

**MassHire Central Region Workforce Board  
Executive Committee  
December 16 2022; 8:30 AM  
Conducted via webex**

**Meeting Minutes**

Attendees: Paul Gilbody, Robin Hooper, Janice Ryan Weekes, Libis Bueno, Joshua Froimson, Jennifer Almeida

Staff: Jeff Turgeon

- Paul Gilbody welcomed everyone to the Webex meeting and asked everyone to review the agenda and note any conflicts of interest. None were noted.
- P. Gilbody the asked if anyone would like to make a motion to pass the minutes from the November 18, 2022 committee meeting and a motion was made and seconded to accept the meeting minutes. The motion passed unanimously.
- J. Turgeon reviewed Board programming with the committee, including information regarding the Year-Round YouthWorks program and new state funded STEM and High School Senior Interns in Education projects that will kick off in late January/February. He also noted the State has made \$50,000 additional funding available for the region's Connecting Activity program which the MCRWB will propose using to support the creation of an employer outreach position housed at the Chamber of Commerce, a "senior scoop" career fair for high school seniors not intending to go to college, and the piloting of a virtual reality-based career development class/activities. He also highlighted some of the area industry pathway program, including the healthcare Hub grant project and the Behavioral Health grant project
- J. Ryan Weekes updated the committee regarding the career center staffing – noting she has filled many vacant positions and the new staff have been very positively received. She has also completed interviews for the two regional upskilling navigator positions, as well as an Employment Counselor position at southbridge. She is looking to also fill the Youth navigator role – potentially with an existing staff person if that will be allowed by Human Resources.
- J. Ryan Weekes also highlighted that several career center staff were recently trained as Bounce life skills program facilitators, and she is working with the Worcester County Sheriff's office to expand "behind the walls" training. She is also co-chairing the City's re-entry workforce taskforce.
- J. Ryan Weekes then gave an update on the Worcester & Southbridge moves, noting the Southbridge move has been completed, and she and J. Turgeon are working with the City on the new Worcester facility renovations – with and expected to move there on July 1<sup>st</sup>. She also discussed some ongoing issues in the current Worcester location, including the inconsistency of cleaning, and problems with the temperature.
- Additionally, she discussed upcoming career center events and initiatives:

- The December Virtual Job Fair was very successful with approximately 190 job seekers and 45 or so employers attending.
- The career center has established a new special referral link with the UMass anchor mission – to allow a direct job seeker – UMass HR connection
- The Job Corps recruiter is now based on site at the career center, as well as an onsite Department of Transitional Assistance (DTA) rep and Worcester Public Schools Adult Basic Education representative, and an Operation ABLE representative.
- J. Turgeon noted the board recently submitted a Workforce Competitiveness Trust Fund grant application in partnership with the North Central region for a new three-year CDL training project, and a new pot of funding through the City's ARPA funds would be released soon for workforce development efforts.
- J. Turgeon also informed the committee a planning session was held recently to identify needed updates to the regional blueprint and the revised plan will be sent to state officials after the new year.
- The committee then discussed the January full board meeting and J. Turgeon is inviting the new City Manager, Eric Batista, and he has also arranged to have Tonja Metlach from the MA Workforce Association discuss the new Governor's anticipated agenda. P. Gilbody advised it would be best to continue with virtual board meetings until such time as the state requires in-person meetings again, or that we look to hold hybrid meetings once an appropriate video conferencing system can be set up. J. Froimson suggested the type of system his office uses, Cisco, works well.
- The executive committee meeting will next meet on Friday, February 17, 2023 at 8:30am
- Hearing no other business, the meeting was adjourned.

*Respectfully submitted by: J. Turgeon*