



**MassHire State Workforce Board Meeting**  
**Thursday, September 19, 2024**  
**9:30 – 11:30 a.m.**

Virtual Meeting (Zoom)

**Meeting Minutes**

***Members Present (logged in):***

*Paul Coogan, Sherry Dong, Maddrey Goode, Anne Broholm, Jennifer Almeida, Maria Ferreira Bedard, Joanne Pokaski, Lauren Jones, Jim Chilton Rainer Gawlick, Jim Cassetta, Nicole Obi, Toni Wolf, Robert LaPage, Randall Lyons, John Mann, Tonja Mettlach, Megan Driscoll, Joanne Marqusee.*

***Members Absent:***

*Jesse Brown, Pamela Everhart, Warren Pepicelli, Sherri Pitcher, Kate Walsh, Chrissy Lynch, Anne Broholm, Sarah Stanton.*

***Guests and Staff***

*Lisa Hemmerle, Angela McCabe, Mark Rembert, Sara Wilson, Diane Hurley, Alysia Ordway, Thomas Perreira, Sacha Stadhard, Katelyn Kelly, Tovah Miller, Chris Albrizio Lee, Frank Bonet, Heather Boulger, Jeff Turgeon, Neil Sullivan, Kevin Coughlin, Jason Hunter, Adam Cutler, Tommy Heavren.*

**Welcome & Introductions**

**Joanne Pokaski** called the meeting to order, reviewed the agenda, and then introduced Mayor Paul Coogan as a new MassHire Workforce Board Member. Then, Joanne asked board members to introduce themselves. Darien Johnson announced **The Massachusetts Caregiver Coalition is hosting a virtual event** to showcase resources available to supporting caregiving employees, featuring the Massachusetts Department of Family and Medical Leave and the Greater Boston Labor Council. Board members are asked to reach out to Darien if interested.

**Approval of Meeting Minutes**

**Joanne Pokaski** asked for any changes to the meeting minutes from both the February 27, 2024 board meeting and the June 20, 2024 board meeting; none were raised. Ms. Pokaski called for a motion to approve the meeting minutes. A roll call vote took place and all Board members voted to approve.

## Workforce Development Update ( Secretary Jones)

**Secretary Jones** updated the Board on Governor Healey's state budget for Fiscal Year 2025, marking a \$2 billion increase over Fiscal Year 24. The Secretary mentioned the investments as it pertains to workforce developments such as **\$8.8+ million** to MassHire Career Centers, **\$10 million** from the Supplemental Budget in May to expand EA programming, including training and employment programs, **\$4.25 million** to connect individuals experiencing homelessness with ESOL training, job placement programs and career wrap around services, **\$10 million** towards employer tax credits to support and encourage EA hiring, and **\$40 million** in total towards CommCorp workforce training programs for CTI, WCTF, re-entry, and youth justice.

The Secretary also discussed the launch of the new Mass Talent website. The goal of MassTalent is to deliver an **improved front-door experience for employers and jobseekers**, connecting employers to skilled talent and jobseekers to employers looking for talent. Many high-growth industries such as advanced manufacturing, clean energy, and Health Care and Human Services can benefit from the **massive talent** home to Massachusetts including untapped talent who pursue meaningful career pathways and job training programs supported by the Healey-Driscoll Administration.

The Secretary mentioned to the board the MassHire Workforce Skills fund which provides funding to support individuals to participate in training and achieving their goals. She stated that there is a fixed amount of flexible dollars provided directly to individuals who are enrolled in programs such as Career Technical Initiative, and the Workforce Competitive Trust fund. These programs encompass a wide range of industries such as Healthcare, Finance, Construction, Hospitality, and manufacturing.

## MassReconnect Update

**Bob LePage** presented an overview on the [MassReconnect](#) program proposed in Governor Healey's FY25 budget. Building on the success of MassReconnect, the budget includes \$93 Million in funding for the creation of MassEducate, which would be among the most comprehensive Free Community College programs in the country. The program supports closing Workforce Skill Gaps by supporting students in all types of associate degree and Certificate programs. Bob mentioned that resources provide last-dollar financial support to cover the cost of tuition, fees, books and supplies as well as provide funding Community Colleges to provide career and wraparound support services to encourage retention and degree-completion. He added that MassEducate provides additional support for low and middle-income students to cover additional educational expenses to mitigate barriers that may impede opportunities for students to enroll in college and complete a program of study.

