

**WESTERN HIGHLANDS AREA AUTHORITY  
APRIL 26, 2006, SPECIAL MEETING**

BOARD MEMBERS PRESENT: Susan Hendrick, Chair, Presiding; Nancy Carey; John W. Condrey (Via Telephone); William J. Cook, Jr.; Justin B. Hembree; Minnie Jones; Abigail Karroubi (Via Telephone); Michele Lawhern; Robert Ratcliffe; Mandy Stone; Ryan Whitson; and Arthur C. Wilson, Jr.

BOARD MEMBERS ABSENT: Patricia Franklin; Rick McDevitt; G. Keith Parker; and Michael Talbert.

ALSO PRESENT: Arthur D. Carder, Jr., Chief Executive Officer; Rhonda R. McKee, Human Resources; Sharon Lentz, Chief Financial Officer; Victor W. Buchanan, Legal Counsel; and Beverly Atkins, Clerk to the Board.

CALL TO ORDER: The area board ("Board") of the Western Highlands Area Authority met on Wednesday, April 26, 2006, at 9:03 a.m. in the second-floor Conference Room (Room 312/315) of its Administrative Offices, 356 Biltmore Avenue, Asheville, North Carolina. The Chair called the meeting to order.

APPROVAL OF AGENDA: Mr. Hembree made a motion to approve the agenda. Ms. Stone seconded the motion, and it carried by a unanimous vote. (A copy of the agenda is included in the minute book with these minutes.)

CLOSED SESSION: A motion was made at 9:08 a.m. by Mr. Wilson, seconded by Ms. Carey, and carried by a unanimous vote to go into closed session, pursuant to Sections 143-318.11(a)(3) and (6) of the General Statutes of North Carolina, to prevent the disclosure of information that is privileged or confidential pursuant to the law of this State or of the United States, or not considered a public record within the meaning of Chapter 132 of the General Statutes of North Carolina, to consult with Legal Counsel, and to consider Personnel Matters.

Open session resumed at 9:37 a.m., Ms. Jones asked a question regarding who would help the consumers. Mr. Carder stated modifications to the phone system are being discussed and will be put in place whereby the caller will have options through an automated system to get needed information. Ms. Lawhern asked that board members try the automated phone system before it is put in service for consumers.

Mr. Whitson asked about appeal rights of staff being RIF'd and severance pay. Ms. McKee reported that a permanent employee who is separated due to reduction-in-force has the right to appeal the separation. Western Highlands RIF policy allows for one week of pay for each full year of employment. The expense for this RIF will come out of current year budget.

Mr. Wilson had a question regarding item #6 budget comparison. Ms. Lentz went over the reasoning for the budget. Mr. Carder reported that he is working on several grant initiatives with most grants being service based. In answer to Mr. Whitson's question relating to the board meeting every other month, Mr. Carder stated that there is substantial cost related to board meetings travel/food/staff time.

A motion was made at 10:00 a.m. by Ms. Carey to recess open session and return to Closed Session. Dr. Ratcliffe seconded the motion, and it carried by a unanimous vote.

At the return to open session at 10:05 a.m. Mr. Carder presented item #4 which shows the positions being RIF'd. Ms. Stone asked with the consolidating of Community and Consumer Relations and Provider Network how will consumer complaints and other issues be handled. Mr. Carder stated that the two departments are already interrelated

In response to a question regarding communicating with staff about the reduction, Mr. Carder reported that an all staff meeting was held on Tuesday, April 25, 2006. He is also, working on a letter to consumers. Mr. Hembree stated that it should be stressed to staff as well as consumers that the reduction is due to a decision made in Raleigh. Mr. Carder stated that he will be sending a letter to the NC Division requesting extra funds to help with the transition as Western Highlands will not be able to have as many providers. WHN currently has the largest provider network in the state.

After further discussion, Mr. Wilson made a motion to approve the RIF Plan, (Attachment 1), and the list of positions, (Attachment #4). Mr. Cook seconded the motion, and it carried by a unanimous vote.

The Board Members expressed their regret with having to take the above action.

ADJOURNMENT: Mr. Whitson made a motion to adjourn the meeting. Dr. Ratcliffe seconded the motion, which carried by a unanimous vote; and the meeting adjourned at 10:28 a.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Beverly Atkins  
Clerk to the Board