

NORTHWEST ARKANSAS LOCAL WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT BOARD

Meeting Minutes – September 3, 2025

818 Highway 62-65-412 North, Harrison, Arkansas

The Northwest Arkansas Workforce Development Board (NWA WDB) held its regular meeting on Wednesday, September 3, 2025, both in person and via Zoom.

Call to Order

Chair **Mr. Bo Phillips** called the meeting to order, welcomed attendees, and introduced three new Board members:

- **Mr. John Jones**, Regional Outreach Director, Arkansas Workforce Connections
- **Ms. Katie Hull**, HR Director, Baxter International
- **Ms. Debbie Ackerson**, CEO, Boston Mountain Rural Health Center, Inc.

FOIA Compliance Discussion

The Board reviewed recent changes to the FOIA law requiring public visibility of board member votes. Discussion centered on ensuring transparency while maintaining in-person and Zoom meeting options. The Board agreed to adopt a *consent agenda* system, allowing most action items to be approved in a single roll call vote. Exceptions will be made for the Eligible Training Provider List (ETPL), which requires individual votes due to abstentions.

Committee and Staff Reports

Staff/Business Services Report – Presented by Ms. Patty Methvin

- **Monitoring Overview:**
 - ADWS conducted monitoring visits in March and April; results were positive.
- **Cargill Plant Closure:** Approximately 1,000 layoffs in Springdale.
 - Northwest received a \$120,000 “Stop Gap” grant from Arkansas Workforce Connections (restricted to training and supportive services).
- **Disaster Grant:** Northwest applied for disaster funding for Searcy and Newton Counties. To date, \$248,392 of the \$1,082,473.39 request has been approved.
- **Third-Party Monitoring:** Completed by Hightower Workforce Initiatives.
- **Partnerships:**

- Updates since the last Board meeting were included in the agenda.
- Ms. Methvin reminded the Board that all programs must be approved by the December meeting.

MOTION: Mr. Jason Patience moved, and Ms. Emilee Tucker seconded, to approve the ETPL updates. Motion carried by roll call vote. **Abstentions:** Cherie Conner, Diana Johnson, Kelley Sharp, and Ricky Tompkins.

Announcements & Other Business

The next Board meeting is scheduled for **Wednesday, December 3, 2025.**

Adjournment

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

DocuSigned by:

Bo Phillips

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John "Bo" Phillips, LWDB Board Chair