

MINUTES
MEETING OF WORKFORCE INVESTMENT BOARD
October 12, 1999

The second quarterly meeting of the Arkansas Workforce Investment Board (AWIB) was held on October 12, 1999, beginning at 9:00 a.m. at the State Cooperative Extension Service Building, Little Rock. Chairman Bill Fisher presided.

Members present were: Marguerite Abowitz, Al Ashcraft, Florine Tousant Bingham, Candis Collins, Charles Cunningham, Mayor Joe Dillard, Robert Drechsler, Representative Lisa Ferrell, Don G. Finley, Bill Fisher, Dr. Steve Franks, Lu Hardin, Dr. James Hendren, Diana Hueter, Judge Phillip Jackson, Dr. Calvin Johnson, Russell R. Kennedy, Kurt Knickrehm, Chris Long, Gloria Lynn, Dr. Kathy Matlock, Karen McFarren, Helen Moore, Trevor Myers, Ed Rolle, Jim Smith, Jack Smurl, Bill Sutton, Joe Warren, Campbell Wilkerson, Sharon Williams, Barbara Wood, John Wyvil.

Members who were unable to attend included: Larry D. Featherstone, Randy Hopper, Governor Mike Huckabee, Alan Hughes, Senator Jodie Mahony, Barbara Pardue, Butch Pike, James Putlak, Patricia Sinnott.

Recognitions: Chairman Fisher introduced Dr. Ed Franklin, Director of Arkansas Association of Two-Year Colleges, who spoke briefly on the role two-year colleges are playing in workforce training in the nation and state. He said that the Task Force on Non-Baccalaureate Post-Secondary Education is working now to provide techniques for avoiding duplication of programs. He disseminated copies of a brochure, "Will Arkansas Workers Be Ready for the 21st Century," that is available from AATYC, 114 East Capitol, Little Rock, Arkansas 72201.

Chairman Fisher also introduced Ron Russell, President and CEO, Arkansas State Chamber of Commerce and Associated Industries of Arkansas, who described the mission of his organization as "continuing to enhance the business community in Arkansas." He described the need for training and re-training of the State's workforce as the greatest challenge that is currently facing business. He said that his organization has engaged in hours of work with political leaders, educators, and others and has drawn some broad conclusions: (1) Products of Grades K through 12 vary from brilliant to mediocre but generally they do not have basic skills to make them trainable by industry. (2) Two-year colleges and technical schools are being studied by a task force to determine whether possible mergers can be made of vocational-technical schools and two-year colleges located in the same geographic areas. He emphasized that there are some very tough decisions related to such questions but that the State's interest in the global economy is at stake. He said that his organization statewide stands ready to work with the State Board and local boards in every possible way.

Minutes, Meeting of September 28, 1999: On motion made by Mayor Dillard, seconded by Dr. Matlock, and carried unanimously minutes of the Executive Committee meeting of September 28, 1999, were approved as mailed in advance to Board members.

Quarterly Report of Executive Director: Dr. Linda Beene submitted a written report and commented on acquiring staff, developing an agency budget, seeking permanent office space, providing leadership to county judges and mayors of first-class cities as they endeavor to nominate local workforce boards. A written report outlined a list of presentations/meetings in which she has been involved in the past quarter. She introduced two new staff members: Paul Murray who started work on October 4 as Deputy Director and Judith Walding who will start work on October 18 as Administrative Assistant.

Committee Reports: Dr. James Hendren reported on the progress made by the Program Performance and Evaluation Committee at its meeting of September 27. He said that the committee members, as they attempted to refine the Committee's role, had help from Attorney Michael Brustein of Washington, D. C. and Michelle Driscoll of the United States Department of Labor, Dallas. He said they made progress in identifying long- and short-term goals and by brainstorming made a list of items to be accomplished, including development of performance measures and standards.

In the absence of Chairman Randy Hopper, Vice-Chairman Jim Smith of the Strategic Planning Committee reported on the Committee's meeting of September 27. He said that the committee made significant progress in developing a vision statement and a long-term mission statement and received good information from Director Barbara Pardue of the Economic Development Department on the State's economic development targets and strategies. He said that Chairman Fisher and Attorney Michael Brustein worked with the group on several items, especially the deadline of January 31, 2000, related to completing a draft of the unified state plan for beginning a public review period.

