

CARES ACT STEERING COMMITTEE MEETING MINUTES  
ZOOM Meeting  
October 28, 2021

IN ATTENDANCE

**STEERING COMMITTEE MEMBERS**

Chair, Elizabeth Smith, Secretary of the Department of Inspector General  
Vice Chair, Dr. Greg Bledsoe, Surgeon General (Department of Health Designee)  
Larry Walther, Secretary of the Department of Finance and Administration  
Mike Preston, Secretary of the Department of Commerce  
Cindy Gillespie, Secretary of the Department of Human Services  
Alex Johnston, Chief of Staff, Department of Transformation & Shared Services  
J.R. Hankins, Chief of Staff, Department of Public Safety  
Gina Windle, Chief of Staff, Department of Education  
Bill Gossage, Governor's Office Representative  
Senator Will Bond  
Senator David Wallace  
Representative Lane Jean

**ADDITIONAL ATTENDEES**

Jonathan Askins, Department of Information Services

AGENDA

1. Welcome and Opening Remarks: Secretary Elizabeth Smith  
Approval of Minutes from June 23, 2021
2. DFA Report – Secretary Larry Walther
  - a. CRF CARES Act – Remaining Fund Balance as of 10/26/21 **\$167,119**
3. Requests for reallocation of remaining funding:
  - a. The following Arkansas Department of Human Services (DHS) projects have concluded with the remaining funds:
    - i. Care Continuity Emergency Response Reimbursements (\$34,597 remaining)
    - ii. Hospital Proposal to assist hospitals in Medicaid to recover reimbursed costs associated with treating COVID-19 patients and to adopt technology to assist in treatment of patients via telemedicine (\$588,573 remaining)
    - iii. Ambulance Direct Care Worker Payments (\$63,958 remaining)
    - iv. Community Outreach Investment Grants (\$400,897.62 remaining)  
**Total of remaining funds: \$1,088,025**
  - b. Department of Commerce – Secretary Preston  
Division of Workforce Services – Director Childers  
Request to reallocate support funding from the National Guard allocation to UI

Administration allocation  
Amount Requested to be Reallocated: \$923,887.69

4. Request for funding
  - a. Department of Transformation and Shared Services – Secretary Fecher
  - b. Department of Information Services – Director Askins
    - i. DIS requests any available funding be utilized to enhance cyber security through extension of software subscriptions. DIS stated these purchases can be made prior to December 31, 2021.
      1. CrowdStrike Cyber Event Monitoring Software (\$297,000)
      2. CrowdStrike End-Point Protection Software Agents (\$400,000)
      3. Subscription to CoreView Software Service for Dpt. Domain Projection (\$479,000)

**Total request: \$1,176,000**
5. Determination of deadline for departments with unspent funds to be identified for return and allocation
6. Adjourn

### **WELCOME & OPENING REMARKS**

Secretary Elizabeth Smith called the meeting to order. Representative Lane Jean made a motion to approve the minutes. Secretary Larry Walther provided a second. Secretary Smith called for a vote; the minutes were approved.

### **AGENDA ITEM #2 / DFA Report – Secretary Larry Walther**

Secretary Walther noted the remaining balance as of 10/28/2021 is \$167,494.27. Based on CARES Act research, there will be another \$702,013 coming back to the Department of Commerce. This adds up to \$869,507 available for distribution.

Secretary Smith noted additional amount coming from the Department of Health, as they have \$200,000 left from the NW Council Marshallese and Latinx amount. Secretary Smith noted the agenda shows the review of departments and their remaining balances.

Representative Jean clarified the original amount was \$1.25 billion. Secretary Smith noted that \$1.25 billion has been allocated; the money discussed during this meeting was money being returned.

### **AGENDA ITEM #3 / Requests for reallocation of remaining funding**

Secretary Cindy Gillespie noted the Department of Human Services has remaining unspent funds from programs ran throughout the initial pandemic period. Secretary Gillespie noted they would like to reallocate this funding to needs at Arkansas State Hospital.

Dr. Hill, a representative from the Arkansas State Hospital, noted the difficult situation regarding the budget due to the challenges COVID introduces. He noted the utilization of nursing agencies in maintaining their necessary workforce, adding the increased cost of nurses, medical supplies,

utilities, and general operational requirements. Dr. Hill noted the public hospitals do not have the ability to bill for services as a private industry hospital does, which affects their revenue streams.

Secretary Walther clarified if these expenses have been covered by CARES Act funding in the past. Dr. Hill noted he has not spoken to Paul Louthian about the matter. Secretary Walther noted DFA will need check the ability to provide funding.

Secretary Mike Preston motioned to approve; Representative Jean provided a second; Secretary Smith called for a vote; the motion was passed.

Secretary Smith noted the second request for reallocation of funding: Department of Commerce.

Secretary Mike Preston noted \$2.2 million was appropriated and approved for support on their UI administration in order to rid the backlog and long lines for pandemic unemployment assistance. Of that original amount, there is a remaining \$923,887.69 that the Department of Commerce would like to reauthorize to go on for continuing UI administration report, noting they are no longer using the support of the National Guard or a staffing service.

Secretary Walther motioned to approve; Secretary Gillespie provided a second; Secretary Smith called for a vote; the motion was passed.

#### **AGENDA ITEM #4 / Request for funding**

Secretary Smith noted a request from the Department of Transformation and Shared Services.

Jonathan Askins noted the request centralizes around data center modernization and the capability to expand the department's projects. He noted the request was for any remaining funding, if any, as they would be able to spend it fairly quickly so the state wouldn't have to return any dollars. He noted funding could be spent on updating programs, laptops, work stations, etc.

Secretary Walther clarified the department had appropriation available to spend that money. Director Askins noted they believed they were good in that regard.

Representative Jean noted the cost of the work stations and what they are. Director Askins noted this consists of the desktop computer and corresponding pieces.

Secretary Gillespie noted the software DIS is looking to implement is incredibly important, given the state of our cyber security.

Director Askins noted TSS and DIS would cover the remaining requested funds not covered through the CARES Act. He noted a discrepancy in the requested funding amount.

Secretary Gillespie called for a motion to approve up to the amount they have requested in returned funds (\$1,347,000); Secretary Smith called for a vote; the motion was passed.

#### **AGENDA ITEM #5 / Determination of deadline for Departments with unspent funds to be identified for return and reallocation**

Secretary Smith noted the discussion of making a determination of a final deadline for departments, giving the CARES Act Steering Committee the ability to reallocate any unspent funding dollars to purposes necessary related to COVID. She also noted a conversation in March 2020 regarding requesting reimbursement from FEMA for the PPE Arkansas has utilized. A number of departments have made that request. Secretary Smith noted that if that funding is received before the end of December, it will come into the CARES Act pool.

Secretary Walther noted a discussion with Paul Louthian about this subject. He noted if there were specific expenses that could be reimbursed, that would be turned around quickly. He noted the importance of documenting legitimate circumstances to provide for reimbursement.

Secretary Walther called for a motion to establish December 10 as the cut-off date for spending funding; Secretary Gillespie provided a second; Secretary Smith called for a vote; the motion was passed.

### **CLOSING DISCUSSION**

Secretary Smith noted the committee will reconvene as needed.

**The meeting was adjourned.**