MINUTES
ARKANSAS WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT BOARD
January 10, 2017

A regular quarterly meeting of the Arkansas Workforce Development Board was held on January 10, 2017, beginning at 1:00 p.m., at the Embassy Suites, 11301 Financial Centre Parkway, in Little Rock, Arkansas. Chair Charles Clark presided with the following members present: Mr. Tom Anderson, Mr. Jeffrey Allen, Mr. Daryl Bassett, Ms. Karen Breashears, Mr. Lindsay Brown, Dr. Charisse Childers, Mr. Robert East, Judge Brandon Ellison, Mr. Jeff Griffin, Mr. Alan Hughes, Mr. Brian Itzkowitz, Mr. Bart Langley, Ms. Holley Little, Mr. Rodney Loy, Mr. Alan McClain, Ms. Katy Morris by proxy Ms. Cassondra Williams, Mr. Michael Newcity, Mr. George Nunnally, Mayor Harold Perrin, Mr. Mike Preston by proxy Mr. Steve Sparks, Dr. Julie Roberson, Mr. Kelley Sharp, and Mr. Robert Thorne. Mr. Chad Bishop, Mr. Scott Bull, Ms. Melissa Hanesworth, Ms Abby Houseworth, Mr. Johnny Key, and Mr. Brett Powell were unable to attend.

Chair Clark called the meeting to order at 1:01 p.m. He then asked the members to turn to Agenda Item 1 in their books.

Agenda Item 1 – ACTION – Minutes of the October 11, 2016 Board Meeting: Chair Clark proceeded to Action Item 1, asking if there were any additions or corrections to the minutes. Hearing none, **a motion to accept the minutes as presented was made by Mr. Brian Itzkowitz, seconded by Mr. Alan Hughes, and the motion carried unanimously.**

Report of the Chairperson: Chair Clark began by welcoming new board member, Mr. Rodney Loy. Next, he announced that fellow board member Ms. Abby Houseworth gave birth recently to a baby boy, Hayden Houseworth Whitener. He reported that the new Ad Hoc Committee would be meeting at 2:30 p.m. following the board meeting. He reported that, since the last meeting of the board, he has been on the road visiting with staff members at the West Memphis Workforce Center and attending a meeting of the West Central Arkansas Local Workforce Development Board. In February, he will be attending the National Governors' Association State Board Chairs meeting in Washington, D.C. and will report on that meeting in April.

Report of Staff: Next, Chair Clark recognized Mr. Daryl Bassett, Director of the Arkansas Department of Workforce Services and board member, who commended all the board members for their service. Mr. Bassett thanked the Chairs of the three standing committees for their leadership, dedication, and willingness to assume additional duties. Mr. Bassett then thanked his staff and the board for timely completion and submission of the state plan. He stated that any plan was only as good as its implementation, emphasizing that board member involvement did not end at board meetings.

Next, Mr. Bassett reported that agency reorganization would be forthcoming; however, details of the changes were not available at that time. He stated that, due to the federal budget cuts, additional funding must be obtained for programs. Mr. Bassett ended by requesting that any members' questions be directed to him, Mr. Arnell Willis, ADWS Director of Workforce Investment, or Ms. Cindy Varner, ADWS Assistant Director for Employment Assistance.

Mr. Bassett requested that Ms. Varner provide a staff report. She began by directing the board members' attention to two handouts at their seats. The first, a Member Data form, she asked that each member review and update any outdated information. The second, a Statement of Financial Interest form, she explained would need to be completed by each board member and returned either to staff present at the meeting today or to the Secretary of State's office by January 31, 2017.

Next, Ms. Varner reported that there would be an Apprenticeship luncheon at the Governor's Mansion on January 13th, encouraging any members interested in attending to inform staff following today's meeting. She stated that the luncheon discussion would include expansion of Registered Apprenticeship in Arkansas, in industries such as Information Technology, Advanced Manufacturing, Health Care, and Construction.

She reported on the statewide activities that have taken place since the last board meeting, including Community Awareness events in Camden on September 14th, Fort Smith on September 21st, Magnolia on October 5th, Fayetteville on October 13th, and West Memphis on October 18th.

