Ozark Opportunities, Inc. Executive Committee
Meeting Minutes
March 26, 2013

The Ozark Opportunities, Inc. Board of Directors Executive Committee met at the Ozark Opportunities, Inc. Central Office in Harrison, Arkansas at 2:00 p.m. on March 26, 2013.

Committee Members Present:
Jim Sprott
Kim Hunley
Paulette Hill (via telephone 2:03 p.m.)

Donna Grinder
Ron McPherson
Mickey Pendergrass

Staff Members Present:
Richard T. Atkinson
Rebecca Hanlin

Shirley Richesin
Emily Crow

Alma Sackett

Meeting Called to Order:

The meeting was called to order by Kim Hunley, Board Chairperson at 2:04 p.m. A quorum was present. Mrs. Hunley welcomed everyone to the meeting.

I. Acceptance of prior meeting minutes:

Mr. Atkinson asked the Executive Committee to review and approve the minutes from the February 19, 2013 board meeting minutes (sent prior to meeting via email.)

☑ Ron McPherson made the motion to accept the minutes from the February 19, 2013 board meeting minutes as they were presented. Donna Grinder seconded the motion. Motion carried unanimously.

II. Program Updates:

A. Community Services:

Ms. Hanlin gave a brief summary of the Community Services Update. They have received 3,300 applications that have been paid out on the regular HEAP program ("HEAP" = Home Energy Assistance Program). There were 400 applications for ECIP that had been received, and the program ends March 29, 2013.
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The Emergency Food Assistance Program (TEFAP) provided food for each county between March 15-22 (Distribution depended on location.) Baxter, Boone, and Newton counties are out of food; however, Marion, Searcy, and Van Buren have a little food left.

Ms. Hanlin also mentioned the United Way Grant is due this month, which will fund the 2014 SUCCESS Goal Coaching program that supports people working toward educational or employment goals in Boone and Newton counties.

B. Head Start:

Ms. Sackett gave the Head Start Update. The little white house is gone and was moved to its new location on Washington Street. Ozark Opportunities, Inc. donated the house to Fuller Center for Housing to benefit a low income family. Mrs. Sackett also reported that the two Head Start classes have completed their move to the modular unit next door, and it is working out nicely. In addition, other upgrades have been done; including a landscaped wall added at the back of the Marshall facility to improve the appearance and help deal with water issues, and there are now cameras in Shirley and Marshall centers. There are a few Head Start Centers that are still low on attendance and it is important to watch for trends in this area for the future.

Also, because of the Sandy Hook Elementary School shooting, and other violent acts at schools, Ozark Opportunities, Inc. Head Start is working to make all Head Start locations more secure. We are installing locks for security, and soon all centers will have new procedures for center entry and an updated lockdown procedure. Door bells are also being added so staff will be able to identify the person requesting entry to the classroom before deciding to let them enter. In addition, OOI Head Start is working with schools to integrate into their Emergency and Intruder Plans.

Mr. Atkinson mentioned that the old Clinton Head Start location on Hwy. 65 has been listed with a Realtor, and it is priced reasonably (with Realtor guidance) to insure a quick sale. Discussion ensued; including questions about how much is owed, how much it is listed for, appraised value, and condition of the property.
Mr. Atkinson replied that there is nothing owed, it is listed for $149,900, the last appraised value was $230,000, and the property was an old funeral parlor and is in decay (and has been for several years.) The property is not well situated (too close to the road and limited parking.) and after the tornado a few years ago, the building has not been the same since.

- Jim Sprott made a motion to order a current appraisal of the Clinton property. Hon. Mickey Pendergrass seconded the motion. Motion carried unanimously.

- Jim Sprott made the motion to limit the appraisal to $1,000 or under. Hon. Mickey Pendergrass seconded the motion. Motion carried unanimously.

C. Weatherization

Since Mr. McCallister was not able to attend the meeting (as he is doing final inspections and trying to close the program) Mr. Atkinson gave the Weatherization Report. He explained that had and the Weatherization and Finance staff have spent the last few weeks trying to close out the ARRA program- all the paperwork has been completed and submitted, they only are waiting on the ARRA specific and agency-wide audit at this time. Mr. Atkinson will send a copy of the final ARRA Program Report (WAP 33) to the Board for review.

There are currently 11 homes left to be completed by June 2013. There is still a lot to be done before the DOE/LIHEAP program can be closed out.

Mr. Atkinson reported back in August of 2012, there was a “whistleblower complaint” against the agency. The state DHS Office of Quality Assurance interviewed staff and took 1 year worth of records to review They found there was no evidence to support the allegations. There was extensive discussion on the matter- Mr. Atkinson explained that he had visited with the Board Chair at the time of the complaint to insure the Board was kept in the loop, and had requested formal correspondence from the state on the matter to share, but did not receive anything until this month (and it was a final report detailing the situation and findings.)

Mr. Sprott said that he felt that Mr. Atkinson did the right thing by getting the Board Chair involved. Mr. Atkinson mentioned that he would like additional input from the Board about how to handle the issue in the future; in the interim if there is another instance he will report to the Board that the agency has had a complaint, and will share the findings with the Board when the investigation is complete.
Mr. McPherson then asked about the long-term plan for the Marshall Weatherization office. Mr. Atkinson replies that the warehouse is an agency asset, and can be used for storage—there is also a conditioned office in the front part of the building that gives the agency options on use of the building, but we will have to be aware of the proximity of the Head Start center. Mr. McPherson asked where any leftover money will go after the Weatherization program is closed. Ms. Richesin replied with it will go back to the federal government to be re-distributed.

