

Minutes of the Local Workforce Development Board #40

Quarterly Meeting

Wednesday, March 3, 2021

10:04 AM

Via Zoom

**I. Call to Order**

The Local Workforce Development Board #40 Meeting was called to order at 10:04 AM by Mr. Patrick Fontenot, Local Workforce Development Board #40 Chairperson.

**II. Pledge of Allegiance**

Mr. Patrick Fontenot led all members and guests in the Pledge of Allegiance.

**III. Welcome-Mr. Patrick Fontenot, LWDB#40 Chairperson**

Mr. Fontenot welcomed all members and staff and guests to the meeting then called for a moment of silence for all heroes and front-line workers who have fought through COVID-19 and for those that have lost their lives due to COVID-19.

**IV. Roll Call**

Adrienne Auzenne conducted the roll call. The attendance was as follows:

**Present**

Amy Thibodeaux	Mike Ortego	Patrick Fontenot
Bob Manuel	Michael Pritchard	Patricia Cottonham
Jason LeMaire	Mike Tarantino	Rebecca Shirley
Judy Bruno	Myron Berzas	Reggie Dupre'
Kay Miller	Nathaniel Chaisson	Suzanne Kidder
Lynel Wilson	Norman Rene'	Tessa Brown

**Absent**

Craig Mathews	Thomas LeBlanc
Joshua Sonnier	Willie Singleton-Guillory

**Quorum: Yes**

**Guests in Attendance:**

Larry Richard	Carey David Lawson	Garrick Brown	Kendra Neal
Amanda Cain	Karen Wyble	Emma Bush	Adrienne Auzenne
Ryan LaGrange	Keith Roy	Billy Francis	Claudette Nickerson
Keidrian Kunkel	Phillip Lemon	Brenda Foulcard	Colandra Authorlee
Andre Perez	Ronald Darby	James Freeman	Stephen Broussard
Shanea Nelson	Braden Hayes	Cecily Holland	Belle LeBlanc

**V. Election of Officers**

A motion was made by Amy Thibodeaux to move the election to a future date in order that she has time to review a board member list. She stated that she was unfamiliar with the board members and needed time to review their qualifications before voting. The Chairman suggested that the election be pushed to the next meeting. Rebecca Shirley seconded the motion to move the election forward. With no opposition or abstentions, all members were in favor and the motion carried unanimously.

**VI. Approval of Minutes**

Minutes of the June 17, 2020, December 02, 2020 and the February 2, 2021 board meetings were provided for review by the board. Rebecca Shirley stated that she would like to make a motion to approve the minutes of the June 17 and December 2 minutes and the February 2, 2021 with the stipulation that the February 2 meeting minutes be approved with a revision made to include a follow-up question made by Rebecca Shirley at that meeting regarding whether the board would receive a strategic plan indicating how the staff intends to implement the regional plan. The motion was seconded by Amy Thibodeaux. With no opposition or abstentions, all members were in favor and the motion carried unanimously.

**VII. Guest Speaker**

Dr. Emma Bush introduced Phillip Lemon as the guest speaker. Mr. Lemon is from Ville Platte and is a former mayor and former city council member and very active in his community. Mr. Lemon stated that he became acquainted with Workforce programs back in the early 80's when it was known as the manpower program. Throughout his insurance career and appraisal career he has hired several employees through Workforce programs, and it was very successful for him. He also utilized Workforce programs when he was mayor to utilize program funding for his civil service employees hiring of youth through program with Workforce program funding also done during his tenure as mayor. He encourages other employers in his service organizations to utilize the programs, however he found that private employers have been reluctant to utilize the program. Mr. Lemon offer any services that he can to encourage employers or employees to get involved, he stated that his experience over the last 30 years has been great.

