



THE MASSACHUSETTS ECONOMIC EMPOWERMENT TRUST FUND

One Ashburton Place 12th Floor Boston, MA 02108 | (617) 367-3900

Economic Empowerment Trust Fund Meeting

Date: Monday, December 6, 2021

Time: 1:02 PM

Location: Attendees participated remotely via Zoom platform

I. Meeting Call to Order and Roll Call

The meeting of the Economic Empowerment Trust Fund ("EETF") was called to order by Treasurer Goldberg at 1:04 PM with the following members present for all or part of the meeting:

Treasurer Deborah B. Goldberg, Chair
Barbara Anthony, Treasury Appointee
Elizabeth Barajas-Roman, Treasury Appointee
Roy Belson, Treasury Appointee
Jacqueline Furtado, Secretary of Housing and Economic Development Designee
Raichelle L. Kallery, Senate Minority Leader Appointee
Dr. Ellen Kennedy, Treasury Appointee
Former Lieutenant Governor Evelyn Murphy, Treasury Appointee
Todd Ostrowski, Commissioner of Elementary and Secondary Education Designee
Edward Palleschi, Undersecretary of Consumer Affairs and Business Regulation
Jerry Rubin, Treasury Appointee

Members present via phone:

Representative Steven Ultrino, Speaker of the House Appointee

Absent from the meeting:

Marcony Almeida-Barros, Director of Community Engagement Division Designee
Hamel Husbands, Treasury Appointee
Mayor Yvonne Spicer, Treasury Appointee

Senator Jamie Eldridge, Senate President Appointee
Tom Moreau, Assistant Secretary for Policy and Planning
Michael Prisco, House Minority Leader Bradley Jones Jr. Appointee
Representative Daniel Ryan, Speaker of the House Appointee

II. Board Members Swearing In
1:05 PM

Treasurer Goldberg delivered the Oath of Office swearing in the following EETF Board Members:

Barbara Anthony, Treasury Appointee
Jerry Rubin, Treasury Appointee

III. Meeting Minutes
(Vote Motion)
1:09 PM

There being no Board discussion, Treasurer Goldberg sought a motion to approve the September 27, 2021 EETF Board Meeting Minutes.

On a Motion by Undersecretary Edward Palleschi, seconded by Ms. Evelyn Murphy, the board unanimously voted, by roll call vote, to approve the minutes from the meeting held on September 27, 2021.

Roll Call Vote:

Barbara Anthony – Yes
Elizabeth Barajas-Roman – Yes
Roy Belson – Yes
Jacqueline Furtado – Yes
Ellen Kennedy – Yes
Evelyn Murphy – Yes
Todd Ostrowski – Yes
Undersecretary Palleschi – Yes
Jerry Rubin – Yes
Treasurer Goldberg – Yes

The motion passed – 10 in favor, 0 against, 0 abstaining.

IV. Executive Director Report
1:11 PM

Ms. Van Tassel briefed the board on the release of the OEE's Financial Education Report and the tremendous response the office has received from organization leaders, such as Mr. Tim Ranzetta from Next Gen Personal Finance, who are now looking to MA and the OEE due to its release. The report, the first of its kind, was a direct result of the work started by the original members of the Financial Literacy Task Force. Ms. Van Tassel offered Ms. Daphna Gluck a round of applause for her invaluable work on the report.

1:11 PM

Elizabeth Barajas-Roman joined the meeting

Moving on to House Bill 42, which if passed will require that financial education be taught in all Massachusetts public schools, Ms. Van Tassel noted that the OEE will continue to monitor and inform the board of the bill's progress. She also discussed the remaining ARPA funds and reminded the board that more information was included in the Legislative Report found in the meeting packet.

Ms. Van Tassel thanked Undersecretary Edward Palleschi for his continued support, as well as the ongoing partnership with the Division of Banks ("DOB") which funds the OEE's Financial Education Innovation Fund a/k/a Credit for Life ("CFL") program. The program, managed by Ms. Christine Callahan, offers high schools across the Commonwealth the funds to host financial education fairs that promote financial literacy to its students. Ms. Van Tassel also thanked Ms. Callahan for her continued work with the schools to ensure the success of the program.

At this time Treasurer Goldberg acknowledged Ms. Daphna Gluck's exceptional work with the many schools and school officials that made the financial report and its release a success.

V. Program Updates

1:16 PM

a. BabySteps

Ms. Daphna Gluck briefed the Board on the general updates regarding BabySteps account enrollment and funding. She presented data that showed 12,624 accounts totaling \$631,200.00 had been funded as of December 3, 2021, of which 8,280 accounts were for babies born in 2020; 4,332 for babies born in 2021; and 12 for adopted children. She noted that December is a big month for account opening and stated that if current trends continue, by this time next year, the rate of account opening could be 13-14% for babies born in 2021.

