Ozark Opportunities, Inc.
Board of Directors Executive Committee Meeting Minutes
March 25, 2014

The Ozark Opportunities, Inc. Board of Directors met at the Ozark Opportunities, Inc. Central Office in Harrison, Arkansas, at 1:34 p.m. on Tuesday, March 25, 2014.

Committee Members Present:
Jim Sprott                Paulette Hill               Ron McPherson               Donna Grinder
               (via telephone)               (via telephone)

Committee Members Absent:
Hon. Roger Hooper

Staff Members Present:
Richard T. Atkinson      Shirley Richesin     Jane Bueg               Rebecca Hanlin
Tawnya Akins             Linda White

Guests Present: None

1. Meeting Called to Order:
The meeting was called to order by Jim Sprott, Board Chairperson at 1:34 p.m. A quorum was established.

2. Acceptance of prior meeting minutes
   Donovan Grinder moved to accept the minutes of the February 27, 2014 Board of Directors Meeting. Paulette Hill seconded. Motion carried unanimously.

3. Executive Director's Report
OOI Executive & Head Start Director Richard Atkinson reported to the Committee on the Head Start Program Triennial Review, conducted March 3-7, 2014. The CLASS classroom assessments were rescheduled due to classroom closings during the review week. The team that visited our program performs the investigative portion of the review— they will submit their report to the national Head Start Office who then determines the outcomes of the process and issues the formal report.
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During his week with the team, Mr. Atkinson received positive feedback regarding the Board of Directors and the Agency. The team identified several strengths; including our use of Google Drive & Google Docs for continuous monitoring, for example. Mr. Atkinson thanked the Board members who volunteered for the extensive, lengthy, interview.

Strategic Planning Update (Mr. Atkinson): the January session was postponed due to weather. The agency has abandoned the quest for CHDO (Community Housing Development Organization) status for multiple reasons; including: the board requirements cannot be meshed with that of a Community Action Agency, and the process of obtaining project funding has been revised by HUD (Housing & Urban Development) in a manner that is administratively expensive. OOI is looking at the possibility of assisting interested community members (when identified) to form an independent CHDO Board. The agency has also discontinued the HOME Program, as Harrison Housing Authority has taken the lead in low income housing in Harrison.

The original Strategic Plan identified 33 needs that OOI could focus on as areas of impact; Mr. Atkinson explained that to focus on all these areas would spread agency and program resources too thin and reduce impact. What OOI needs to do is answer the question: “How do we affect the fundamental barriers low-income people and communities face to get out of poverty?” Our approach could include: before and after school childcare for Head Start students in select areas, Early Head Start, initiatives that support Family Stabilization and actions that support Agency Stabilization (i.e. strong financial systems & accountability, strategic use of technology, a comprehensive intake system, and Legislative Education and Enlightenment.) The next Strategic Planning meeting will be held this spring.

The agency is undergoing an extensive “Spring Cleaning”: items and equipment that are past their useful life will be repurposed via donation to other community groups- items that have clearly little or no value will be disposed following agency procedures. OOI has numerous mobile home doors and windows at the Marshall Warehouse and is actively seeking either a buyer or suitable recipient of the materials and other surplus property.

The agency is awaiting guidance on how to proceed with Head Start Program grant amendment for budging the restored sequestration funds.
4. Program Updates:

A. **Community Services:** Community Services Director Rebecca Hanlin provided the Committee with status reports on the Regular Home Energy Assistance Program and the Crisis Intervention Program. Community Services staff processed over 3,000 regular and 350 crisis applications, with $356,000 and $106,000 in benefits, respectively. Regular Assistance application period ended 2/28/14 and Crisis will end 3/28/14. A summer energy program should start 7/7/14. The Corrective Action Plan submitted in response to the last review was accepted.

Commodity Food distribution began in the county offices this week; the next food shipment is scheduled for early May.

Ms. Hanlin reported to the Committee that the Baxter County office has been relocated to Cotter. There was no affordable space in Mountain Home. Chairperson Sprott inquired as to how Judge Pendergrass has responded to OOI’s need for space. Mr. Atkinson replied that space is money and Baxter County could no longer afford to give us free space. Paulette Hill expressed the downside of OOI moving to a Baxter County community other than Mountain Home: other complimentary services that address our client’s needs are mostly located in Mountain Home.