**VIII. Executive Director's Update**

- Dr. Bush reported with excitement the progress of the Business Service Team. When the new contract started with our contractors, we had six employers. As of today, we have over 100 work experience jobs with employers. She stated this was significant movement by a hard-working team that has been knocking on doors, meeting with chambers, etc. They have been able to convince companies to come on board with us and they have about 60 plus companies now who are willing to accept work experience applicants and on the job training applicants.
- Dr. Bush stated that there is a gap in communication in our community statewide. Cecily Holland shared the social media platform website pages that the board staff launched including, Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram platforms to address gaps in communication. Dr. Bush stated that companies that we are working with will be spotlighted on these accounts. The current employer is looking for employees and every week a new company will be spotlighted.

- Dr. Bush explained issues that board staff has been having with the current contractors. The issues included:
  - Difficulty with receiving performance/enrollment reports. Board staff has received reports varying from 250 – 40,000 participants enrolled.
  - Ongoing operational issues with the operations contractor. Billy Francis is still working on these issues with the contractor, however almost every week we are resolving issues regarding the operations of the job centers.
  - Most recently a corrective action letter was mandated by the Secretary of the State regarding an incident in the job center that escalated up to a Senator. The state required that Dr. Bush submit a corrective action plan within 24 hours. Dr. Bush cited in her submission that training all WIOA funded employees will be retrained on how to deal with unemployment and some other critical issues. Dr. Bush offered to send a copy of the corrective action plan to any board member that would like to see it.
  - The contract is at a mid-point and we do not have performance numbers on those benchmarks. Board staff will pull their own performance numbers from the state so that we know exactly where we are on performance. Finance should be able to share that about 5% of funding has been expended. More information will come from the finance team.
- Regarding work experience Dr. Bush stated that the business team has worked extremely hard and she is proud of them. She stated that they have produced 100 jobs, but our contractor has not been able to fill those jobs and we have over 60 companies they are working with. As a result, board staff is stepping in to help the contractor. The Board staff will implement several things:
  - Youth Expo where we will assist the contractor in recruiting youth.
  - Veteran’s Expo since one of the key elements of a WIOA contract is also servicing Veteran’s.
- Tessa Brown inquired if she understood clearly that there is 100 jobs available, and the contractor is unable to find people to fill those spots and now board staff has stepped in to help them make that happen? Dr. Bush stated that is correct. She also asked if the corrective action would help them identify the reasons why they are having trouble fulfilling their responsibility. Dr. Bush responded by clarifying that the performance assessment that the board staff monitoring team will complete will provide some answers.
- Dr. Bush stated that a concern for her with the contractor is performance. WIOA is employment driven, it’s about getting people to work, not about how many people you can train, it is about getting out in the communities making people aware of our services and helping people get people back to work. That is our bottom-line mission and we do it in different ways. Mr. Ortego stated that we are here to spend the tax-payers money efficiently and get people working to produce taxable income.
- Dr. Bush cited that the former Executive Director, Mrs. Hubbard-Thomas, and her team saw the need for bringing in the business team to the board office. Now that the business team has aligned with the board staff, they have secured the jobs with the employers, but the board staff will have to step in and use our expertise to help place candidates into these positions. We cannot afford to go back to the state and say we are not performing. We are going to fill these jobs or loose these companies. We must get people back to work or we are failing on our WIOA side in terms of this grant. This is part of the reason why we are stepping in and using our expertise to help.

