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**Massachusetts Workforce Development Board Meeting**

Monday, September 10, 2018

9:30 A.M to 12:00 Noon

Brockton Area Workforce Investment Board

25 School Street

Brockton, MA 02301

**Meeting Minutes**

***Members Present:***

*Rosalin Acosta, Zamawa Arenas, Aixa Beauchamp, Anne Broholm, Jesse Brown, , James Cassetta, Donna Cupelo, Pam Eddinger, Jessyca Feliciano, Robert LePage, Susan Mailman, Juliette Mayers, Jeffrey McCue, Jennifer Morales, Warren Pepicelli, Joanne Pokaski, Elizabeth Skidmore, Maicharia Weir Lytle, Beth Williams*

***Members Absent:***

*Joanne Berwald, Tricia Canavan, Kathleen Cullen-Cote, Sherry Dong, Pamela Everhart, Maria Ferreira-Bedard, John Mann, Dan Rivera, Juan Vega, Joseph Wagner, Ray Wrobel*

***Staff and Guests:***

*Lorraine Albert (Brockton Area Workforce Investment Board), Henry Bryson (Partnerships for a Skilled Workforce), Greg Bunn (Partnerships for a Skilled Workforce), Jason Hunter (Brockton Area Workforce Investment Board), Jennifer James (Exec. Office of Labor and Workforce Development), Allison McIntyre (MassHire Department of Career Services), William McKinney (Department of Labor Standards), Neila Neary (MassHire Cape & Islands Career Center), Tom Perreira (Bristol Workforce Investment Board), Nathan Pham (Verizon), Joan Rezendes (MassHire Cape & Islands Career Center), Cheryl Scott (Exec. Office of Labor and Workforce Development), Alice Sweeney (Department of Career Services), Sheila Sullivan-Jardim (Brockton Area Workforce Investment Board), Jeffrey Turgeon (MassHire Central Region Workforce Board), Abel Vargas (Lower Merrimack Valley Workforce Investment Board), Pamela Wojtkowski (BerkshireWorks), Marina Zhavoronkova (Exec. Office of Labor and Workforce Development).*

**Welcome & Introductions**

Donna Cupelo called the meeting to order, and welcomed board members and guests. Ms. Cupelo extended a thank you to Sheila Sullivan-Jardim at the Brockton Area Workforce Investment Board for hosting today’s meeting. Ms. Cupelo welcomed new members Zamawa Arenas, Jessyca Feliciano, Jennifer Morales, and Mairchaira Weir Lytle to the Board. Each of the new members introduced themselves by providing a brief summary of their career, background, and interest in workforce development. Then, all members and guests present introduced themselves.

Donna Cupelo introduced Sheila Sullivan-Jardim who provided a brief background on the Brockton Area Workforce Development (BAWIB), noting that the Board will be soon changing their name to “MassHire Greater Brockton Workforce Board” when they hold their local MassHire launch on September 27, 2018. All members and guests were invited to the launch which will be themed as a red carpet event, and showcase many of the programs the Board supports. Ms. Sullivan-Jardim turned the floor to Lorraine Albert, BAWIB’s Director of Regional Training. Ms. Albert provided a brief overview of the [southeast region’s planning blueprint](https://www.mass.gov/files/documents/2018/11/21/Southeast%20Region%20Labor%20Market%20Blueprint%20%28Final%29.pdf), an effort BAWIB joined its three neighboring workforce regions to develop. The regional plan is focused on developing career pathways for high-demand occupations in healthcare and social assistance, information technology, and finance and insurance, as well as supporting growth of the Blue Economy.

Ms. Scott then reviewed the meeting agenda and updated the Board on the member re-appointment process. She also noted that the 2019 Board meeting dates have been announced, and were sent to members via email, and in the meeting packets.

**Workforce Development Update**

Secretary Acosta provided a snapshot of the Massachusetts economy. Massachusetts is in a full employment cycle with unemployment averaging about 3.5% last year. Nearly 3.7 million Massachusetts residents are employed, more than ever in the Commonwealth’s history. There are, however, 135,800 unemployed Massachusetts residents seeking work, and nearly half of the UI claimants have a high school degree or less. Black and Latino unemployment is higher than the general population – 5.5% and 6.1%, respectively. And, much of the economic growth is unequal; places like Lawrence have an unemployment level of 6.7%. Many are working in jobs that pay low wages in fields like Leisure and Hospitality, Retail, and Food and Accommodation, and many of these jobs are prone to automation. Meanwhile, there are many job openings in high-pay, high-demand fields such as tech and healthcare, and manufacturing, and we do not produce enough skilled workers to fill these jobs. Secretary Acosta noted that a key focus of her agency is to come up with strategies that help bridge the divide between those in need and high demand career pathways.

