The *Ozark Opportunities, Inc.* Board of Directors met at the Newton County Library in Jasper, Arkansas at 6:00 p.m. on November 29, 2012.

**Board Members Present:**
- Kim Hunley
- Trudy McManus
- Donna Grinder (6:43 p.m. via telephone)
- Clyde Johnson (rep. for Hon. James Norton)
- Hon. Roger Hooper
- Ron McPherson
- Paulette Hill (6:43 p.m. telephone)
- Jim Sprott

**Board Members Absent:**
- Hon. Pete Giles
- Hon. Joe Bodenhamer
- Danny Griffin
- Hon. Warren Campbell
- Vanessa Thomas
- Hon. Johnny Hinchey
- Paula Crawford

**Staff Members Present:**
- Richard T. Atkinson
- Jane Bueg
- April Strain-Polston
- Shirley Richesin
- Linda White
- Emily Crow
- Rebecca Hanlin
- Alma Sackett

**Guests Present:**
- Cathy McAuliffe, Ph.D., ECE Specialist for Head Start Region VI – AR
- Judy Schenk, prospective Board Member for Newton County.

*Kim Hunley, Board Chair welcomed the attendees and led the Pledge of Allegiance.*

As a quorum was not yet present, Ms. Hunley requested a change to the agenda to permit the scheduled Head Start Board Training to precede the meeting.
- Jim Sprott made a motion to change the agenda as requested. Honorable Roger Hooper seconded the motion. Motion passed unanimously.

**Head Start Training: CLASS & School Readiness**

Alma Sackett, Head Start Program Manager & Education Coordinator introduced Cathleen McAuliffe, Ph.D., Early Childhood Education Specialist for Head Start Region VI, who trained the Board on *CLASS™* (Classroom Assessment Scoring System) and *School Readiness* legislative requirements for Head Start grantees. She mentioned that she had attended the Policy Council meeting earlier in the day, and that she was impressed with the involvement of the parents and quality of the OOI Application for funding.
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I. Meeting Called to Order:

The meeting was called to order by Kim Hunley, Board Chair, at 6:43 p.m. A quorum was present. (NOTE: copies of relevant documents were emailed prior to those attending via teleconference.)

Minutes of the September 27, 2012 and October 23, 2012 Executive Committee Meetings were presented to the board for approval, along with the November 26, 2012 committee actions including the action to hire Emily Crow and April Strain and accept the resignations of Jeannie Dean and LaDana Pate.

❖ Hon. Hooper made a motion to accept the minutes and ratify the Committee actions. Clyde Johnson seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

II. Program Updates

1. Head Start

The Head Start PY 2013-2014 was presented to the Board by Richard Atkinson, Shirley Richesin and Alma Sackett. Mr. Atkinson showed the application to the group with a media projector, and they covered the highlights of planned Long & Short term goals and objectives; including, School Readiness, Internal Monitoring of the program (i.e. progress of the compliance matrix), Community Assessment and Self-Assessment.

Data, statistics and analysis is incorporated into the narrative to illustrate and support the continued need for Head Start services in the Ozark Opportunities, Inc. service area. Ozark Opportunities, Inc. standards and curriculum meet or exceed the Arkansas State Core Standards & Frameworks and Head Start Performance Standards. Also reviewed was the concept of having a “Parent, Family, and Community Engagement Plan”, Program Governance and participation of the Policy Council Planning Committee in the development of the Work Plan. Community Needs Assessment (CNA) data was analyzed; There will be no change in the location of Centers, though there was a minor change in the planned number of enrollment opportunities assigned to each center. The actual number of enrolled children may be adjusted to ensure 100% enrollment (481 students) program-wide on the first day of school.

Mr. Sprott inquired as to what is available to families who don’t qualify for Head Start. Ms. Sackett replied that the ABC (Arkansas Better Chance) preschool program takes students above the Head Start income guidelines, so many families take their children to them.

