Ozark Opportunities, Inc.
Board of Directors Executive Committee Meeting Minutes
September 24, 2015

The Ozark Opportunities, Inc. Board of Directors Executive Committee met at the Ozark Opportunities, Inc. Central office in Harrison, Arkansas, at 2:15 p.m. on Thursday, September 24, 2015.

Executive Committee Members Present:
Jim Sprott
Ron McPherson
Gloria York
Hon. Roger Hooper
(via telephone)

Committee Members Absent:
Debra Clemons
Paulette Hill

Board Members Present:
None

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

Guests Present:
Shawna Jeffery

1. Meeting Called to Order:

The meeting was called to order by Jim Sprott, Board Chairperson at 2:15 p.m. A quorum was established.

2. Prior Meeting Minutes

- Ron McPherson moved to approve the August 27, 2015 minutes of the OOI Executive Committee. Gloria York seconded. Motion carried unanimously.
3. Training

Ryan Clayborn, Program Manager/Education & T/TA Coordinator for Head Start, conducted Board Training on CLASS (Classroom Assessment Scoring System), School Readiness Agenda, Curriculum, Frameworks and Training & Technical Assistance (T/TA) Plan for 2015-2016.

Both Mr. Clayborn & Mr. Atkinson (Executive & Head Start Director,) educated the Committee on the use of CLASS throughout the school year and as a measurement tool during the Head Start Triennial Review (it was low Instructional Support scores that put OOI into recompetition for the Head Start grant).

- The agency has 6 reliable observers on staff: Ryan Clayborn, Tricia Murray, Crystal Samsel, Maria Alexopoulos-Shortt, Pam Keeling & Carrie Ragland. The reduced classroom size in the new model should lead to higher CLASS scores. Performance Improvement Plans are implemented for Teachers who are not performing as needed on CLASS.
- Tamara Brickey, T&TA Specialist for OOI, was at the agency this week to provide technical support on OOI Head Start training needs.
- School Readiness Meetings are held periodically in Harrison, with parents, school officials (including principals), Policy Council and public invited to attend.
- OOI Head Start uses Creative Curriculum, along with other curriculum resources, in the classroom. Teaching Strategies Gold is utilized as the assessment tool; both mesh with Head Start Frameworks (Domains). OOI is using the best assessment tool and the best curriculum available.
- The T&TA Plan for 2015-2016 has a budget of $42,305. Regular grant funds also support training opportunities for Head Start staff.
- Mr. Atkinson reported that the distribution process for Arkansas Better Beginnings funds has changed. Funding will no longer be automatic, individual grant requests must be made for each training. OOI received approximately $25,000 annually from Arkansas Better Beginnings for staff development and classroom enhancement.
- After a general Q & A regarding Policy Council, Gloria York, who serves as Board Liaison to Policy Council, described the Policy Council Training process. Mr. Atkinson remarked that Ms. York is an asset to the agency, with her years of experience as a Head Start parent, an Early Head Start parent, and past Policy Council member for both programs. Her experience with Early Head Start can give us insight to the challenges and opportunities of having the program.
4. Finance Report

Shirley Richesin, Finance Director, introduced Shawna Jeffery, Lead Auditor from Welch, Couch & Co. Ms. Jeffery will meet with the Executive Committee privately later in the meeting.

Ms. Richesin presented to the Committee for their review, consideration and approval Agency Budget for 3/1/15 – 2/29/16, Grant Period Expenditures as of 8/31/15 for Community Service Block Grant and Head Start, Credit Card Statement Re-Cap and review (documents sent prior to meeting) for August 2015. Credit card purchase documentation is present for inspection. Also included in the Finance Reports were verification of Payroll Taxes Report and Retirement Plan Recap.

Ms. Richesin noted that the non-federal match for the Head Start grant is above target for this period of time. $33,000 for space donation is generated each month (assessment values for in-kind value of property is current).

