

MassHire Central Region Workforce Board
April 18, 2024; 8:30 AM
Via MS Teams – phone & online

Meeting Minutes

The following members/proxies were present: Paul Gilbody (Chair; Milford Federal Bank); Janice Ryan Weekes (MassHire Central Career Centers); Joshua Froimson (AbbVie); Robert DeMastro (MA Small Business Development Center Network); Jack Houlker (MA Rehabilitation Commission); Robin Hooper (The Community Builders); Nicole Trombly (Grafton Job Corps Center); Kimberly White (QCC); Kelly Aiken (UMass Memorial); Scott Lappalainen (Advantage Truck Group); David Garvin (Greater Worcester Regional Chamber of Commerce); Jenna Wills (Worcester Community Action Council); Nicole Rendon (Worcester Housing Authority); Sherri Greene Pitcher (Notre Dame Academy); Dave Bassett (Senior Community Service Employment Program)

Guests/Staff: J. Turgeon (MCRWB); Kimberley Ingalls (MassMEP); Jason Matthews (MassHire Central Region WIOA Operator)

Call to Order, Announcement of Quorum & Note of Conflict of Interest: P. Gilbody called the meeting to order at 8:34 AM, and asked the members if anyone wished to note any conflicts of interest on the agenda. A conflict was noted by J. Wills of the Worcester Community Action Council for the WIOA Youth Request For Proposals (RFP) item. P. Gilbody then welcomed all the attendees and thanked them for their attendance. J. Turgeon then reviewed the attendance log.

Approval of the January 18, 2024 MCRWB Meeting Minutes: Upon a motion and second from the attendees, the minutes were unanimously approved.

P. Gilbody then turned the meeting facilitation over to J. Turgeon who reviewed the WIOA Youth RFP process and recommendation from the review team to enter into negotiations and prioritize funding the Fieldstone School, LLC and Youth Opportunities Upheld, Inc., and if funding allows, also funding the Worcester Community Action Council, Inc if the agency has the ability to revise their outreach, recruitment and assessment process. A motion was made by J. Froimson and seconded by J. Houlker to approve the recommendation. The Motion passed unanimously, with J. Wills recusing herself.

J. turgeon then reviewed the work of the Board staff and volunteers to complete the career center service provider annual monitoring and three-year certification process, noting the items that were reviewed and the steps taken in the process. He also informed the members of the areas that warranted recommended improvement, as well as the numerous highlights of the career center's operations. This included the observation that the career centers appear to be well managed and effectively meeting customer needs. Minimal concerns were identified (and largely addressed during the review process), including the need for the career center to adopt a new state-issued cover form to document customer training enrollment needed (WIOA Program Training Determination (18-101-6) form), the Career Center's Standard Operating Procedures should have a cover sheet noting the date of the most recent review with the reviewer's name and title, and strengthening communication and services provided to the Adult Basic Education/ESOL partners and the MA Dept. of Transitional Assistance representative. As mentioned, there were numerous highlights, such as the success of the

career center moves to new locations; the utilization of new online tools for job seekers; strong WIOA performance and ITA enrollments; the integration of new services for refugees and migrants. It was therefore recommended by J. Turgeon that the Board approve the career center recertification for the FY25 – FY27 period. A motion was made to approve the recommendation by J. Froimson and seconded by J. Houlker and the motion passed unanimously.

P. Gilbody then welcomed Kimberley Ingalls from the Massachusetts Manufacturing Extension Partnership (MassMEP) who discussed their Pathmaker Grant program that the MCRWB is a partner on that will help prepare MA residents for careers in life-science related production roles.

P. Gilbody next welcomed Jason Matthews, who serves as the MCRWB's WIOA Operator, which serves as a coordinator with the region's other federally funded partners. Jason outlined the status

J. Turgeon then discussed Board programming, including the YouthWorks year round and summer job programs, school to career connecting activities, regional career pipeline programs in healthcare, mental health, and CDL driving, as well as programs through the Worcester Jobs Fund. He also reminded members that the Board has released a draft of the regional blueprint for public comment and he shared information from the blueprint regarding top regional trends and priority occupational sectors. The public comment period ends on April 24th and after revisions are made it will be submitted to state officials.

J. Ryan Weekes then updated the Board about career center events and activities, including the need to fill up to five vacant positions (three on which are on hold due to a state hiring freeze), the upcoming large job fair that will be happening on May 14th at the DCU in Worcester which is anticipated to connect more than 100 employers to several hundred job seekers. She also informed the Board about the career center's efforts to assist area migrants living in emergency shelters – and a new program they are setting up to expand English classes plus work readiness in partnership with five area service providers. J. Ryan Weekes also discussed staff training for sexual harassment that occurred and an upcoming training for active shooter response. She concluded by highlighting a special ceremony conducted in partnership with the City of Worcester and state officials to honor Worcester career center Veteran's Services representative, Bill Ryan, for his 30+ years of services and his tremendous impact that he has had in Central MA and throughout the nation.

J. Turgeon shared some upcoming Board and career center events that members may wish to promote or attend, and also reminded members that a list of current training programs is posted on the board's website (www.masshirecentral.com) and asked attendees to share information regarding these projects with their respective networks, including a training through National Grid and YMCA lifeguard training.

P. Gilbody then asked members if there were any additional announcements and hearing none, thanked all for their attendance and reminded members that the next MCRWB full board meeting is scheduled for Thursday, July 18, 2024 at 8:30am.

P. Gilbody then invited members to make a motion to adjourn, and after a motion, a second and unanimous vote, the meeting was adjourned at 9:39am.

Respectfully drafted by, J. Turgeon; MCRWB