



August 19th, 2026 WSRCA Board Meeting Minutes  
08/19/2026 12:30 PM CDT to 1:30 PM CDT  
Workforce Solutions Rural Capital Area  
575 Round Rock W. Dr. Bldg H. Suite 220, Round Rock TX 78681

### **Members Present**

Rene Flores, Lisa Stewart, Rhonda Estelle, Amy Payne, Mary Helen Martinez, Eben Riggs, Becky Garlick, Steven Brockman-Weber, Woody Engebretson, Nikki Stallings, Christian Fletcher, Mike(Larry) Crane, Marco Cruz, Susan Kimball, Frank Leonardis, Paul Boff, Sam Dowdy, Mike Grant, Heather Watson, Alfonso Sifuentes, Tim Ols, Megan Gandy

### **Members Absent**

Melissa Johnson, Margaret Lindsey, Diane Cook, Laura Lucas, Kwee Lan Teo, Kyle Swartz, Sean Miller, Joshua Paselk

### **1. Call to Order/Roll Call/Establish Quorum**

Presented By Frank Leonardis, Alfonso Sifuentes

The meeting commenced with opening remarks, greetings, and confirmation that remote participants could hear the proceedings. The meeting was then formally called to order, and Alfonso was tasked with conducting the roll call to ensure all attendees were accounted for.

Alfonso conducted the roll call, with Diane Cook calling out names and receiving confirmations from both in-person and virtual attendees. This process ensured that quorum was established and all present members were documented for the record.

### **2. Public Comment Period**

Quorum was confirmed with at least 16 members present, and Mary Helen Martinez joined the meeting, further solidifying attendance. It was decided that the public comment period would be moved to the end of the meeting to coincide with board announcements, and no additional public comments were identified beyond those included in the board packet for Megan.

### **3. Information Sharing**

Presented By Frank Leonardis

#### **3.1. Recent Board Member Resignations**

Leslie Abbott, Elva Zdeb, and Jeff Light announced their resignations from the board, effective September 30th. Efforts are underway to recruit new board members, with several candidates already submitted for approval to fill the upcoming vacancies.

#### **3.2. Recently Appointed Board Members**

### **4. Consent Agenda\***

Presented By Frank Leonardis

The consent agenda was presented, encompassing the minutes from the June regular board meeting and the financials for May and June. A motion was made to approve the consent agenda, which was seconded by Nikki. Following a vote, the motion to approve the consent agenda was carried.

## **5. Budget\***

Presented By Frank Leonardis, Diane Cook, Paul Fletcher

A motion was made and seconded to approve both a small amendment to the current operating budget for 2025-2026 (ending September 30th) and the new 2026-2027 budget. The board discussed the amendment, which included new funding sources such as a DOL Youth Build grant and a contract with Texas State University for childcare funding, both reflected in budget amendment 3. The 2026-2027 budget is approximately \$40,000 less than the previous year due to conservative estimates, with allocations from TWC estimated at 90% of last year's amounts. The motion to approve the budget amendment and the new budget was carried after review and discussion.

## **6. Subrecipient Contract Renewals\***

Presented By Frank Leonardis, Diane Cook, Paul Fletcher

The board discussed contract renewals for subrecipient partners, including C2 Global, Baker Ripley, a new contract with American Youth Works, and the final year of a contract with Workforce Networking. A motion to approve the subrecipient contracts was made, seconded, and subsequently carried following a vote.

## **7. Policy Updates\***

Presented By Frank Leonardis, Diane Cook, Paul Fletcher

A motion was made and seconded to approve policy updates, specifically changes to procurement and acquisition thresholds. The board received an overview of the changes, including increased thresholds for equipment, micro purchases, and small purchases, as well as updated CEO authorization limits. No questions or objections were raised regarding the changes to FINO 3 and ADM 07, and the motion to approve the policy updates was carried.

## **8. Executive Committee/Chair's Report**

Presented By Frank Leonardis

The executive committee met the previous week to finalize the budget amendment and the new fiscal year budget, both of which were subsequently approved by the full board. The committee also discussed a potential affiliation with Workforce Network Inc., but did not approve the affiliation at this time. Additional information is being gathered for further consideration. The committee reviewed subrecipient contract renewals and policy updates, which were also approved by the board, and received a cybersecurity report from Eric as part of their regular updates.

## **9. Business Education Services Committee Report**

Presented By Nikki Stallings

The Business & Education Committee met in July, hosting Robert, Director of Economic Development for Smithville, as a special guest. The committee reviewed the business service presentation scheduled for the October board retreat, discussed workforce updates including the career ready website and apprentice efforts, and learned about a hospitality partnership with Texas State and Horseshoe Bay Resort. The next committee meeting is set for September 14th.

