of First Blueprint Document: Chairman Fisher reminded the Committee that they were eager to publish a user-friendly, easily-readable document which captured the current status of all resources devoted to workforce development and training in Arkansas as a foundation for their recommendation for systemic improvement. He said that with consultation from Dr. Ashvin Vibhakar, UALR, as well as advice from Phil Price, Legislative Council, Dr. Beene had designed a format for the first edition of the *Blueprint Document*. This format is intended to establish a foundation for change by creating awareness of current status with business and industry, job seekers, as well as state agency and legislative leadership. Dr. Beene explained that this document is an effort to move beyond WIA compliance. She said the idea was to use the October full board meeting as a retreat for the preparation of recommendations on workforce training and development in group sessions. Chairman Fisher stated the cost would be \$15,000 and the October meeting would deal primarily with the content of the document. **After more discussion, motion was made by Dr. Kathy Matlock, seconded by Mrs. Helen Moore, and carried unanimously to move forward with the *Blue Print Document*.**

Method of Administration (MOA) for Nondiscrimination in WIA Programs and Universal Access Statement: Chairman Fisher focused the Committee on beginning the process of reviewing the Method of Administration for assuring nondiscrimination under WIA. Dr. Beene explained that the materials were policy statements and there was nothing new in compliance with the law, that the memoranda were given new packaging for the Workforce Investment

Board. She said Mrs. Kay McVey, Board staff, and Attorney Michael Brustein, as well as representatives of local areas reviewed these documents and that this was a precursor to the book that was targeted to be ready by October 1 for review by the Board. Dr. Beene also recognized Ms. Albessie Thompson for her role in the Method of Administration and Universal Access Statement. **Motion was made by Mr. Alan Hughes, seconded by Mrs. Karen McFarren, and carried unanimously to adopt the memoranda and policy statements as presented in the agenda packet to be included in the MOA manual, which will be approved at a later date. They also approved in the same motion a Universal Access Statement as included in the agenda packet.** (A copy of the memoranda and policy statements to be included in the MOA book are carried as Attachment D to the permanent copy of these minutes. A copy of the Universal Access Statement Action Item Sheet is carried as Attachment E to the permanent copy of these minutes.)

Report on Program of Work: Chairman Fisher directed attention to a report on the Program of Work for the Workforce Investment Board. He said Vice-Chair Bingham is working with the staff on this effort and expects to present the current and immediate challenges and goals of the Board through this document. Mrs. Bingham said she has reviewed the document, and it was very thorough and task-oriented. She said she asked Dr. Beene and the staff to prioritize the tasks for the Board and present the report to the Committee at the next meeting.

Evaluation of Act 1125 of 1999: Chairman Fisher asked at the last Executive Committee meeting that members should suggest changes they believe should be made in Act 1125 of 1999 by the 2001 Legislature and that the suggestions be submitted to the Board staff. He reported that no such suggestions were received by the staff and invited Committee members to voice suggestions, if any, at this time. No suggestions were offered.

Presentation on JAG Program: Chairman Fisher explained that the Jobs for America's Graduates (JAG) Program is a nationwide dropout prevention, school-to-career, and dropout recovery program for at-risk and disadvantaged youth. He said the ultimate objective is to help the participant secure a quality job that leads to a personally satisfying career. Chairman Fisher introduced Ms. Teresa Dow, Department of Workforce Education and JAG Program Manager, who gave a presentation on the program. Ms. Dow distributed a newsletter and handout and gave a Power Point presentation on the JAG Program and its ten major components. She said there are 28 states involved in the program and Arkansas has been involved since 1985. She said the ten components of the program are: (1) An Oversight Board (2) Program Management (3) Program Staff (4) Participant Selection (5) Student Load (6) Career Association (7) Competency Attainment (8) Employer Marketing and Job Development (9) Follow-up Services and (10) A National Database Management System. Dr. Beene stated that the JAG Program is valuable to the local areas in serving youth. Ms. Dow explained that the program can offer more now than it had in the past and there are 81 competencies listed which are work-related. She said the competencies prepare youth to be successful in the workforce while incorporating reading and math skills. It also gives the needed follow-up for youth. She said the program is operated out of the Department of Workforce Education and is a "pick and operate" program. After more discussion, Chairman Fisher thanked Ms. Dow for the presentation and encouraged the Committee to suggest other presentations to the staff for meetings. Mr. Drechsler suggested the Community in Schools Program. Representative Ferrell presented a brochure entitled "Facing

Facts about Arkansas Education” which was published by the Arkansas Business and Education Alliance and gave the status of education in Arkansas.

Report on Client Tracking for Non-Duplication of Services: Chairman Fisher stated that at the last meeting a question was raised concerning non-duplication of services. Director Ed Rolle of Employment Security Department agreed to have a report for this meeting, which would track a client through the enrollment process of a One-Stop Center. He said the client profiles were included in the agenda packet and recognized Ms. Sharon Robinette to make the report in Director Rolle’s absence. Ms. Robinette introduced Ms. Rebecca Trammell, Office of Employment and Training Services, who gave the report. Ms. Trammell walked the Committee through one of the enrollment processes -- a 52 year-old client. She said the scenario was developed from an actual case but was embellished. She said there are three levels of services: core, intensive, and training. She mentioned that a client must have core services before being enrolled in intensive services and there is a federal time limit on intensive services. After the profile was presented, Ms. Trammell stated that the client received thirteen different services in one location, which incorporated four state agencies and two community-based agencies. She said there is the possibility of duplication in One-Stops, but if tracked properly and in the same location, no duplication of services will arise.