Ms. Richesin also noted that the Balance Sheet was not distributed; Ms. Jeffery is staying through Friday to provide Training & Technical Assistance for Finance Staff; the Balance Sheet should be available at the next meeting.

Ms. Jeffery said that the number of changes in the trial balance during the audit process was a small issue, and management had already made progress on the matter. Ms. Richesin pointed out that multiple trial balances were a result of the differences between the old system and the new system in the receivables category and is being corrected.

- Ron McPherson moved to accept the Finance Reports. Hon. Roger Hooper seconded. Motion carried unanimously.

5. Audit Discussion

Shawna Jeffery met privately with the Committee; all staff were excused from the meeting.
6. Program Updates

   a. Community Services

Rebecca Hanlin updated the members on the Community Services projects. LIHEAP (low-income home energy assistance program) Summer Assistance will end 9/21/2015 as recently ordered by OCS. The Summer LIHEAP is scheduled for monitoring next week. The corrective action plan OOI submitted for the Winter LIHEAP monitoring in May was approved by OCS this month. Correspondence from OCS included in meeting materials.

Two new staff in Community Services is scheduled to begin employment on October 5, 2015. Ms. Hanlin also provided an update on OOI’s VISTA worker. The new worker is currently living in Tennessee, and should be available to start at OOI in December or January, after completing VISTA training.

“Getting Ahead in a Just Getting’ by World” classes have started with Julie Smith, Family Development Worker and Rebecca Hanlin training our Head Start Family Service Workers. The full course consists of 16, 3-hour sessions. Ms. Hanlin shared an illustrated “mental model” crafted by one of the participants, which addresses the question: What is your life now?

In closing, Ms. Hanlin invited all to attend the first SUCCESS Awards Banquet on Friday, September 25, 2015. The inaugural Believe & Achieve Awards will be presented at 7:00 p.m.; 9 SUCCESS participants will be recognized.

b. Head Start:

Mr. Atkinson provided the Committee with an update on both Head Start Program report for period ending 8/31/15 and a status report on the Recompetition Grant application. Mr. Atkinson went over current enrollment in detail, as program enrollment has not yet reached funded level of 440 students. Several classrooms targeted for closing next year are currently under-enrolled, among them Mountain Home and Alpena. Bruno-Pyatt also has low enrollment figures.

This year’s Policy Council met for the first time on Tuesday, September 22, 2015. Some new Policy Council parents are wanted to revisit the decisions made last year on site closings. Mr. Atkinson met with Flippin Superintendent Dale Query. Mr. Query is not happy with the decision to close Flippin Head Start and will let him (Mr. Atkinson) know later on Flippin School’s role in Early Head Start.
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Mr. Atkinson and staff continue to meet with Susan Johnston, consultant hired by OOI to write the recompetition grant for Head Start. Research is continuing on center-based Early Head Start services.


7. Corporate Services Update

Corporate Services Director Jane Bueg presented to the Committee the employment actions that occurred since the last meeting.

Staff hired:
• Joshua “Blaine” Lawrence, Program Coordinator for Community Services.
• Brandi Patrick, Family Development Worker for Community Services.
• Larcie Paulin, Substitute for Head Start.

Resignations accepted:
• Alison Parks, Head Start Teacher for Clinton.

Chairperson Sprott asked if there were any questions; Ms. York inquired about in-home Early Head Start Services. Mr. Atkinson replied that in-home services are not really in the plan, although Ms. Johnston recommended possibly adding a home visitor component to our plan. Mr. Atkinson has had conversations with OOI Board Member Kristen Smith, who works in a program that provides services for young mothers and their infants through home visits in Van Buren County. A major challenge to the success of the program is getting families to commit to a home visit and investing the required time for a successful visit. Ms. York added that a lot of people in our communities are reluctant to invite outsiders into their homes; it could be said it is part of our culture of privacy here.

8. Adjourn:

There being no further business, Chairperson Sprott declared the meeting adjourned at 3:45 p.m.

[Signature] 11/6/15
Board Officer  Date