In connection with committee reports, a discussion ensued on the characteristics of a unified state plan in contrast to separate state plans. Deputy Director Paul Murray said that guidelines for unified state plan development became available from the United States Department of Labor just last week--more than thirty pages in the Federal Register. Mr. Murray said that the unified plan will facilitate elimination of duplication of effort, services, and programs; improve strategic and long-range planning; promote integration of technology; should provide opportunity for more efficient use of state/federal funds.

Dr. Beene mentioned that the State is required to maintain a list of appropriate and qualified training providers and that the Executive Committee designated the Employment Security Department as the agency responsible for maintaining the list under provisions of Section 122(i) of the Federal Workforce Investment Act of 1998. She indicated that the list would include all types of public training providers as well as about 150 licensed private providers of workforce training.

Chairman Fisher reported that the Executive Committee, at its meeting of August 10, agreed that secondary workforce training programs should be made a part of the State's unified plan, asking the State Board of Workforce Education and Career Opportunities (SBWECO) to concur in the decision as required by Act 1125 of 1999. He said that the WECO Board took action to concur at its meeting of August 12, and that Director Steve Franks provided a certification of concurrence, which is carried as Appendix A to the permanent copy of these minutes.

Agency Budget, 1999-2000: Director Beene stated that the budget was approved for appropriated categories of funding on September 28 by the Board's Executive Committee. She made budget copies available to Board members and commented on various items. The document also included expenditures for the first quarter.

Designation of Geographic Areas of the State to Serve as Workforce Investment Areas: Dr. Beene indicated that Board members have been provided a list of counties comprising ten geographic areas that the Board's Executive Committee recommended to Governor Huckabee following its meeting of September 28. She said that the Governor issued a proclamation on September 30 through which he designated the same ten geographic areas as local workforce investment board areas. (A copy of the Governor's proclamation is carried as Appendix B to the permanent copy of these minutes.)

Criteria for Use by Chief Elected Officials in Local Workforce Investment Board Appointments: Chairman Fisher reported to the Board that the criteria were on public review from August 29 until September 28 when the Executive Committee held a public hearing and approved the criteria. He said that the Executive Committee established a deadline of November 12 for local workforce investment board nominations to be submitted to Dr. Beene and that CEOs have been notified of the deadline. He said that Dr. Beene and her staff will review the nomination lists, share the appropriate lists with Board members for possible input, negotiate with CEOs if necessary, and make the lists available for consideration by the Board at its December meeting. Dr. Beene said that the lists could then be submitted to the Governor who must certify appointments by January 15, 2000.

Ratification of Actions of Executive Committee: Chairman Fisher asked members to review a list of Executive Committee actions for which ratification is requested. Motion was made by Mr. Hendren and seconded by Mr. Knickrehm and carried unanimously for ratification of Executive Committee action on the following:

- # Board will develop a unified plan
- # Designation of Employment Security Department under provisions of Section 122(i) to maintain the State's official list of training providers for which vouchers may be used to cover training costs
- # Concurrence by State Board of Workforce Education and Career Opportunities to include secondary vocational education programs in the unified plan

- # Agency Budget
- # Recommendations to Governor for Designation for Geographic Areas for Local Workforce Investment Boards
- # Recommendation to Governor of Criteria for Use by Chief Elected Officials in Appointing Local Boards and Deadlines for Submission

Report on Study of Realignment of Training Programs to Match Employment Needs of State: Dr. Beene called attention to a list of 48 programs that exist in Arkansas today, stating that alignment/realignment of training programs will be a Board responsibility continuously. She said a tally of funding resources listed on the report totals approximately \$400,000,000--a total of \$285,000,000 plus another \$119,000,000 for programs offered by two-year colleges. Resources for some programs are yet to be discovered. A discussion was held about vouchering and availability of funds for 2000-2001. Chairman Fisher, Dr. Franks, and others agreed that little, if any, additional monies would be available during the first year of operation by workforce investment boards; rather, their task would be to redirect existing resources. Director Rolle of Employment Security Department said that he was prepared to make a presentation to the Board regarding labor market information maintained by his Department.

