

**MassHire State Workforce Board Meeting**

Thursday, March 10, 2022

9:30 a.m. to 11:30 a.m.

Virtual Meeting (via WebEx)

**Meeting Minutes**

***(Draft)***

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

*Rosalin Acosta, Joanne Berwald, Anne Broholm, Jesse Brown, James Cassetta, Sherry Dong, Dr. Pam Eddinger, Pamela Everhart, Jessyca Feliciano, Maria Ferreira-Bedard, Rainer Gawlick, Robert LePage, Eric Lesser, Randall Lyons, Juliette Mayers, Jennifer Morales, Jerald Parisella, Joanne Pokaski, Elizabeth Skidmore, Marylou Sudders (proxy: Bekah Diamond), Juan Vega, Janice Weekes, Maicharia Weir Lytle*

***Members Absent:***

*Axel Grippo, John Mann, Radhames Nova, Warren Pepicelli, Sherri Pitcher, Ray Wrobel*

***Guests and Staff***

*John Afonso, Rosemary Alexander, Patrick Beaulieu, Rebecca Bialecki, Jenna Borkoski, Andrea Bresnahan, Laura Buckley, Michele Campbell, Inez Canada, David Cruise, , Marisa de la Paz, Lauren Godding, Jennifer Hansen, Lisa Hemmerle, Ron Iacobucci, Joanne Kamens, Kate Kelly, Amy Kershaw, Ron Maranian, Joana Mateus, Bruce Mendelson, Tonja Mettlach, Patrick Mitchell, Jasmine Montañez, Teresa Nelson, Maija Lee Orlovsky Nagels, Charlie Pearce, Dr. Mahesh Ramachandran, Donna Ramos, Cheryl Scott, Sacha Stadhard, Karen Shack, Alice Sweeney, Jeffrey Turgeon*

**Welcome & Introductions**

Joanne Pokaski called the meeting to order, reviewed the meeting agenda, and made announcements. The Board will seek to have three virtual and one in-person meetings a year, as long as the Open Meeting Law, regulations or Executive Orders allow. The June 9th Board meeting will be virtual, and the September 15th Board meeting will be in-person. There will be a two-day, in-person WIOA Convening this fall, similar to the WIOA Convening held in 2016. Agencies and organizations that are part of the Massachusetts workforce system will be invited, as well as MassHire State Workforce Board members. The September Board meeting will be held in conjunction with the WIOA Convening. The MassHire State Workforce Board will also be expanding by two seats based on a determination from the US Department of Labor. There will be a new seat representing Vocational Rehabilitation, and a new business and industry seat to maintain the business majority.

Cheryl Scott announced that the Board’s by-laws will need to change to reflect the change in Board membership; the MassHire Performance Committee will be tasked to work on this. The Governor’s Office of Boards and Commissions is still working on re-appointments for those members whose terms have expired. And, there will be a call for nominations for the MassHire Champion Award as part of the annual MassHire Champion; Board members are encouraged to submit a nomination.

**Meeting Minutes**

Joanne Pokaski asked for any changes to the meeting minutes from the December 9, 2021 meeting; none were raised. Ms. Pokaski called for a motion to approve the meeting minutes. Pam Everhart, made the motion to approve the minutes, Maria Ferriera-Bedard seconded the motion, and the motion was passed unanimously through voice and chat vote.

**Workforce Development Update**

Secretary Acosta announced that Alice Sweeney, Director of the MassHire Department of Career Services, will be retiring in June after many decades of service to the Commonwealth. She thanked Alice for her commitment, dedication and leadership. Alice Sweeney thanked the Secretary for the acknowledgement, and shared a few remarks. Many Board members and guests expressed congratulations and appreciations for Ms. Sweeney via voice and chat.

