

MassHire Central Region Workforce Board
August 20 2020 8:30 AM
Via Webex – phone & online

Meeting Minutes

The following members/proxies were present: Paul Gilbody (Vice Chair); Janice Ryan Weekes; Leslie Baker; Joshua Froimson; Leslie Parady; Ethan Brown; Kathie Mahoney; Jennifer Almeida; Karen Koller; Colleen Lanza; Joyce Clemence; Don Prescott; Alex Guardiola (proxy for T. Murray); Luis Pedraja; Jose Perez; Richard Cheney; Vivianna Abreu-Hernandez; Kevin Kuros; Libis Bueno; Ryan Foley; Jil Wonoski; Charla Hixson (proxy for M. Campbell)

Guests/Staff: J. Turgeon (MCRWB); Suzanne Stinson, Kelsi Rodriguez, Paul Judd

Call to Order, Announcement of Quorum & Note of Conflict of Interest: P. Gilbody called the meeting to order at 8:38 AM, and asked the members if anyone wished to note any conflicts of interest on the agenda. J. Weekes noted her potential conflict with the career Center RFP item, and L. Bueno noted a potential conflict with the IT program item. P. Gilbody then welcomed all the attendees and thanked all for their participation. J. Turgeon then asked all attendees to note their names in the chat window for record-keeping purposes.

Approval of April 16, 2020 Meeting Minutes: The minutes were unanimously approved upon a motion by J. Weekes and second by L. Bueno.

J. Turgeon then discussed the recent resignation by the current Chair, Rosalie Lawless, after serving 12 years as the MCRWB's Chairperson, and 27 total years on the Board. He noted her desire to step away from work and other major commitments at this time and stated both he and the City manager have offered her their deep appreciation and thanks for a job well done and exemplary public service. J. Turgeon also noted she has worked hard to ensure a smooth transition of leadership. He stated he will be working with the executive committee on additional ways to acknowledge her contribution to the Board, including the potential re-naming of the Board's ELM room in her honor. He asked members with other suggestions to contact him.

J. Turgeon then noted that the current Vice Chair, Paul Gilbody, has agreed to assume the Chair for the remainder of the term (through the January meeting) if so nominated. With that he opened nominations for Chair and J. Froimson nominated P. Gilbody, which was seconded by L. Parady. P. Gilbody affirmed he accepted the nomination. Then, after hearing no other nominations, J. Froimson made a motion to close the nominations and approve P. Gilbody as the Board in the transition and the motion was seconded by J. Weekes and approved unanimously. J. Turgeon thanked Paul for his continued service to the Board.

J. Turgeon then reminded members that the quarterly program updates were sent out to the membership in advance of the meeting, and highlighted some of the Board's activities:

- The YouthWorks summer job program has served 277 youth this summer, all with virtual programming. He noted the program was underspend due to some youth not fully taking advantage of the opportunity (and budgeted pay) offered through the program.
- The Board is currently wrapping up the 2 year Pharmacy Tech training program – having met original goals for participants and placements with a final class yet to complete.

- The Board will soon be starting up a new program to training commercial drivers starting this fall. It is a state-funded two year program.
- The Board has also received a small grant to assist in the expansion of local apprenticeship programs that have connection to STEM/technology (including medical records, manufacturing, etc.), and will need to identify local companies that would like to discuss the potential for having the grant support the related education portion of the apprenticeship model. R. Foley state he would like to discuss this as his employer contacts may have an interest.

J. Weekes then gave an update of career center activities, including the operational changes made due to the pandemic such as moving to online customer career counseling and delivering online webinars, as well as virtual job fairs and facilitating access to new online education and training programs such as Coursera, Edex, and the new Harvard University developed Skill Base tool. She encouraged the members to check these tools out and shared the address with members to the Skill Base link on the career center website. J. Weekes also informed the Board that their neighbor at the Southbridge Career Center building has moved out for another area facility, and she highlighted a new grant the career centers have received to support people affected by the opioid crisis, including family members of a person dealing with addiction) which will work in tandem with their existing Access To Recovery (ATR) program. She also noted they have a new pilot initiative to serve people receiving state-issued housing vouchers, delivered in partnership with RCAP solutions. New staff have been hired to work with each of these programs. J. Weekes also notified the Board that the career centers will be participating in the upcoming VETS Inc. stand down community/jobs fair, happening in person later this month.

J. Turgeon then invited guests from UMass, Kelsi Rodriguez, Suzanne Stinson, and Paul Judd, to discuss their anchor mission program with the members, and the linkage with MassHire for the purpose of supporting connection for local resides with jobs at UMass and growth along career pathways within the organization. The members then discussed the project with the representatives and J. Turgeon noted that P. Judd has actually joined the Board as a new member recently and welcomed him.

J. Turgeon then gave an overview of the career center procurement process to the members, noting that the current contract ends in June, 2021 and therefore a bid must be put out this fall in order to have time for review and vote at the Board's January meeting – which then leaves time for new contract development for July 1, 2021. He informed the board that State officials, in consultation with Federal Department of Labor leaders will soon be issuing updated guidance on this matter and this guidance may significantly change the scope of the contract to be bid, potentially reducing the contract from the current direct delivery of all services, to one in which the lead operator serves more of a coordination role. J. Turgeon will be working with the Executive Committee on next steps depending on the new state guidance.

J. Turgeon then reviewed the strategic plan that was developed this past month with members and partners to help ensure local efforts align with and support the regional workforce blueprint (which was previously updated this winter/early spring) by various leaders from education, workforce development, economic development, and employer/industry. He outlined the revised regional blueprint goals and priority sectors/occupations, as well as the regional response to the COVID-19 pandemic and the impacts observed and anticipated moving forward, and then discussed with members the local goals and strategies that will guide the Board's work in the coming years. Members that discussed the goals and strategies outlined in the plan and next steps in the process, which includes translating these items into MCRWB sub-committee work plans for the coming year, so that they may oversee the implementation of the plan.

The members were then invited to make announcements and L. Bueno's recent spotlight by the Central MA STEM Ecosystem was noted. No other announcements were made and upon a motion, second, and unanimous vote, the meeting was adjourned at 9:59am.

P. Gilbody thanked all for their attendance.

The next MCRWB full board meeting is Thursday, October 15, 2020. (location to be announced)

Respectfully drafted by, J. Turgeon; MCRWB