

MassHire Central Region Workforce Board
July 15, 2021; 8:30 AM
Via Webex – phone & online

Meeting Minutes

The following members/proxies were present: Paul Gilbody (Chair); Janice Ryan Weekes; Jennifer Almeida; Libis Bueno; Kevin Kuros; Jil Wonoski; Robin Hooper; Ethan Brown; Sandra Foley; Alyssa Hansen; Hasir Gonzales (proxy for Alex Corrales); Alex Guardiola (proxy for Tim Murray); Jose Perez; Joyce Clemence; Maegan McCaffrey (proxy for Karen Koller); Charla Hixon (Proxy for Marybeth Campbell); Richard Cheney; Paul Soucy

Guests/Staff: J. Turgeon (MCRWB); Lila Pope and Roberto Diaz (WCAC); Sacha Stadhard (MA DCS)

Call to Order, Announcement of Quorum & Note of Conflict of Interest: P. Gilbody called the meeting to order at 8:33 AM, and asked the members if anyone wished to note any conflicts of interest on the agenda. No conflicts were noted. P. Gilbody then welcomed all the attendees and thanked them for their attendance. J. Turgeon then reviewed the attendance log.

P. Gilbody then welcomed Ms. Sacha Stadhard from MA Division of Career Services who gave a presentation regarding the statewide MassHire efforts to ensure diversity, equity, and inclusion are a hallmark of our workforce system, including the work of a special task force that she is leading that includes representatives from workforce stakeholders such as boards, career centers, and partner agencies. She noted J. Turgeon is a member of the task force and reviewed the draft vision statement and other steps they are taking, including a Request For Proposals that is now posted for a consultant to assist the task force in their work. J. Turgeon then reviewed local efforts around diversity, equity and inclusion and highlighted a review of the regional demographic activity report that compares local service levels of customers with regional demographic profiles (especially as it relates to accessing training resources through the career center). He noted for the board some of the limitations of the data, including the fact that customers self-report their race/ethnicity and this may somewhat skew the data. J. Perez noted the level of Latino/a customers as it relates to the City of Worcester's residents and encouraged the staff to expand efforts to reach out to the community and not just rely upon whomever comes to the career center. J. Ryan Weekes shared information regarding career center staff, highlighting the fact that includes nearly 20% are Latino/a, 17% Black, and 6% Asian and that her senior leaders are likewise diverse – including 33% Latino/a and 17% Black (including her as the director being a black female). Sacha thanked J. Turgeon for sharing the lessons learned by the region's work with the state task force and noted it is helpful for the task force to identify efforts done at the local level that can be replicated statewide.

Approval of the April 15, 2021 MCRWB Meeting Minutes: The minutes were unanimously approved upon a motion by A. Guardiola and second by J. Wonoski.

J. Turgeon then gave an update on Board programs and activities, including implementation efforts for the regional blueprint implementation (and priority sector workforce consortia), new grant projects, and the career center certification and monitoring effort. He also informed the Board that the region's draft 4-year plan was drafted and posted for public comment on the MCRWB website and invited members to review and offer feedback before the July 23rd deadline.

Lila Pope from the Worcester Community Action Council (WCAC) then shared an update regarding the YouthWorks Summer jobs program which WCAC manages in Worcester on behalf of the Board. She highlighted that the region will receive more than \$1million to serve more than 400 youth this summer and 5,000 youth statewide. Locally, WCAC will be having youth stationed at more than 60 area work sites.

J. Turgeon then reviewed additional projects the Board is involved with, including the regional blueprint implementation, healthcare training projects, and the XPrize grant project serving more than 200 trainees through online training provided by HireMee. He also informed the members about other area grant applications the MCRWB has supported since the last meeting and reviewed the current status of the Fiscal Year 2022 state budget that features strong increases in workforce-related programming dollars. He then reminded members that they can access up to date information regarding area training opportunities by logging in to the MCRWB website at www.masshirecentral.com. This includes current trainings in manufacturing, management, CDL drivers, healthcare, and IT help desk support.

P. Gilbody then introduced the newly selected WIOA Operator, Jason Matthews from Cross Sector Consulting, who will be assisting the Board with coordinating the work of the WIOA partners and the region's career centers.

J. Ryan Weekes gave an update regarding the career centers' return to in-person services, including notice that staff are now back in the office and serving customers in person by appointment only and it is anticipated that the center will be back to serving people in early September.

J. Turgeon then also informed the members that the statewide MassHire awards will be on Thursday, July 22nd at 10am and noted three staff are finalists for awards (five were nominated) and that the region's own Sue Mailman was selected as the state's MassHire Champion Award being awarded by the Secretary.

The members were then invited to make announcements and no member announcements were made, and upon a motion, second, and unanimous vote, the meeting was adjourned at 9:46 am.

P. Gilbody thanked all for their attendance.

The next MCRWB full board meeting is Thursday, September 21, 2021 (Webex virtual, unless otherwise announced)

Respectfully drafted by, J. Turgeon; MCRWB