Ms. Gluck also discussed data on accounts opened and hospital checked box rates by birth month up to 9/29/2021. She stated that lower income communities have lower rates of accounts opened and pointed out that Somerville has the highest share of BabySteps accounts among those opened in MA. She also discussed account growth and presented a graph with data for six-month periods in 2020 in which higher numbers indicated that accounts were being opened at a higher rate at different times. She noted that New Bedford had no accounts opened

in the January-June period but had higher rates in later periods. Ms. Gluck expressed that with the Brandeis University evaluation in progress, she hopes to gain more insight in the matter.

Moving on to outreach, Ms. Gluck remarked on the OEE's outreach efforts, including upcoming presentations on BabySteps and enrollment trainings with community partners, including MassHealth, DPH Home Visiting Programs, The Children's Trust, and VITA sites.

Mr. Jerry Rubin asked if the OEE currently partners with community organizations in lower impacted communities, such as Chelsea Connects in Chelsea, MA.

Ms. Gluck responded that the office is increasingly establishing connections with local communities and state agencies that directly work with low-income individuals and families. She mentioned the OEE's pilot program to target low-income individuals at the grassroots level. Mr. Rubin stated he is familiar with the Lawrence Community Health Center and mentioned the center could be a potential collaborator.

Ms. Evelyn Murphy asked if the office had considered the creation of a network of ambassadors to take on the responsibility of presenting on BabySteps to create a regional network that would facilitate outreach.

Ms. Gluck stated that the collaboration with some organizations have been tremendous, and that local level help have helped connect communities with the OEE.

Ms. Van Tassel reminded the board that a community engagement outreach proposal was on the agenda for a vote.

Mr. Roy Belson asks if the office had reached out to the Department of Early Education and Care, to which Ms. Gluck responded by stating the office is going to continue expanding outreach to include more of these organizations.

b. Grant Reports

i. NAST Financial Wellness Grant/ Financial Wellness for MA State Employees and Retirees

Ms. Christine Callahan updated the Board on the Financial Wellness for State Employees and Retirees Program, which was made possible by a grant received from the National Association of State Treasurers ("NAST") and the Wells Fargo Foundation. She discussed the success of the program which included 1,730 users on the OEE's Enrich portal as of November 28, 2021.

Ms. Callahan noted that 51% of users have completed at least one course with a 94% completion rate for users who registered for the *What's Your Money Personality* course. She stated that the average knowledge gains in topics covered by courses were 41% per user with *Student Loan Snapshot*, *Retirement Analyzer*, and *Home Affordability Analyzer* being the most popular topics.

Ms. Callahan informed the board that the program was scheduled to end 12/31/2021, but with NAST's approval the agreement with Enrich has been extended and the portal will be available to users for 18 more months. She also discussed NAST's commitment to moving 100,000 users to their new Enrich Portal and Enrich's plan to add more courses to the portal which will include topics as *How to Claim your Unclaimed Property*, *Saving for the Future with 529s*, *Are you ABLE Eligible?*, *Maximizing Retirement Savings* (not available in all states), and *Careers in Consider in the Public Finance Sector*. The new NAST Enrich portal is set to go live on January 1, 2022.

Moving on to the financial report, Ms. Callahan shared that 80% of the \$100,000 funding was spent on the Enrich portal, incentive raffles, and advertising, and that with NAST's approval, the remainder funds will be used for a second round of incentive raffles in 2022.

Ms. Callahan also informed the board that due to the program's success, the OEE is in the process of re-applying to the NASTF grant.

Treasurer Goldberg stated that the relationship with Wells Fargo will be ongoing and that the OEE is looking to continue seeking the benefit of such grants for financial education. She went on to say that as Chair of the Massachusetts State Retirement Board ("MSRB"), she is aware of retirees' need for financial education.

ii. Citizens Grant/Worth & Wealth Seminars

Ms. Shaitia Spruell briefed the board on the launch of the Worth & Wealth Seminars website and Instagram account. She stated that the websites which launched on November 22, 2021 had received over 200 inquiries regarding the program with over a dozen organizations requesting more information on how to partner with the OEE on the program. She went on to say that volunteers for Worth and Wealth Seminars will complete a sensitivity training due to the demographics of the intended audience. Ms. Spruell reminded the board that the program will serve three cohorts of women, including one completely in Spanish (cohort 3), for a period of five-weeks with a focus on salary negotiation and worker's rights, as well as relationships & money and much more. Ms. Spruell hoped to launch the full website and registration later in December 2021.

