Ozark Opportunities, Inc.
Board of Directors Meeting Minutes
August 28, 2014

The Ozark Opportunities, Inc. Board of Directors met at City Hall in Western Grove, Arkansas, at 6:00 p.m. on Thursday, August 28, 2014

Board Members Present:
Jim Sprott          Paulette Hill          Judy Schenk          Hon. Mickey Pendergrass
Julie Tilley        Lisa Nunley          Gloria York          Laurel Orr
Donna Grinder       Danny Griffin        Nedra Daniels        Debra Clemons
Althea O’Haver

Board Members Absent:
Hon. Terry Ott      Paula Crawford        Ron McPherson        Hon. Roger Hooper
Clyde Johnson

Staff Members Present:
Richard T. Atkinson Shirley Richesin    Jane Bueg            Rebecca Hanlin
Krystal Mayes       Melissa Riggins        Patricia Murray     Wanda Nelson
Ryan Clayborn      Loretta Blair         Pam Klunk

Guests Present:
Lanna Bullington, Early Childhood Education Consultant, George Hill, Jan Larson

1. Meeting Called to Order:

The quarterly meeting of Ozark Opportunities, Inc. Board of Directors was called to order by Jim Sprott, Board Chairperson at 6:07 p.m. A quorum was established. Mr. Sprott welcomed everyone to the meeting.

The pre-meeting meal was prepared by Newton County Board member Judy Schenk (with some help from Nedra Daniels who brought a side item.) The meal was delicious- THANKS JUDY & NEDRA!

a. WELCOME & AWARDS: Mr. Atkinson began the meeting with a welcome, and then described the events of Tuesday, August 26, 2014 (highlighting his story with photographs projected for all to see) when an out-of-control vehicle plowed into the playground at Marshall Head Start; an unlikely event, as the playground is not anywhere near the open road.
A customer of Ozark Opportunities, Inc. who was leaving the property made an error in judgment and shifted the vehicle into “Drive” instead of “Reverse,” and then accelerated instead of braking. Head Start staff, Teacher Pam Klunk and Teacher Assistant Loretta Blair, were nearby supervising the children’s outdoor learning time—Ms. Klunk heard the engine rev and the sound of flying gravel and yelled to Ms. Blair to get the children to the other end of the playground. Most of the children ran; however, two of the children were so frightened they could not move and were carried to safety by the teaching staff.

The result was the vehicle destroyed the playground fence before coming to rest impalec in the side of the Head Start warehouse. Twelve children were on the playground at the time, playing in the shade of a large tree not far from the fence. No child or adult was injured throughout the event, and the damage is expected to be repaired in the near future, as a contractor has already been contacted to survey the damage and give an estimate for the repairs.

Ms. Klunk and Ms. Blair were present to accept Recognition Awards from Program Manager, Ryan Clayborn. The award reads:

“The Board of Directors, Head Start Policy Council and Staff of Ozark Opportunities, Inc. express their gratitude to Pam Klunk, Marshall Head Start Teacher and Loretta Blair, Marshall Head Start Teacher Assistant who, on August 26, 2014, by virtue of their clear thinking and quick action protected the students under their care from harm and injury.”

Mr. Atkinson also awarded each of them a day of Administrative Leave in thanks for their service.

b. WELCOME TO NEWTON COUNTY: Ms. Schenk introduced her sister and fellow Newton County member Jan Larson, who provided the group with an informative talk on the history, culture, economy and diversity of Newton County.

2. Acceptance of prior meeting minutes

Chairperson Sprott refreshed the members on the current membership of the Executive Committee of the Board: Jim Sprott, Paulette Hill, Ron McPherson, Hon. Roger Hooper, and Donna Grinder.

- Judy Schenk moved to accept the minutes of the May 27, June 30 and July 24, 2014 Executive Committee Meetings and the May 27, 2014 Board of Directors Meeting. Debra Clemons seconded. Motion carried unanimously.
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3. Ratification of actions of the Executive Committee

Mr. Sprott presented to the membership Executive Committee actions to be ratified by the Board.

