

MassHire State Workforce Board Meeting

Thursday, December 8, 2022

9:30 – 11:30 a.m.

Virtual Meeting

**Meeting Minutes**

***(Draft)***

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

*Rosalin Acosta, James Cassetta, Jim Chilton, Sherry Dong (left early), Pam Eddinger (arrived late), Pamela Everhart, Maria Ferreira-Bedard, Rainer Gawlick, Maddrey Goode, Robert LePage, Randall Lyons, Radhames Nova, Warren Pepicelli, Joanne Pokaski, Juan Vega (left early), Toni Wolf*

***Members Absent:***

*Anne Broholm, Jesse Brown, Jessyca Feliciano, Eric Lesser, John Mann, Juliette Mayers, Jerald Parisella, Sherri Pitcher, Elizabeth Skidmore, Marylou Sudders, Ray Wrobel*

***Guests and Staff***

*Christine Abrams, Lorraine Albert, Patrick Beaulieu, Chuck Bennett, Heather Boulger, Andrea Bresnahan, Michele Campbell, Inez Canada, Stefan Cejic, Marisa de la Paz, Jason Hunter, Jennifer James, Joanne Kamens, Tonja Mettlach, Jim Oliviera, Antonia Ortiz, Cheryl Scott, Jacqueline Sylvia*

**Welcome & Introductions**

Joanne Pokaski called the meeting to order and reviewed the meeting agenda. She recognized two new members to join the Board, Jim Chilton and Maddrey Goode, who then introduced themselves.

Cheryl Scott announced that the Governor’s Office of Boards and Commissions is close to making all re-appointments for those members whose terms have expired, encouraged them to contact her if they have any questions or concerns. She announced that the 2023 Board meeting dates have been set, and all Board members should have received an email with the meeting dates as well as a calendar invitation for each of the quarterly meetings.

**Approval of Meeting Minutes**

Joanne Pokaski asked for any changes to the meeting minutes from the June 9, 2022 and September 15, 2022 meetings; none were raised. Ms. Pokaski called for a motion to approve the meeting minutes. Rainer Gawlick made the motion to accept the minutes, the motion was seconded by Randall Lyons, and minutes were approved unanimously.

*Reference materials:*

* *MSWB Meeting Minutes 09.15.22.docx*
* *MSWB Meeting Minutes 06.09.22.docx*

**Workforce Development Update**

Secretary Acosta provided an economic and labor force update. The labor supply continues to tighten leading to employers facing difficulty in hiring. Labor demand has steadily increased in the past year as measured by a rise in online job postings, while the labor pool is decreasing as more working aged people are choosing to not work or to not seek work. Massachusetts’ labor force participation rate is higher than the national average and the Commonwealth’s unemployment rate is currently below the national average. This underscores the need to focus on labor supports, such as childcare, to help boost the labor supply. Creating new upskilling and talent pipeline development opportunities, such as apprenticeship, is also important to addressing the labor shortage. Data points to workers wanting to work, but not having the skills for the jobs they want. Thus, higlighting the importance of workforce investments such as the [*Future Skills*](https://www.mass.gov/futureskills)initiative that brings together a range of Massachusetts workforce development programs under a single name marketed to employers, training partners, and jobseekers in a unified way. EOLWD recently launched an outreach campaign for FutureSkills.

Massachusetts hosted a multi-state New England Regional Job Fair November 15 – 16, 2022. Over 1500 job seekers, and over 1000 employers were in attendance, the majority of whom were from Massachusetts. The event was timed to coincide with Veterans Day, and Veterans were given priority admission for the first hour on both days.

National Apprenticeship Week took place November 14 - 20, 2022 where several events celebrating apprenticeship programs took place. At Quisigamond Community College, Governor Baker announced $3.3 million in new grants that will train 724 apprentices in construction and expansion industries.

The Executive Office of Labor and Workforce Development’s (EOLWD) Employment Modernization and Transformation Project (EMT) is underway. Phase 1 of the project is projected to deploy June 2023 for the employer side (UI contributions). Communications to users and the public are going through plain language review by third-party entities to ensure messages are easily understood. There will also be extensive usability testing for functional accessibility, particularly for people with disabilities.

*Reference material: ACOSTA\_MassHireBoardMeeting\_2022.12.08\_v2.pdf*

**MassHire Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI) Update**

Joanne Kamens of The Impact Seat provided an update on the MassHire DEI Project. The Impact Seat is the consultancy firm hired by the MassHire Department of Career Services to deploy and manage 2022 MassHire DEI activities. Ms. Kamens reviewed the 2022 timeline and three phases of the work: DEI Assessment, DEI Strategy Playbook, and beta DEI Learning Sessions. The DEI assessment consisted of both qualitative (interviews, focus groups) and quantitative (online survey) data gathering. Over 300 staff from a MassHire organization participated (MassHire workforce boards, career centers, and state-level staff.) Ms. Kamens highlighted key findings from the DEI assessment such as unclear or unreliable processes for reporting DEI concerns, desire to hear a commitment to DEI from leaders, overall equitable and inclusive treatment of people with multiple identity dimensions, and the need for more DEI training across the MassHire system. These key themes will inform the goals and tactics in the DEI Strategy Playbook, which will continue to be developed by MassHire in 2023.

