

MINUTES
EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE
ARKANSAS WORKFORCE INVESTMENT BOARD
NOVEMBER 14, 2000

Chairman Bill Fisher called to order a meeting of the Arkansas Workforce Investment Board Executive Committee at 9:00 a.m. on Tuesday, November 14, 2000, at the Arkansas Activities Association building in North Little Rock. Members present included Florine Tousant Bingham, Robert Drechsler, Larry Featherstone, Bill Fisher, Garland Hankins for Steve Franks, Kathy Matlock, Karen McFarren, Helen Moore, Bill Sutton, and approximately 25 public representatives. Members unable to attend included Joe Dillard, Lisa Ferrell, Alan Hughes, Gloria Lynn, Jodie Mahony, and Campbell Wilkerson.

Chairman Fisher welcomed and introduced Rebekah Lee from the Governor's Office, Carl Bane, Assistant Director of Employment Assistance with ESD, and Linda Birtcher, Administrator of the Governor's Dislocated Worker Task Force.

Minutes: The minutes of the October 10 regular quarterly meeting of the full board were unanimously approved as included in the agenda packet on motion made by Mr. Bill Sutton, and seconded by Mr. Bob Drechsler.

Report of Executive Director: Dr. Beene began her Director's report with an update on the status of local area plans. She said the five areas that required restructuring were received by the staff on October 31 and were in the process of being reviewed. She mentioned that Mr. Paul Murray, Deputy Director, was leading interagency team technical assistance visits to the ten comprehensive One-Stop Centers in Arkansas. She briefly touched on the recent out-of-state One-Stop Center tour to North and South Carolina since it was an agenda item. Dr. Beene said the staff of the Board had been recently reduced from seven to four members. Ms. Cindy Varner, staff of the Board, delivered a baby boy and would be on maternity leave. The position previously occupied by Ms. Claudia Griffin would be determined soon and interviews for the position previously filled by Ms. Alicia Evans would occur that week. Mr. Ron Stone, Employment Security Department, would begin work with the staff on November 27. Dr. Beene thanked Director Ed Rolle for his help in accomplishing the hiring of someone in the Grade 24 position that would be devoted to performance of local areas. She said Mr. Stone may be the most knowledgeable person in Arkansas concerning WIA issues. Dr. Beene said the staffs of the Department of Information Services and the Board were pursuing the implementation of the AWIS System. They are working to get three local areas brought into the system. Three questions still remain to be resolved and the answers from the Department of Labor are still to come. Dr. Beene mentioned the SkillsNet program and said the staff had accomplished demonstrating the concepts with positive feedback from the participants. She said a meeting was planned for this week with the partner agencies to discuss SkillsNet more in depth. She explained that the full implementation of the program required more than the staff could accomplish at this time and therefore the partner agencies will be included in the process. Dr. Beene thanked the participants of the Foundation for the Mid-South Briefing Sessions in Arkansas. She announced a Legislative Forum that would be held on December 5 in Little Rock (which has since been postponed). She said Representative Ferrell and Senator Mahony were

scheduled to attend. Dr. Beene also said she is scheduled to appear before the Legislative Budget Committee on November 22. She said a favorable recommendation came from the Governor's office for the hearing, and it would be a good time to explain the role of the Board and its implementation of WIA. Dr. Beene and Director Ed Rolle stated that they had received a verbal confirmation of no cost extension on the grants for the One-Stop Centers, but are still waiting for a written confirmation. Dr. Beene said the five local plans that were received by the staff were being reviewed and would be forwarded to the Local Plan Review Committee as well. A letter was sent to three of the areas stating the changes that needed to be made for approval. She asked the local areas to work quickly to respond because the Local Plan Review Committee would meet on December 6, and the Executive Committee would consider approval of the plans at their December 12 meeting. Dr. Beene was very pleased to say that the staff had just completed their legislative audit. She said there were no comments made by the auditor and that was very impressive, especially for a new agency.

Chairman Fisher thanked Dr. Beene and the staff for the positive audit report and their hard work. Dr. Matlock also commended the staff for the audit. Chairman Fisher reminded the Committee that the review of the local area plans started in early spring and two separate 90 day extensions were approved since then. He asked the staff to include an in-depth discussion of the local area plans yet to be approved on the December agenda. He said the Committee should consider options if these plans are not ready for approval and the consequences if the Committee decides not to extend funding. The staff confirmed that the problems were more constructional than philosophical.

