Ozark Opportunities, Inc.
Board of Directors Executive Committee Meeting Minutes
April 28, 2015

The Ozark Opportunities, Inc. Board of Directors Executive Committee met at the Ozark Opportunities, Inc. Central office in Harrison, Arkansas, at 1:32 p.m. on Tuesday, April 28, 2015

Committee Members Present:

Jim Sprott Paulette Hill Gloria York Ron McPherson
via telephone

Hon. Roger Hooper via telephone

Committee Members Absent: none, Searcy County position vacant

Staff Members Present:

Richard T. Atkinson Shirley Richesin Jane Bueg Wanda Nelson
Ryan Clayborn Krystal Mayes

1. Meeting Called to Order:

The meeting was called to order by Jim Sprott, Board Chairperson at 1:32 p.m. A quorum was established.

2. Prior Meeting Minutes

- Gloria York moved to approve the March 30, 2015 minutes of the OOI Executive Committee. Ron McPherson seconded. Motion carried unanimously.

3. Executive Director’s Report: Emerging Issues & Opportunities and Planning Update

Richard Atkinson, Executive & Head Start Director, provided the membership an agency progress report: Derek Cromwell with the VISTA (Volunteers in Service to America) program office in Little Rock called today with the good news that OOI will be getting a volunteer through NAPHE (North Arkansas Partnership for Health Education). Our candidate will have to selected by July and attend training in Denver before they begin work.

Technology Plan Update: Mr. Atkinson was able to receive funds to purchase eight new computers for OOI outreach offices to serve as kiosks for client applications for services and other online resources through an opportunity from “Special CSBG” funds from OCS to CADC (Central Arkansas Development Corporation.)
The agency is in the process of updating anti-virus software on computers used in the administrative offices, and are exploring a move to an Enterprise System for applications and back-up. Mr. Atkinson is working on completing the OOI Technology Plan by the end of the month per OCS request.

The process for Head Start Recompetition will open soon; perhaps before June. There is a 60 day turn-around timeframe from RFP to grant application due date.

Agency-wise, the company is running well and keeping on course.

Ron McPherson queried as to who will try to compete with us (OOI) for the Head Start program. Mr. Atkinson replied that several organizations currently located within the state may submit competing applications, as they are close by: Arkansas Early Learning, Inc. and Northwest Arkansas Human Services, Inc. are possibilities, along with Save the Children. He noted that it could also be a for-profit organization such as CDI from Colorado. Head Start staff are busy gathering data, looking at our communities and conducting analysis of where we are and why. Two grants will have to be written; one for renewal (based on our present model) and one for recompetition.

4. Program Updates/Department Reports

A. Community Services

Since Community Services Director, Rebecca Hanlin remains captive of the Boone County Leadership Program, Mr. Atkinson provided the Community Services Update as detailed in the Agency Progress Report and vowed not to enroll her in anything else for a while 😊.

Energy Assistance for winter is over, with the Summer Program on the horizon. Approximately 80% of outreach staff time is utilized annually to execute the program. Assistance dollars to OOI clients are nearly $1,000,000 per year.

Margaret Duncan, Outreach Worker for Van Buren & Searcy Counties, will retire May 15, 2015. Our best wishes for a happy retirement are extended to Margaret. A replacement will be hired and the position is currently posted.

The Vehicle Repair Loan Program is not “taking off” as expected; individual income tax returns were received before the program started by local residents; thereby diminishing the need for help. The program funding has been amended to allow stability payments (water, housing, etc.); to apply for assistance the individual will need to enroll in our SUCCESS Program.
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The Boone County Community Services location now has an Experience Works placement that started this month. This individual will serve as an Assistant and will help to improve access to participants.

A CSBG Standards Review was conducted by staff from Office of Community Services on April 7, 2015. Four or five minor recommendations were made by OCS on items already identified by agency staff and are on track to be resolved in May; Mr. Atkinson will send the Re-Cap of those items to all Board members. The items needing action will be added to the May full Board Meeting agenda- that meeting will be a big one, with many priority items to be addressed, a strong quorum will be needed.

B. Head Start

Mr. Atkinson provided to the Committee a review of the classroom locations for the recompetition grant that passed by a vast majority of Head Start Policy Council members at their meeting on April 27, 2015:

- 263 Pre-K Head Start enrollment slots in 17 classrooms (Mountain Home (4), Norfork (1), Cotter (1) Harrison (4), Valley Springs (1), Bruno-Pyatt (1), Yellville-Summit (1), Jasper (1), Western Grove (1), St. Joe (1), & Shirley (1).

- Addition of 48 Early Head Start slots in 6 classrooms (of 8 students each): Mountain Home (2), Harrison (2), Flippin (1), Clinton (1).

Total number of staff will increase by 1 or 2. Filling classrooms should be realistic, some locations for Head Start may struggle to fill, as the population of eligible children is low (i.e. St. Joe & Shirley); our target outcome is to enroll 100% low-income children. Consultation with OUR ABC Preschool Coordinator, Cindy Lambe, indicates that ABC slots may be able to be increased in Alpena through an addition of slots from the state OR shifting of a classroom from another location.

