

***Ozark Opportunities, Inc.***  
**Board of Directors Meeting Minutes**  
**June 24, 2021**

The *Ozark Opportunities, Inc.* Board of Directors met via virtual meeting in Harrison, AR at **12:00 p.m.** on **Thursday, June 24, 2021.**

Board Members Present (all by virtual meeting):

Paulette Hill	Jim Sprott	Margaret Hodges	Charmaine Seaton
Karen Carter			

Executive Committee Board Members Absent:

Staff Members Present:

Richard Atkinson    Brenda Morris    Rebecca Hanlin    Hilary Cleaver

Others Present: None.

Audio recording of this meeting is available upon request.

**1. Welcome & Meeting Called to Order:**

Chairperson Paulette Hill called the meeting to order, established that a quorum was present, welcomed all in attendance and began the Executive Committee Meeting of the *Ozark Opportunities, Inc.* Board of Directors at 12:00 p.m.

**2. Employment Actions/Human Resources Update:**

Hilary Cleaver, Human Resources Manager, reviewed the HR updates with one new hire in Community Services. Ms. Cleaver announced the Health and Mental Health components will be split and Mental Health will be reunited with the Disabilities component that became open upon the retirement of Child Development Asst. Supervisor and Disabilities Coordinator, Patricia Murray. The combination of Mental Health and Disabilities will become the “Special Services Coordinator”. Ms. Cleaver reviewed vacancies for two Teachers, a Teacher Assistant, and Remote Worker positions. Unemployment claims submissions continue with the closure of classrooms. Ms. Cleaver stated she is working on a request from OSHA for Wage Statistics. The *OZI Employee Assistance Plan* now has three contracted providers for Mental Health services. Ms. Cleaver announced the first nomination for the *Jane Bueg Leadership Program* and the brochure for the *Shirley Richesin Employee Assistance Fund* had been shared in a prior email to all Board members, and will be shared with all staff at the next “Commitment to Excellence” event in August 2021.

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**3. Finance:**

Richard T. Atkinson, CEO, informed the Committee that NFP Partners were not available to attend the meeting; however, he had met with Mrs. Underwood prior to the meeting to review the report and could answer questions. Mr. Atkinson then reviewed the OOI Finance Report with the members; beginning with the first page, based on the agency wide budget, a review of Accounts Receivable which showed that cash on hand has decreased by half due to spending to cover CSBG expenses; Mr. Atkinson reported that he was notified earlier in the week that the oldest amount of \$65,000 has been processed by OCS and should be received by the agency in the coming week, which will improve the Aging A/R and Cash on Hand dramatically.

Mr. Atkinson continued into Grants by Budget showing the percent of period and percent expended. He went on to speak on the need for multiple CSBG Budget Revisions that will be reviewed at the next Exec. Committee Meeting (or before).

Rebecca Hanlin, Community Services Manager, reviewed the LIHEAP expenditures, stating she and Mrs. Underwood have sent a letter requesting additional support for Administrative, Crisis and Regular Program Support funding due to depleting funds. LIHEAP is preparing for an increase in July for the Summer Program, anticipating 4,000+ applications normally allotted for elderly and disabled receiving SNAP benefits, but now includes households of children under six years of age.

The heating fuel program will be reopening that will assist with non-electric utilities, becoming available in two weeks and exposing a need for additional staffing funds. Chairperson Hill asked about reduced summer cost for propane and prepayment for those in need- Ms. Hanlin confirmed this can be included in funding under the COVID Delayed Payment Arrangement, or "DPA".

Mr. Atkinson spoke on tracking expenditures can be complex and time consuming due to coding to the multiple LIHEAP and CSBG grants. He also reviewed the Non-Federal Match, "In-Kind", is being tracked and a new process put in place to prevent delays in the future (the members were sent an "In Kind Update" prior to the meeting). Mr. Atkinson reviewed the CACFP Nutrition funds and explained that any positive credit above costs can be used to help offset staff salaries for nutrition-related staff.

- ❖ Jim Sprott made a motion to approve the Finance Report. Ms. Margaret Hodges seconded the motion. Motion carried unanimously.

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**4. Agency & Program Updates & Actions:**

Mr. Atkinson spoke on the formation of the Strategic Planning Group and Needs Assessment to be performed in the communities OOI serves. Mr. Atkinson states he believes employment, health, and housing to be the largest need, as displayed in past assessments. He went on to speak on the COVID grants and the request for continued Board guidance. Mr. Atkinson states he believes the Agency is in good health based on the financials and staffing pattern.

