

## **NORTHWEST ARKANSAS LOCAL WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT BOARD**

### **Meeting Minutes – December 2, 2025**

818 Highway 62-65-412 North  
Harrison, Arkansas

The Northwest Arkansas Local Workforce Development Board (NWA WDB) held its regular meeting on Wednesday, December 2, 2025, at 1:00 p.m., with members attending both in person and via Zoom.

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#### **Call to Order**

Chair Mr. Bo Phillips called the meeting to order and welcomed those in attendance.

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#### **Committee and Staff Reports**

##### **Staff/Business Services Report – Ms. Patty Methvin**

- **Monitoring Update:**  
All monitoring activities are current with no outstanding findings.
  - **Cargill Plant Closure:**  
Approximately 1,000 layoffs were announced at the Cargill plant in Springdale. Staff are actively working to enroll dislocated workers affected by the closure.
  - **Disaster Grant:**  
Northwest applied for disaster funding for Searcy and Newton Counties. Of the \$1,082,473.39 requested, \$248,392 has been approved to date.  
Ms. Michelle Ryan is working to enroll participants under the disaster grant.
  - **ADWS Performance Training:**  
Mr. James Moss and Ms. Patty Methvin attended performance training in Little Rock sponsored by ADWS.
  - **NAWDP Youth Symposium:**  
Ms. Michelle Ryan, Ms. Katie Causey, Ms. Rose Sparrow, Ms. Nadine Sewak, Ms. Melba Miller, and Ms. Patty Methvin attended the National Association of Workforce Development Professionals (NAWDP) Youth Symposium in New Orleans. The speakers and breakout sessions were informative and encouraging.
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#### **Action Items**

##### **Item 1 – Workforce Budget Update**

The Board reviewed the current budget status.

**Item 2 – Title I Program Provider**

The Board discussed approval of the Northwest Arkansas Economic Development District as the Title I Program Provider and Fiscal Agent.

**Item 3 – Annual Report**

The Board reviewed the Annual Report as presented by Ms. Methvin.

**Item 4 – One-Stop Operator Report**

Mr. James Moss presented program highlights and participant success stories.

**Item 5 – Approval of September 3, 2025 Minutes**

No corrections or changes were noted.

**MOTION:** Mr. Kelley Sharp moved to approve the Committee Reports and Action Items 1–5. Mr. Kevin Estes seconded the motion. The motion carried by a roll-call vote.

**Item 6 – Eligible Training Provider List (ETPL)**

- Updates since the previous Board meeting were included in the agenda packet.
- Ms. Methvin reminded members that all Board members who are affiliated with a training provider must abstain from the vote.

**MOTION:** Mr. Jason Patience moved to approve the ETPL updates, seconded by Mr. Kevin Estes. The motion carried by a roll-call vote.

**Abstentions:** Cherie Conner, Diana Johnson, Kelley Sharp, Rodney Ellis, and Ricky Tompkins.

**Arkansas Business Engagement Model Restructure**

Mr. Bo Phillips introduced Mr. Cody Waits, Director of Arkansas Workforce Connections. Mr. Waits presented information regarding the proposed restructuring of Arkansas’s business engagement model. The plan would transition the existing Business Resource Division to Workforce Connections under Arkansas Industry Connect.

He outlined plans to hire additional staff, including two regional business managers, and emphasized the importance of improved data sharing and reporting between the state and local workforce development boards. The proposal would shift ownership of business service teams to the state, potentially allowing local areas to reallocate funding to other priorities.

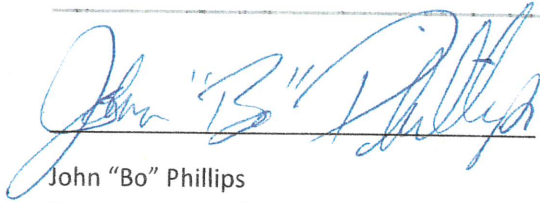
**Announcements & Other Business**

The next Board meeting is scheduled for Wednesday, March 4, 2026.

**Adjournment**

**MOTION:** A motion was made and seconded to adjourn. The motion carried.

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A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "John 'Bo' Phillips", is written over a horizontal line.

John "Bo" Phillips  
Northwest Workforce Board Chair