Secretary Acosta reviewed the Governor’s FY23 budget, highlighting the Workforce Skills Cabinet budget and the career services line items. She also reviewed the Commonwealth’s American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) commitment and budget for workforce services. She then provided an update on the Healthcare Collaborative noting the progress of the Work Groups focused on Direct Care, and Behavioral Health, as well as investments of the Workforce Skills Cabinet to provide training and build healthcare workforce pipelines. She then introduced Andrea Bresnahan, the new Director of the Nursing Council and Workforce Sustainability. Ms. Bresnahan introduced herself, shared a few remarks on the work on the Nursing Council, including increasing opportunities for people entering nursing, looking at data sets on the nursing workforce and workforce shortages, and meeting with multiple stakeholders.

**COVID-19’s Impact on the Commonwealth’s Labor Market**

Dr. Mahesh Ramachandran presented on labor market trends in the Commonwealth’s industries and workforce (see attached presentation.)

Joanne Pokaski noted that at Beth Israel Lahey Health there are currently 5,000 openings for all types of jobs, and they are looking for people who are interested in healthcare.

Juliette Mayers asked when the data presented will be updated and shared with the Board; Dr. Ramachandran responded that the unemployment numbers will be available tomorrow after which the presentation will be updated and shared.

Liz Skidmore asked whether we should include apprenticeship in the tracking of educational data. Dr. Ramachandran responded that yes, this was a good idea, and should also be included in longitudinal databases.

Jim Cassetta remarked that he was encouraged that the presentation included disability statistics. People with disabilities of working age have a higher rate of unemployment. He invited Dr. Ramachandran to see the work of WORK, Inc. to see successful employment programming for people with disabilities.

Pam Everhart asked whether there is data on the drop out rate for Black males, when they drop out, and the reasons why they drop out and don’t continue their education? This could be helpful to identify supports needed. Dr. Ramachandran responded that they are starting to look into the data.

Over chat, Pam Eddinger remarked that it would be instructive to have the unemployment numbers disaggregated by race and ethnicity. She added that she would like a category for Asian and Pacific Islander (API) as portions of API communities are hidden in data. Joanne Pokaski wondered if the education and health services sector could be broken into sub-categories to better understand the dynamics of those two sectors. Pam Eddinger agreed with this point.

Randall Lyons remarked on the college graduate information, and asked whether there is a difference between students who attend traditional high school and vocational schools? Are there different financial and career outcomes? Dr. Ramachandran responded that these types of questions are on their list of research questions that the EOLWD Department of Economic Research is looking into. Joanne Pokaski added than when you break down educational categories between associates degrees earners, and those who earn credentials, the outcomes can look really different.

**WIOA State Plan Modification Update**

Cheryl Scott reviewed the WIOA State Plan modification that will be submitted to the US Department of Labor on March 15th (see attached presentation.) She shared the plans’ vision, and overarching goals and objectives, which largely remained the same as the plan submitted in spring 2020. The biggest areas of change were the inclusion of work related to the COVID-19 response and recovery, including a heighted focus on building workforce sills, enhancing the workforce system infrastructure and operations, and providing supports to those most impacted by the pandemic. Ms. Scott noted areas of feedback from Board members and other stakeholders through public meetings that took place throughout February, and where that feedback has been incorporated. Massachusetts expects the WIOA State Plan modification to be approved sometime in June 2022.

**MassHire Diversity, Equity & Inclusion (DEI) Project**

Ms. Scott introduced consultants from The Impact Seat, an organization that has been contracted to guide MassHire through the MassHire DEI Project. The consultancy team, Teresa Nelson, Joanne Kamens, and Jasmine Montañez, introduced themselves and briefed the Board on the plan and expected outcomes for the MassHire DEI Project, which includes a MassHire DEI climate assessment, development of a strategic playbook, and systemwide learning sessions (see attached presentations). The Board will be updated on the MassHire DEI Project ongoingly as the work progresses.

Liz Skidmore asked whether the DEI work will be internal facing or external facing. For example, pre-apprenticeship does not have any diversity goals. Is this something that will be addressed in this project? Ms. Scott responded that this phase of the work will be internal facing to MassHire staff to create foundation to begin looking more externally to policies, programming, and outcomes.

Joanne Pokaski adjourned the meeting at 11:30 a.m.