

**WEDNESDAY, NOVEMBER 20TH, 2019
MEETING MINUTES**

The First Planning District Workforce Development Board meeting was held on Wednesday, November 20, 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—Alan Thriffiley, Chris Abadie, Floyd Baker, Charlene Bonck, Ellis Bourque, Dr. James Carlson, Rachel Mackey, Mark Pisani, Steve Price, Jerry Repka, Stacie Retzlaff, Mike Stedem, Lenny Unbehagen, and John Zollinger.

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 declared a quorum for the meeting and explained the need to approve the last two meeting minutes, as well as a few other items that could not be brought to a vote at the September meeting due to a lack of a quorum.

3. **APPROVAL OF MINUTES:** Chairman Thriffiley requested members review the minutes of both the July 17th and September 18th meetings which were sent out the week prior and also included in the meeting packet. Motion was made by Mr. Abadie and seconded by Mr. Unbehagen to accept the minutes for both meetings as presented. Vote taken, motion passed unanimously with no abstentions noted.

4. **COMMENTS FROM THE CHAIRMAN:** Chairman Thriffiley reiterated the importance of board members making every effort to attend the full board meetings, as there are important issues to discuss and approve which requires a quorum. He also brought up the recent email sent to all board members asking for volunteers to conduct mock interviews for the school systems Job’s for America’s Graduates program. He thought it very appropriate to have a good turnout from the Workforce Board to help the youth of our parish in preparing for their future careers.

5. **REVIEW OF EXPENDITURE REPORT ENDING OCTOBER 2019:** Chairman Thriffiley recognized Ms. Kirsch to present the expenditure report for the month ending October 30, 2019. Ms. Kirsch reviewed the expenditure report and shared that the Centers had a solid start to the new fiscal year with an overall expenditure rate of 30%. She also mentioned the current training obligations were at \$424,000, significantly higher than this month last year. She commended the Operator and staff as they were doing a great job even while not fully staffed and with many new staff still in training mode. A few questions were asked and discussion ensued.

6. REVIEW AND APPROVAL OF NEW FISCAL YEAR ANNUAL BUDGET: The Chairman brought the members attention to the documents in their packet pertaining to the annual budget. He asked Ms. Kirsch to provide an overview of the new budget. Ms. Kirsch pointed out a few line items in the side by side comparison to last year’s budget that had changed somewhat. The Rent and Telephone line items had changed to reflect the new Center location in St. Tammany parish and the change in the Leaseholder from First Planning to LWC. She also pointed out the increase in the outreach line item, as decided by the Board at a previous meeting. The intention is to ensure the Centers have the necessary resources to promote services within the communities. She also discussed plans to conduct a “Request for Quotes” for outreach activities. At this time, Mr. Stedem made a motion to approve the annual budget. The motion was seconded by Mr. Zollinger and passed unanimously with no abstentions.

7. Review and Approval of required addition to local 5 year plan: Ms. Kirsch was recognized to provide an explanation of this request. Ms. Kirsch explained to the members that LWC had found one deficiency in our Local Plan which needed to be addressed. While we had defined in our Youth Policy the definition of the youth barrier “an individual who requires additional assistance”, the Board had not included this definition in our local plan. According to federal guidelines, this definition must be included in the local plan. She referred the members to the document in their packet that had also been sent out prior to the meeting. A motion was made by Mr. Zollinger and seconded by Mr. Pisani to approve the addition to the local plan. Vote taken, motion passed unanimously with no abstentions noted.

