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**MassHire State Workforce Board Meeting**

Monday, January 13, 2020

9:30 a.m. to 12:00 noon

WORK, Inc.

25 Beach Street

Dorchester, MA 02122

**Meeting Minutes**

***Members Present:***

*Rosalin Acosta, Anne Broholm, Donna Cupelo, Sherry Dong (remote), , Pam Eddinger, Pamela Everhart, Jessyca Feliciano (remote, left early), Maria Ferreira-Bedard, Rainer Gawlick, Robert LePage, Eric Lesser, Juliette Mayers, Jennifer Morales (left early), Warren Pepicelli, Joanne, Pokaski, Elizabeth Skidmore, Janice Weekes, Maicharia Weir Lytle, Beth Williams,*

***Members Absent:***

*Zamawa Arenas, Aixa Beauchamp, Joanne Berwald, Jesse Brown, James Cassetta, Ann-Margaret Ferrante, Axel Grippo, John Mann, Sherri Pitcher, Dan Rivera, Juan Vega, Ray Wrobel*

***Non-members Present:***

*Bruce Bergwall, Susan Lange, Katherine Mainzer, Patrick Mitchell, Jennifer James Price, Amy Kershaw, Cheryl Scott, Marina Zhavoronkova*

**Welcome & Introductions**

Donna Cupelo called the meeting to order, and welcomed board members and guests. Board members and guests introduced themselves. Steve Aalto, Vice President of Workforce Development for [WORK, Inc.](https://www.workinc.org/dcap) provided an overview of the organization’s robust workforce programming for people with disabilities, including connecting individuals with skill development opportunities, employment, and sector-driven work. Some of WORK, Inc.’s biggest areas of potential for success are working with individuals on the autism spectrum, and those with mental illnesses. WORK, Inc. also serves as a [Dorchester Access Point (DCAP)](https://www.workinc.org/dcap) for MassHire Boston, providing workforce services to Boston area residents, particularly those in the Dorchester area.

Cheryl Scott announced that all Board committees will meet over the next couple of months, and also solicited feedback from the Board members on the 2020 MassHire Awards.

**Review and Approval of Meeting Minutes**

Donna Cupelo called for a motion to accept the meeting minutes for both the June 18, 2019 and October 1, 2019 meeting minutes. The motion was given, accepted, and passed with a unanimous vote.

**Workforce Development Update**

Secretary Acosta thanked WORK, Inc. for hosting the meeting.

Secretary Acosta congratulated Amy Kershaw on her recent appointment as Commissioner for the Department of Transitional Assistance (DTA). She also suggested that Board members listen to the Governor’s State of the State speech on January 21st, noting that she will be sharing highlights in the Governor’s budget at the next Board meeting on March 9th.

Secretary Acosta updated the Board on the current employment and unemployment numbers. She noted that in March 2020 Massachusetts will receive revised 2019 unemployment numbers to correct the preliminary rates that have been shared. The preliminary numbers suggest that Massachusetts added 50,000, and the unemployment rate has remained steady at 2.9% for the past five months, 0.6% higher than the national average. The Latino unemployment rate is 4.1%, more than halving the 11% unemployment rate at the start of the Baker Administration. Black unemployment is 3.8%, the first time this rate has fallen below 4.0% in a long time, and far below the 11% unemployment rate at the start of the Baker Administration. Massachusetts has added 231,000 jobs since 2015.

Secretary Acosta announced that [YouthWorks](http://commcorp.org/programs/youthworks/), administered by [Commonwealth Corporation](http://commcorp.org/programs/youthworks/), is turning 20 years old, and are making some changes to their programming. The program will follow a tiered model designed to meet the needs of youth at any age, stage and path. Programming will include occupational skills training, and sector specific work-based learning, alignment with Connecting Activities, and private sector engagement.

Patrick Mitchell, Director for Apprenticeship Expansion and Work-Based Learning, introduced himself and shared his background in apprenticeship and sector work in San Francisco, California. Mr. Mitchell provided an update on of the apprenticeship activities in Massachusetts, including a National Apprenticeship Week event in November, celebrating Massachusetts’ many “firsts” in apprenticeship – first competency based apprenticeship, first tech apprenticeship, first apprenticeship tax credit, and first state line item supporting apprenticeship. Mr. Mitchell then announced new apprenticeship expansion work, including funding for apprenticeship technical instruction, staffing changes to enhance capacity of the state to scale up apprenticeship models and enter into new fields, and a new federal grant to help diversify the apprentice pipeline in the building trades. Mr. Mitchell suggested coming back to the Board later on in the year to share more how apprenticeship expansion strategies are aligned with the WIOA State Plan.

Secretary Acosta added that EOLWD is focusing on ensuring the operations behind apprenticeship has to work in order for expansion to be successful, especially in response to a growing need for talent in key sectors, like IT. She noted that [Apprenti](https://apprenticareers.org/) has a goal this year of 100 apprentices, but the ultimate goal is to sustain 400 tech apprentices a year on an ongoing basis.