Ms. Sackett explained the process involved in becoming a reliable CLASS™ classroom observer, the Child Development Associate (CDA) credentialing training that is afforded all Teacher Assistants.
Mr. Atkinson reviewed other portions of the grant: an Employee Incentive Plan to reward employees who did not exhaust their annual sick leave allocation (legally protected leave such as Family Medical Leave, excepted); and allowance to pay above the General Services Administration (GSA) maximum in lodging situations where a sanctioned or sponsored Head Start event or training site has a higher rate. Mr. Atkinson covered the long and short-term goals for the 2013-2014 Head Start Grant which will continue as a full-day, center-based program.

Ms. Sackett reviewed OOI’s School Readiness Plan and described the Learning Accomplishment Profile (LAP) process used to track student progress, to the Board.

Mr. Sprott inquired as to who receives this document. Ms. Sackett responded the Administration for Children and Families (ACF.) Mrs. Sackett affirmed Ms. Schenk’s observation that Head Start Programs in Arkansas must also follow the state’s educational guidelines (i.e. frameworks, benchmarks, Kindergarten Readiness Indicators). Mr. Sprott asked if this type of application for Head Start funds is something we have to do every year. Mr. Atkinson stated that a full and comprehensive application is required every three (3) years. Mr. Sprott asked in terms of time, are we at the end of the 3rd year? Mr. Atkinson answered we are in year 2- We did a comprehensive application this year because of the current environment; whereas programs are going up for “re-competition” and not having success in re-funding. It is critical for the program to do the absolute best in all areas to insure the children are served and program continues.

The “T & TA Plan” (Training and Technical Assistance) was presented to the Board, along with the accompanying T & TA budget.

Honorable Hooper asked where are we on the Head Start budget this year? Ms. Richesin reported the program is on track, with 67% of budget expended; next month (December) we will have a better idea where we are at in the budget overall; as the program has experienced some staff vacancies that has made more money available. The centers have been encouraged to create and maintain a list of desired items that may be purchased if surplus funds become available.

Ms. Richesin informed the Board that the funding levels are designated (set) at the Federal level and that the program has received no increases except very small COLA (cost-of-living) awards. Each year it becomes more challenging to meet mandated standards. Frugal, dedicated staff members enable OOI to manage the funds effectively. The agency also has low administrative costs within the program – 8.63%; the maximum allowed is 15%.

Honorable Hooper asked what the administrative budget is this year compared to next year. Ms. Richesin replied about $18,000 less.

In reviewing the T & TA budget, Ms. Richesin explained the biggest expenditure is “Al’s Pals” for the training required to finish implementing the social-emotional program in the rest of the classrooms.
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Mr. Sprott asked Mr. Atkinson if he feels the documents meet all the requirements for refunding?
Mr. Atkinson replied affirmatively.
❖ Jim Sprott made a motion to approve the Head Start Refunding Application and the
  Training and Technical Assistance Application for 2013-2014 (including budgets.) Ron
  McPherson seconded the motion. Motion passed unanimously.

Mr. Sprott commented that fringe benefits, at 22%, seem a little high. Ms. Richesin responded
that the figure includes mandatory payments (social security match, Medicare, unemployment,
workers compensation), leaving 11% for health and dental premiums and other options employees
have to choose from. Mr. McPherson inquired is the high unemployment rate due to turnover? Ms.
Richesin stated the bulk of the expense is due to the ARRA (American Recovery and Reinvestment
Act) staff separation at the end of those temporary employment opportunities. The ARRA grants
(CSBG & Weatherization) were large- $2 million in funds over a 3 year period.

At the recommendation of Mr. Atkinson, in the interest of time, the Board agreed to skip the Board
Liaison (to Policy Council) agenda item (especially considering that the Policy Council is now receiving
the full “Governing Board Report” that includes all agency information) and it can be re-visited at the
next meeting.

2. Weatherization

Mr. Atkinson reported that the Weatherization Program is getting down to very few ARRA houses
(about 3) and a few DOE houses (22). There has been no guidance from the state or federal offices
on the continuation of the program.