- Reggie Dupre' stated that this is one of the key reasons that employers are not participating. If you develop slots for people and do not fill them, you lose faith in that quickly. Private business entrepreneurs get things done quickly and bad news spreads fast so this needs to be corrected quickly.
- Mr. Ron Darby inquired as to who our new contractors are now. Dr. Bush responded that SLCC is the Operator and Eckerd is the service deliverer. Mr. Darby also wanted to know if the Business Reps had been talking to all local leaders and organizations. Dr. Bush informed Mr. Darby that our business team is doing that every single day.
- Judy Bruno inquired if there was any accountability in the contract that we signed with the contractors? Dr. Bush responded yes. Judy then inquired how do we vet the contractors that we use? Dr. Bush responded that the contractors that we use now came through an RFP process and board staff selected an RFP team lead by our Vice-Chair to evaluate the proposals that we received. Judy then inquired if these contractors are usually used in Government contracts. Dr. Bush responded that Eckerd has experience in working with Workforce boards and SLCC was the former contractor with this region. Judy asked if data was provided from the previous projects that they did? Dr. Bush stated yes it was.
- Board members were informed that emergency meeting with the contractors was held last week to discuss performance on the services they provide. They sent two clients when 69 slots for employment were provided.
- Rebecca Shirley stated that in serving on the One-stop committee several years, these issues as well as the monitoring reports were always brought to the One-stop committee for discussion, has that been done? Was a report brought to the last One-Stop Committee meeting? Jason LeMaire responded that they have not received a monitoring report yet.
- Dr. Bush stated that board staff is hoping to perform the contractor assessment within the next two weeks and get it to the One-Stop Committee. Miss Shirley questioned if one of the issues board staff is having with the contractor is that the contractor cannot supply the number of workers requested for the contracts that we have with employers? Dr. Bush stated that is one element within several. We have a performance issue related to key benchmarks. Miss Shirley quested if Dr. Bush was stating that the contractor should do outreach beyond the people who come into the job centers to find workers for these contracts? Dr. Bush responded yes absolutely that is what they should be doing every single day with this money, that is their job. It is not to sit at a desk and wait for people to come to us. Most people do not know WIOA services so that is why we pay for a full staff of outreach specialist. Their job is to go out and make the community aware of our programs they refer people back to the job centers for services, that is all they do full time, six staff members. Amy Thibodeaux asked if it is different from the business services outreach individuals? Dr. Bush responded yes. We have a business service team that is over here, but the contractor has a full staff of outreach specialist and that is all they do. Mr. Ortego inquired if the business team goes to business and presents the programs. Dr. Bush responded yes, we that is what our business team does. She stated that we also have the outreach team which is totally different and in the job centers.
- Iberia Parish President Larry Richard inquired if the parish leadership such as mayors or Parish Presidents are being made aware that the business service reps are going out to local community and organizational meetings? He stated that this communication would enable a greater response and make everyone aware of what is going on. He stated that

it would be very beneficial to get local leaders involved in what Workforce is trying to accomplish. Dr. Bush stated that Business service reps are doing as he described and there is no challenge with the companies.

- Mike Ortego inquired if Workforce is attempting to implement the summer program for youth. Dr. Bush answered yes, in the meeting with the contractor they were instructor to ramp up on summer youth. Dr. Bush stated that according to figures given by finance it appears that we can serve approximately 280 to 300 youth participants this summer in the eight parishes. Board staff will also assist with ramping up the summer youth program. Dr. Bush stated that the business service team has also secured 107 slots for summer youth as well.

#### **IX. Finance Committee Report**

- Brenda Thibeaux gave the Finance Committee Report. She stated that the committee meeting was held on Feb. 10 at 1 pm. Committee members present at the meeting were Miss Thibeaux, Jason LeMaire, and Judy Bruno. The staff present was Mrs. Foulcard and Amanda Cain.
- Miss Thibeaux directed everyone to page 29 in the packet to the FUR report. She explained that the FUR report expresses a snapshot of Workforce Board 40 approved funding streams by allocation. She then explained the funding streams and gave the contract periods each funding stream was associated with. She explained that the PY19-FY20 are the carryover funds that are on the sheet. Amy Thibodeaux inquired as to what the acronym FUR represents. Mrs. Foulcard stated it represents the Fund Utilization Report. Mrs. Foulcard explained that the state also provides a FUR report every quarter; **however**, we create this report monthly. It demonstrates where you are with your expenditures versus your allocations.
- Rebecca Shirley inquired if the amount of \$1,661,506.07 must be spent by a certain timeframe. Brenda Foulcard replied **yes**. She explained that the way allocations are sent to the board is through PY and FY. The PY19, which also consists of the youth, and the FY consists of the adult, and dislocated worker, must be expended by June 2021. She stated that if these funds are not spent, the state can recoup these funds. She also said that PY20-FY21 has not been charged yet and that this contract ends in 2022. A clause in the contract states that 80% must be obligated by June 2021 or the funds could be subjected to recoupment. Rebecca asked for further explanation of what it means to have 80% of the funds obligated. Mrs. Foulcard responded that to obligate funds means by contract or purchase order, obligated funds must be already identified to go to a vendor. She stated that there must have made a financial commitment to the vendor.
- Michael Pritchard inquired if what Mrs. Foulcard was stating is that we must spend or obligate approximately \$6,600,000.00 by the end of June 2021. Mrs. Foulcard answered yes.
- Rebecca asked if we are on track to spend this by that timeframe? Mrs. Foulcard responded no. Dr. Bush responded that we are nowhere near on track. She stated that our client enrollment is low, and this is what helps to spend the funds. The work experience, which is 100 percent of salaries. This program cost is important to filling these jobs to help expend the funds and help someone get employment. The training is also another form of spending funds. Dr. Bush stated that low enrollment funds are not being used, and we are not on track.
- Mr. Ortego inquired if funds will be recouped if we do not spend a portion of it. Chairman answered, yes it could be recouped. After the fiscal year 2020 is over, it is

