**Massachusetts Workforce Development Board Meeting**

Tuesday, March 6, 2018

9:30 A.M to 12:00 Noon

WORK, Inc.

25 Beach Street

Dorchester, MA 02122

**Meeting Minutes**

***Members Present:***

*Rosalin Acosta, Aixa Beauchamp, Anne Broholm, James Cassetta, Kathleen Cullen-Cote, Donna Cupelo, Sherry Dong, Pam Eddinger, Pamela Everhart, Cassius Johnson, Robert LePage, Susan Mailman, Juliette Mayers, Jeffrey McCue, Beth Mitchell, Warren Pepicelli, Joanne Pokaski, Dan Rivera, Elizabeth Skidmore, Juan Vega, Beth Williams.*

***Members Absent:***

*Joanne Berwald, Jesse Brown, Gerard Burke, Tricia Canavan, Eileen Donoghue, Mayor Kimberley Driscoll, Eric Hagopian, John Mann, Joseph Wagner, Ray Wrobel*

***Staff and Guests:***

*Rosemary Alexander (Department of Career Services), Frankie Amador (Puerto Rico), Rafael Aparicio (Puerto Rico), Pablo Asencio (Puerto Rico), Kate Banimenia (US Department of Labor), Gregg Bunn (Exec. Office of Labor and Workforce Development), Alice Buckner (Westover JobCorps Center), Trevor Capon (US Department of Labor, Christine Carreras (Puerto Rico), Anthony Cardona (Puerto Rico), María Charneco (Puerto Rico), Jolanta Conway (Adult and Community Learning Services), Pahola DeLeon (Exec. Office of Labor and Workforce Development, Migdalia Diaz (Exec. Office of Labor and Workforce Development), Christina Eckenroth (US department of Labor), Luis González (Puerto Rico), Neidaliz González (Puerto Rico), Diane Hurley (Department of Career Services), William Jiménez (Puerto Rico), Erasmo Lamberty (Puerto Rico), Rey Marrero (Puerto Rico), Henry Mattuchio (Department of Labor Standards), William McKinney (Department of Labor Standards), Charles McNeil (US Department of Labor), José Nazario (Puerto Rico), James Oliveira (Greater New Bedford Workforce Investment Board, Jennifer James Price (Exec. Office of Labor and Workforce Development) José Francisco Rivera (Puerto Rico), Rubén Rivera (Puerto Rico), Yolanda Rivera (Puerto Rico), Scott Salesses (GED Testing Services, Diana Santiago (Puerto Rico), Jaime Santiago (Puerto Rico), Sunny Schwartz (Metro North Regional Employment Board), Cheryl Scott (Exec. Office of Labor and Workforce Development), Amarillys Silver (Puerto Rico), Ethan Snow (New England Joint Board UNITE HERE), Sacha Stadhard (Department of Career Services), Alice Sweeney (Department of Career Services), Doreen Treacy (JVS Career Solutions), Natasha Vazqueztell (Puerto Rico), Eduardo Vergara (Puerto Rico), Marina Zhavoronkova (Exec. Office of Labor and Workforce Development).*

**Meeting Minutes**

**Welcome & Introductions**

Donna Cupelo called the meeting to order, and welcomed board members and guests. All members and guests introduced themselves.

Donna Cupelo introduced Jim Cassetta, President of WORK, Inc. Jim Cassetta welcomed all guests to WORK, Inc. WORK, Inc. was established 51 years ago to provide social and vocational development for people with disabilities. WORK, Inc. used to have the largest sheltered workshop in Massachusetts. Today, thanks to WORK, Inc’s efforts, thousands of people with disabilities have been integrated into mainstream, competitive employment. WORK, Inc. continues to pursue initiatives to reduce unemployment among people with disabilities.

Donna Cupelo introduced the newest member of the Massachusetts Workforce Development Board, Pamela Everhart who is the Senior Vice President and Head of Regional Public Affairs and Community Relations for Fidelity Investments. Ms. Cupelo also thanked departing Board member, Beth Mitchell, for all of her contributions to the Board. Ms. Cupelo also officially welcomed the delegation of workforce development officials from Puerto Rico.

Donna Cupelo shared some of the key insights that she gathered from a recent trip to Washington, D.C. for the National Governors Association’s State Workforce Board Chairs’ Association. One key takeaway is a focus on apprenticeships. There is recognition from federal leadership that apprenticeship is an equally valid pathway to careers as college, and apprenticeship can also be combined with going to community college or other forms of higher education. There were also discussions about an industry-driven alternative track to Registered Apprenticeships that could exist along with Registered Apprenticeships, although not much detail was provided. Another important topic was skill-based training, and how businesses can work with workforce development and education to ensure that training develops market-based skills, and hiring is based on skills and competencies, not necessarily degrees.

Cheryl Scott provided an overview of the agenda. Ms. Scott explained that WIOA mandates Massachusetts to submit a modification to the WIOA State Plan. One role of the Board is to review the modifications, so a summary of the modifications were provided to the Board via email and in the Board meeting packet. Ms. Scott requested that any questions and comments about the WIOA State Plan be directed to her.