3. Community Services

Rebecca Hanlin, Community Services Director updated the members on the various community
partners making donations of items and funds: Entergy donated 300 lap robe-style blankets for
distribution in Baxter, Boone & Marion counties; FedEx Construction and Design group employees
sponsored a food drive and delivered the groceries in reusable bags; $10,000 donation for use in
Newton County was received from a benefactor who, at this time, wishes to remain anonymous. The
agency has also received word that it will receive a grant from Entergy for use in the VITA (Volunteer
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Mr. Atkinson presented for board consideration and approval a Resolution authorizing the current Executive Director “to apply for grants, sign applications, to accept said grants or contracts and fully comply with all stated grant or contract terms and conditions and carry out all required grant or contract purposes for OZARK OPPORTUNITIES, INC.; with all aforementioned documents to be ratified by the Board of Directors at the next regularly scheduled meeting.”

Jim Sprott moved to adopt the resolution. Roger Hooper seconded the motion. Motion passed unanimously.

Ms. Richesin informed the board that approval was received to purchase the new accounting system and that the audit had been approved.

Jim Sprott asked if we got the Van Buren County property sold. Mr. Atkinson responded not yet; however, it is hoped that it can be sold in the coming months.

At the recommendation of Mr. Atkinson, in the interest of time, the Board agreed to skip the By-Laws and Articles of Incorporation agenda items.
At this point Board members Paulette Hill and Donna Grindem exit the meeting (hang up) and agreed to rejoin when board action is required.

4. Retirement Plan Vendor Presentation & Acceptance

Jim Sprott, Board Secretary/Treasurer provided the members with a report of the process of review of RFP’s (Request for Proposal) Ozark Opportunities, Inc. received in the search for a retirement plan vendor. After initial review of all submissions, 4 proposals were studied in depth and 2 finalists were selected, Cafaro-Greenleaf/VALIC and Mutual of America.

- VALIC is a large corporation catering mainly to schools; Calafaro-Greenleaf is their partnered investment/advisory firm from New Jersey who will provide investment advice to employees. Calafaro-Greenleaf would be a named co-fiduciary of the plan.

- Mutual of America’s representative, Shane Estes, is located in Dallas. Mutual of America is a large organization which focuses on non-profits like Ozark Opportunities, Inc. Mutual of America will indemnify against loss, offering a level of protection for the board.

BACKGROUND: Members of the OOI Executive Committee and staff met with representatives of both firms on Monday, November 26, 2012 at the Central Office (prior to the Executive Committee Meeting.) The Committee had an opportunity to ask questions, get answers and clarifications. After the meeting Mr. Atkinson sent an e-mail to the Executive Committee members requesting each vote on their choice. Five votes were received: 3 for Mutual of America, 2 for Calafaro-Greenleaf/VALIC.
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Mr. Sprott stated that he felt both vendors will radically reduce the Board’s fiduciary liability exposure. He feels the board has met its fiduciary duty from a legal standpoint in that either company will offer protection of employee directed investments.

Q & A of the Board:

Clyde Johnson: Can we change in, say, 5 years?
Jim Sprott: Yes, we are not locked in.
Richard Atkinson: The Board can set a time limit on any agreement.
Jim Sprott: Not too long, probably 3 years unless there is gross mismanagement.

Roger Hooper commented on the VALIC/AIG relationship as VALIC is a wholly-owned subsidy of AIG. Mutual of America focus is mostly non-profits. He agreed that it is a tough decision to choose between the two.

Jim Sprott commented that his decision was based on the answers given to him in a conversation he had with a school employee who has an account with VALIC. Mr. Hooper revealed he voted for Mutual of America.

Kim Hunley stated she chose Mutual of America because she felt they were more in touch with us and we may get more personal service from them.

Jim Sprott stated the fees are 1.75% with Mutual of America and .7 – 1.25% with VALIC; fees are expected to reduce when fund assets reach $3 million dollars.

At this point Board members Paulette Hill and Donna Grinder rejoined the meeting via telephone.

- Ron McPherson moved to accept the OOI Executive Committee recommendation for Mutual of America, subject to review in 3 years unless there is an issue of nonperformance (per the contract). Clyde Johnson seconded the motion. Motion passed unanimously.