Recognition of Michelle Driscoll and Ann Cole: Chairman Fisher acknowledged the presence of Michelle Driscoll and Ann Cole, both from the Department of Labor-Dallas. Chairman Fisher announced that the meeting was Michelle's last as the Board's representative because she was assigned to another area. He thanked her for all her hard work and stated the Board would not have been able to come as far as they had without her. Chairman Fisher also introduced Ann Cole who would be the Board's representative from DOL.

Potential Plan for Meetings Outside of Little Rock: Chairman Fisher reminded the Committee that a motion was made at the September Committee meeting for the staff to present a plan for four possible meeting locations outside of Little Rock. He said the potential plan was included in the agenda packet and asked for discussion. Members of the Committee expressed concern for four meetings, but felt one or two was a good idea. They were also concerned about time. They agreed that if other events or activities were also planned, the trip would be worth the time. **Motion was made by Mrs. Florine Bingham, seconded by Mrs. Helen Moore, and carried unanimously for the staff to plan two meetings outside of Little Rock for the next year. The first meeting would be scheduled after the legislative session and the second in the fall.**

Future Focus Exercise and Vision Document: Chairman Fisher stated that at the October full board meeting, Ron Copeland facilitated a group work session in which the Board's goals were prioritized. He said the results of that future focus session were included in the packet. Also included in the packet was a draft color booklet titled "Vision for the Arkansas Workforce in the New Millennium." He said this booklet was produced by the Institute of Economic Advancement at UALR and was similar to the publication by the Arkansas Business Education

Alliance. The members of the Committee were complimentary of the booklet and said it was an easy to read, well-prepared document. Dr. Beene said the supplemental companion book would include in-depth information on all the programs in Arkansas that are aimed at workforce development. **Motion was made by Mr. Bob Drechsler, seconded by Mrs. Karen McFarren, and carried unanimously to move forward with the publication of the two documents.** (A copy of the "Future Focus Report" is carried as Attachment A to the permanent copy of these minutes.)

Chairman Fisher said concerns had been expressed by Representative Ferrell and Senator Mahony concerning the duplication of programs. He said the Board would need to consider reviewing the state's workforce development programs and determine if there is duplication. He suggested assigning the task of the review for duplication in the programs to a committee. **Motion was made by Mrs. Helen Moore, seconded by Mr. Bill Sutton, and carried unanimously to assign the review for duplication of the state's workforce development programs to the Strategic Planning Committee.**

Proposal for Outreach Provider: Chairman Fisher said a draft of a Request for Proposal was included in the Committee's agenda packet for early review. Dr. Beene stated that the money for this contract would come from some of the money left over after closing out JTPA, representing an addition to budgeted funds. Discussion revealed a need from local areas for marketing assistance as well as a concern about a dollar amount included in the RFP. **Motion was made by Mr. Bob Drechsler, seconded by Mr. Larry Featherstone, and carried unanimously to issue the RFP after tightening up the guidelines, removing the dollar amount, and asking for credentials from the bidders.**

Performance Accountability and Customer Information Agency (PACIA): Chairman Fisher focused the Committee on a draft letter to the Department of Labor from Governor Huckabee. The letter designated the Workforce Investment Board as the Performance Accountability and Customer Information Agency while mentioning the August, 1999 designation of the Employment Security Department as the agency responsible for creating and maintaining the ETP list under WIA section 122 and being the State Unemployment Insurance Agency. Chairman Fisher added that it had been virtually impossible to find anyone at DOL who could explain the duties of the PACIA. **A motion was made by Mrs. Florine Bingham, seconded by Mr. Bill Sutton, and approved unanimously to recommend sending the letter that designated the Workforce Investment Board as the PACIA.** (A copy of the draft letter designating the Workforce Investment Board as the PACIA is carried as Attachment B to the permanent copy of these minutes.)

