

**WEDNESDAY, JULY 17th, 2019  
MEETING MINUTES**

The First Planning District Workforce Development Board meeting was held on Wednesday, July 17th, 2019 at Nunez Community College, Music Room, 3710 Paris Road, Chalmette, LA at 8:30 a.m.

1. **CALL TO ORDER:** The meeting was called to order at 8:34 a.m. by Chairman Thriffiley.

**MEMBERS PRESENT**— Charlene Bonck, Ellis Bourque, Dr. Jim Carlson, Stephanie Dupepe, Elizabeth Ellison-Frost, Debbie Green, Adriana Kriesen, Stacie Retzlaff, Mike Stedem (via conference call), Alan Thriffiley, Lenny Unbehagen, and John Zollinger. A quorum was declared.

Others in attendance were: Melissa Kirsch, Executive Director and Jennifer Barnett, One-Stop Operator.

2. **WELCOME AND INTRODUCTIONS:** Chairman Thriffiley welcomed members and thanked everyone for attending the meeting. He invited board members to introduce themselves before getting the meeting underway.
3. **APPROVAL OF MINUTES:** Chairman Thriffiley requested members review the minutes of the May 22nd, 2019 meeting which were sent out the week prior and also included in the meeting packet. Motion was made by Mr. Zollinger and seconded by Dr. Carlson to accept the minutes as presented. Vote taken, motion passed unanimously with no abstentions noted.
4. **COMMENTS FROM THE CHAIRMAN:** Chairman Thriffiley shared stated he and Ms. Kirsch had been working closely together on various administrative issues including contract requirements, budget creation and advisory board membership details. He invited Ms. Kirsch to share with the members the exciting news on the partnership expansion with the St. Tammany Corp. Ms. Kirsch reminded the group that this project had been in the works for a few months and was mentioned in some previous board meetings. A contract was being signed in which our two agencies will share in Business Services staff in order to be more effective and efficient. Resources are being leveraged and staff cross-trained to be able to increase capacity and show a unified position. Numerous board members expressed their support and congratulations on the effort. The Chairman also stated that a signing event was taking place on the next day and a press release would be going out by the following week.
5. **PRESENTATION ON LOUISIANA APPRENTICESHIP GRANT:** Mr. Thriffiley indicated that this item would be deferred as the presenter had not yet made it to the meeting.

6. **REVIEW OF EXPENDITURE REPORTS:** Chairman Thriffiley recognized Ms. Kirsch to present the expenditure report for the month and year ending June 30, 2019 to the Board. Ms. Kirsch reviewed the expenditure report indicating that we ended up slightly behind at 80% for the year overall. She did point out that there were another approximately \$150,000 of training obligations from the prior fiscal year, as well as \$125,000 obligation about to be on the books for the Ochsner Customized Training contract that was recently initiated. Ms. Kirsch also mentioned the Summer Program initiative with the St. Tammany Community Action Agency in which almost \$25,000 was being leveraged from CAA to increase the number of youth served. Discussion ensued on specifics of the two mentioned projects. She stated that plans were to provide a more detailed “year in review” presentation at the September meeting.
  
7. **REVIEW AND APPROVAL OF REVISION TO BY-LAWS TO INCORPORATE ADVISORY BOARD MEMBERS:** The Chairman reminded the members of the recent decision to add advisory board members to the full board. In light of that decision, the By-laws needed to be revised to reflect this change in membership. Mr. Thriffiley referenced the recommended language provided in the meeting packet and also sent out by Ms. Kirsch two weeks prior to the board meeting. The document was reviewed and discussed. A motion was made by Ms. Retzlaff and seconded by Mr. Zollinger to accept the revised By-laws as presented. A vote was taken and passed unanimously with no abstentions.

Additional discussion ensued regarding the need for an official opinion from the Louisiana Board of Ethics regarding whether the advisory board members would be required to file personal financial disclosures and complete annual Ethics training. Chairman Thriffiley indicated that this was discussed at the most recent Executive Committee and that an opinion was being requested.