Joanne Pokaski asked what is next for the MassHire DEI Project. Joanne Kamens responded that the contract The Impact Seat with MassHire will end in December, but they hope to be able to continue the work in 2023. Cheryl Scott added that the MassHire Department of Career Services and Executive Office of Labor and Workforce Development is committed to continuing the work, and are currently working on a plan for 2023.

Jim Chilton asked what progress on DEI looks like. He mentioned that at Cengage they have been engaged in DEI efforts for many years, but it is difficult to determine whether progress is being made, especially if the areas of challenge are about feelings (culture, inclusivity, and belonging, etc.) Joanne Kamens responded that ongoing surveying and qualitative data collection to get a “pulse” on how people feel is a good approach. Progress would mean more people, especially in key demographics, reporting more positive feelings about the areas of challenge such as inclusivity and belonging. This is how the survey was designed and analyzed for the MassHire DEI Project. It is an instrument that can be administered over time to capture trends in these key areas that contribute to the work culture. Progress, however, will be measured over years, not in months.

Pam Eddinger added that Bunker Hill Community College has been going down this road for years, and she has found that addressing mechanical practices is beneficial. She points to looking at human resources and structures within an organization. She suggests a deep review of policies and procedures, particularly reporting procedures, but notes that not everything can be done in a year.

Maddrey Goode asked who the MassHire DEI Playbook is for – state leadership, local leadership, all staff, etc.? Joanne Kamens responded that the Playbook is for all of MassHire, which means that everyone will need to be involved in its development, approval and deployment. The hope is that everything in the Playbook will resonate with people within MassHire because it comes from feedback they gave. The goal is to move MassHire from a well-intentioned system to intentional when it comes to DEI.

*Reference material: MassHire 12\_8\_22 Workforce Board The Impact Seat.pdf*

**Looking Back, Looking Forward**

The Board engaged in a discussion noting the Board’s and/or workforce system’s accomplishments under the Baker-Polito administration, as well as the work they see ahead for the new year and the new administration.

Secretary Acosta shared the accomplishments she is most proud of during her tenure with the Baker-Polito administration, including:

* Unifying and rebranding the workforce system to “MassHire”, and establishing the brand values (respect, ingenuity, collaboration, and reliability)
* Regional Blueprints
* Expansion of training programs – Career Technical Institute, Workforce Competitiveness Trust Fund, RENEW, etc.
* Apprenticeship expansion
* Changes to the UI system
* Response to Hurricane Maria

Pam Eddinger noted that serving on the Board’s Workforce Intelligence Committee has been a highlight for her. MassHire branding and understanding the vastness of the lives touched through the workforce development system is a point of pride, too. Similarly, Pam Everhart considers the MassHire branding and the DEI initiative as accomplishments of the Board and the workforce system. Rainer Gawlick cited apprenticeship expansion as a key accomplishment, and mentions the need to take the model further and drive employer engagement with the system. Jim Cassetta noted that a key area of improvement is including people with disabilities in data analysis, providing greater visibility for this untapped workforce. Radhames Nova recognized the resilience of YouthWorks during the pandemic, and hopes there is a plan for continuity and sustainability moving forward.

Joanne Pokaski asked how the system can do a better job of integrating immigrants into the workforce, and whether it is time to look at new models or a change in existing programming.

Secretary Acosta noted that she has met with the Governor-Elect and the transition team and spoke to the key workforce initiatives that are underway. In those conversations, she noted that the Workforce Skills Cabinet makes sense to tackle workforce issues, and perhaps consider adding health and human services to the table. She also identified the need to procure a new re-employment system as a critical area of focus for the workforce system.

Commissioner Toni Wolf noted that she has seen progress in the secretariats being more integrated with each other, and would love to see more of that at a system level. Pam Eddinger added that deeper integration across the four pillars is critical: industry, trainers (including community colleges), industry standards, and health and human services for wrap around services.

Jennifer James mentioned that partnership is an effective way to leverage the work, and the Board can contribute as well. For example, for the work on the Cliff Effects, the Board can accelerate conversations about new delivery models. The MassHire Performance Committee can look at outcome data, and the Modernization Committee can advance technological change for the system. The Board can build a system that leads change, perhaps a 2.0 version of the MassHire brand to integrate DEI to push the system culturally. The Board can also engage with businesses to talk about their internal cultures, career pathway development, hybrid work models, and job quality.

Randall Lyons noted that DEI is an issue with outdoor recreation, and he is working with the Office of Outdoor Recreation on this. He is also working with schools in the region to leverage the value of the industry advisory boards as a way to engage employers in pathway development.

Maddrey Goode added that this is an opportunity to utilize DEI to technology to connect folks. People don’t have a view of what’s going on in the private sector. We need to be cutting edge, a 3.0 version of the system so that we don’t lose individuals. Rainer added that we need better tech for better employer integration, such as providing information on candidates.

**Open Meeting**

Radhames Nova announced that JA Inspire, a career exploration conference geared toward 8th grade students, will take place on December 9th at the Hynes Convention Center. Over 750 students are expected to attend.

Pam Eddinger thanked Joanne Pokaski for her leadership on the Board.

Joanne Pokaski thanked Secretary Acosta for her leadership.

The meeting adjourned at 11:23 a.m.