1:40 PM

Undersecretary Palleschi left meeting

Ms. Murphy and Ms. Ellen Kennedy congratulated Ms. Spruell for the terrific effort with the program.

VI. Trust Fund Financial Report

1:42 PM

a. Profit & Loss

Bringing the board's attention to the Profit & Loss report, Ms. Van Tassel pointed that the *Total Assets* line of the report is what the board should consider, and that Ms. Rose Costa will streamline the spreadsheet to avoid any confusion.

b. Balance Sheet

Ms. Van Tassel reminded the board that the Massachusetts Educational Financing Authority ("MEFA") is funding BabySteps accounts opened for babies born in 2021 and 2022, and that the EETF will continue to fund accounts opened for 2020 babies born in the South Shore and Worcester areas.

Ms. Callahan discussed the expenses for the NAST's Financial Wellness program and noted no changes to the Seniors and Veterans accounts.

Ms. Van Tassel pointed out that the report did not reflect the \$90,000 earmarked by the Legislature to be used for operational and COVID-19 expenses, but she did anticipate the Comptroller's Office would transfer the funds to the EETF by the next board meeting in March 2022. She noted that part of the funds will be allocated to the Non-targeted class which supports overhead expenses.

Ms. Van Tassel also discussed expenses for the Women's Empowerment program which is funded by Citizens and informed the board the office was in the process of re-applying for funds.

1:47 PM

Undersecretary Palleschi rejoined meeting

VII. New Business

1:47 PM

a. Approval of Community Engagement Pilot Proposal
(Motion Vote)
1:47 PM

Ms. Van Tassel briefed the board on the proposal for a Community Engagement Pilot Program which will focus on outreach for BabySteps as well as other programs. She requested that \$50,000 of the \$90,000 earmark funds be allocated to pay wages for two community outreach contract positions targeting the Greater Springfield area and the Merrimack Valley region, two of the low-income areas hit hardest by the COVID-19 pandemic.

Ms. Murphy questioned if \$50,000 is enough money to make a substantial impact and reach these communities.

Ms. Van Tassel stated that the OEE hoped to extend the funding into FY2023.

Ms. Barbara Anthony questioned whether the contract position would exist for 6 months at \$25,000 with the possibility of renewal. She was concerned \$25,000 might not be sufficient to attract qualified candidates.

Ms. Van Tassel stated that due to rising expenses, enough funds must be retained for overhead costs.

Mr. Roy Belson questioned what types of support these contractors/coordinators will have for their work.

Ms. Murphy suggested piloting only one community to ensure there are sufficient funds to attract the caliber of person desired for the position, and to see if the program works.

Ms. Kennedy suggested that the office create a model of outreach at this time to see if it might work and if so, it could be replicated in the future.

Ms. Barbara Anthony pointed out that the OEE has piloted outreach programs in Worcester and suggested that the office consider the cost and time involved to reach those communities.

Mr. Roy Belson asked what the coordinator's benefits may be, and what support, if any, they will receive in terms of materials, technology, etc. He stated that the office should try and reach as many communities as possible for legislative purposes.

Ms. Van Tassel reiterated that these will be contract positions; therefore, they will not be eligible for the same benefits as state employees, and confirmed that as with the OEE staff, the necessary equipment, such as iPads, phones, laptops, etc. will be provided for the contractors to perform the duties related to their job. She also stated that the work is expected to be fully virtual.

In response to Ms. Anthony's question, Ms. Spruell spoke about her involvement in SoarMA pilot program and reminded the board that the OEE was a relatively new office at the time. She explained that the office is now more known and visible and expressed that she believes the contracted individuals will have more support than the staff who worked on previous pilot programs.

Ms. Van Tassel expressed how hard it is to attract qualified candidates and that the OEE do not have the bandwidth to have staff on field. She requested flexibility from the board and suggested that the language on the proposal be amended to "*up to two contract positions*". She stated that if only one qualified individual was hired, another would be added at a later time.

Ms. Murphy expressed her trust in Ms. Van Tassel's judgement and stated she agreed with the language amendment on the proposal.

Ms. Van Tassel asked Treasurer Goldberg to amend the motion to request \$50,000 for contract positions accordingly.

2:05 PM

Treasurer Goldberg sought a motion to approve the Community Engagement Pilot Proposal.

On a motion by Ms. Anthony, seconded by Ms. Murphy, the board unanimously voted, by roll call vote, to approve the Community Engagement Pilot Proposal.

