Ozark Opportunities, Inc.
Board of Directors Meeting Minutes
February 25, 2016

The Ozark Opportunities, Inc. Board of Directors Executive Committee met at the home of OOI Board of Directors member Debra Clemons in Marshall, Arkansas, at 6:15 p.m. on Thursday February 25, 2016.

Board Members Present:
Jim Sprott
Ron McPherson
Althea O'Haver
Morgan Sellers
Gloria York
Danny Griffin
Hon. Terry Ott
Debra Clemons
Kristen Smith

Board Members Absent:
Hon. Mickey Pendergrass
Paulette Hill
Vanessa Thomas-Jones
Mayor Dan Sherrell
Hon. Jim Harness
Mayor Jan Larson
Donna Crain
Hon. Roger Hooper
Judy Schenk

Staff Members Present:
Richard T. Atkinson
Rebecca Hanlin
Shirley Richesin
Ryan Clayborn
Jane Bueg
Wanda Nelson

Guests Present:
Alan Yarbrough- Superintendent of Searcy County School District

1. Welcome to Searcy County: Searcy County School District Superintendent Alan Yarbrough provided a program on the current building project for the district, complete with a photo array of progress, interesting facts and highlights. Mr. Yarbrough proudly announced that Marshall High School was ranked #2 High School in Arkansas by SchoolDigger and is home to the State Chess Champions.

2. Meeting Called to Order: Chairperson Jim Sprott, declaring a quorum present and with the consent of the body, called to order the quarterly meeting of Ozark Opportunities, Inc. Board of Directors at 6:15 p.m. Mr. Sprott extended warm thanks to the hosts, OOI Board of Directors members Debra Clemons and Althea O’Haver for coordinating the pre-meeting meal and festive surroundings; and a special thank you to Debra Clemons for providing her home for the event.
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3. Acceptance of prior meeting minutes & ratification of actions (minutes provided prior to the meeting).

Executive Committee Action Items January 28, 2016:

- Contract with Welch, Couch & Co., PA for this year’s audit
- Accept the Finance Reports
- Extend the option of cashing in one day of sick leave to all eligible OOI staff.
- Revise job descriptions of Program Manager (Education and Training & Technical Assistance Coordinator), Disabilities Coordinator/Classroom Staff Assistant Supervisor, Teacher and Teacher Assistant.
- Approve Policy 2-16 Payroll Process and Policy 3-10 Workers’ Compensation and Paid Leave
- Confirm offer on the “Old Clinton Head Start Building”.

Executive Committee Action Items February 25, 2016:

- Approve a $0.50 per hour wage increase for all regular and contract staff. Head Start staff August 1, 2015 — February 29, 2016; Community Services Block Grant staff October 1, 2015 — February 29, 2016.
- Hon. Terry Ott moved to accept the minutes of the November 24, 2015 Board of Directors Meeting, the minutes of the January 28, 2016 Executive Committee Meeting and to ratify the Executive Committee Action Items of January 28, 2016 and February 25, 2016. Morgan Sellers seconded. Motion carried unanimously.

4. Mutual of America Retirement Plan Review: Dan McDonie, Account Representative for Mutual of America, led the Board in the annual review of the Ozark Opportunities, Inc. 403(b) Thrift Plan. Mr. McDonie opened with a brief overview of Mutual of America, their client base (90% are non-profit groups), compensation philosophy (staff are salaried, not on commission), and service-oriented approach to business. He then described the services Mutual of America provides to OOI that help support the organization’s fiduciary responsibilities: staff/employee education, non-discrimination testing, IRS 5500 assistance, indemnification agreement with OOI that holds the agency harmless in the selection of investment choices. Mr. McDonie reviewed the Plan Administrator’s Checklist for 403(b) included in the plan review tool provided by Mutual of America. The checklist is kept current to keep up with regulatory and interpretation changes. Richard Atkinson, Executive Director reported to the Board that the checklist has been done and OOI is in compliance. Future annual reviews will be conducted with the Board of Directors as a scheduled event.
Mr. McDonie explained the fee structure in place for the agency’s plan; OOI is currently at Tier 1 (average expense ratio 1.69%) and will move to Tier 2 (average expense ratio 1.09%) when plan assets exceed $2 million. Further fee reductions occur when plan assets exceed $5 million. Because of our status as a Community Action Agency and membership in Community Action Partnership, employer fees are waived ($100 per month plus $4 per participant).

A Question and Answer Session followed, with Mr. McDonie providing answers:

Jim Sprott: When are fees are deducted?
A: Every month; performance rates on quarterly reports are after fees.

Althea O’Haver: Do employees chose their investments?
A: Yes; if they do not make a selection, the default fund is the target retirement date fund applicable to their age.

