

MINUTES  
MEETING OF WORKFORCE INVESTMENT BOARD  
January 26, 2000

A regular quarterly meeting of the Arkansas Workforce Investment Board (AWIB) was held on January 26, 2000, beginning at 9:00 a.m. at Embassy Suites Hotel, Little Rock. Chairman Bill Fisher presided.

Members present were Marguerite Abowitz, Al Ashcraft, Florine Bingham, Candis Collins, Joe Dillard, Robert Drechsler, Lisa Ferrell, Don Finley, Bill Fisher, Steve Franks, Lu Hardin, James Hendren, Randy Hopper, Mike Huckabee, Diana Hueter, Alan Hughes, Phillip Jackson, Russell Kennedy, Kurt Knickrehm, Chris Long, Gloria Lynn, Jodie Mahony, Karen McFarren, Helen Moore, Barbara Pardue, Ed Rolle, Jim Smith, Jack Smurl, Bill Sutton, Joe Warren, Campbell Wilkerson, Sharon Williams, Barbara Wood, and John Wyvil.

Members who were unable to attend included Charles Cunningham, Larry D. Featherstone, Calvin Johnson, Kathy Matlock, Trevor Myers, Butch Pike, and James Putlak.

Minutes: Minutes of the special Board meeting of January 11 were approved on motion made by Mr. Bill Sutton, seconded by Ms. Florine Bingham, and carried unanimously.

Ratification of Actions of Executive Committee: On motion made by Ms. Barbara Pardue, seconded, and carried unanimously the Board ratified Executive Committee actions on the following items: vision statement; mission statement; policy of using standard formula for in-state allocation for WIA Title I funds for adult activities; policy on use of "Hold Harmless" provision for first year of funding for WIA Title I Adult activities; policy of using performance indicators in development of youth plan and unified plan; use of performance indicators in addition to those specified by law including demographics of all one-stop participants, cost per "Registered" and "registered" customer, expansion of the employer customer base, efforts to achieve a "livable wage," and percentage of job openings filled by one-stop customers; approval of the state's youth plan for transmittal by the Governor to the United States Department of Labor; policy of requiring local WIBs to include a school superintendent on each local board.

Report of Executive Director: Dr. Linda Beene summarized a written report of Board/staff activities during October – December 1999. (A copy of the report had been provided to each Board member.) Dr. Beene covered progress made on state/local plans, nominations and certification of local workforce investment boards, staffing, office space, and outlined major activities expected for the next quarterly period.

Amendment to Bylaws: Chairman Fisher read a proposed amendment to Board bylaws as follows: To amend Article V, Section 2, last paragraph to read "The full Board with a two-thirds (2/3) vote may recommend to the Governor termination of the staff executive director." (A copy had been faxed to each Board member seven days in advance of this meeting.)

Motion for adoption of the amendment was made by Ms. Karen McFarren and seconded by Ms. Helen Moore. Mr. Fisher invited discussion, indicating that fifteen minutes each would be allowed for positive and negative comments. Governor Huckabee spoke in support of the proposed amendment, emphasizing that the Governor is held accountable by the public for the success of enhanced workforce training under WIB. He reminded that the proposed change would leave Article V, Section 2, last paragraph, with the same wording that was in place when the Board originally considered the bylaws on July 13, 1999. Senator Jodie Mahony spoke in opposition to the motion. Comments were made by other Board members on both sides of the proposal. Director Luther Hardin called for the question. Chairman Fisher stated that 28 positive votes would be necessary to pass the motion (the bylaws requiring 2/3 vote of 41 members). He called for the question, asking for a show of hands, and later called the roll for votes. A total of 28 members voted FOR the motion, three voted AGAINST, and two ABSTAINED. The Chair declared that the motion had carried.

Release of Draft for Public Review of Unified Plan: Chairman Fisher reminded Board members that concepts of plan development had been explained to them by Dr. Linda Beene at the Board retreat on January 11, that the state e-mailed or otherwise sent disks or paper copies of the draft plan to Board members on January 14, inviting comments by January 21. (In this connection Representative Ferrell asked that hard copies of drafts be provided in the future.) Chairman Fisher asked Dr. Beene to present major improvements that have been made in the plan draft since January 11. Dr. Beene made her presentation from a 20-page document entitled “Major Improvements to the 1/14/2000 Preliminary Draft of the Unified State Plan.” Each Board member had available a copy of the document which she/he followed during Dr. Beene’s presentation.

Chairman Fisher asked members to note their comments/suggestions on the document and to submit them to the staff at the close of the meeting. Several members (Representative Lisa Ferrell, Mr. John Wyvil, and Mr. Campbell Wilkerson in particular) expressed a need for an “executive summary” of the plan that would condense and present clearly major items covered by the unified plan. They expressed the belief that the summary would be more meaningful to public reviewers than a compliance document. Other members (Senator Mahony and Mr. Chris Long in particular) expressed a need for a document that would be prepared even after the unified plan has been submitted to provide specifics as to how the Board vision/mission would be attained. Representative Ferrell suggested that state agencies assist the WIB staff by paying for services of writers from the University of Arkansas at Little Rock or elsewhere to assist in preparing the executive summary and an expansion of the federal compliance document. She mentioned a recent report by the State Workforce Commission as an example of the type publication she had in mind—emphasizing that she is more interested in content than form.