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He stated that we do not want to spend it recklessly. We must spend it prudently.

- Dr. Bush explained the state could take the funds and not give back what they recoup. It is their option. Mr. Ortego wondering if the Pandemic would give leeway for understanding why funds are not spent. Dr. Bush explained that the state was instructing workforce boards that it is the board's responsibility to find creative and innovative ways to get people back to work. She stated that boards are being held accountable, and the Department of Labor is holding them accountable. Therefore, board staff will step in and help because we do not want to lose jobs in our region, and we cannot afford to lose a cent.
- Mrs. Foulcard explained that the term carryover refers to funds carried over from the prior year. Last year we were only supposed to carry over 20%, but we carried over 70%. She also pointed out that when the state recoups funds, they do not have to reissue the funds to us. She stated that she estimates that we are in the top five regions for the most allocations in the state. She emphasized that we do not want to be in a recoupment of funds situation if any additional funds are available, our region will not be the first consideration for reissuing funds since we were not able to initially spend funds. Mrs. Foulcard stated that under the supervision of Dr. Bush, and discussed in the Finance Committee, a letter would be issued to the contractor requesting that the contractor submit a plan that would contain details on how to spend the remaining funds in their budget. She stated that at every finance meeting, funding performance discussions are held.
- Finance Chair Brenda Thibeaux echoed Brenda Foulard's statement that at each Finance Committee meeting, discussions are held on budget review, the contractor's progress, and the accountability of obligating these funds.
- Amy Thibodeaux inquired whether the contract started in November 2020. Brenda Foulcard answered that as far as the new contracts are concerned, Eckerd and SLCC began November 1, 2020. However, the current funding began July 1, 2020. SLCC as the prior contractor had the allocations at the beginning of the state contract year from July 2020 to November 2020. A Request for Proposal was presented, it was approved, and the new contractors began November 1, 2020, with carryover funds. Amy Thibodeaux inquired about the finance committee meetings and when they were held. She suggested that they meet more frequently than quarterly. Dr. Bush suggested that the Finance committee take Amy's suggestion under advisement and decide if they need to revise their meeting schedule since they are most knowledgeable about all the details what is occurring. Dr. Bush stated that board staff would send an email with the Finance Committee meeting date to the board members prior to the meetings. Amy stated that she thought that the information regarding contractor's finances was not given to the board in a timely fashion. Dr. Bush informed Amy that this information is provided at each board meeting and has been in every packet. She also informed Amy that the board meets every quarter. The contractor had to be given an opportunity which has been done. Currently, the board is being presented the information for the last four months due to the contract being at a midway point. She stated that the contractor would not be able to spend six million dollars in four months. At this point, solutions must be found as quickly as possible. How much can we spend as efficiently as possible according to regulations? What will happen with the balance? Will there be communication directly with the state on our situation and circumstances? We are looking at what we need to do and what steps we need to take, what corrective actions we need to make, and how we can assist in