Report on Efforts of Governor's Dislocated Worker Task Force in Camden and Monticello: Chairman Fisher said that since the Board's last meeting, announcements of two major plant closings have been made. He said the Governor's Dislocated Worker Task Force made a presentation at a previous meeting, but with the recent events Linda Birtcher, Administrator of the Task Force, was going to bring the Committee up to date on the efforts being made in those towns. Ms. Birtcher handed out a brochure about the Task Force and described the efforts being made in each of the towns affected by announcements of plant closings. She said the Task Force is required to be on-site within 24 hours of a plant closure situation. They determine if there is a

need for additional funding and what steps to take. She said that it was determined there was a need for additional funding for Camden and Monticello, for which a grant has already been drafted. The Task Force holds worker assistance workshops and moves mobile career research labs to the locations for the workers. Ms. Birtcher stated that 584 workers were affected in Camden from the International Paper plant announcement and 750 workers were affected in Monticello by the Burlington plant announcement. However, she said the Burlington plant has a possible buyer and would only affect 300 workers if the purchase takes place. Ms. Ann Cole, Department of Labor, was present at these sites and also commented on the efforts made by the Task Force. Mr. Garland Hankins and Mr. Don Harlan expressed their appreciation and thanks for the Dislocated Worker Task Force as well.

Chairman Fisher thanked Ms. Birtcher for the presentation and asked Dr. Beene to talk about the performance standards for those areas and how they would be affected. Dr. Beene stated that the performance standards approved by the Board for the local areas would be difficult to achieve due to the closings of these plants and would be an issue in the next several weeks. She invited Mr. Terry Sherwood, Program Provider for Southwest Arkansas, to express his concern as well. He thanked Dr. Beene and the staff for acknowledging the problem and for their concern. Chairman Fisher said that the Program and Performance Evaluation Committee would be asked to review the performance standards and come back to the Board with a recommendation in light of the new developments in Arkansas.

Report on Technical Assistance Visits to Arkansas One-Stop Centers: Chairman Fisher asked Mr. Paul Murray, Deputy Director, to update the Committee on the Technical Assistance visits made recently to the comprehensive One-Stop Centers in Arkansas. Mr. Murray described the team approach that was used to visit the ten comprehensive One-Stop Centers and gave a brief description of each. He used a Power Point presentation that included pictures taken at most of the sites. He stated that eight of the ten One-Stop Centers had been visited since October 17 and Hope and Fort Smith would be visited during the week. He noted that one of the needs mentioned by most of the Centers was for marketing and outreach. Mr. Murray said that the visits had been very successful.

Report on Tour of North and South Carolina One-Stop Centers: Chairman Fisher thanked Mr. Murray for his report and mentioned that Dr. Beene and five others had recently returned from a scheduled tour of out-of-state One-Stop Centers. He asked Dr. Beene to start the report and then stated that the members who attended could add comments at the end. Dr. Beene gave a summary of the schedule of visits to the Centers and described a little about each Center visited. She also showed pictures taken on the trip. Dr. Matlock and Mr. Featherstone added their appreciation of the tour. Mr. Featherstone said he came back feeling a lot better about what Arkansas is doing. Dr. Matlock added that some of the things Arkansas should learn from these states is that a One-Stop Center should not be a collection of agencies; it should emphasize customer focus and market to the employers as well as the employees. Chairman Fisher thanked Dr. Beene and the Board members for the report and mentioned that it should be the responsibility of the members to visit a One-Stop Center. He also mentioned that the next trip is scheduled for mid-December and the tour would include South Carolina and Georgia. He said another trip could possibly be scheduled after winter, and the staff was open to ideas. He

encouraged the local members to participate as well as the directors of the Arkansas One-Stop Centers. Dr. Beene mentioned the possibility of a One-Stop conference in the spring.

Announcements: Dr. Beene announced that the staff received notice from Joseph Juarez, Regional Administrator, U.S. Department of Labor, that Arkansas had achieved its performance standards under JTPA for all the local areas. She said the information was just received and would be forwarded to the Board and the local areas soon. Chairman Fisher complimented the local areas and the Board on this achievement. He also announced that the next Executive Committee meeting would be December 12 at the Arkansas Activities Association building again. He said the next regular quarterly meeting of the full board would be January 9 at the Jacksonville Community Center. He said that was also the first day of the legislative session and a snack lunch would be provided for those who wish to stay and watch the Governor's opening address to the legislature. Chairman Fisher added that if anyone had suggestions for agenda items to feel free to recommend them to the staff.

Adjournment: **Motion was made by Mr. Bill Sutton, seconded by Dr. Kathy Matlock, and carried unanimously to adjourn the meeting at 11:25 a.m.**

Bill Fisher, Chair

Linda Beene, Executive Director

Minutes recorded by Christina Miller
Staff of Workforce Investment Board