Bob mentioned the importance of the Board and important stakeholders sharing information with prospective students, organizations, and trade associations of this program.

### **Wage Equity in Massachusetts, Megan Driscoll:**

**Mass Hire State Board Member, Megan Driscoll** provided a small update on the Governor's signing into Law "An Act Relative to Salary Range Transparency, which increases equity and transparency in pay requiring employers to disclose salary ranges and protecting an employee's right to ask for salary ranges.

She also mentioned the legislation requires employers with 25 or more employees to disclose a salary range when posting a position and requires that any company who files an EEO form, they must submit that same data to the State- Labor and Workforce department.

Megan spearheaded the Wage Equity Coalition alongside Evelyn Murphy that advocated for this legislation to be passed.

### **Regional Planning Process:**

**Darien Johnson and Sacha Stadhard** from EOLWD gave the board an overview of the regional planning process. Darien discussed the 16 local workforce regions and 7 planning regions. Darien informed the board that the Regional Blueprints are used to inform policy, practice, and funding decisions on a state and local level. He mentioned that the Blueprint information are aligned with applications for grant funding to support education programs, workforce development initiatives, and economic development effort. Some grant funding that requires/ encourages alignment with regional plans include workforce training fund program, career technical initiative grants, Massachusetts Skill Capitol Grants, and Apprenticeship Expansion Grants. Sacha – gave an overview of each region's strategy to bolster the Healthcare Workforce. She also was able to discuss the priority industries within each region. Occupations that was seen throughout each regions are IT, Professional services, and educational services.

### **Health Care Workforce Development Update, Joanne Marqusee:**

**Joanne Marqusee, Assistant Secretary for Health and Human Services** provided an update to the board on The Healey/Driscoll Healthcare Agenda. Joanne stated that the Executive Office of Healthcare and Human Services have prioritized occupations such as nursing, behavioral health, and direct care. Joanne mentioned that HHS has established a Nursing Council on Workforce Stability that brings together experts, community leaders, labor, and educators to help develop policy recommendations to help deal with labor shortages in the Healthcare industries particularly as it pertains to registered Nurses and Licensed Practitioners. Joanne gave a quick overview of major behavioral health initiatives that are currently such as:

- **\$300m MA Repay -- Loan Forgiveness** (majority for BH)
  - \$146m for BH awards offered in FY 24 to >3K people (also includes some Primary Care). >9500 years of service commitment
  - Additional \$90m (plus remaining funds from prior programs) to be awarded in FY 25 (plus additional primary care)
- \$25m for **BH Scholarships** (FY 25)
  - Graduate level (including certificate programs) students
  - Requires commitment to work in MA for 6 months for each semester of scholarship
- \$25m for **BH Internships** (FY 25)
  - Support unpaid clinical hours required for field placements, internships, apprenticeships and practicums
  - Priority to diverse workforce and those working in equity priority geographies
- \$20m for **BH Clinical Supervision** (FY 25/26)
  - Incentivize experienced clinicians to start or expand supervision of BH students pursuing certification or licensure
  - Employers/providers to apply for funds
  - Prioritize equity (trainees, supervisors, and location of services)

**Commonwealth Corporation WCTF Healthcare/Behavioral health Initiatives:**

Tommy Heavren, Senior Program Manager of Section Pathways provided an overview of Commonwealth Corporation. He discussed the different grantmaking programs such as the Workforce training fund, career technical Initiative, Workforce Competitive Trust Fund, Youthworks, and Re-entry. Tommy explained to the Board the goal and structure of the Behavior Healthcare hub grants which are funded from ARPA and the Workforce Competitive Trust Fund. He mentioned that to use this grant, the requirements are an 85% Program Completion Rate, 75% Job Placement/Advancement Rate, and wage gain & title change. He highlighted the impact the Behavior Health hub grants have had on the Commonwealth. He stated that **9 partnerships** representing all seven workforce regions have been awarded, **\$16.849M** awarded in total Planning & Implementation, and **1,855 proposed enrollments** in healthcare/behavioral health pathways.

The meeting was adjourned at 11:30 a.m.