



MassHire State Workforce Board Meeting
Thursday, November 30th, 2023
9:00 – 11:00 a.m.

In Person Meeting
National Offshore Wind Institute
198 Herman Melville Blvd
New Bedford, MA, 02740

Meeting Minutes

Members Present (logged in):

Jennifer Almeida, James Cassetta, Jim Chilton, Maria Ferreira-Bedard, Rainer Gawlick, Lauren Jones, Robert LePage, Randall Lyons, Juliette Mayers, Joanne Pokaski, Elizabeth Skidmore, Pam Eddinger.

Members Absent:

Jesse Brown, Pamela Everhart, Jerald Parisella, Warren Pepicelli, Sherri Pitcher, Kate Walsh, Ray Wrobel, Anne Broholm, Juan Vega, James Cassetta, Maddrey Goode, John Mann, Jessyca Feliciano, Sherry Dong, Toni Wolf, Pam Eddinger, Radhames Nova, Joan Phillips.

Guests and Staff

Diane Hurley, Jennifer James, Sara Mello, Sacha Stachard, Jennifer James, Joe Lopes, Jennifer Applebaum, Raija Vaisanen.

Welcome & Introductions

Joanne Pokaski called the meeting to order, reviewed the agenda, and welcomed the board and esteemed guests to the National Offshore Wind Institute. Joanne thanked President **Laura Douglas** of Bristol Community College and her staff for hosting the Massachusetts State Workforce Board. Then, Joanne asked board members and speakers to introduce themselves. Darien Johnson gave a recap to the board on speaking engagements where he discussed the MassHire State Workforce Board.

Meeting Minutes

Joanne Pokaski announced that a quorum of the board was not present, therefore a vote to approve meeting minutes could not take place.

MassHire Greater New Bedford Presentation

Joe Lopes, Executive Director of MassHire Greater New Bedford, provided an overview of the programs, services, and staff in the Greater New Bedford region.

Welcome to the National Offshore Wind Institute and Bristol Community College:

Laura Douglas, President of Bristol Community College, gave the board an overview of the programs and certifications offered to students and how Bristol Community College has partnered with UMass Dartmouth to produce the 2018 Massachusetts Offshore Wind Workforce Assessment, funded through the Massachusetts Clean Energy Center. The Assessment identified a large gap in the workforce needs for the offshore wind and marine sectors in Massachusetts and the U.S.

President Douglas explained to the Board the role that the National Offshore Wind Institute (NOWI) plays in providing the needed infrastructure for the offshore wind industry and its related supply chain in Massachusetts and the country.

President Douglas explains that due to the seriousness and danger surrounding the professions in this sector, the offshore wind industry supports certain standards around health and safety training that are set by the Global Wind Organization or GWO. Last summer, NOWI became a GWO certified training facility that offers health and safety, technical training and enhanced first aid training modules. She added that NOWI will be expanding its offerings to include Basic Technical Training, Slinger Signaler, and Helicopter Underwater Escape Training (HUET) and other related programs.

Overview of the Clean Energy Sector in Massachusetts:

Jennifer Applebaum, Managing Director of Massachusetts Clean Energy Center (MassCEC), gave the board an update on the work MassCEC is currently doing to grow the clean energy economy here in MA while helping to achieve our climate goals of getting MA to 50% reduction in GHG emissions by 2030 and net zero by 2050.

Jennifer discussed MassCEC's role in Workforce Development which is building stronger pipelines to the Clean Energy industry with a priority on increasing **equity and access to opportunities** by providing funding and technical assistance to help support programs in under-resourced communities, expanding the awareness of industry opportunities among students, incumbent workers, and underemployed individuals, and developing and revising curriculum to address skills needs.

WIOA State Plan First Draft Overview

Secretary Jones updated the board that **Molly Jacobson**, Principal at Boston Consulting Group, was named the next President and CEO of Commonwealth Corporation (Comm Corp). Molly starts her tenure on January 2nd, 2024.

Jenn James provided the board with a Workforce State Plan development timeline to give context to where we are in the State plan process. Jenn shared the content of the workforce plan which included a broad Statewide Workforce agenda & vision, federally required operational & programmatic Information, stakeholder input, talent development strategies for priority populations and employee retention, and a vision statement.

Secretary Jones: lead an open discussion around the vision statement draft of the state plan. She asked board members to give feedback and to provide your input on strategies you see as most critical for the public workforce system given the post-COVID economy.

Reactions:

James Cassetta: Stated that we should identify barriers to employment in the vision statement to make it stronger.

Anne Broholm: Asked the Secretary and Jenn what are the strategies/ways the business community and work with EOLWD to alleviate some of the hiring barriers Massachusetts is facing?

Secretary Jones responded by asking Anne to follow up with Darien to discuss this matter.

Rainer Garlick: Mentioned we should look at what other states are currently doing around workforce development. He mentions the vision statement doesn't mention employers.

Secretary Jones responded to Rainer by stating that we are focusing on helping individuals that employers have direct access to.

Jennifer Almeida: Informed that states require harsh guidelines that push away smaller companies and only appeal to large businesses when it comes to grant opportunities/ funding.

Jim Chilton: Questions: What are we doing for AI? We need to plan for that.

Secretary Jones: Agreed with Jim and said she would follow up to set up a meeting.

Jennifer Almeida: Questions: Is there any movement to move virtual engagement when we talk about the workforce?

Jennifer James: Responded by stating there is a huge movement around hybrid ESOL language training. She mentioned it is a strategy and is something the administration considers an emerging area.

Joanne Pokaski: Questions: What are we doing to support Healthcare workers? What is the future of the gig economy?

Jennifer Almeida: Highlighted there is nobody fighting for gig workers and the issue is much deeper.

The meeting was adjourned at 11:00 a.m. A tour of the NOWI training facility followed after the meeting for board members and guest.