Report on Current Status of AWIS and Alternate Plan for Data Collection and Reporting: Chairman Fisher recognized Mr. Bill Searles who told the Committee he understands their low confidence. He said the following:

- That at the last meeting he stated the system would be running on August 28, and it was not. Since then he has made this project his number one priority and set aside most of his administrative duties in order to focus on the system.
- When the system underwent testing with multiple users there were five major problems detected.
- Phase I was very complicated but DIS did everything possible to correct the five problems.
- Phase I is being rebuilt with changes and he should have an update by the end of the day stating where Phase I stands.
- He expects Phase I to be up and running by Wednesday, September 13, and ready for data collection by Friday, September 15. Therefore, entire Phase I should be fully employed by Monday, September 18.
- Phase I and Phase II should be ready to go in October. He again stated that he understood the low level of confidence, but asked the Committee to bear with DIS because the system would regain their confidence when it works, which should be the end of the week or the beginning of next week.
- DIS is working on a back-up plan as well, but it is very extensive and will take some time.
- If the Board decided to go with a third resource and purchase a system “off-the-shelf,” DIS would expand their resources to help but he did not believe a system in Arkansas could be found that would meet all the Board’s needs. However, if the Committee waits a little longer, it would see the system work.
- There were some developmental questions that needed answered about Phase II, but those were not slowing the development of Phase I.

- He was now personally working on this system as project leader.

After discussion, Dr. Beene stated that her greatest concern about an interim system is the fact that the local areas will have to manually enter the data twice. Mr. Searles explained it would not be easy to transfer data from an Access or Excel program into the AWIS system; the data would have to be entered twice. Mr. Drechsler asked if any of the local areas had been exposed to the system, and the answer was “yes.” He said if the architecture is altered, it will delay the process and the Board is not in a position to change the process now. Dr. Beene also mentioned that Mr. Searles released paper forms for the data collection to the local areas, which standardized the data. She said Phase I was designed by state and local experts to meet the requirements for the Workforce Investment Act. It was also stated that the Board had not paid any money yet for the system. The \$1.9 million was appropriated but will not be paid until the system works. Mr. Searles stated that DIS has a very strong interest in seeing this system complete, and he has never had a project fail. Chairman Fisher thanked him for the report.

Chairman Fisher recognized Representative Lisa Ferrell who expressed concern in several areas that reflect a difference in understanding of the Workforce Investment Act of 1998 on the part of the Legislature and the public. When Representative Ferrell offered a motion, Chairman Fisher asked that a specific motion be presented on each area of concern. **Motion was made by Representative Ferrell, seconded by Mrs. Moore, and carried unanimously to send a letter to legislators, which gives a reader-friendly version of the Workforce Investment Act and the names and addresses of all the local board and state board members.**

Chairman Fisher also asked for a motion to direct the staff to work with Mr. Ron Russell, State Chamber of Commerce, on a newsletter to send to all local area chambers of commerce after a suggestion by Mr. Bill Sutton. **This motion was made by Mrs. Bingham, seconded by Mrs. Moore, and carried unanimously.**

Discussion generated concerning Representative Ferrell’s motion about meeting outside of Little Rock led to the amendment of the motion. The motion was changed to state that at the November Executive Committee meeting, the staff would present a plan including meeting sites for four Executive Committee meetings outside Little Rock within the next year. **Motion was made by Representative Ferrell, seconded by Mr. Drechsler, and carried unanimously.**

The discussion about the calendar of local board meetings revealed that the meetings were already being posted on the Board’s website on a regular basis as well as the State Chamber’s website. **Representative Lisa Ferrell amended her motion to have the local areas continue to update the website of their local board meetings, which was seconded by Mr. Alan Hughes, and carried unanimously.**

Much discussion was made concerning contracting with an outreach provider for information purposes. Representative Ferrell agreed that the Board needs more of a product before it starts selling, but until then the Board needs to entice involvement and get the message out to the public about the Workforce Investment Act. **Chairman Fisher suggested that Dr. Beene discuss with Cabinet members the future contract of public relations services and report**

**back to the Committee at the November meeting. Members of the Committee expressed approval of this idea.**

Announcements: Chairman Fisher asked the Committee to sign TR-1s. Mayor Dillard and Chairman Fisher expressed thanks to local boards for the partnership that exists between state and local boards. He said he hoped the transitional funding approval through December 31 is a good example of assistance the state board provides to local boards. Chairman Fisher stated the next meeting will be a regular quarterly meeting of the full board and will be held at the Jacksonville Community Center.

Adjournment: **The meeting was adjourned at approximately 11:35 a.m. on motion made by Mr. Drechsler, seconded by Mayor Dillard, and carried unanimously.**

Bill Fisher, Chairman

Linda Beene, Executive Director

Minutes recorded by Christina Miller  
Staff of Workforce Investment Board