8. **REVIEW AND APPROVAL OF REVISED POLICIES:** Ms. Kirsch was recognized by the Chairman to present the two revised policies requiring approval. The first one discussed was the Work-Based Training policy in which the Executive Committee recommended incorporating funding thresholds requiring board approval. Ms. Kirsch explained the recommended change and referred to the appropriate document in the meeting packet. The Chairman expounded on Ms. Kirsch’s comments saying that the purpose was to keep the board more informed of new contracts that have significant value and to ensure proper vetting. A few questions were asked and discussion ensued. Mr. Zollinger made a motion to accept the policy revision with following corrected language: “Any customized or incumbent worker training contract or contracts with a cumulative total value within a year over \$100,000 or a participant cost exceeding \$6,000 per individual trainee requires approval of the Workforce Board prior to execution.” The motion was seconded by Ms. Green and a vote was taken. The motion passed unanimously with no abstentions.

The second policy reviewed by the group was the Youth Incentive Payments policy. Ms. Kirsch reviewed the suggested changes with the board members. She explained there was a need to restructure how youth incentive payments are made as the current process did not seem to be incentivizing the most important aspects of the youth activities. She gave an example of the current policy providing a \$50 incentive payment to a youth for attending a workshop, when the youth might miss a significant amount of the time they were supposed to be at a jobsite working that same week.

Significant discussion regarding suggested edits ensued. Mr. Zollinger made a motion to accept the Youth Incentive Policy with the following edits:

- 1) “Work Experience Boot Camp Successful Completion Incentive - \$200 payment will be awarded upon successful completion and meeting a 100% attendance (change from 90%) requirement”,  
And
- 2) “Accomplished Work Experience Incentive of \$200 (change from \$100) monthly will be awarded if they maintain 100% (change from 90%) attendance rate on the job with no significant issues. The following exceptions may be considered: death of an immediate family member, a court appearance, or sickness with a doctors note.”

The motion was seconded by Mr. Ellis and put to a vote. The motion passed unanimously with no abstentions noted.

9. COMMITTEE REPORTS AND UPDATES:

**Executive**---The Chairman shared the committee had created some parameters and roles for advisory board members, was seeking an opinion on the ethics requirements for these members as well as preparing to reach out to those individuals identified to serve in this role. **Business Engagement**—Mr. Stedem informed the members of the most recent meeting of this committee in which great ideas on work-based learning and apprenticeship were discussed with a few action items to move forward. The brainstorming session focused on the awareness of these great tools for businesses, as well as how to increase involvement in work-based learning activities. He also mentioned that the state legislation regarding the gathering of best practices on this subject matter had passed and it truly is about creating partnerships rather than being parochial. **Community Development**—Ms. Dupepe stated that while the committee had not met recently, the Re-Entry initiatives remained a strong focus. She was excited to share that work was underway to enter into a Cooperative Endeavor Agreement with Catholic Charities to leverage resources to offer “transitional job” opportunities to those exiting prison. Catholic Charities already offers this service but on a limited basis. Through the CEA, the Board will be adding to the capacity of serving more individuals with the goal of increasing the success of this hard-to-serve population. **Center Accountability Committee**---Ms. Kirsch gave a brief update for Mr. Repka since he was unable to attend the meeting. She indicated that preparations were underway to conduct the upcoming Center Certification Review. Data was being collected for the committee which would be meeting again in late October/early September.

10. UPDATES FROM ONE-STOP OPERATOR: Ms. Barnett gave a brief update on current and on-going projects and operations. She shared that partnership opportunities with community stakeholders was continuing to increase. This is a very positive sign as it means that we are getting better known as well as showing more significant value within our communities. Due to the continued success of the job fairs, other agencies want to be more involved in future events. She also shared a recent success story from a job fair participant that was extremely satisfied with the assistance provided and the great job she was able to obtain. The summer youth programs began in early June with 12 youth in St. Bernard and 27 in St. Tammany. Ms. Barnett did mention some technology challenges that they are still dealing with in the new Center, as well as a lack of time to devote to the marketing and new branding for the Centers. Discussion ensued regarding the marketing work and some suggestions were made to possibly help ease that burden on Ms. Barnett and staff. Suggestions included: hiring an intern or utilizing the community college students to do the work, especially with the social media

piece. Ms. Barnett also stated that a decision would be made very soon on the new email server as well as the signage for the Centers. An Open House and Business After Hours event was also being planned.

11. OTHER BUSINESS: There was no other business to discuss.
12. PUBLIC COMMENT PERIOD: At this time the Chairman asked if there were any public comments. None were received, so the meeting was adjourned at 10:05 am.