Senator Mahony expressed a strong belief that community colleges and other two-year training institutions have very major roles to fulfill in the work of local workforce investment boards. After discussion a motion was made by Director Luther Hardin and seconded by Ms. Florine Bingham that at least one member of each local board will represent a two-year institution—

community college, technical institute, or technical college. The motion carried unanimously.

Motion was made by Representative Lisa Ferrell that the Board staff be charged with the responsibility of working out an arrangement with other state agencies to find personnel who will work with UALR or another source to get the Board staff some writing assistance within the next ten days so that an executive summary can be written. The motion was seconded and carried without opposing vote.

After much discussion about the date on which the draft plan will be placed on public review, motion was made by Mr. John Wyvil and seconded to place the plan on public review in draft form and follow with an executive summary later. Judge Phillip Jackson moved to amend the motion to provide for the Board to wait until February 8 to place the draft on public review, at that time including an executive summary. The amended motion was seconded and passed unanimously.

Dr. Beene discussed briefly possible plans for holding public hearing(s). She said that some Board members have suggested that one hearing should be transmitted electronically. Representative Ferrell said that she believes at least one State Board member should be located at each transmission site if electronic transmission is used.

Concern was expressed by Mayor Joe Dillard, Judge Phillip Jackson, and others relative to a statement near the center of page 10 of the document Dr. Beene used for comments. The statement reads: “In a case in which a local workforce investment area includes more than one unit of general local government, the chief elected officials of such units will execute an agreement that specifies the respective roles of the individual chief elected officials and **designate one chief elected official to act as the lead elected official for the local area who will serve as grant recipient for the local area, responsible for maintaining the integrity of the allocated funds.**” Both Mayor Dillard and Judge Jackson said that they question whether ONE elected official would be willing to carry responsibility as grant recipient.

Mr. Campbell Wilkerson commented that “Challenges” and “statewide Goals” as carried on pages 2 and 3 of the “Major Improvements Document” place great emphasis on the need for high-tech training. Mrs. Barbara Wood said that undue emphasis on high-tech training might be a problem for training of older workers. Both said they hope that the Board will not lose sight of the need for other types of training. Dr. James Hendren responded that it is his impression that the Board places high-tech training as a priority but not to the exclusion of other training.

Senator Jodie Mahony mentioned his concern for including the items from a recent report of the Workforce Development Commission in the plan, and Dr. Beene responded that the staff is very aware of this need but that this piece has not been addressed yet. She added that a very far-reaching plan is envisioned—one that will supplement and expand the compliance document that will be submitted to the Department of Labor by April 1. Dr. Hendren volunteered that the committee he chairs (Program Performance and Evaluation) has always viewed the development of a plan of vision as a major goal of the Board.

Arkansas Workforce Investment Board, Council Resolution Number 2000-1. Chairman Fisher said that a copy of this proposed Resolution has been placed at each member's chair. He said that the Board must enact the Resolution in order for per diem and expenses to be paid to Board members during the year 2000, including the January 11 meeting. The Resolution was adopted on motion offered by Director Luther Hardin, seconded by Dr. James Hendren, and carried unanimously. (A copy of the Resolution is carried as Appendix A to the permanent copy of these minutes.)

Report of Nominating Committee: Chairman Fisher asked Mrs. Diana Hueter to report for the nominating committee which he appointed on December 14 (including Mrs. Hueter, Mr. Bill Sutton, and Dr. Calvin Johnson). The nominating committee was charged with presenting to the full Board on January 26 a slate of members for a permanent executive committee. Director Beene displayed on a flip chart the statutory categories required for representation on the Executive Committee along with persons who are nominated for the permanent executive committee. The nominations included: Labor (2), Ms. Gloria Lynn and Mr. Alan Hughes; General Assembly (2), Senator Jodie Mahony and Representative Lisa Ferrell; Community College (1), Dr. Kathy Matlock; Chief Elected Official (1), Mayor Joe Dillard; Chair, Vice Chair of Board, Mr. Bill Fisher and Mrs. Florine Bingham; Agency Director, Dr. Steve Franks; Representatives of Business and Industry, who with the Chair and Vice-Chair total a majority of 8—Mr. Robert Drechsler, Mr. Larry Featherstone, Mr. Karen McFarren, Mrs. Helen Moore, Mr. Campbell Wilkerson, and Mr. Bill Sutton. Mrs. Hueter said that the nomination of an agency director to serve on the permanent executive committee is new and that the nomination of Mr. Bill Sutton is done to provide representation from Northwest Arkansas as well as a clear majority of representatives of business/industry. There were no nominations from the floor.

Motion for acceptance of the recommendations of the nominating committee was made by Ms. Sharon Williams. The motion, seconded by Ms. Gloria Lynn, carried unanimously.

Announcement: Chairman Fisher asked members to submit TR-1s for this meeting to a staff member and for Board members who have not been photographed for a Board directory to have photographs done immediately following this meeting. He reminded members of the next meeting of the Executive Committee that is to be held on February 8 at 9:00 a.m. Dr. Beene announced that a meeting of the Governor's Technology Initiative group, scheduled for tomorrow, has been postponed for a week due to inclement weather.

Adjournment: On motion made by Mr. Campbell Wilkerson and seconded by Ms. Karen McFarren, Chairman Fisher adjourned the meeting at approximately 11:35 a.m.

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Bill Fisher, Chairman

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Linda Beene, Executive Director