- spending these funds. Mr. Ortego inquired if spending down funds only works with work experience programs or all programs. If necessary, we can expand the summer youth program. Dr. Bush responded, yes, this is one way to expend some of the funds. Tessa Brown inquired about the amount of funds to be spent, how much should be obligated, and how much should be spent. Brenda Foulcard clarified.
- Brenda Thibeaux directed everyone to page 31 and the budget overview. Mr. Ortego asked if Eckerd was given \$4, 498,814.00 and utilized zero percent. Brenda Foulcard stated that this amount is the FY21 contractual amount, however, the reason it is at zero percent is that we are still spending FY20 carryover funds are still being spent.
- Mr. Darby questioned the percentage of administrative fees that SLCC receives and what percentage does Eckerd gets. Brenda Foulcard wanted to know if he was referring to admin costs or program costs? Brenda Foulcard asked if we can get back to him on this question, he said yes. He stated that he wanted to know how much they were being funded. He stated that SLCC should be holding Eckerd accountable, and we hold SLCC accountable. He asked if he was correct? Dr. Bush responded that he was partially correct; she stated that SLCC and Eckerd should be collaborating, which is another issue that we have encountered that was addressed recently. Contractors with Workforce Boards collaborate. Before we get reports they should have discussed content with each other for accuracy. SLCC operates and manages the centers and Eckerd provides the services. They are separate vendors but partners.
- Judy Bruno asked regarding the contractors' reimbursement; what exactly are they asking reimbursement for salary or administrative costs. Mrs. Foulcard stated that all program costs are paid in-house; the only reimbursement requests are the operational costs, facility costs, salary costs, any supplies or training, and any benefits or travel. Mostly operational costs and facility costs they are requesting reimbursement on. Judy inquired whether the reimbursement costs match their actions, is there a detailed cost breakdown. Mrs. Foulcard said no, their only sign off that they have dispersed the funds and that they are WIOA funds. There is no explanation of services with the allocations. Judy asked if we could request an explanation. Dr. Bush replied that Judy is heading in a positive direction. She stated that the contractor's work is measured by performance, the output of work. Since the performance was not lining up, we brought this information to the board to make you aware of our concerns and concerns before we move into corrective action. Dr. Bush stated that since this is a performance-based contract at this midpoint of the contract, we see a performance issue, so we are moving into the phase where corrective action must be taken to protect these funds in this region. Board members will be kept in the loop on what actions will be taken, what findings we have, etc.
- Amy Thibodeaux asked if updates would come prior to the next board meeting. Dr. Bush responded yes. Amy also requested a copy of the contracts. Judy Bruno echoed the request for a copy of the contracts.
- Rebecca suggested that staff conduct the performance assessment of the contractor and then have a joint finance and one-stop committee meeting to review the findings and bring information back to the board. Dr. Bush agreed.
- Tessa Brown inquired what will happen when the contract ends on June 30, 2021. Dr. Bush stated we are about to investigate other options. Tessa inquired if there are renewal options in the contract. Dr. Bush responded, yes, there are several options in contract, and the state gives options. She asked that Tessa give board

staff 1-2 weeks to come up with a plan, get the assessment in place, talk to the contractor then an updated report will be provided to the chairman on the outcomes.

- Miss Thibeaux directed the board to pages 33-36 in packet, she wanted to bring board members attention that this is a different presentation of the statement on page 31 than previous meetings as the board requested at the last board meeting. She stated in closing that the Finance Committee will discuss the need for meeting more frequently and get the information to board.
- Chairman Fontenot accepted a motion to approve the Finance Committee Report. The motion was made by Jason LeMaire to accept the report. The motion was seconded by Norman Rene' to accept with Finance Committee Report. Without any opposition or abstentions, all members were in favor and the motion carried unanimously.