- Paulette Hill moved to accept and to ratify the actions of the Executive Committee May 27, June 30, and July 24, 2014. Althea O’Haver seconded. Motion carried unanimously.

4. Election of Officers

Mr. Sprott detailed the current officers of the Board: Jim Sprott Chairperson, Paulette Hill Vice Chairperson and Donna Grider Secretary-Treasurer. The current officers have agreed to serve another year at the Board’s pleasure.

- Debra Clemons moved elect by acclamation the current officers of the Board. Danny Griffin seconded. Motion carried unanimously.

Mr. Sprott gave a summary of the Executive Committee duties, meeting place and frequency of meetings and asked a member of the Newton County delegation to serve, as all other counties are represented. Gloria York volunteered.

- Danny Griffin moved to approve Gloria York for Executive Committee membership. Hon. Mickey Pendergrass seconded. Motion carried unanimously.

5. Executive Directors Report

Mr. Atkinson reported that, overall, the agency is sound and moving in a positive strategic direction. A Strategic Planning Session was held in Harrison recently with Board, Staff and Community Partners participating.

Mr. Atkinson and Rebecca Hanlin are assuming responsibility for some of the key target areas remain a focus in the area of community development.

As a member of several Boards, Mr. Atkinson remains involved in the strategic process on the state and national level. Membership includes Arkansas Access to Justice Foundation, Community Resource Group (CRG) as Secretary/Treasurer & Arkansas Community Action Agencies Association (ACAAA) as Chair.
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Rose Adams, Executive Director of ACAA has recently tendered her notice of retirement. Mr. Atkinson expects to spend more time in Little Rock to oversee the transition of leadership to new staff for that organization.

Mr. Atkinson also mentioned that in the near future it is his expectation is that all federal funding sources will have a re-competition element in their standards. Renewal of grant awards will no longer happen routinely for an infinite period of time.

In preparation for the likely future transition to Early Head Start, Mr. Atkinson & Mr. Clayborn toured the Newton County Early Head Start facilities and discussed the requirements of the program (which are much different than the current age group.)

6. **Program Updates** (Reports provided prior to the meeting):

   a. **COMMUNITY SERVICES** – Rebecca Hanlin, Community Services Director, provided the Board with an update on the Home Energy Assistance Program. Crisis Intervention Program will start September 2nd and will assist those households with electric shut-off notices and those in need of establishing electric service. Roughly $51,000 will be available for assistance through the end of the application period, September 30, 2014. About 2,000 households have been assisted this summer with non-emergency electricity energy assistance; nearly $300,000 in benefit assistance paid so far.

   *Althea O’Haver asked how much CIP was spent in 2013? Ms. Hanlin responded around $50,000. A re-allocation of funds could occur near the end of the application period, so our allocation could grow or shrink, depending on our level of spending.*

   Food was distributed to the counties on August 19, with distribution beginning this week.

   September SUCCESS Seminar topic is Energy Conservation & Efficiency (Water Conservation & Recycling). October is a planning and assessment month, November will begin the new recruitment period for participants in the program.

   Mr. Atkinson pointed out to the Board that OOI Community Services programs are really “wrapping around” Head Start, beginning with the program year starting October 1. Head Start Policy Council will be invited to help develop strategies directed toward the Head Start families.
Shirley Richesin, Finance Director, presented for Board approval the 2014 CSBG Revised Budget, including carryover from the October 1, 2013 – June 30, 2014 grant. CSBG grant is divided into two grant cycles: October 1 – June 30 (to coincide with the state’s fiscal year), and July 1 – September 30 (end of federal fiscal year). The budget transfers approximately $25,000 ($28,608 to be exact- RTA) of unobligated funds into the remaining 3 month grant. The Work Plan and budget categories are unchanged.