Ms. Hanlin closed with the announcement that OOI Community Services received a $3,000 donation from Central Indiana Community Foundation.

B. **Head Start:** Mr. Atkinson directed the committee to the Governing Board report for Head Start enrollment and classroom size data. The Triennial is nearly done, and program staff will oversee “Spring Cleaning” at the classroom level. Head Start program self-assessment is in progress; identified needs include a new roof at the Marshall Facility.

   a. **Head Start Training**

Richard Atkinson, Executive/Head Start Director introduced Tawnya Akins, Health/Mental Health Coordinator for Head Start. Ms. Akins provided the committee with comprehensive training on the Health and Mental Health components of the Head Start Program, along with samples of tracking tools, reports and forms utilized in the process.
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b. Mr. Atkinson presented for review and acceptance the updated **ERSEA Selection Criteria** for Head Start.
   ✷ Donna Grinder moved to accept the **ERSEA Selection Criteria** as previously reviewed and revised by the ERSEA Committee of the Policy Council. Ron McPherson seconded the motion. Motion carried unanimously.

5. Acceptance of Program Reports
   ✷ Donna Grinder moved to accept the Agency (Governing Board) Report. Paulette Hill seconded the motion. Motion carried unanimously.

6. **Community Development**: Mr. Atkinson asked Linda White, Community Development Specialist to update the Committee on the status of projects: VITA/TCE (Volunteer Income Tax Assistance/Tax Counseling for The Elderly) Training was completed by 5 OOI staff member: Linda White, Ryan Clayborn, Tawny Akins, Terri Beard, & Krystal Mayes; in support of the Facilitated Self Assistance Tax Return Preparation initiative hosted by Ozark Opportunities, Inc. There have been few participants thus far. Paulette Hill inquired on the participation rate of Head Start parents. The program has not taken off with OOI’s Head Start Community. Donna Grinder expressed a similar outcome at Searcy County Rural Services. Mr. Atkinson stated that this type of program needs a dedicated staff to promote the project before the tax season begins and to educate our target population on the financial benefits of filing a return and forgoing refund anticipation loans, which come with outrageous interest rates and service fees.

Ms. White also reported that OOI is continuing the application process to acquire VISTA volunteers to help with new initiatives.

The Housing and Urban Development (HUD) organization has made the HOME Program overly difficult for OOI to execute and the Arkansas Development and Finance Administration has made changes that make the program unworkable for the agency.

Mrs. White reported on her work with the Harrison Fire Department on writing a FEMA Grant. At Chairperson Sprott's request, she submit the following correction to her Agency (Governing Board) Report submission (corrected portion highlighted):

*C. Grant Writing – I worked on 3 with other organizations: the Searcy County Rural Help Center applied for an Adult Literacy grant from Dollar General that was submitted February 27; the Boone County Library is applying for a Youth Literacy grant from Dollar General, due May 22; and the Harrison Fire Department is applying for a FEMA grant to provide smoke detectors to owner-occupied homes in the City of Harrison.*
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Other areas of focus include: Head Start Male Involvement Project; Boone County Library grant, Closure of involvement with Giving Back Industries; Entrepreneur Support; Strategic Planning – Theory of Change; Coordinated donation of old U-Haul trailer (formally used in the Weatherization Program) to Searcy County Rural Help Center; Received scholarship to attend Basic Economic Development Course in Little Rock; Board Member recruitment.

Mr. Atkinson thanked Mrs. White for her service to the agency in recruiting four new members to the OOI Board of Directors.

7. Finance Report:

Shirley Richesin, Financial Officer, presented to the Board for their review, consideration and approval Expenditure Reports and Credit Card Statement Re-Cap and Review (documents sent prior to meeting). Credit card purchase documentation was present for inspection. Ms. Richesin also provided documentation of OOI’s Thrift Plan Non-Discrimination Test for 2013 (passed).

❖ Donna Grinder moved to accept the Finance Reports. Ron McPherson seconded the motion. Motion carried unanimously.

8. Corporate Services Update: Corporate Services Director Jane Bueg presented to the Committee for acceptance the Employment Actions as approved on February 20 & March 20, 2014 by Head Start Policy Council.

❖ Donna Grinder moved to accept the actions. Paulette Hill seconded the motion. Motion carried unanimously.

There being no other business, Chairperson Sprott adjourned the meeting at 2:55 p.m.

[Signature]
Board Officer

[Signature] 4/22/14
Date