Roll Call Vote:

Barbara Anthony – Yes
Elizabeth Barajas-Roman – Yes
Roy Belson – Yes
Jacqueline Furtado – Yes
Ellen Kennedy – Yes
Evelyn Murphy – Yes
Todd Ostrowski – Yes
Undersecretary Palleschi – Yes
Jerry Rubin – Yes
Treasurer Goldberg – Yes

The motion passed – 10 in favor, 0 against, 0 abstaining.

Moving on, Treasurer Goldberg spoke to the board House Bill 42 regarding mandatory financial literacy in schools. She pointed out that from a socio-economic perspective, those from less-affluent communities, considering the COVID-19 pandemic, are more affected by the lack of financial education in school and asked the board to keep the topic in mind if/when speaking to their representatives. She stated that she proposed a model to create a trust fund to manage the funds. She argued that this would be a proactive approach to prevent financial disaster.

Ms. Murphy asked the status on the bill to which Ms. Van Tassel responded that it was with the Joint Committee.

Ms. Elizabeth Zelnick further elaborated by stating that a hearing was held the summer of 2021 in which the bill was viewed favorably and received a lot of support, including from community partners and many organizations that testified in support of the bill, like the Black Economic Council of Massachusetts (“BECMA”).

Ms. Anthony questioned if the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (“DESE”) had weighed in on the matter.

The Treasurer affirmed that DESE had been involved with the bill and added that financial literacy would be embedded in existing curriculum.

Ms. Van Tassel stated that Rhode Island had passed a similar bill last year.

VIII. Announcements
2:14 PM

Mr. Belson mentioned the need to build relationships with the superintendents and school committees to advance the legislation and that he would be happy to help with the matter.

The Treasurer suggested that Ms. Van Tassel or Ms. Zelnick try to coordinate and thanked Mr. Belson.

IX. Next Meeting
2:16 PM

Treasurer Goldberg reminded the Board of the next meeting on Monday, March 7, 2022 at 1:00 PM.

She wished everyone present a Happy Hannukah (to those who celebrate it), Happy Holidays, and good health to all.

X. Adjournment
2:17 PM

Treasurer Goldberg sought a motion to adjourn.

On a motion by Board Member [X], seconded by Ms. Murphy, the board unanimously voted, by roll call vote, to adjourn the December 7, 2021 meeting at 2:17 PM.

Roll Call Vote:

Barbara Anthony – Yes
Elizabeth Barajas-Roman – Yes
Roy Belson – Yes
Jacqueline Furtado – Yes
Ellen Kennedy – Yes
Evelyn Murphy – Yes
Todd Ostrowski – Yes
Undersecretary Palleschi – Yes
Jerry Rubin – Yes
Treasurer Goldberg – Yes

The motion passed – 10 in favor, 0 against, 0 abstaining.

LIST OF DOCUMENTS AND EXHIBITS USED

1. Meeting Agenda
2. Meeting Minutes – September 27, 2021

3. Executive Director's Report
4. BabySteps Program Update PowerPoint
5. Grant Reports
 - a. NAST Financial Wellness Grant/ Financial Wellness for MA State Employees and Retirees Report
 - b. Citizens Grant/ Worth & Wealth Seminars Power Point
6. Trust Fund Budget Reports
 - a. Balance Sheet by Class
 - b. Profit & Loss by Class
 - c. BabySteps Funded Accounts
7. New Business
 - a. Approval of Community Engagement Pilot Proposal
8. Articles and Press Releases
 - a. 10.1.2021 – Treasurer Goldberg Provides Testimony to Joint Committee on Ways & Means Regarding ARPA Funding for Education, Social Equity, and Families (Mass.gov PR)
 - b. 10.5.2021 – Treasurer Goldberg's Women in Finance Fellowship Applications Now Open for Summer 2022 (Mass.gov PR)
 - c. 10.9.2021 – Office of Economic Empowerment Hosts Panel on Latina's Equal Pay (Mass.gov PR)
 - d. 11.5.2021 – Treasurer Goldberg Publishes Statewide Financial Literacy Report (Mass.gov PR)
 - e. 11.5.2021 – Treasurer: Report reveals statewide financial literacy education (WWLP)
 - f. 11.8.2021 – Office of Economic Empowerment and Veterans' Bonus Division Announce Return of Money After Military (Mass.gov PR)
 - g. 11.8.2021 – Webinar to offer financial advice for returning veterans (WWLP)
 - h. 11.15.2021 – PowerUp 4.0 Latinx Business Summit (Amplify Latinx)
 - i. 11.27.2021 – Ranzetta: Mass. high schools must embrace personal finance education (Boston Herald)