## **XI. One-Stop Committee Report**

- Jason LeMaire, One Stop Committee Chair, presented the One-Stop Committee Report. The One Stop Committee was held February 10 at 10am. Attendees include, Andre Perez, Jason LeMaire, Dr. Shanea Nelson, Michael Pritchard, Brenda Foulcard, Adrienne Auzenne, Keidrian Kunkel, Colandra Authorlee, Kimberly Coleman, Billy Francis, James Francis, and Cecily Holland.
- An update was given of the American Job Centers. They are currently operating at 75 percent capacity and the centers are following all protocols related to COVID-19. Currently centers are seeing clients by appointment only.
- Monitoring reports are in the stages of approval. Once approval is obtained this information will be shared with the board. Thus far the monitoring team have visited the St. Landry center and the Evangeline center. The next visits will occur in Vermilion and Acadia.
- The One stop update included the following:
  - 75% operating capacity for the centers
  - SLCC began contract with establishing a corrective action implementation plan in partnership with MIS and Eckerd Connects.
  - A series of trainings have been held including:
    - Case Notes and IEP on January 21
    - Vos Greeter implementation training on January 28 with a launch on February 2
  - SLCC and Eckerd, through collaborative efforts have set up monthly meetings and a monthly newsletter.
  - Traffic reports were read with MIS numbers broken down by parish.
  - SLCC stated at the meeting that currently they have some vacancies that need to be filled.
- The Business Service Update included:
  - The Business Team has contacted over 700 businesses in the Acadiana Region.
  - Business Forums are planned for all parishes.
  - Business Team is working hand in hand with the outreach team and SLCC.
- Other business
  - Mr. LeMaire presented to the One-Stop Committee that he would like to add on a couple of additional members if possible. He would also like to set the committee meetings in advance to work around everyone's schedule.



- Mr. LeMaire announced LWDB40 completed trainings that were provided to the contractor:
  - Monitoring Policies and Procedures
  - Center Management and MIS Duties
  - Employee Services
  - Moday.com Training
  - WIOA Eligibility Training
  - UniteUS Review and Rollout
- Upcoming Trainings Include:
  - Case Notes and IEP/ISS Training
- Previously held events Included:
  - Acadia Parish Youth Recruitment Extravaganza in Rayne
  - Iberia Parish Youth Recruitment Extravaganza
  - Acadia Parish Youth Recruitment Extravaganza in Crowley
- Upcoming Events Include
  - Iberia Parish Business Forum
  - Evangeline Parish Business Forum
  - St. Martin Parish Business Forum
- Amy Thibodeaux requested to be notified of upcoming events so that she could get the word out. Mr. LeMaire replied that the information would be relayed to her in the future.
- Mr. Reggie Dupre inquired if there was any discussion regarding slowing down the communications with local businesses due to the contractor's lack of ability to fill positions. He stated that is if we create the demand but cannot meet the demand our brand name will be damaged further than it is now. Mr. LeMaire stated that we have not had any discussion about slowing efforts but considering today's news of struggling to fill the positions we may want to consider slowing down efforts.
- Jason reviewed the employee service report in the packet which included totals of placements pending, employer interest and contracts in place. He also referred the board to the Acadiana Outreach Report in the packet.
- This concluded the One-Stop Committee Meeting Report. Chairman Fontenot called for a motion to accept the One-Stop Committee Report. The motion to accept was made by Norman Rene' and seconded by Lionel Wilson. Without any opposition or abstentions, all members were in favor and the motion carried unanimously.

## **XII. Upcoming Events**

Dr. Bush referred board members to the dates and upcoming events listed in the board packet. She stated that the Youth Expo is part of the board staff's stepping in to assist the contractor with filling jobs. Dr. Bush announced that a Veterans event would be held to assist them with employment needs. Tessa Brown inquired if there is a recommendation who should they send it to. Dr. Bush responded to forward recommendations to Adrienne and she would get it to James.

## **XIII. New Business**

Dr. Bush stated that there is a need to re-start the youth committee. She requested input and feedback from anyone interested in sitting on the committee.

Rebecca Shirley requested that a list of all committees and their members and details of their responsibilities be sent to the board prior to giving feedback on this item. Dr. Bush stated that board staff will forward committee information and details of responsibilities is something that is planned to be covered at the upcoming board retreat.