Next, Ms. Varner reported that the 2016 Career Expo, a great success, was held November 3rd, at Verizon Arena in Little Rock, with the participation of 138 employers, educational providers and other exhibitors. She reported the attendance of 1,300 jobseekers, who had the opportunity to apply for 6,000 available jobs and attend workshops on interviewing skills and resume writing.

Ms. Varner reported that the U.S. Department of Labor (USDOL) recently approved Arkansas for a technical assistance project, funded by the federal agency, to assist the state in asset mapping. She stated that the project would begin in the spring.

Ms. Varner reported that ADWS would host a Workforce Innovation & Opportunity (WIOA) Partner's meeting in Hot Springs, March 2 – 3, with an expected attendance of 250 partners from throughout Arkansas.

Committee Reports:

Chair Clark asked Mr. Brian Itzkowitz, Chair of the Strategic Planning Committee, to provide a report of Committee activities since the October quarterly meeting.

Mr. Itzkowitz reported that the Strategic Planning Committee met this morning and approved the minutes of the July 12th and October 11th meetings. He stated that the final five revisions made to the WIOA Combined State Plan, which were reported at the last meeting, were approved. He explained that, due to a lack of a quorum last quarter, the committee was unable to approve the revisions in October. These revisions were required, as a condition of approval of the plan, by the U.S. Department of Labor and the U.S. Department of Education. The final five amendments included the following: incorporation of special populations into the service strategy under the plan goals; three areas of clarification for priority of service to veterans; and clarification of concurrent activities under the adult education program.

Mr. Itzkowitz stated that the committee heard a report from staff regarding the submission of the two-year transitional plans. All ten local boards submitted their plans by the December 30, 2016 due date. The staff reported that an interagency team had been established to review the local plans and provide feedback on the content. The review team's findings would be reported at the committee meeting in April.

Staff reported that the U.S. Department of Labor had encouraged states to have four-year local plans in place as soon as possible. More specifically, Arkansas had been encouraged to revise its planning guidance to have four-year plans in place by July 2017. The staff presented a revision to the local planning guidance, which had been approved by the committee in July, 2016. The revision includes the following: the replacement of the two-year transitional plan with a four-year guidance; a due date for submission of the four-year plan (as modified from the two-year transitional plan) of May 19, 2017; a requirement that any state level review comments be addressed by local boards within the four-year submission; and a four-year local plan effective date of July 1, 2017. He stated that the committee had approved the revised guidance.

The committee was presented a draft sector strategies implementation guidance to assist local workforce boards. The guidance includes the following: a definition of sector strategies; best practices; state and local board roles in supporting sector strategies; formation and structure of sector partnerships; sector partnership designations as active, emerging, or exploring; framework for regional planning and implementation; approaches for sustaining sector strategies; and an explanation of the need for employer-led planning. Staff reported that, from the Arkansas Sector Partnership grant, approximately $15,000 per local area will be provided to offset the costs of convening partners, employers, and other stakeholders in the development of industry partnerships. Additionally, Maher & Maher, the State's consultant on the Arkansas Sector Partnership grant, will provide technical assistance to each local area to implement this guidance. The committee had approved the sector strategies implementation guidance.

Next, Mr. Itzkowitz reported that the committee heard a report that the Arkansas Department of Workforce Services and the ten local workforce board directors had established a workgroup to develop a statewide policy manual for case managers providing services under WIOA Title I-B, which is the adult, dislocated worker, and youth programs. So far, the group has developed

twelve policies regarding eligibility for services, priority of service for veterans, on-the-job training, incumbent worker and customized training, and work experience. Although the group plans to have the manual completed by April 2017, certain standards of care are being followed to ensure accuracy.

Members heard a progress update on the committee's staff-generated action plan to aid in monitoring required committee activities. There were multiple updates to the action plan this quarter, and the committee's assignments are progressing well. The committee will meet again on April 11 at 10:00 a.m.