Ron McPherson inquired about the financial ramifications of the proposed change. Mr. Atkinson replied that the amount of the grant remains the same; the grant will be written with a budget of $16,000 per infant/toddler and $7,200 per Pre-K student. We can meet these enrollment numbers and quite likely will have a waiting list (as required by Head Start). This plan does require a loss of centers; we will need Board action as soon as possible. The new model will start with the August 2016 school year. Mr. McPherson asked why reductions in classroom numbers? Shirley Richesin, Finance Director for OOI replied that the level of funding is non-negotiable, and the numbers not only will keep us within the budgeted amount, but will allow smaller classrooms and; therefore, as lower teacher-to-child ratio.
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Mr. Atkinson distributed the Head Start Policy Council approved locations schedule (along with data analysis) for School Year 2016-2017, stating this will allow us to “get our feet wet” and gain experience with Early Head Start and hopefully additional slots will be funded and made available for application in a few years.

Hon. Hooper said, “I hear you saying you are wanting to close the Clinton Center”, and stated he wants to give it a month and make it a full Board decision.

Ryan Clayborn, Head Start Program Manager & Education Coordinator provided the balance of the Head Start Program update, including enrollment report & meals served. Staff are busy with home visits, and transition conferences with public schools, including IEPs (Individual Education Plans). All required physical and dental exams are nearly completed. May 15, 2015 is the final date for students. A Post-Service Training for all staff will be conducted May 18, 2015, followed by work days for staff to conduct inventory and clean-up. Mr. Clayborn reported that Enhancement Coordinator, Crystal Samsel is now CLASS Reliable, and all Coordinators have been completing a lot of professional development.

5. Head Start Training

Krystal Mayes, Parent Engagement Coordinator for Head Start, provided training on Parent Engagement and Volunteers, including in-kind donations (Non-Federal Share) and Male Involvement.

Wanda Nelson, Licensing & Facilities Coordinator for Head Start, provided training on the Nutrition component for the program. Head Start Performance Standards require that students are offered 2/3 of their minimum daily requirements of nutrition through meals and snacks in the center. Ms. Nelson gave an overview of the CACFP (Child & Adult Care Food Program) contract and grant application, along with the annual bid process for food that is conducted each summer and a copy of the Meal Plan (Menu) for the locations with kitchen facilities.

6. Acceptance of Program Reports- Mr. Atkinson asked if anyone had questions about the Agency Report- there were no questions.

❖ Ron McPherson moved to accept the Agency Progress Report. Paulette Hill seconded. Motion carried unanimously.
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7. Finance Report

Shirley Richesin, Finance Director, presented to the Committee for their review, consideration and approval Agency Budget. Expenditure Reports for Community Service Block Grant and Head Start and Credit Card Statement Re-Cap and review (documents sent prior to meeting) for March 2015. Credit Card purchase documentation was present for inspection. Also included in the Finance Reports were Payroll and Payroll Taxes Report and Retirement Plan Recap.

Considerable discussion ensued on the challenges of developing an Agency Budget and Expenditure Report when various grants have different cycles and spending patterns of the Home Energy Assistance Program are so extreme. Only one grant coincides with the agency fiscal year- the Head Start Grant.

Ms. Richesin updated the Committee on communication with Mutual of America (our retirement company) on possible changes to the agency retirement plan; assurances were received that these changes could be made at no cost to the agency. Necessary documents can be provided by Mutual of America for action at the Board’s convenience. The members instructed Ms. Richesin to move forward with the Plan Amendment for presentation at the May meeting.

- Ron McPherson moved to accept the Finance Report(s). Gloria York seconded. Motion carried unanimously.

8. Corporate Services Update

Jane Bueg, Corporate Services Director, reported on Employment Actions and OOI Policy 6-11 Adverse Weather Conditions Policy, both approved by Head Start Policy Council on April 27, 2015. Also presented for Board approval is the Job Description for Assistant/EW position.

- Ron McPherson moved to accept 6-11 Adverse Weather Conditions Policy, and Job Description for Assistant/EW. Gloria York seconded. Motion carried unanimously.

Chairperson Sprott asked if the agency would have increased risk/liability with the changing focus of Head Start to infants and toddlers. Ms. Bueg responded that she would clarify with our insurance carrier the adequacy of our coverage.

Ms. Bueg presented for Board consideration and approval a Reduction-in-Force plan for the proposed changes in Head Start. Hon. Hooper asked if Ms. Bueg will send out the Reduction-in-Force (RIF) scenario prior to the May 21 meeting (at least a week ahead of time) for study by the Board. Mr. Sprott requested Ms. Bueg meet with him to discuss the proposed plan in detail.
Hon. Hooper asked if the changes to Head Start will be voted on by the full Board at the May 21, 2015 meeting; Mr. Atkinson responded “Yes, as time is of the essence.”

Gloria York requested the Board take into consideration when adopting a RIF plan, that some parents make decisions on where to place their children based on the Teacher’s skills, especially with special needs children and/or children with Individual Improvement Plans (I.E.P.’s). She used herself as an example, noting that she chose to transition her son from Early Head Start at Western Grove into the Head Start classroom at Valley Springs next year because she was assured Mrs. Urisote (the Lead Teacher) has the special skills and patience needed to effectively teach her special needs child.

9. **Adjourn:** There being no further business, Chairperson Sprott declared the meeting adjourned at 3:22 p.m.

[Signature]

Board Officer

Date: 5/21/15