**Workforce Development Update**

Secretary Acosta shared that the draft regional planning blueprints have been posted and feedback is welcomed from the Board members before they are finalized.

Secretary Acosta also shared an overview of the workforce development-related items in the Governor’s budget. The Governor’s budget proposes investing $18.3 Million to impact over 6,000 students and workers statewide to meet existing and future talent demands. These funds will be managed and developed through the Workforce Skills Cabinet to address short-term and long-term skill gaps in our workforce by pursuing two major strategies: developing youth pipelines and developing work-ready pipelines. Key industries of focus in the budget are manufacturing, health care and information technology industries.

The Governor’s budget includes $3.5 Million for the Connecting Activities, which creates partnerships between high schools, workforce boards and businesses to develop work readiness skills for high school students. $1 Million has been proposed for Innovative Pathways and Early College programs, a new program to help schools re-align curriculum and integrate career planning and academic courses to directly connect with employment or college entrance after high school. The budget proposal also includes $700,000 to fund the expansion of 400 new apprenticeships in manufacturing, health care and information technology. Within the Governor’s budget $1 Million in new funding is proposed to support the acceleration of community college certificates for more than 400 new workers pursuing critical mid-wage jobs in the three priority industries. By 2024, research estimates that there will be a shortage of 10,000 manufacturing workers in mid-wage occupations. To address the shortfall the Governor’s budget proposes $3 million for Advanced Manufacturing Training – this doubles the funding for the program and increases the number of participants by 850 a year. An additional $1 million has been proposed for the Vocational Institute Post-Secondary program to design a new curriculum at the college and university level in order to align existing programming in high school, regional vocational programs, community colleges and engineering programs. New funding will create 350 new graduates with advanced manufacturing credentials. On the health care and tech talent pipelines, the Governor’s budget proposes $5 million for the Workforce Competitive Trust Fund including $4 Million in new funding to scale-up retraining initiatives in the health care and tech fields to address predicted shortages of more than 15,000 workers by 2024. This funding will support training and certification programs for more than 830 unemployed individuals who need retraining. Lastly, in alignment with the Workforce Skills Cabinet budget, the priorities for the labor and workforce department is pursuing continued funding for YouthWorks at $10.2 million, which will allow us to serve a consistent amount of young people in the summer program next year while also providing continued funding for the year round programming.

Secretary Acosta introduced Jeffrey McCue, Commissioner of the Department of Transitional Assistance (DTA). DTA hit a landmark of processing 5,000 applications from Puerto Rican evacuees. Most of that effort has been concentrated in the cities of Holyoke and Springfield. Commissioner McCue briefly reviewed the January 2018 report “Untangling Welfare to Reinvest in Work and Economic Mobility”. In DTA’s cash assistance program there are recipients that are exempt from the work requirement and there are people that are work required;75% of the caseload (about 30,000 households) are exempt from the work requirement due to having a disability, caring for a disabled person or children. The 25% of the case load that are work required receive a financial assistance grant that is 2.75% lower than the grant that is given to people that are not work required. Meanwhile, DTA grant-levels have not been adjusted since the year 2000. In the FY19 budget the Governor’s budget proposes raising the grants for individuals that are work required. Currently, a cash benefits applicant or recipient will be denied assistance if they have assets worth more than $2,500. In response, the budget proposes increasing the asset limit from $2,500 to $5,000. 50% of the current caseloads for DTA are recipients that grew up at some point on DTA assistance. DTA is looking to disrupt multigenerational poverty and these proposals in the Governor’s budget can give us that opportunity. Other items in the Governor’s budget include proposing that 100% of earnings for recipients who get a job or promotion will not count in the calculation of their benefits for the first six months of the job or promotion. Finally, the Governor’s budget proposes a $1 million investment in transportation for SNAP (food stamp) recipients. This will provide vital assistance to the 1 out of 8 residents in Massachusetts who are SNAP recipients.

**Workforce System Branding**

Secretary Acosta provided an overview of the rebranding initiative including a review of the brand analysis and brand development that has taken place during the course of the year. The proposed unified brand, MassHire, will serve as a platform to drive consistent, system-wide operational excellency. A unified brand for the workforce system will increase awareness, visibility, and external cohesiveness of the public workforce resources available in the Commonwealth.

Marina Zhavoronkova recapped the 3-phase brand development process. Phase I was finding out the current state of the workforce system brand. Phase II was developing the MassHire brand. Phase III will be implementation of the new brand, if adopted. Since the last Board meeting, EOLWD has been focusing on planning for brand implementation. A brand policy is in development to establish the brand and how it will be applied across the workforce system. Member of the system will “live the brand” through in-person trainings, an online platform and a brand ambassador toolkit. Key assets and materials like websites and brochures will be centrally-developed to ensure a consistent look across the system. Every local area will receive transition grants to implement the new brand. Additionally, every local area is eligible for implementation incentive grants if they transition to the new brand within the articulated time period. Implementation incentive grants can be used for programmatic purposes, such as branding, or training. In order to ensure the re-branding effort was successful, the brand development process involved adopting best practices learned from other states that have re-branded their workforce systems. Key best practices include having executive leadership buy-in, broad-ranging stakeholder engagement at state and local levels, data-driven decision making, and consistent requirements regarding application of brand. Transition to the brand adoption is expected to take place March to October 2018, with local brand launched happening after the statewide launch sometime in August 2018.