5. Salary Scale

Jane Bueg, Corporate Services Director, presented to the Board a revised agency Salary Scale. The scale includes:

- Training wage based on 90% of entry, to be utilized during the probationary period
- Entry rate
- Career Range
- Cap based on 125% of entry
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Ms. Bueg detailed the various levels of salary within particular job titles: Teacher Assistants, Teachers and Family Service Workers, which are based on education levels, certifications and licensure. The “Center Director” designation has been removed from Teacher classifications and will be assigned as a job addendum with compensation based on center size.

Judge Hooper inquired as to how long the cap is going to stay the same. Ms. Bueg replied that it will remain in place until the board changes it; however the scale may reflect changes due to across the board COLA (cost-of-living) increases.

Mr. Sprott commented that it is a shame some of our wages are near poverty level.
  ❖ Jim Sprott moved to accept the salary scale. Ron McPherson seconded the motion. Motion passed unanimously.

6. Executive Director’s Report/ Emerging Issues

Mr. Atkinson introduced Judy Schenk, a prospective OOI Board Member for Newton County. Ms. Schenk was a teacher for 36 years before her retirement; she is now a licensed real estate professional. He also recognized new OOI staff April Strain, Head Start Program Administrator; and Emily Crow, Administrative Assistant II.

Linda White, Community Development Specialist, presented to the board for adoption a Community Housing Developer Organization (CHDO) Resolution. Ms. White and Mr. Atkinson reviewed the process for applying for CHDO designation.

A discussion on the language of the resolution unfolded:

Jim Sprott: Recommend in paragraph 6 that the second bullet be deleted: “For organizations that are sponsored or created by a for-profit entity, no more than one-third of the governing body and board members are appointed by the for-profit entity as evidenced by the By-laws.”
  ❖ Jim Sprott moved to adopt the resolution with the bullet change. Clyde Johnson seconded the motion.

Discussion followed:

Jim Sprott asked: In paragraph 9; do we now provide: “a formal process for low-income program beneficiaries to have input into our decisions regarding the design, siting, development, and management of affordable housing, including CHDO and HOME activities. This process will include annual meetings of low- and middle-income residents in each of the counties we serve, with a board member participating in each meeting. There will be follow-up with attendees.” Mrs. White responded that this would be a new process. Mr. Sprott moved to amend the motion to include “will” in ¶ 9 (between the parenthesis.) Motion passed unanimously.
Mr. Atkinson requested board action to grant authority to the Executive Committee of the Board of Directors to approve an addendum to the Community Service Block Grant (CSBG) work plan to include CHDO and HOME programs.

- Ron McPherson moved to grant authority to the Executive Committee of the Board to approve an addendum to the CSBG work plan to include CHDO & HOME programs. Clyde Johnson seconded the motion. Motion passed unanimously.

At this point Board members Paulette Hill and Donna Grinder exited the meeting (hung up).

Mr. Atkinson distributed the Executive Director’s Report and provided an update on the agency’s Strategic Plan. He and staff are trying to get it done; Jim Sprott asked “when do you think that it is going to be?” Mr. Atkinson replied the process started a year ago and the goal is to get it done by Christmas. There is still a lot to be done, so it may be January as he does not want to decrease quality to hit an early deadline. He added that part of the plan is for OOI to “up our game” to increase public awareness of the agency and engage more community members in our programs and fundraising.

Mr. Atkinson announced to the board that he has been selected as a member of the CSBG Performance Management Task Force that will first meet December 4 – 7, 2012 in Washington D.C. All expenses will be paid by CSBG. Subsequent meetings will be scheduled in the spring. The meetings are designed to coordinate national efforts to create and implement enhanced performance management and measurement tools and protocols for CSBG.

He also explained that progress is being made on the disposition of the “white house” property at 705 E. Prospect Avenue, Harrison. The Fuller House group is working on moving the home to another property for use by a low income person in the near future (approved by the Executive Committee prior to the Full Board.)

- Roger Hooper made a motion to adjourn at 8:33 p.m. Jim Sprott seconded the motion. Meeting adjourned.