

MassHire Central Region Workforce Board

April 16, 2020 8:30 AM

Via Webex – phone & online

Meeting Minutes

The following members/proxies were present: Rosalie Lawless (Chair); Paul Gilbody (Vice Chair); Janice Ryan Weekes; Leslie Baker; Joshua Froimson; Leslie Parady; Ethan Brown; Kathie Mahoney; Joyce Clemence; Don Prsecott; Alex Guardiola; Jose Perez; Mike Bowes; Sherri Pitcher; Ellen Spencer Viviana Abreu-Hernandez; Kevin Kuros; Leslie Parady; Libis Bueno; Rick Laferriere; Ryan Foley; Richard Cheney; Jil Wonoski; Charla Hixson (proxy for Marybeth Campbell)

Guests/Staff: J. Turgeon (MCRWB); Mark Moore (MCRWB)

Call to Order, Announcement of Quorum & Note of Conflict of Interest: R. Lawless called the meeting to order at 8:37 AM, and asked the members if anyone wished to note any conflicts of interest on the agenda. C. Hixson of WCAC noted her conflict on the WIOA Youth item. R. Lawless welcomed all the attendees and thanked all for participating on the meeting during these difficult times. J. Turgeon then conducted a roll call to document attendance.

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

J. Turgeon then reviewed the WIOA Youth RFP selection recommendations from the MCRWB Youth Workforce Investment Council for Board staff to enter into negotiations on contracts with the Worcester Community Action Council, YOU, Inc., and the Fieldstone School. After a review of the recommended programs, a motion was made to approve the recommendation by P. Gilbody, seconded by A. Guardiola, and passed unanimously.

J. Weekes then discussed the operational changes made by the career center due to the pandemic and her staff's support of the Department of Unemployment Assistance – sending 12 staff to assist their office with processing unemployment insurance claims. She noted that along with online customer career counseling and delivering online webinars, they are looking to offer new information sessions online regarding the filing of unemployment claims – noting her staff is not DUA representatives and lack direct access to the state UI database to assist individual clients with their claims. J. Weekes also discussed the launch of the tool they developed through the website to connect available job seekers with essential employers critical openings, noting it has now transitioned to a new phone-based app through a partnership with JobGet that will allow companies and job seekers to connect instantly and speeding up the process. J. Turgeon noted all users are asked to use the referral codes (“mhcentral” for job seekers and “mhcentralhire” for employers) to allow for tracking of outcomes. There is no cost for the service to job seekers ever and employers can access it for six months at no cost.

J. Turgeon then reviewed Board changes, including the development of a new online pharmacy tech training being offered through a partnership with CVS. He thank R. Laferriere for the support from CVS in offering access to their online pre-apprentice curriculum and platform at no cost. J. Turgeon has shared a flyer with the members and the public. He also reviewed some of the resource links that are shared on the Board's webpage.

J. Turgeon then noted for the members that he is working with state officials on the status for the summer youth jobs program, YouthWorks, that at this point is still being planned on, but may be affected by the pandemic.

K. Kuros and R. Cheney then discussed available state and federal resources, highlighting that some of these resources are nearly exhausted already and that organizations should act sooner rather than later. These include the Paycheck Protection program, bridge loans, and the Economic Injury Advanced Loan program. K. Kuros noted that these and other state programs for business services are being continually adjusted to address employer needs as much as possible. This includes things like a waiver being implemented to the state's Tax Incremental Financing program for applicants needing to provide a Department of Unemployment Assistance certificate of good standing since that office is overwhelmed at this time. He also highlighted the link to the Central MA Regional Planning Council's web-based resource finder was also shared ([cmrpc.typeform.com/to/oUWJ28](http://cmrpc.typeform.com/to/oUWJ28)). R. Cheney discussed the rapid increase of customers his office has been seeing and their hope to bring on additional staff to increase their capacity.

R. Lawless then asked attendees if anyone had any announcements. L. Bueno noted Domitek has introduced a product to help organizations scan people's temperatures in real time that are entering their facilities. He will share a video about this tool with folks. C. Lanza discussed the fact that Job Corps nationally has sent students home and they are working to establish online training capacity, but they've been able to beginning serving approximately 60% of their students already. They anticipate taking new enrollees in May and their admissions staff are still working. L. Baker asked that board members do what they can to help state officials address the need for increased internet access throughout the Commonwealth, especially rural areas, as this very much restricts the ability of adult basic education and others access online education material and resources.

Adjournment: upon a motion, second, and unanimous vote, the meeting was adjourned at 9:47am. R. Lawless thanked all for their attendance.

The next MCRWB full board meeting is Thursday, April 16, 2020.

*Respectfully drafted by, J. Turgeon; MCRWB*