- Jim Sprott made the motion to accept the Governing Board Report. Ron McPherson seconded the motion. Motion carried unanimously.

III. Finance

Ms. Richesin gave a summary of the Finance Report, which included the Credit Card expenditures. Ms. Richesin reported that they completed payroll on the Sage Accounting System on March 15, 2013. They had some minor issues that took a little time to resolve, but it seems to be working well.

Ms. Richesin opened the floor for questions about the program financial reports. Mr. Sprott asked if some categories go over budget, for example utilities, supplies and employment development. Ms. Richesin replied that the budget is done many months in advance, and we use historical values to prepare the budget. In regard to the Head Start budget, the “Other” category is broken out for Board members on the report, but is not required to be for the funding source. In addition, Head Start has the greatest flexibility, and we remain within the regulations when moving funds between budget areas. Any non-utilized funds from last year were invested; and were used for playgrounds and center improvements and other needs that will benefit the children and program in the coming years.

Ms. Richesin then explained the overage for each budget category to insure members understood why they were over. Additional discussion followed. Mr. Sprott asked why the program supply line is so must over budget for Head Start. Ms. Richesin explained that we have to replenish consumables (paper, reports, etc.), when we do our budget for Head Start (rent, utilities, telephones), and extra expenditures, which includes the 26 classrooms. Ms. Sackett explained some of the reasons about the credit card expenditures. She said that the two new classrooms that recently moved into the modular have purchased new cubbies, concrete bike pads, educational rugs, etc. She said that we wanted to buy something that would last awhile.
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Retirement Report: Ms. Richesin explained the transfer of the retirement assets from Bank of the Ozarks to Mutual of America. OOI had the assets liquidated from Bank of the Ozarks on February 28, 2013, with the final transfer on March 22, 2013. Ms. Richesin mentioned that Bank of the Ozarks charged Ozark Opportunities, Inc. a $1,000 fee to transfer funds to Mutual of America, and that the process went fairly well.

Ms. Richesin said that the staff were very pleased with Mutual of America. The agency arranged for three regional meetings (Marshall, Harrison, and Mountain Home) and they had very knowledgeable staff that worked with each employee to choose their investments. OOI Staff seemed very pleased with the process and vendor so far.

Ms. Richesin also reported that Ozark Opportunities, Inc. Finance Department is assisting the auditor (Mrs. Pam Disheroon) with files needed to complete the ARRA and regular agency audit, with hopes to have it complete by June.

❖ Hon. Mickey Pendergrass made the motion to accept the Finance Report including the Credit Card Statements and Retirement Report. Ron McPherson seconded the motion. Motion carried unanimously.

IV. Corporate Services Update

Mr. Atkinson reported that Mrs. Jane Bueg was unable to attend the meeting due to the loss of her husband Mr. Karl Bueg. He explained that she was dealing with family matters and his thoughts are prayers are with the family.

Mr. Atkinson gave the Corporate Services Update. He gave an overview of the extensive process necessary to transfer to Mutual of America, and that many staff hours had been dedicated by Mrs. Bueg, Finance and himself getting the paperwork completed.

Mr. Atkinson explained that he had been contacted by Mr. Estes about the Retirement Plan; he explained that OOI should adopt the amendment as is and we do not like a section in it, we can amend it. Mrs. Bueg, Ms. Richesin, and Mr. Atkinson reviewed the document and found several small errors that were corrected immediately. Since the Board had already approved Mutual of America as the vendor, Mr. Atkinson signed the Plan Summary Description document to insure the agency did not get in a “black-out” situation, and the money was transferred as scheduled. Mr. Atkinson explained that he will send the new Mutual of America version of the Plan prior to the next Executive Committee meeting for review and action.
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V. Executive Director’s Report

Mr. Atkinson presented the Executive Director’s Report. He explained that he traveled to Oklahoma City for their Community Action State Conference as a Presenter on “Integrating ROMA Next Generation and Organizational Performance Standards” which was related to his work with the CSBG Performance Management Task Force and the CSBG Standards in the future.

Mr. Atkinson and Ms. Hanlin will have a discussion on March 27 with Derek Cromwell about Ozark Opportunities, Inc. having a VISTA program. Mr. Atkinson will be traveling to Washington, D.C. at the end of April for the Community Services Block Grant, Performance Management Task Force (CSBG PMTF) representing the region in discussions on a Performance Management concept for the network.

Mr. Atkinson then gave a detailed explanation of the effects of the Sequestration on funding; both Head Start and CSBG will be getting cuts. There was a discussion about the effects on each program; at this time CSBG will not need to decrease staff salaries, as there are carryover funds that are helping to keep the program going. There was then a discussion about how each program is affected by “ups” and “downs” of funding, and how it is difficult to make impacts of funding reductions agency-wide since they have separate budgets, cycles, and funders.

In regard to Head Start, at this time Mr. Atkinson (along with the Admin. Team and H.S. Program Manager) recommended that non-teaching staff Head Start employees receive a 3.25% cut starting April 1, 2013, taken over 11 months. For teaching staff (teachers and teacher assistants) the reduction in pay will begin at the beginning of the next contract year with a reduction of contract days by 6, to 179. This is a proactive approach to the situation; if for some reason the cuts are not needed they can be “rolled back”, and staff could potentially get some of the funds returned.

- Ron McPherson made the motion to reduce the pay in Head Start as recommended by Mr. Atkinson. Hon. Mickey Pendergrass seconded the motion. The motion carried.

VI. Adjourn:

- Ron McPherson made the motion to adjourn the meeting. Hon. Mickey Pendergrass seconded the motion. Motion carried unanimously. Meeting adjourned at 3:44 p.m.