Althea O’Haver: Are there a variety of investments to cover different risk tolerance?
A: Yes. Mr. McDonie stated that OOI employee fees average 1.22%, reflecting a diverse range of investments by OOI staff. Morningstar ratings of Mutual of America funds range from 3 to 5 stars (5 star maximum). Mutual of America has not removed a fund in over 10 years; all of Mutual of America’s target date funds are 5 star. OOI’s fiduciary liability is reduced because Mutual of America selects the funds offered for investment; therefore Mutual of America is able to give OOI an indemnification agreement.

5. **OOI Strategic Plan Update:** Richard Atkinson, Executive & Head Start Director, provided an update of OOI’s Strategic Plan- he reviewed progress on the Strategic Plan “Action Items”—dental assistance, transportation needs, community assessment, homelessness, school readiness lunch & learn, early childcare (infants and toddlers) expansion grants and daycare partnership. He also reviewed a few of the “Items on Hold”, i.e. needs areas that have been identified, but no action taken at this time.

- Althea O’Haver commented that housing is an issue in Searcy County, as there aren’t any rental units available. Mr. Atkinson replied the agency is working with the local Continuum of Care groups on emergency housing solutions.

Mr. Atkinson reviewed the Strategic Plan— Theory of Action detailing the agency’s Strategic Commitments of “Stabilization” and “Development & Empowerment” with the members and asked if anyone had any questions or additions/revisions (none given.)
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VRLP: Mr. Atkinson requested approval to transfer $5,000 from Corporate Funds to support the Vehicle Repair Loan Program ("VRLP"), as the need was identified in the Matrix, and the recent pilot was successful. Jim Sprott asked; "How much is in the Corporate Account?" Shirley Richesin responded; "The unrestricted fund balance is around $180,000." After discussion, Gloria York asked; "If we don’t use it can we pull the funds allocated to VRLP back out?" Mr. Atkinson responded, "Yes, with Board Action."

Debra Clemons moved to approve transfer of $5,000 from Corporate Funds to support the Vehicle Repair Loan Program. Morgan Sellers seconded. Motion carried unanimously.


a. Childcare Licensing: Ms. Nelson began by explaining that Arkansas Childcare Licensing contains around 1,200 regulations(!) OOI holds 18 licenses at 14 sites (Mountain Home has 4 licenses). Licensing requirements include regular health inspections, fire inspections, water quality reports, minimum square footage per child (35 sq. ft. inside; 75 sq. ft. playground). New regulations went into effect January 2015 (with a reported 85 changes). Training was provided by DHS in May 2015 in Harrison.

Emergency preparedness is high priority and OOI participates in drills and training provided by schools in which centers are located. As a safety measure, doors are locked during certain hours of operation and cameras have been installed in most of our facilities: Clinton, Bruno-Pyatt, Shirley, St. Joe, Valley Springs, Yellville-Summit, Mountain Home, and Norfork. Cameras protect our staff from false allegations and give Coordinators/Director a view into the everyday operation of each classroom. Local internet speeds are a challenge to viewing the cameras in real time; however recordings are available on site.

Head Start employees are mandated reports of child maltreatment, abuse and neglect. We are obligated to self-report any licensing violations that may occur at our facilities. OOI has in place 100% Supervision Policy, requiring all classroom staff to commit to ensuring all children are under direct supervision 100% of the time. A staff is trained on 100% supervision on an annual basis and renews the agreement each year. OOI Head Start classrooms are all accredited by Better Beginnings with a 3 Star Rating (ratings range from 1 to 3 stars; with 3 being the best score achievable).

b. Nutrition: OOI Head Start feeds all children breakfast, lunch and an afternoon snack (2 locations have a morning snack instead of afternoon due to early breakfast and late lunch schedule) every day classrooms are in session. Our food and food-related needs are supplied by vendors who respond to OOI request for bids, via the sealed bid process. Contracts are let
annually. Current vendors are Sysco for food, Pippin for food-related items, Hiland for milk and some juices (Hiland provides refrigerator milk storage boxes at no additional cost.)

OOI Head Start cooks participate in annual training provided by CACFP (Child and Adult Care Food Program). OOI is reimbursed a set rate for each breakfast, lunch and snack served to Head Start students. The agency undergoes a Special Nutrition Audit every two years.

7. **Finance Report:** The Finance Report was reviewed earlier by the Executive Committee and ratified by the Board.
   - Secretary/Treasurer Ron McPherson moved to accept the Finance Report. Morgan Sellers seconded the motion. Motion carried unanimously.

