

MassHire Central Region Workforce Board
Executive Committee
June 19, 2020; 8:30 AM
Conducted viabex
Meeting Minutes

Attendees: Paul Gilbody, Robin Hooper, Leslie Parady, Janice Ryan Weekes, Libis Bueno, Joshua Froimson

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.
- Upon a motion by L. Parady and second by L. Bueno, the minutes from the committee's May 15, 2020 meeting were unanimously approved.
- J. Turgeon gave an update to the committee on next year's budget, highlighting the recently released Federal WIOA and Wagner-Peyser funding allocations and an overall 7.1% cut from these major budget lines, which equates to a \$277,791 reduction (from \$3,197,684 to \$2,959,893). This is due to the fact that these Federal budget lines are based upon a formula that uses the unemployment rate from last year which was historically low. Making matters worse, the State budget outlook for next year appears bleak with revenue due the pandemic very low. J. Turgeon will keep Board members aware of any efforts to educate elected officials regarding the impacts of cuts and need for additional funding.
- J. Turgeon then discussed programming, including some issues regarding the plans for the summer YouthWorks program and changes that need to be made in order to meet the guidelines from the State. He also noted the recent submission of the revised regional blueprint to State officials and his work now on aligning the regional strategies with the blueprint with the help of the committees and members.
- J. Weekes then updated the committee regarding career center operations, including their recent virtual job fair which attracted 80 jobseekers and 34 companies. They plan to hold another virtual fair in July. She also reported the career center is working with the State to roll out additional online tools, including a new labor matching tool that staff have been requesting for years.
- J. Weekes also informed the committee that the career center and the Board have joined with the City and numerous other organizations from the Worcester Together Coalition to release a statement condemning racial inequity and police brutality - the statement is on our websites and will be put into action through joint staff training and other activities.
- J. Turgeon then discussed Board grant activities, including a recently submitted 2-year State grant for training commercial drivers, and a grant application being developed for a healthcare workforce planning and training grant. He also discussed the award of a grant to promote IT apprenticeships to Clark University that the Board will be a part of. J. Weekes also noted that five area non-profits have been awarded staff support for

COVID-19 food relief efforts. These organizations include Catholic Charities, Worcester Public Schools, and the Southeast Asian Coalition.

- L. Bueno discussed a robotics program that he felt would be very helpful for the region, noting a recent discussion with youth and staff at You, Inc., and Katherine Chen at WPI who leads the regional STEM Ecosystem. The program costs approximately \$5,000 and could serve 80 students. He will send the information to Karen Pelletier from the Worcester Regional Chamber of Commerce and J. Turgeon, who will look for ways to assist in funding it.
- J. Turgeon discussed the ongoing outreach to UMass regarding potential Board membership and also informed the committee that the State recently concluded an audit of the Board and career center and notified officials that we passed without any findings or major concerns. He thanked Janice and her team, the finance department, as well as the Board staff for this success.
- The members then discussed the upcoming summer meeting and the determined it would be helpful to delay the meeting until August and to add in election of the Chair (until January's next regularly scheduled election). J. Turgeon will also plan to invite UMass to give a presentation regarding their anchor mission and he will update the Board regarding the strategic plan and blueprint.
- Given the delay in the full Board meeting, the executive committee will next meet on July 17, 2020 at 8:30am.
- Hearing no other business, the meeting was adjourned.

Respectfully submitted by: J. Turgeon