## **10. Community Awareness Committee Report**

Presented By Brian Hernandez

The Community Awareness Committee met in July to focus on launching signing day initiatives throughout the region, planning events for both northern and southern areas with ISDs and employers. The committee received an overview of the rapid response system for employer layoffs and WARN notices, and discussed

upcoming outreach campaigns, including a new career ready website for the 10-county area. Additional topics included upcoming events, a presentation from intern Caitlyn Swetner about her summer experience, and plans to continue and expand the internship program. The next committee meeting is scheduled for September 17th.

#### **11. Untapped Populations Committee Report**

Presented By Diane Cook

The committee reviewed data across the 9-county area, identifying Caldwell County as a key area for serving older workers and young adults due to significant resource gaps. Ongoing efforts include gathering information on foster youth, justice-involved individuals, and homeless populations, with plans to analyze gateway jobs and living wage pathways. The committee will identify information shared with schools and residents, review data for policy recommendations, and improve referrals and follow-up between organizations. Additional focus areas include digital literacy, workforce readiness, transportation, and family stability. The next meeting is scheduled for September 17th, and priority areas for each county were determined using a scoring system based on labor market and school success data.

#### **12. Early Care & Education Committee Report**

Presented By Gwen Snyder

The Early Care and Education Committee met on August 5th to discuss strategic plan items, including updates to childcare parent and provider surveys. The committee reviewed rising childcare costs, the impact on access and funding, and plans to share information as the legislative session approaches. A one-page advocacy document will be created, and the next meeting is scheduled for November 5th. The committee emphasized the economic impact of childcare, discussed TRS certification requirements and challenges, and noted ongoing issues between licensing and certification standards. There is also discussion at the state level about consolidating childcare functions to improve system effectiveness.

#### **13. Chief Executive Officer's Report**

Presented By Paul Fletcher

The CEO reported ongoing efforts to educate elected officials about workforce development, including a planned lunch-and-learn at the state capitol and participation in national advocacy events. Board member Megan Gandy and Kelly Moreno will travel to Washington DC, and the CEO will attend a similar event in October. Legislative activity is expected to be minimal until after the November election. The organization hosted Steve Pier, the new executive director of the Texas Workforce Commission, and will participate in the Q3 Win Texas meeting. A communications intern, Caelyn Swendner, shared her summer experience. New office locations in Taylor and Llano have opened, with grand openings scheduled. The organization received a \$1.5 million YouthBuild grant and established a contract with Texas State University for the C-Campus grant, supporting child care for student parents. Child care costs have increased, and while TWC's allocation rose, higher costs mean fewer children served. Mandatory children will receive priority access, and the board expects to serve around 400 fewer low-income children. Planning is underway for the board's 40th anniversary, and the Sunset Commission report indicates TWC will continue as an agency with increased IT oversight. The organization continues to address skill mismatches through training and upskilling, with ongoing efforts to enroll individuals in training before grant deadlines. The average number of children served is around 2,900, with a target of 3,108, decreasing to 2,748 in 2027. The wait list for child care is expected to increase, and 76% of providers have achieved a rating or designation, with efforts to improve this percentage ongoing.

#### **14. Performance Reports**

Presented By Diane Cook

#### **15. Workforce Board Announcements – Board at Large (what's happening in your area) – Submit your announcements to the Board Secretary prior to the meeting.**

Presented By Frank Leonardis

Recent announcements included union hall and job site tours for interns, providing real-world exposure at various locations such as local 67, local 286, IBU 52520, McCormick and LaGrange, and Spira Drill Manufacturing. Interns are subject to a three-strike policy for conduct, and Workforce Solutions is developing a business guide pack for companies interested in hosting interns. The cost for hosting interns was detailed, and only low-income students are eligible. TCS created an 8-week internship program across six departments, receiving positive feedback and planning to continue despite scaling challenges. There is an intention to collaborate with Workforce Solutions on a guidebook for employers, and thanks were extended for their support. The next board meeting will be a retreat at the Kalahari Resort on October 21st and 22nd, with room arrangements to be announced.

#### **16. Schedule Date/Time for Next Board Meeting**

Presented By Frank Leonardis

#### **17. Adjourn**

Presented By Frank Leonardis

A motion was made to adjourn the meeting, and words of appreciation were expressed to all participants before the meeting concluded.

#### **Uncategorized Discussion Points**

##### **Open Forum & Q&A**

During the Open Forum & Q&A, members discussed the fluctuation in the number of children served by child care programs, noting that service levels increased during COVID due to additional funding but have since returned to pre-pandemic levels, resulting in a projected decrease in children served. The group clarified eligibility requirements for child care services, emphasizing support for those seeking employment or education, and described the process for assisting families on the wait list. Challenges with the Texas Child Care Connection portal were highlighted, particularly the lack of up-to-date provider availability, and distinctions were made between provider-specific and subsidy program wait lists. Concerns were raised about the length of the subsidy wait list, with some applicants waiting since January 25, underscoring the need for greater investment and stakeholder attention to address these issues.