

MassHire Central Region Workforce Board
Executive Committee
May 19, 2023; 8:30 AM
Conducted via webex

Meeting Minutes

Attendees: Janice Ryan Weekes, Paul Gilbody, Joshua Froimson, Robin Hooper, Jen Almeida
Staff: Jeff Turgeon

- P. Gilbody welcomed everyone to the Webex meeting and asked everyone to review the agenda and note any conflicts of interest. None were noted. He then asked if anyone would like to make a motion to pass the minutes from the March 17, 2023 committee meeting and a motion was made and seconded to accept the meeting minutes. The motion passed unanimously.
- J. Turgeon reviewed Board programming with the committee, including information regarding the regional YouthWorks program (now expanded to serve older youth with new pay structures for youth in various “tiers” relating to the level of work and responsibility they will have in their placements), as well as the STEM and High School Senior Interns in Education projects, and the Connecting Activity program. He also noted the ongoing regional industry pathway programs, including the healthcare Hub grant project and the Behavioral Health grant project, as well as the consortia meetings for healthcare, Manufacturing, and Transportation/Logistics/Warehousing this month. J. Turgeon stated the Board is submitting a planning grant to explore training needs in the healthcare information technology field, and that the Board will be receiving new funding in FY 24 to revise the regional workforce blueprint as well.
- J. Turgeon also highlighted to the committee that the Board is taking part in discussions with Clark University about a Main South economic empowerment center, as well as a similar type of project being led by the Worcester Community Action Council to serve residents on the Blackstone Valley area or the region.
- J. Ryan Weekes shared a career center update with the committee, highlighting the recent successful job fair at the DCU center that had more than 100 employers represented, along with approximately 1,500 job seekers. She noted advertising through the MA Department of Transportation billboards raised the event’s visibility. She also noted that new staff have been hired to fill key vacancies, including the Access to Recovery program, a new youth coordinator (hired internally – leaving her administrative assistance position now vacant).
- J. Ryan Weekes also informed the committee that the Worcester career center and Board move to 554 Main Street in Worcester is on track for early July. It is hoped staff downtime will be kept to a minimum by working remotely as the new work stations are being set up.

- J. Turgeon brought up recent discussions had with career center staff regarding outside training entities and what they charge our clients – which ensured we are not being overcharged for training that they provide. He also let the committee know that the state has issued a draft policy clarifying that federal funds cannot be used to serve employers from the cannabis industry – however, this leaves open the ability to serve these customers with local or state funding (as long as it gets documented). The committee expressed general concurrence that serving this industry would be positive if allowed by state and city policy.
- The committee then discussed the upcoming summer Board meeting agenda, and what topics may be of interest to the members. One topic that may be explored is what the state DEI initiative status is and what resources are available for local employers that wish to address this topic for their own organization.
- J. Turgeon announced a regional economic development listening session scheduled for May 22nd at WPI organized by the MA Executive Office of Economic development, as well as the MA Workforce Association annual meeting occurring June 8 and 9, 2-023 in new Bedford.
- The executive committee meeting will next meet on Friday, June 16, 2023 at 8:30am
- Hearing no other business, the meeting was adjourned.

Respectfully submitted by: J. Turgeon