Ms. Hill asked about staff being on site due to Coronavirus concerns. Mr. Atkinson responded with vacations being taken during the summer due to decreased need as Child Development is on their summer break. Mr. Atkinson and Ms. Hill spoke on the increase of Coronavirus cases locally and reiterated the possibility of masking in the offices again, but due to staff layoffs over the summer staff in the office are adequately distanced.

Mr. Atkinson spoke on scheduled an Agency wide Commitment to Excellence Event on August 9<sup>th</sup> at the JPH Center at North Arkansas Community College campus in Harrison. He invited all OOI Board Members to attend. He went on to state that the day will include a “This is OOI” training in the morning, then lunch, and Safety Training in the afternoon. He again mentioned that the Agency Progress Report was sent via email prior to the meeting and is a good “one stop” source for the progress of the agency each month.

Ms. Hanlin reviewed Community Services, noting the increase in work. She deferred the CARES budget review to Mr. Atkinson. Mr. Atkinson reviewed the grant and possible expenditures within offices for COVID-related needs. Ms. Hanlin explained she has some ideas regarding high capacity folding machines for program applications and portable scanning machines at workstations that will assist with moving to a paperless model within Community Services. Ms. Hodges inquired about the scanners within single offices relaying to servers for interoffice collaboration. Ms. Hanlin spoke about the EmpowOR software being used to meet the paperless and collaborative goals.

Mr. Sprott asked about \$24,000 not used within the budget that is above the amount included under the “Other Office” category. Mr. Atkinson stated that his conversations with CSBG leadership has led to discussion about identifying specific expenditures in a line item budget, as the CARES funds are under increased scrutiny. Mr. Atkinson conveyed he will be revising the budget and requesting approval in a future session.

Ms. Hanlin stated the 2022 CSBG Application and Budget has not been completed, as time had to be spent on other issues, such as the year-round LIHEAP program, etc. The documents are due to OCS by July 23<sup>rd</sup>, so we have time to get them completed and back to the Exec. Committee in July before the deadline. Mr. Sprott stated he is willing to be available for a special Executive Committee Meeting to approve any budget revisions.

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Ms. Hanlin shared her screen to review the Healthy Families of America Budget Revision; Ms. Hanlin is requesting to move \$131.68 from Supplies & Equipment and \$29.30 from Travel & Education to Utilities.

- ❖ Jim Sprott made a motion to approve the Budget Revision for Health Families. Ms. Margaret Hodges seconded the motion. Motion carried unanimously.

Mr. Atkinson mentioned that one item he wanted to be sure to include in the minutes is that the letter to AEO to increase Program Support for LIHEAP, as sent to all Board Members. The members agreed that they understood the request and it was reviewed earlier in the meeting by Ms. Hanlin.

**5. Acceptance of Agency Progress Report:**

Mr. Atkinson reviewed the Agency Progress Report sent via email prior to the meeting. Mr. Atkinson stated he has been working with Ms. Cleaver and NFP Partners to make the compensation structure clear and understandable with emphasis placed on the need to be fair and competitive. Mr. Atkinson states his goal is to hire and retain educated staff, and the need to invest in people as they are the core of the agency.

Ms. Hanlin reviewed the Board Member updates, announcing a candidate for the Searcy County Low Income vacancy. Ms. Hanlin has extended the Board application to the potential candidate. Newton County continues with vacancies, and Ms. Hanlin discussed the vetting process for Board Members.

Mr. Sprott asked about paragraph 10 in the Fresh Start Housing budget and the \$559,000 AEDC award to be used for rental assistance. Ms. Hanlin stated the funding is to assist eligible applicants with 2.5 months of back rent, all required deposits for the homeless and low-income with 1.5 months forward in rent. Ms. Hanlin stated this is a first-time grant and monies are paid up front. Mr. Sprott asked about the budgeting of this grant. Mr. Atkinson stated it is in the Finance Report under Fresh Start Housing and we are utilizing the first round of funding currently, and should transition to the next half in the coming months. Ms. Hanlin stated 10% is allocated for administrative support as well.

- ❖ Ms. Margaret Hodges made a motion to approve the Agency Progress Report. Mr. Jim Sprott seconded the motion. Motion carried unanimously.

Mr. Atkinson stated the CSBG CARES Discretionary Budget revision will be presented next week for review.

Meeting adjourned at **12:47** p.m.

*Paulette Hill*

*Board Officer*

11-16-2021

*Date*