In conclusion, Mr. Itzkowitz stated **by direction of the committee, I move the adoption of the revisions to the WIOA State Combined Plan for program year (PY) 2016 – PY 2019, revisions to the local planning guidance, and approval of the sector strategies implementation guidance. Chair Clark recognized the motion from the Strategic Planning Committee and asked for any questions from the full board. Hearing none, the board voted and the committee's recommendations passed unanimously.**

Next, Chair Clark provided a report on the Program & Performance Evaluation Committee activities since the last full board meeting. He stated that the Program & Performance Evaluation Committee met this morning and approved the minutes of the October 11th meeting.

The committee heard a report from staff regarding the Arkansas Workforce Center Certification criteria. Ms. Cindy Varner reported that the WIOA Roundtable Policy Committee was working to develop a certification policy that would establish standards for workforce centers and include a focus on continuous improvement. This policy would be used by local workforce boards to certify the local area workforce centers, thereby ensuring that centers meet quality standards. Staff plan to bring a draft for consideration to the committee in April. Ms. Varner also reported that the U.S. Department of Labor had advised states not to initiate evaluation activities, pending the forthcoming guidance. Therefore, the committee would table efforts to identify an evaluation strategy until such guidance was received.

The committee heard a report from Ms. Varner regarding the federal guidance on performance accountability that was issued on December 19, 2016. This 75-page guidance provides information to States regarding the common performance measures. Ms. Varner summarized the guidance for members and then shared efforts underway to improve data integrity and performance reporting for services to special populations.

The committee heard from Dr. Greg Holland, director of the Arkansas Research Center, regarding publications of workforce data. The Arkansas Research Center is a partner in the State's Workforce Data Quality Initiative and has recently worked closely with the Arkansas Department of Workforce Services to publish the economic security report as a result of Act 852 of 2015. (The Act requires ADWS to publish annually a report, educating parents and students on the outcomes of the State's two- and four-year education programs, average

wages, costs of attendance, and average student debt incurred to attend postsecondary programs. Dr. Holland also reported on a report issued as a result of Act 920 of 2015, which required the study of professionals of necessity, identifying areas of the state that have a shortage of these licensed professions. Finally, Dr. Holland reported ARC's efforts, in collaboration with the various state agencies, to assist in producing employment outcome data for the state workforce system's customers.

The committee heard an update on implementation of the new grant, awarded to the Department of Workforce Services, in the amount of $1.1 million. This grant would be used to integrate data systems between partners and to create a common intake system. Mr. Earnest Sweat reported that staff had been consulting with the America's Job Link Alliance in Kansas, regarding the possibility of enhancing the Arkansas JobLink system to use as the hub to connect all existing data systems for reporting and common intake. A teleconference was held last week with the twelve other states included in the system consortium to poll interest in a joint project. Eight of those states also have been receiving the data integration grant, and many have shown interest in a joint project that could be jointly-funded. The next meeting of the committee is scheduled for April 11, 2017.

Chair Clark asked Mr. Tom Anderson, Chair of the Transitional Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) Oversight Committee, to give a report of the Committee's activities since the October quarterly meeting.

Mr. Anderson reported that the TANF Oversight Committee had met this morning and had approved the minutes of the October 11, 2016 committee meeting. The committee heard an update on the implementation of requirements in Act 1205 of 2015. As requested in previous meetings, the committee reviewed the new state law-required drug screening/testing program for TANF customers. The committee heard a report on TANF program performance was pleased to inform the board that the TANF program met both its federal work participation rates (All Family and Two-Parent) for fiscal year 2015.

Mr. Anderson stated that the committee heard a rollout and implementation update for ARWINS, an integrated system that streamlines eligibility systems from the Department of Human Services and the Arkansas Department of Workforce Services. The ARWINS system was officially in production and is being piloted in three counties. He reported that the project is three months ahead of the deployment schedule and $1.3 million below budget.

Next, Mr. Anderson reported that the committee was provided an update on the staff-generated action plan to aid in monitoring required activities, as established by the bylaws, and also to reflect the goals and objectives that have been implemented in the state plan.