- Debra Clemons moved to accept the CSBG 2014 Revised Budget, including carryover. Nedra Daniels seconded. Motion carried unanimously.

b. **HEAD START** – Mr. Atkinson presented the Head Start Program **2013-14 Head Start Report to the Public**, which includes the following:
   - Program Summary
   - Year End Schedule of Expenditures (SF425)
   - Summary of Program Results and Benefits (toward short and long-term goals)
   - Progress toward School Readiness Goals

The Head Start classrooms are utilizing **Teaching Strategies Gold** as the assessment tool and **Adventures in Learning** for curriculum. Staff are currently engaged in training to incorporate the Conscious Discipline approach in the classroom. Head Start is an evidence-based program where evaluation is crucial. We are working hard to plan strategies with the end in mind, and create evaluation tools to measure progress before beginning any activity expected to have impact.

- Althea O’Haver moved to approve all components of the Head Start Program 2013-14 **Annual Report to the Public**. Paulette Hill seconded. Motion carried unanimously.

7. **Head Start Training**

   a. Head Start Performance Standards, Head Start Act, Federal Review, Protocol and OMB Circular information were today’s training focus. Mr. Atkinson provided the Board with a tour of each of these documents and stressed the importance of each. An excellent source of guidance and information on all things Head Start is the **Early Childhood Learning and Knowledge Center** or “ECLKC”, an online resource located at: **https://eclkc.ohs.acf.hhs.gov**
Lanna Bullington, Early Childhood Education Consultant for OOI Head Start noted the high level of cooperation from OOI in the Disabilities Services component. OOI graciously shares student information and screening results with the Co-Op staff, thus reducing over-testing of small children. This cooperation is not the reality her staff experiences with most other programs.

Gloria York voiced her praise of Western Grove Head Start Center staff who she observed training the children in walking safely through the school parking lot; Ms. York observed staff counting children many times and following procedures for child safety.

- Mr. Atkinson noted that OOI is making progress in making procedures uniform which will enhance consistency among all classrooms.

b. Ms. Richesin provided the Board with a detailed explanation of the Head Start SF 425 Year-End Financial Report. Projections for the grant year were off for the fiscal year, as the two accounting systems in place during this period complicated the accuracy of the projections. Additionally, the agency was very proactive in responding to the Sequestration Budget cuts, saving money whenever an opportunity arose (staffing, non-essential expenses). Ms. Richesin and Mr. Atkinson presented to the Board a proposed budget for the unspent previous year program funds to be allocated toward technology, finance software, facility & safety improvements, training and Education Opportunity Grants for staff and parents.

- Judy Schenk moved to approve the proposed budget for unexpended Head Start funds. Debra Clemons seconded. Motion carried unanimously.

8. Acceptance of Program Reports

- Nedra Daniels moved to accept the Agency Progress Report, including Program Reports. Gloria York seconded. Motion carried unanimously.
9. Finance Reports

c. Shirley Richesin presented for review and acceptance OOI Financial Reports for the period ending July 31, 2014. Reports include CSBG Expenditure Report, Head Start Expenditure Report, Credit Card Re-Cap, Payroll and Payroll Taxes Report & Retirement Report. Head Start expenditures on track for this point in time in both the grant period and school year; original back-up information for credit card expenditures was available for review.

Employer contributions to the Retirement Plan are now made monthly. Chairperson Sprctt observed that the plan initially opened with approximately $900,000 and has grown to $1.2 million. Ms. Richesin reported that completing the IRS 5500 return is much easier to prepare for with Mutual America.

d. Ms. Richesin provided the Board with an update on the Annual Audit progress. The process is going well; OOI is using a new firm this year and scheduling on-site time is more complex than with the previous auditor. An extension has been requested and approved. The final audit report will be submitted by the end of September.

e. Ms. Richesin presented for discussion and Board action the adoption of an Unrestricted Net Assets Policy. The agency reserve funds (often referred to as “Corporate Funds at OOI) balance is approximately $200,000 at this time. Best practices recommend a 3 month supply of cash. OOI has very few opportunities to build the balance of the Corporate Funds account. Mr. Atkinson pointed out that this pot of money has enabled OOI to function without a line of credit. The agency has no current policy on authorization for spending these funds. Ms. Richesin suggested the Board set a dollar amount limit that the Executive Director can authorize spending, regular reporting on unrestricted net assets. Currently this balance shows up only in the annual audit.