#### **XIV. Other Business**

- Dr. Bush announced that board staff is considering having the board retreat at Cypress Bend Resort in Many, LA. Board staff has reserved two sets of dates to be presented to the board today.
  - June 4-5
  - June 11-12

Amy Thibodeaux announced that a doodle poll is needed, and that Saturday dates were out for her. Dr. Bush informed Miss Thibodeaux that after the meeting a poll would be sent out with the dates for all board members to respond to.

- Dr. Bush announced that at the retreat we would like to take the board photo.

#### **XV. Public Comment**

- Ryan LaGrange of LEDA had a public comment. He stated that he is aware that in times of adequate funds he has seen different things where the board is able to approve customized training contracts to meet a certain industry sector need. He stated it has been done when utility companies had a dire need it has been done, when construction has had a dire need it has been done. He stated that it was a way to rapidly enroll people and enhance training programs and put people to work and most programs resulted in 90% placement rate. He stated that Healthcare was the largest growing and fastest growing industry express a need for training in a variety of areas. At a recent meeting four different healthcare employers expressed a need for Respiratory Therapists among other areas of need. A lot of it is directly related to COVID-19 impact he stated. He stated that Mike Pritchard and himself did research and found that LWC information stated that five current openings or 20 openings over the course of a year is the minimum criteria for a board to approve a local demand occupation. He stated that in their research they found over 20 current openings in the Respiratory Therapy Field. Dr. Bush thanked Ryan for bringing this up. She stated that some misinformation has been circulating and an effort was made to clear this up with two other board members. Dr. Bush stated that a conversation was started with Karen Wyble via a connection with Ryan. This conversation was expanded to include Opelousas General and Our Lady of Lourdes medical facilities to get a good grasp of what was going on in the health care systems in our region. Multiple meetings were held, conversation started with two other positions and it was narrowed down to Respiratory Therapy. She stated that with WIOA funding due diligence must be performed. A checklist of things must be done to justify expending funding on a customized contract. The first discussion item was the number of positions, we ended up with seven positions within a period of one year's time. Research was also done within the state system for Respiratory Therapy positions, Karen asked if we would talk to Carey at LSUE, in that conversation it was discovered that the completions time for the Respiratory Therapy program is two years. She stated that we would be unable to fill these positions with two-year training time. We need employers who can project out further. She gave an example that we would start the

program at the midpoint of this year we would need a projection in 2023. Employers would have to commit to a certain number of positions being open in two years to be filled will you assist us by helping to underwrite the cost to train these individuals so that they can join our staff at that time.

Ryan pointed out that in 2019 it was considered a demand occupation and the demand has continuously grown. He stated in addition to the hospitals Via med introduced 200 jobs to the Acadiana Region their main business is Respiratory Therapy. He wanted the board to know that they can declare it a demand occupation and he has the evidence to show it and it is an ongoing growing need.

Dr. Bush said perfect if Ryan can help our Business Team identify those companies that say in two years, we project we are going to have a certain number of Respiratory Therapy positions open then we can discuss this further and move this further along quicker. One requirement of WIOA training they must commit to hiring these individuals that we are going to pay for since this will be an expensive program. The company must commit up front that they will hire them in two years. They must also tell us how many positions they will need filled in two years. She stated that those are the components that board staff has been performing due diligence on to determine if it is viable. Since we ultimately must answer to the state and to the Department of Labor. Therefore, we can't just write the contract we have to justify it.