8. **Program Updates** (Reports provided prior to the meeting)
   a. **HEAD START:** Ryan Clayborn, Program Manager / Education, Training & Technical Assistance Coordinator for OOI Head Start, provided the update of the Head Start Program. Funded enrollment level of 440 student was met last week; classrooms have been provided with new math & science supplies, new disabilities materials are in place, staff training at all levels has increased. Krystal Mayes and Ryan Clayborn attended “Head Start 101” training in Dallas; and a “War on Poverty Training,” conducted by David Bradley with the National Community Action Foundation (“NCAF”) was attended by Ryan Clayborn, Jennifer Bixler and Julie Smith. The Arkansas Head Start Institute is scheduled for next week and will be attended by most Coordinators. The second round of CLASS (Classroom Assessment Scoring System) observations will be conducted in March. Overall, scores are markedly improved over last year. Enrollment of students with disabilities is at 14% of funded enrollment (10% is the requirement); several new students are in need of health screenings.

   Mr. Atkinson added that the Head Start continuation grant has been received and the program has funding through June 30, 2016. We received more money than expected and are seeking clarification for the funds. No word yet on the re-competition grant. In addition, an additional safety item (a Fire Suppression System for the Clinton kitchen) was purchased.

   b. **COMMUNITY SERVICES:** Rebecca Hanlin, Community Services Director, provided updates on Community Services progress.

   **HEAP:** The Home Energy Assistance Program (HEAP) served 2,500 families with non-emergency assistance in the amount just under $300,000. 65 families received emergency assistance in the amount just under $14,000. Non-emergency assistance application period ends March 31, 2016. Emergency Assistance continues until September 30, 2016 (or earlier if the state sets another closing date.)
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CSBG Special Grants: A request for $20,000 in CSBG discretionary grants was made in August 2015 to fund several initiatives; OCS recently asked OOI to resubmit proposals for $9,000; targeted areas will include: Getting Ahead in a Just Getting By World, A Revolving Loan Fund, and Emergency Assistance funds. The proposal was submitted February 24, 2016 and funds must be spent by September 30, 2016.

Other Grants: Additional opportunities include an Emergency Solutions Grant (ESG) due in May 2016, and the Boone/Newton United Way grant due in April 2016.

SUCCESS/Getting Ahead: In the SUCCESS program, the first class of Getting Ahead in a Just Gettin’ by World graduated after completing 16 sessions of 3 hours each program designed to change the mindset of individuals to get them mentally ready to move forward. OOI Board Chairperson Jim Sprott graciously served as Master of Ceremonies at the graduation event. Aaron Evans, OOI’s newest Family Development Worker is now a certified facilitator for Getting Ahead.

Staffing: Most Community Services Staff are new: current tenure is from 3 months to 9 years. Recent retirees include Wanda McMurrin with 46 years and Susan Phelan with 10 years.

VISTA: Community Services may get a new VISTA; placement has been delayed from October 2015; hopefully the VISTA will start in early March, focusing on Family Development Activities in Searcy & Van Buren Counties. The VISTA worker is free to OOI for 1 year.

Other: Workforce Services has youth workers available; they will work on their GED for 20 hours per week and at a work experience job for 20 hours per week. We are in conversation with Workforce Services about obtaining workers through this program.

9. Corporate Services Update: Jane Bueg, Corporate Services Director, informed the Board of recent Head Start employment actions approved by Policy Council on February 23, 2016: Robin Wilson hired as a substitute and resignation of Family Service Worker Rana McNeely.
Ms. Bueg provided background on the 5-1 Employee Tattoo Policy, and 5-2 Employee Dress and Personal Appearance approved by Head Start Policy Council on October 20, 2015. These policies were presented to OOI Executive Committee of the Board of Directors on October 27, 2015.

The Committee moved to table the subject and send it to the full board for action with no recommendation from the Executive Committee. The Board was sent several documents to review prior to the meeting: 5-1 Employee Tattoo Policy, and 5-2 Employee Dress and Personal Appearance as approved by Head Start Policy Council, an alternate/simplified version of OOI Policy 5-2 Employee Dress and Personal Appearance, and a recap of area school dress codes currently in place for all schools in OOI service area.
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A lengthy discussion of the Policy Council approved Employee Tattoo Policy followed.

- Hon. Terry Ot: moved to retain current OOI Personnel Policy 5-2 Employee Dress and Personal Appearance. Morgan Sellers seconded the motion. The motion carried with one abstention from Gloria York.

Mr. Atkinson proceeded to explain the OOI Head Start Policy PDM1022 Impasse Procedures and solicited board members for the Impasse Committee.

- Althea O’Haver, Morgan Sellers and Gloria York volunteered to serve on the Impasse Committee. Mr. Atkinson will research the issue and explain the process to the Policy Council Chair and other relevant parties.

10. Adjournment: Chairperson Sprott again expressed the Board’s thanks to Debra Clemons and Althea O’Haver for providing the meeting venue. Adjournment declared by Chairperson Sprott at 8:42 p.m.

James D Sprott
Board Officer

5/19/16