Consideration of Funding Issues for Green Thumb Program: Barbara Wood, Regional Director of Green Thumb, Inc. and a member of AWIB, made a presentation on the scope of programs and funding status of Green Thumb. Mr. Fisher stated that this agenda item was an informational item with no action anticipated. Mrs. Wood said that 12.7% of Americans and 16% of Arkansans are at least 65 years old, that 17% of Arkansas seniors live below the poverty level. She said that seniors face four real problems in seeking training and employment: perception of age discrimination, slow to go to one-stops, problems with technology, and lack of transportation. She said that JTPA set-aside funds have been of great help to seniors but that mainstreaming will not be as satisfactory. She presented Claudia Griffin of her staff who reported for a Green Thumb task force that has studied state/federal WIB legislation. Ms. Griffin disseminated a hand-out entitled "Information on State Set-Aside for Older Workers under WIA." It contained the statement "The Act allows for state money to be set aside for an Older Worker program," and carried six citations in the Federal Workforce Investment Act of 1998 as indications that set-asides for older workers are appropriate. She said that training for older workers should be included in the unified plan.

Chairman Fisher said that there are four other entities in Arkansas that provide funds for training/employment of seniors and that each of the four will be invited to present written information to be made available to Board members.

Apprenticeship Training: In response to a previous request from a member of the Executive Committee, this item was included on the agenda. Don Havens of the Department of Workforce Education was unable to attend, but Lee Danner, Apprenticeship Training Representative of the Bureau of Apprenticeship and Training, United States Department of Labor, made the presentation. He introduced Ken Lamkin, Director, Bureau of Apprenticeship and Training in Arkansas. Mr. Danner and Dr. Steve Franks, Director, Department of Workforce Education, agreed that Arkansas ranks high in the nation in the number and quality of programs and enrolled apprentices. Mr. Danner said that the tremendous expansion of apprenticeship training in the State for both union and non-union employers, especially in the electrical, plumbing, and construction trades, has been due in large part to Act 10 of 1991 and subsequent state legislation related to apprenticeship.

Amendments to Bylaws: Chairman Fisher disseminated the contents of an amendment approved by the Executive Committee on August 10, 1999, asking the Board to ratify the action of deleting the final sentence under Article I, Appointments, Section 2, and inserting the following: "When a board member's category changes and the majority of the Board membership remains 51% in business/industry categories, such member may continue to serve on the Board; however, if that member's category change causes the business/industry majority to drop below 51%, she/he will be expected to resign from the Board; furthermore, for a member who singularly represents a statutory category and moves from eligible representation of that category, membership will automatically terminate." The Board ratified the bylaws change on motion made by Mr. Sutton, seconded by Ms. Moore, and carried unanimously.

Chairman Fisher presented bylaws changes that were approved by the Executive Committee on September 28 for recommendation to the Board. He stated that a two-thirds affirmative vote would be required to adopt this recommendation. The bylaws changes were: Under Article V, Section 3, insert at the appropriate places the following:

- (4) Designation of local workforce investment areas;
- (17) Use of federal, state or private funds, donations, and grants made available for the development of the Arkansas Workforce Development Plan

and

Under Article V, Section 4, insert the following:

- (8) Development of a statewide employment statistics system as described in Section 15(e) of the Wagner-Peyser Act;
- (10) Recommendation of the program identified in Section 7(b)(8)(A) which may be consolidated or realigned.

- (13) Evaluation of the entire Arkansas workforce investment system, including but not limited to the education system, the Career Development system, and the youth programs, to determine if it is meeting the goals of the Arkansas Workforce Investment Act.

Ms. Moore moved the adoption of the recommended changes. The motion was seconded by Mrs. Bingham, and carried unanimously.

Adjournment: The meeting was adjourned at 10:55 a.m. on motion made by Campbell Wilkerson, seconded by Dr. Calvin Johnson, and carried unanimously.

Bill Fisher, Chair

Linda L. Beene, Director

Appendixes A and B added to permanent copy of minutes

Minutes recorded by Geneva Guthrie
Staff of Workforce Investment Board