Juliette Mayers asked how the state is getting the word out about Apprenti. Secretary Acosta responded that Apprenti does their own marketing, often through social media, and aggressive outreach to tech companies and industry associations.

Senator Lesser acknowledged the work of Board member, Rainer Gawlick, who has been a part of the Apprenti effort. Senator Lesser also noted the apprenticeship tax credit is an effective way incentivize businesses to participate in apprenticeship. He noted that the infrastructure to support apprenticeship is good, but more can be done on outreach. In Springfield he hosted a meeting on apprenticeships in manufacturing; in western mass where there are many small employers, a $4800 tax credit could be a big deal for a small machine shop. Senator Lesser noted that there is a lot of enthusiasm in the legislature to support outreach on apprenticeship, and they are eagerly awaiting for the Governor’s budget and economic development bill to see what the administration’s priorities are. Senator recommended that the Board lean on the legislative members of the Board (Senator Lesser and Representative Ferrante) to help promote this work. Donna Cupelo noted that there are several other industries that also have a need for tech apprentices, not just traditional tech companies.

**Board Committee Update**

Jessyca Feliciano provided an update on the Youth Pathways Committee, noting that the committee’s key deliverable will be to plan a convening of youth practitioners as part of a wider WIOA State Plan kick-off celebration in fall 2020. Interested Board members were invited to join the committee.

On behalf of the MassHire Performance Committee, Bob LePage shared that the committee has been engaged in discussing the WIOA State Plan, providing feedback on the goals, strategies, tactics, and metrics in the plan. The committee is also gearing up to help shape MassHire Day and select the 2020 MassHire Award winners.

Pam Eddinger and Joanne Pokaski provided an update on the Workforce Intelligence Committee. The committee has met to review and provide feedback on an early draft of the Economic Analysis section of the WIOA State Plan, and will review another draft at their next meeting next day (January 14.) The committee also plans to resume producing the Labor Market and Workforce Information Dashboard, and the industry Deep Dives. Both noted the importance of looking ahead to see if what is to come, and of ensuring the dashboard helps to track trends as they emerge, marking economic shifts.

Rainer Gawlick updated the Board on the Adult Pathways Committee, which began meeting in November. The committee intends to conduct a landscape of analysis of workforce services, identify gaps, and then develop a set of recommendations to address gaps in resources or alignment with strategy.

Donna Cupelo asked about looking into apprenticeships for adults, versus youth. Mr. Gawlick responded that the average age for apprenticeships is 32 years old, noting that apprenticeships can be ideally suited for adults who have had some life and work experience, and may not have been ready to go to college at the traditional age of 18. One goal of apprenticeship is to ensure that it is a co-equal pathway with college. Beth Williams added that as adults change jobs, they need to be retrained, so this is an area that apprenticeships can add value. Liz Skidmore added that in the building trades, the average age for apprentices in 28, so it has traditionally not been utilized by youth. Adults tends to like apprenticeships for the great wages and benefits, and would challenge perception that it is an avenue for the “less mature”. Mr. Gawlick clarified that he did not mean to imply that apprenticeships were for those who were less mature.

**2020 WIOA State Plan Briefing and Discussion**

Jennifer James presented an update on the 2020 WIOA State Plan development. She shared background on the purpose of the WIOA State Plan, a summary of the outcomes of the 2016 WIOA State Plan, and a summary of the feedback received from the Board thus far. She then shared a draft of the proposed vision statement for the plan, followed by a description of each of the four goals, strategies and state-driven metrics for the 2020 WIOA State Plan. The four goal areas are: (1) Adult Job Seekers, (2) Youth and Young Adults, (3) Business Customers, (4) Modernizing the workforce system.

Liz Skidmore suggested that the plan feature diversity as a key component of the vision and goals of the plan. Janice Weekes noted that it should be clear the workforce system is for all workers, not just blue collar work. Pam Everhart and Juliette Mayers recommended that the plan identify differentiated workforce strategies for different populations, noting how the strategies will address barriers to employment. Anne Broholm understood the value of a goal focused on business customers, but suggested that the role of business be identified in other goal areas to stress the importance of engaging business in all aspects of the workforce system. Ms. Broholm also suggested noting how policy changes, such as the increase of the minimum wage, will impact the system. Joanne Pokaski commended the draft business metrics including repeat businesses as a means to capture quality, and not just quantity. Board members also suggested including a glossary of terms to have navigate the many acronyms referenced in the document.

Ms. James noted these recommendations will be taken into consideration when drafting the full draft narrative of the plan, which the Board will review and vote on at the March 9th Board meeting. Ms. James also shared that there will also be public review and comment sessions on the draft State Plan in February, and the Board will be notified of these dates and locations. The projected final submission date for the plan is March 20, 2020.

Ms. Cupelo adjourned the meeting at 12:02 p.m.