Althea O’Haver asked for clarification on what OOI was seeking in a policy. Chairperson Sprott recommended the Board assign the task of creation of a policy to the Executive Committee. The membership agreed by general consensus.
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f. Ms. Richesin then asked the Board to appoint a member to serve as Finance Liaison. Board member Ron McPherson has been serving in an unofficial capacity, and recently attended a training in Conway to assist in developing a “Dashboard Report” to better report finances to the Board of Directors.

- Hon. Mickey Pendergrass moved to accept the Finance Report and appoint Ron McPherson as Finance Liaison. Gloria York seconded the motion. Motion carried unanimously.

g. Ms. Richesin appraised the membership of the need for additional authorized check signers for the agency. Policy requires two signatures on each check; employees who sign the authorization for payment are restricted by agency policy from signing the check. Current, active check signers are: Richard Atkinson, Wanda Nelson, Jane Bueg, Melissa Riggins and Rebecca Hanlin. New signers to be added are Terri Beard and Krystal Mayes. Chairperson Sprott stated that a Board Resolution is required by the banking industry.

- Debra Clemons moved to create the Board Resolution to add Terri Beard and Krystal Mayes as authorized signers of agency checks. Lisa Nunley seconded the motion. Motion carried unanimously.

10. Corporate Services Update:

a. Jane Bueg, Corporate Services Director, requested Board approval of Job Descriptions for Finance Coordinator and Operations Coordinator approved by Head Start Policy Council on 8/27/14. In response to questions from the Board, Ms. Bueg answered that the Finance Coordinator position is an approved position in the current Head Start budget and the Operations Coordinator is the new job description for the current Administrative Assistant I for Head Start. The employee, Melissa Riggins, has been responsible for the duties described, and her compensation is appropriate for her level of responsibility. Chairperson Sprott inquired about an item on the Operations Coordinator job description that references Wal-Mart credit cards. Ms. Richesin answered that some staff, primarily cooks, need a card to purchase perishable items.

- Judy Schenk moved to approve the job descriptions for Finance Coordinator and Operations Coordinator. Gloria York seconded the motion. Motion carried unanimously.
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b. Ms. Bueg next presented for discussion and Board action the adoption of a revised Grievance Procedure policy and new Termination Appeal policy. Mr. Atkinson offered background on the limitations of the current policy and the need to have a separate policy to appeal terminations.

Considerable discussion of both policies followed, with Hon. Mickey Pendergrass inquiring if there was a policy establishing a Personnel Committee? If not, it appears these policies put the horse before the cart. He offered to send a copy of Baxter County Grievance Policy as a sample. Mr. Atkinson responded that the Board Bylaws give guidance in that respect, but that a Personnel Committee is no currently in place.

Chairperson Sprott recommended the Executive Committee look at these policies at their September meeting and present revised policies at the next meeting of the Board. The membership agreed by general consensus.

c. Recent correspondence from Head Start Region VI asked the Policy Council and Board of Directors to take action to hire Mr. Atkinson as Head Start Director on a permanent basis, if that is their desire (as he has been “Acting” Head Start Director since February of 2011). The Head Start Policy Council approved the action to hire Richard T. Atkinson as Head Start Director at their August 27, 2014 meeting. Ms. Bueg asked for Board Action to do the same.

德育Clemons moved to hired Richard T. Atkinson as Head Start Director. Althea O’Haver seconded the motion. Motion carried unanimously.


德育O’Haver moved to approve the Employment Actions. Judy Schenk seconded. Motion carried unanimously.

德育Danny Griffin moved to adjourn. Debra Clemons seconded. Meeting adjourned.

11. Meeting adjourned 8:20 p.m.

[Signature]
Board Officer

[Signature] 9/29/14
Date

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