

MassHire Central Region Workforce Board
Executive Committee
Mar 20, 2020; 8:30 AM
Conducted viabex
Meeting Minutes

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

Staff: Jeff Turgeon

- J. Turgeon welcome everyone to the Webex meeting and informed them that the Chair, Rosalie Lawless, was unavailable for the meeting.
- P. Gilbody then asked everyone to review the agenda and note any conflicts of interest. J. Weekes noted she has a conflict with the career center operator contract extension and procurement items. J. Turgeon noted this for the minutes.
- Upon a motion by L. Bueno and a second by L. Parady, the minutes from the committee's February 21, 2020 meeting were unanimously approved.
- J. Froimson then informed the committee that the Career Center/Adult Career Pathways Committee recommends the extension of the Career Center operator contract for the for the final option year of the contract, which was for two base years and up to two additional one-year extensions. After a motion by L. Parady and a second by P. Gilbody, the committee discussed the motion and then voted unanimously to approve it. J. Turgeon will send the recommendation to the City manager for approval and implementation. J. Weekes thanked the committee for their support.
- J. Turgeon then presented the draft of the MCRWB's continuity of operations plan that he has drafted with the help of the City that outlines how the Board will function as we meet the COVID-19 and other long-term disruptive crises. After discussing the basics of the plan a motion was made by L. Bueno and seconded by R. Hooper to approve the plan as part of the Board's Standard Operating procedures. The vote passed unanimously. J. Turgeon thanked the committee as it works to remain functioning during the COVID-19 outbreak. He also informed the committee that all Board programming is either on hiatus or switching to virtual/online program delivery and support services, such as case-management for program participants.
- J. Weekes then reviewed for the committee how the career center is responding to the Coronavirus outbreak, including the transition from in-person services at the centers to entirely virtual service delivery to both job seekers and businesses. She reported that some staff, including the fiscal office staff, are working remotely, while others are working from the centers (but keeping appropriate social distances from each other). She also informed the committee that some career center staff will be temporarily reassigned to assist with the state Dept. of Unemployment Assistance to work remotely on handling claims since there has been a huge spike in new Unemployment Insurance claims and the system is overwhelmed and short staffed after years of low unemployment led to staff reductions for DUA.

- J. Weekes also reported that the career center is looking to expand online service delivery, including online workshop delivery – and is linking in with the Lowell Career Center’s existing virtual workshop offerings to offer these to our customers. She also noted the career center is working closely with the Board to launch a simplified online tool to connect those healthy and lower-risk individuals willing and able to work with companies/organizations that provide needed services that are in need of workers. This hiring platform will be housed on MCRWB website and accessible by either MassHire website. The committee thanked Janice for all her hard work during this difficult time.
- J. Turgeon informed the committee that the scheduled WIOA Youth procurement will be happening as planned, but will be completed virtually. He thanked R. Hooper for her help coordinating this with the Youth Council.
- J. Turgeon also noted that efforts to complete upcoming administrative tasks that the over the several months - including a local strategic plan that aligns local efforts with the regional blueprint, the subcommittee workplans (to be completed following the blueprint revision this spring), as well as career center certification and monitoring (April/May) that will all be done using virtual means as available. He noted the timelines for these tasks may need to be adjusted, depending on the circumstances.
- J. Turgeon then noted the Board is continuing to help support partner schools and training providers with their grant applications, including the state-funded Skills Capital grants. He also noted the Board is looking to coordinate a response for the State’s Workforce Competitive Trust Fund grant opportunity and looking at other opportunities as they are released.
- J. Turgeon then discussed the upcoming April full Board meeting and the need to conduct it via an online tool, noting his limited experience with this technology. L. Bueno offered to assist with the meeting set up and facilitation, and J. Turgeon gladly accepted the offer and thank Libis.
- The next committee meeting will be Friday, May 15. 21, 2020 at 8:30am (remote and or in-person location TBD)
- Hearing no other business, the meeting was adjourned.

Respectfully submitted by: J. Turgeon