8. COMMITTEE REPORTS AND UPDATES:
Executive---The Chairman referred members to the Transfer Request document in their packet. He explained that it was necessary to request LWC to transfer \$250,000 from Dislocated Worker to the Adult funding stream to ensure the Centers had sufficient available funds in both categories. He asked for the board to ratify this decision taken by the Executive Committee. Discussion ensued. Mr. Stedem made the motion to approve the transfer request of \$250,000. Mr. Repka seconded the motion and it passed unanimously with no abstentions. At this time, Chairman Thriffley updated the board on the request for an opinion from the Ethics Commission regarding the addition of Advisory members. He indicated that the opinion was not favorable as any advisory member would be required to file annual personal financial disclosure statements and partake in annual Ethics training. After much discussion and comments, it was decided that the Executive Committee would review the opinion and decide on next steps on how to proceed. **Community Development**—The Chairman asked Ms. Kirsch to provide the committee report, in Ms. Dupepe’s absence. With assistance from Ms. Mackey, Ms. Kirsch explained the committee’s recommendation to approve the awarding of an agreement to United Way for the provision of specific Youth Services based on a successful negotiation. The committee recommended an 18 month contract term beginning in January 2020 with the funding award not to exceed \$250,000 to serve 120 WIOA eligible youth participants. Questions were asked and answered and discussion ensued. A motion was made by Mr. Price and seconded by Dr. Carlson to approve the recommendation as presented. Vote taken, motion passed unanimously with no abstentions noted. **Center Accountability Committee**---The Chairman recognized Mr. Repka to report out on the work of this committee. Mr. Repka shared that the committee wished to recommend to the full board the approval of the Certification of the Tri-Parish Works Career Center

with a “Standard of Excellence” designation based on the successful outcomes of the evaluation conducted over the prior four months. He reviewed the process undertaken and many of the outcomes and data that was collected and reviewed. Mr. Repka also referred to a few suggestions from the committee going forward and in preparation for the next evaluations which included: 1) the creation of a customer satisfaction system that will collect data on an on-going basis with quarterly updates, 2) the formalization of a referral process among partners, and the implementation of technology (sign-in kiosk) for tracking customers more effectively. Overall, he indicated the outcomes of this review were excellent. Some discussion ensued and a motion was made by Mr. Stedem and seconded by Mr. Bourque to approve the Center Certification with a “Standard of Excellence” designation. Vote taken, motion passed unanimously with no abstentions noted. The Chairman and board members extended their congratulations to Ms. Barnett and her staff at this time for a job well done.

9. **UPDATES FROM ONE-STOP OPERATOR:** Ms. Barnett gave a brief update on current and on-going projects and operations. She first shared that a ribbon cutting ceremony for the new Center location in St. Tammany was scheduled for December 10th at 3:30pm. She hoped that many board members would be able to join in this exciting event. Ms. Barnett also stated that the opening of a small center in Plaquemines Parish would be happening in the very near future. She had hired a new staff member for this location and they would be training in St. Bernard for the next few months. She had also been working hard to complete the hiring process for two other vacant positions: 1) St. Bernard Business Services Representative and 2) St. Tammany Center Manager. The recent Job Fair was a huge success with 110 employers and over 600 job seekers in attendance. The next Job Fair was scheduled for March 26th at the Harbor Center in Slidell.
10. **OTHER BUSINESS:** The Chairman presented a proposed meeting calendar for the new calendar year. Two dates were being proposed for every other month mainly because the current meeting day was problematic for a few board members who sit on another board that meets at the same time. After some discussion it was agreed that the meetings would be held on the fourth Wednesday of every other month beginning in January. At this time, Mr. Stedem suggested we invite the newly elected St. Tammany Parish President, Mike Cooper, to the open house and try to set up a meeting with him and the Executive Committee to discuss his role with the board. The Chairman agreed with the idea and asked Ms. Kirsch to arrange the invite and meeting. Dr. Carlson gave an update on the customized training currently underway with Ochsner for Certified Medical Assistants. He shared that all fourteen students were doing very well in their classwork and he expected all of them to successfully complete. Clinicals will begin soon at Ochsner facilities and the students should graduate by the end of January. Ms. Kirsch reminded the board members to complete their ethics training prior to the end of December.
11. **PUBLIC COMMENT PERIOD:** At this time the Chairman asked if there were any public comments. None were received. The meeting was adjourned at 10:05 am.