- Lauren Womack (Lafayette Consolidated Government, Ticket to Work Office) commented that she just wanted to know that status of the partnership MOU that we they were supposed to receive. Chairman Fontenot asked for a more detailed explanation on her request. She explained that LCG failed to sign their agreement last year since it was back dated and have not received a new agreement this year. Shanea Nelson stated that the MOU was sent to Mrs. Brenda Foulcard for review and SLCC is waiting on signatures and status to move forward. Mrs. Foulcard explained that the MOU's is an agreement between agencies to provide shared services. She stated that the MOU's from the previous contract were signed and submitted. Currently the One-Stop Operator (SLCC) did submit a MOU for consideration to move forward and it is still under review. She stated that it is her understanding that all MOU's are in place and signed under the former One-Stop Operator and Service provider at that time. The agreement was issued prior to October 31, 2020 and signed and is available. Andre Perez stated that the current MOU is for the last contract year which expired October 31, 2020. Mr. Perez stated that the partner is inquiring why there is not a MOU for the current contract in place which includes infrastructure cost-sharing agreement. Mr. Perez stated he sent a copy that includes a cost-sharing agreement to board staff, but he has not received a response back. Mrs. Foulcard stated that Mr. Perez is correct, and that the MOU is currently under review with the attorney and the contractor and partner will be contacted when the process is finalized. Mr. Perez inquired whose responsibility was it to execute the process, the contractor, or the board staff. Mrs. Foulcard stated that she would discuss the details at a different time, and she encouraged him to review his contract.
- Amy Thibodeaux inquired about the AWS board website. She stated that information was outdated, no board member listings, etc. She was wanting to know who oversaw updating the website. Dr. Bush stated that this is subcontracted out and we have a local IT person that had to assume the role of crisis management situations when the disaster hit and without a full-time person in-house it is difficult to keep things updated. With our IT person tied up board staff has asked a marketing firm to step in and assist with

the management of the website. Dr. Bush stated that we are trying to fix 50 items simultaneously and requested patience from the board on this issue and contribution needed as a board member as we move forward to ensure that we serve the eight parishes. Dr. Bush welcomed ideas, time volunteers, skills volunteered and contributions of any kind from board members.

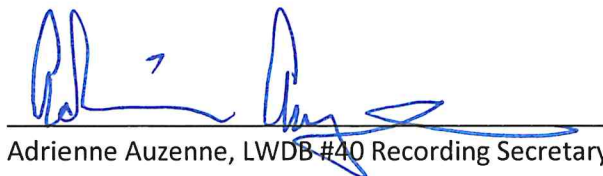
- Rebecca Shirley commented that at the December meeting board members were asked to hold dates on their calendar for future board meetings. She stated that changing board meeting dates should only occur under a strict, strict emergency. She stated that the board she works for (One Acadiana) sets out their dates 1 year in advance. She requested that we stick to the dates and respect the board members who have already put the dates on their calendars. Chairman Fontenot stated that he was informed of the changes and agreed with them because he was able to see the pressure the staff for several things that have been stated today. He stated that he can deny future requests for change of dates if we are unable to be flexible. Rebecca Shirley forcefully stated that everyone is under a lot of pressure at their jobs but are still held to timelines and dates that are set. She stated that unless that there is something so crucial that we can't have a board meeting, she hopes that the staff is organized enough to be prepared on the dates previously set throughout the whole year. Dr. Bush responded that Rebecca's request will be honored, as assured her that we have never shifted a date of a meeting unless it was absolutely essential. Rebecca stated that there has been a lot of changing of dates at the last minute. She stated for board members that take their board membership seriously, this is jeopardizing their ability to attend meetings. She asked that the board be respected and keep the dates previously set and agreed to. Dr. Bush said you are correct and when she came into the role she was putting out fires that impact whether or not each parish will get a dime, fires that determine if we are in compliance with the state and federal government, whether or not we would have funds or be rebuked, we don't want rebuked funds on this region, sometimes staff has had to drop everything and face demands and pressure that no one is aware of to make sure we meet requirements for the state and federal entities. We will only shift dates under circumstances that require it. Dr. Bush requested from Rebecca that staff be given consideration that if a request is made to shift dates, something is going on and if details are required staff is happy to share them. Beyond that she stated that the approved schedule will be honored, and changes will only be requested if it is necessary.

**XVI. Adjournment**

Mr. Patrick Fontenot entertained a motion for adjournment by Amy Thibodeaux and the motion was seconded by Tessa Brown. With no opposition or abstentions, all members were in favor and the motion carried and the meeting was adjourned at 12:25 pm.



Mr. Patrick Fontenot, LWDB #40 Chairperson



Adrienne Auzenne, LWDB #40 Recording Secretary