



**Minutes of Full Board Meeting
Workforce Development Board Area 81
April 22, 2025 11:30 AM at Piccadilly Cafeteria in Monroe**

MEMBERS PRESENT	MEMBERS ABSENT
Gwendolyn Amelin	Stephanie Calhoun
Melodi Merritt	Melissa Ducote
Beverly Lewis	Damion Green, Sr.
Gerald Dyer	Ken Green
Elijah Finister	Robert Hartmann
Matt Green	Brett Pierce
Ellen N. Hill	Kelsey Vallee
Chiitra Jones	Courtney Worthy
ShaBrodrick Jones	
Otis Marshall	
Elizabeth Pierre	
Frank Pilcher	
Rev. John Russell, Jr.	
Paul Stephenson	
Brian Teegardin	
STAFF PRESENT	
Doretha Bennett	
Leslie Horne	
VISITORS PRESENT	
N/A	

Call to Order

Gwendolyn Amelin, Chair, called the meeting to order at 11:45am and established a quorum.

Invocation

Beverly Lewis gave the invocation.

Roll Call and Recognition of Guests

Attendance was taken by Beverly Lewis. No guests were present.

Approval of December 12, 2024 Minutes

Gerald Dyer made a motion to approve December 12, 2024, minutes. Beverly Lewis seconded the motion. No opposition; minutes approved, motion carried.

New Business/Action Items

1. Monitoring

Doretha Bennett reviewed highlights of the proposed Regional/Local Plan. She informed the board that it had been made public for review, still advertised in the newspaper and no public comments had been received from anyone. She also noted that it had been sent to LWC Technical Department for review, and they only had a few suggestions. She mentioned that the focus for the new plan would be skills for the new META plant being constructed in Richland Parish. Motion was made by ShaBrodrick Jones and second by Elizabeth Pierre to accept the proposed Regional/Local Plan.

2. Board CEO Agreement & Conflict of Interests

Doretha Bennett explained that an updated CEO agreement had been approved by Ouachita Parish Police Jury (OPPJ) on April 21, 2025. Leslie Horne explained to the board members that because of a recent monitoring by LWC, all board members would be required to sign updated Conflict of Interest (COI) statements. She reminded the board members that those COI forms were due to be turned in.

3. Policies

Leslie Horne reviewed the following policy updates/changes.

- i. Work Experience for Adults, Dislocated Workers, and Youth Policy 17-02
Policy changes were being made in regard to participant wages and hours per week. These changes were necessary because of the recent cut in funding.
- ii. WIOA Adult Priority of Service Policy PY25-AD01
This was a new policy created as a result of a recent monitoring review by LWC. "Priority of Service" was being included in policies "iii" and "iv" noted below, but a new one was to be established in accordance with 20 CFR 680.600(b) and TEGL 7-20.
- iii. Career Services for Adults and Dislocated Workers Eligibility Policy PY23-AD01
Changes were made to this policy to remove wording regarding "Priority of Service". The extracted part was added to the new policy created in "3.ii".
- iv. Use of Individual Training Accounts (ITA) Policy PY15-AD05
Changes were made to this policy as well to remove wording regarding "Priority of Service". The extracted part was added to the new policy created in "3.ii".

Motion was made by Chiitra Jones and second by Elizabeth Pierre to accept all policy updates/changes reviewed above in numbers 3i, 3ii, 3iii. and 3iv.

4. FY24 On-site Monitoring Review, March 26-27

Doretha Bennett explained that LWC came in March for onsite monitoring, and the final report hadn't been sent out yet. She mentioned a few areas of concern noted.

5. Financial – Expenditure and General Ledger Reports

Doretha Bennett reviewed reports for DW FY24, Youth PY24, Adult FY24 and Adult PY24. She noted that there was no money to draw down.

6. RFP for Regional One-Stop Operator

Doretha Bennett informed the board that OPPJ had approved the RFP for Regional One-Stop Operator services on 4/21/25 and would be issued to the public by May 1st.

Other Business

1. Youth Services

Gwen Amelin reported that the Youth Expo back in March was great, but there were a few things that needed to be improved. She encouraged the board members to participate more in the board events. She stated that the board was going into the summer with no money for young people to work, but OPPJ was nice enough to give them \$100,000.

2. Adult/Dislocated Workers

Gwen Amelin reported that everyone still needed to help find dislocated workers for the program.

3. Sector Partnerships

i. Healthcare

Doretha Bennett reported that she'd recently attended a meeting on April 17th. She stated that Rob Cleveland from Grow NELA was the speaker, and that the alliance was going well.

ii. Manufacturing

Leslie Horne reported that NELA hadn't had a quarter meeting since the last one. She stated that their Board of Directors was working on reviewing/revising their bylaws, working with Monroe Chamber on media campaigns and re-electing officers.

Executive Director's Report

Doretha Bennett informed the board that staff would be reaching out to see if anyone has jobs to offer the youth for the summer.

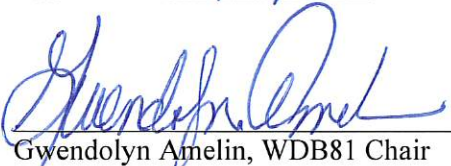
Public Comment

None

Adjournment

Gwendolyn Amelin called to adjourn the meeting. Motion by Elijah Finister and second by Paul Stephenson to adjourn.

Approved at 8/13/25 meeting.



Gwendolyn Amelin, WDB81 Chair

Transcribed by 

Leslie Horne, Planner