Juliette Mayers reviewed the WIOA Oversight Committee’s involvement in the rebranding initiative. The committee acted on behalf of the Board to address and field any concerns regarding brand development and application. Early on, one of the committee’s concerns was whether there were adequate resources to transition to the brand. After reviewing and providing feedback on EOLWD’s approach to providing direct funding and support through training and centrally-developed materials, the committee felt this concern was addressed. The committee also pleased to see that Massachusetts was providing guidance and to the local career centers and workforce boards to adopt the brand within the established timeline.

Ms. Mayers shared that after extensive discussion about the branding effort, the WIOA Oversight Committee formulated a set of recommendations to the full Board regarding adopting the MassHire brand across the workforce system. Ms. Mayers presented to the following recommendations to the Board:

The MWDB’s WIOA Oversight Committee recommends that the Massachusetts Workforce Development Board, in its capacity to provide policy guidance and oversight of the Massachusetts Workforce Development system, issue the following recommendations to Governor Charles Baker:

1. Adopt “MassHire” as the master brand as well as the MassHire Brand Charter to apply to the Massachusetts Workforce development system comprising the Massachusetts Workforce Development Board (State Board); local workforce development boards, One-Stop Career Centers; the Massachusetts Department of Career Services, and other related organizations, agencies and programs at the discretion of the Executive Office of Labor and Workforce Development;
2. Re-name the Massachusetts Workforce Development Board to become the "MassHire State Workforce Board”;
3. Re-name the Massachusetts Department of Career Services to become the “MassHire Department of Career Services”;
4. Direct the Department of Career Services to issue a policy to apply the MassHire brand to all state and local workforce development boards and One-Stop Career Centers in the structure of "MassHire *[geolocator]* Workforce Board" and "MassHire *[geolocator]* Career Center", inserting a designated geographic locator to each title;
5. Direct the Executive Office of Labor and Workforce Development and the Department of Career Services to issue policies and protocols to support consistent and comprehensive adoption of the MassHire brand across the Massachusetts Workforce System, including integration with policies governing state certification of local workforce development boards and One-Stop Career Centers, instituting training protocols among staff and agents of the system; and providing funding and non-monetary resources to support the transition to the MassHire brand;
6. Amend the Massachusetts WIOA State Plan to reflect Massachusetts’ adoption of the MassHire master brand;
7. Direct the Massachusetts Workforce Development Board, the Executive Office of Labor and Workforce Development, and the Department of Career Service to track progress of the adoption of and expected outcomes of the MassHire brand.

The Board unanimously voted to adopt the recommendations. Secretary Acosta stated that she will bring these recommendations to the Governor.

**Review and Approval of December 2017 Meeting Minutes**

Donna Cupelo asked for a motion to approve the minutes for the Massachusetts Workforce Development Board meeting on December 5, 2017. The motion was made, and passed unanimously.

**Economic Opportunity Committee Update & Discussion**

Anne Broholm provided an update of the Economic Opportunity committee. Some of the activities that they have completed are learning about the Workforce Competitiveness Trust Fund (WCTF) and the Career Readiness Initiative (CRI). Some of their continued work includes tracking WCTF funding to target populations (FY 16 round) and develop recommendations on expansion and enhancing impact of WCTF on target populations. Other continued work includes receiving updates on the CRI progress, analyze effectiveness and develop recommendations on the use of the CRI tools. New committee work includes learning about incentives to promote employers to train/hire Economic Opportunity populations, design a campaign to promote business usage of employer incentives and make recommendations to enhance access to and use of incentives by employers.

**Labor Market and Workforce Information Dashboard**

Liz Skidmore provided an update on the Labor Market and Workforce Information Dashboard. For the labor market demand data source, EOLWD is now using a new product called Labor Insight (Burning Glass). In the dashboard analysis, there was a drop of 52,000 online job postings, but an increase in employment. There are racial, age, and gender disparities among population receiving unemployment; Latinos and Blacks, men, and older workers are disproportionately represented among those receiving unemployment, compared to their share of the general population. There are a great number of construction jobs that are not reflected in the labor market research because they do not typically advertise online.

**Workforce Development in Puerto Rico**

Natasha Vazqueztell shared a brief overview of Labor and Workforce Development in Puerto Rico, including an overview of the funding and governance structure, and major shifts in their economic and workforce development as a result of Hurricane Maria. The population of Puerto Rico is declining as residents leave the island, and the unemployment rate is 10.4%. Puerto Rico’s state plan and various other workforce initiatives for the island were placed on hold due to Hurricane Maria. Meanwhile, and there have been massive layoffs in Puerto Rico in the Hurricane’s aftermath. The new challenge is getting the unemployed back to work, so Puerto Rico is looking to develop a new state plan to reflect the current challenges, including strategies to bring new business to the island as well as supporting the existing employers.