Last, the committee heard some wonderful program success stories, detailing how participants had become gainfully employed and self-sufficient through one or more of TANF funded program initiatives. Mr. Anderson reported that the next meeting of the committee would be on April 11, 2017, at 10:00 a.m.

Agenda Item 2 – ACTION – Council Resolution 2017-1 (Stipend Payments): Chair Clark asked members to turn to page seven of the agenda books to review Council Resolution 2017-1. (The Resolution allows board members to accept a stipend, in the amount of $110.00 for reimbursement of expenses, to attend meetings of the board.) He stated that each member is able to decline this stipend, and staff was available to provide a Stipend Declination form. He asked for any questions and, hearing none, recognized **a motion, to accept the $110 stipend amount, by Mr. Kelley Sharpe, seconded by Ms. Karen Breashears, and carried unanimously.**

Review of 2016 WIOA Implementation Activities and 2017 Planned Activities: Chair Clark asked that Ms. Varner present on 2016 WIOA activities and 2017 planned activities. Ms. Varner began by reporting that the WIOA Combined State Plan had been submitted on time April 1, 2016, addressed 116 comments/revisions, and was approved conditionally on June 27, 2016. She stated that the U.S. Department of Labor (USDOL) had conducted a WIOA assessment the week of March 7, 2016, meeting with all partner agencies and had provided very positive feedback, including identifying Arkansas's MOU template between partners as a best practice that could be utilized by other states. USDOL had noted that Arkansas's partnerships are strong, with a suggestion that there is a need to focus on hard-to-serve populations, but overall had found nothing in need of improvement in the state's implementation, to date.

Ms. Varner listed all of the trainings presented in 2016 that included the following: Local Board training April 27, 2016, Case Management training May 2 – 3, 2016, WIOA Partners' meetings May 23 -24, 2016 and September 29 – 30, 2016, and the National Governors' Association-led Registered Apprenticeship meeting July 8, 2016. She touched on WIOA Roundtable (multi agency) discussions, which include policy writing, identifying and implementing information technology needs, finance and cost allocation across WIOA partners, transition services for youth with disabilities, and the creation of core measures for the program. She stated that there had been cross-agency policy development on performance accountability, open public meetings, WIOA Title I funding distribution, initial and continued eligibility for Eligible Training Providers, sector strategies implementation guidance, local planning guidance, Arkansas Workforce Center certification, and American Job Center branding activities.

Ms. Varner reported that Local Board activities included transition from 75 percent expenditure for Out-of School Youth from 30 percent, submission of both regional and local plans by all ten local areas by the December 30, 2016 deadline, commencement of one-stop-operator procurement planning, continuation of monthly meetings with all ten local board directors, and development of a State level working group to develop statewide WIOA Title I-B policy manual, with twelve policies approved to date.

Next, Ms. Varner reported that in 2017, there would be a continuation of state plan goals, implementation of the vision for Arkansas Workforce Centers, continued cross-agency policy development, work with federal agencies in preparation for required two-year modification of the state plan, and the continued data collation for performance baselines.

Open Discussion: Chair Clark moved to the open discussion item and asked to discuss meeting locations for 2017. He asked for thoughts from the members on having a meeting in El Dorado, Arkansas. All were in favor. Mr. Brian Itzkowitz asked of ADWS Director Daryl Bassett, how he would be communicating legislative issues concerning consolidation of agencies, and Mr. Bassett stated he would be sending out e-mail blasts to the board. Chair Clark asked of Director Bassett how the new President would impact the board. Mr. Bassett responded that the agency would be pushing forward until information was available on the transition.

Announcements: Chair Clark announced that the next meeting of the full board would be held on April 11, 2017, at 1:00 p.m., with committees meeting at 10:00 a.m., at the Arkansas Career and Technical Institute (ACTI) in Hot Springs, Arkansas.

Adjourn: Chair Clark adjourned the meeting at 2:16 p.m., **on a motion made by Mr. Lindsey Brown, seconded by Mr. Bart Langley, and carried unanimously**.

Charles Clark, Chairman

Arnell Willis, Director Workforce Investment
Department of Workforce Services

Minutes recorded by Kim Kight
Department of Workforce Services Staff