Secretary Acosta shared that the Fiscal Year 2019 budget has been finalized and the Workforce Skills Cabinet and their respective agencies are receiving about $15 million for workforce strategies like apprenticeship, accelerated community college certificates in IT, Manufacturing, and Health Care, youth career pathways, advanced manufacturing initiatives, and the Workforce Competitiveness Trust Fund. But, we do need to start planning for future budget priorities now to not only take advantage of the current great economy, but for the next economic cycle.

The state legislature passed and the Governor signed a paid family and medical leave bill, the most generous in the country. Starting in 2021 all Massachusetts employess will be eligible for up to 20 weeks of paid medical leave, and up to 12 weeks of job protected paid family leave to take care of the birth or adoption of a child. The bill called for the Executive Office of Labor and Workforce Development to implement and manage the program, so the agency has been working diligently to focus on that.

Warren Pepicelli noted that he is frustrated that we are not talking about automation and how it will displace many people, and eliminate many jobs. Secretary Acosta responded that this is an area EOLWD is tracking, citing a [McKinsey report](https://www.mckinsey.com/featured-insights/future-of-work/jobs-lost-jobs-gained-what-the-future-of-work-will-mean-for-jobs-skills-and-wages) that projected that by 2030 23% of jobs will be automated. This is why skill retooling is so important, and it is an area of focus for EOLWD. The Governor’s [Commission on Digital Innovation and Lifelong Learning](http://commcorp.org/programs/commission-digital-innovation-lifelong-learning/) is addressing this in their forthcoming report; Secretary Acosta suggested the Board receive a briefing on their work at the next Board meeting.

Commissioner McCue noted his support of the Governor’s Commission on Digital Innovation and Lifelong Learning presenting to the Board because it has been hard to get localized information about these topics. Much of the information available right now is national.

Liz Skidmore noted that the Carpenter’s Union has been looking into automation as carpentry has become more computerized. The union is looking at apprenticeships to work on installing, maintaining and programming computerized machinery.

Anne Broholm suggested that a focus on reducing unemployment is very important. This will ease burden on employers and help them maintain competitiveness. Massachusetts has the highest cost of business, and in her field, they are actively exploring robotics and off-shoring as a way to reduce costs. This will mean fewer jobs for people in these fields.

Jim Cassetta noted that the data do not reflect barriers to employment related to disabilities, and suggests including that data in future presentations. Currently 400,000 people with disabilities ages 18-60 are unemployed. If we can also incorporate strategies to employ more people with disabilities, the state will save money and the quality of life for these workers will improve. Mr. Cassetta also suggested that people with disabilities be included in analysis and strategies related to the Pay Equity Law.

Pam Eddinger suggested that as we look at the committee structure, we consider the future of work as a topic for the Board to explore. She posited whether it would make sense for the Board to form a task force work on a set of recommendations on digital literacy, or that this be a topic that is tightly anchored to the work of the committees. Secretary Acosta suggested that the Digital Innovation and Lifelong Learning Commission would give us a good frame to think about these issues. She suggested we hear from them before charting out a body of work for the Board.

Donna Cupelo noted that establishing a taskforce was an idea that was considered in forming the proposed Board Committee structure. They ultimately moved away from the idea because they were trying to be cognizant of Board members and their ability to participate in a task force, in addition to committees.

Commissioner McCue updated the Board that all budget reforms that he presented on at the last board meeting made it into the FY 19 budget. These reforms were aimed at addressing (and reducing) disincentives to work for people receiving benefits through the Department of Transitional Assistance. The reforms will take place in October and November, and will be retroactive to July 1st (beginning of the fiscal year.)

**Review and Approval of Meeting Minutes**

Donna Cupelo asked for a motion to approve the minutes for the Massachusetts Workforce Development Board meeting on June 11, 2018. The motion was made by Warren Pepicelli, seconded by Liz Skidmore, and passed unanimously.

**MassHire Update & Implementation Incentive Funding Recognition**

Marina Zhavoronkova provided an update on implementation of [the MassHire brand](https://www.mass.gov/topics/masshire), including announcing that MassHire was officially launched on August 29th. Anne Broholm briefly spoke about the statewide launch in Greater New Bedford, at which she represented the MassHire Greater New Bedford Workforce Board and the Masshire State Workforce Board. Ms. Zhavoronkova shared that other local areas have launched since then, and all launches will be complete by November. Board members received invitations to these launch events, and are encouraged to attend. Juliette Mayers then recognized which workforce areas qualified for Implementation Incentive Funding which they received by transitioning to the MassHire Brand on an accelerated timeline.

**MassHire: Living the Brand**

Jason Hunter, the MassHire Brand Ambassador for the Greater Brockton workforce area presented on local area efforts to train staff and stakeholders in the new MassHire Brand. Mr. Hunter shared a portion of the training video that was used statewide to facilitate brand enculturation training.

**Labor Market and Workforce Information Dashboard**

Joanne Pokaski presented the Labor Market and Workforce Information’s quarterly dashboard, noting that the dashboard reflects nearly full employment. Ms. Pokaski pointed out that the labor force participation rate is increasing, while the unemployment number is increasing, suggesting that the good economy is pulling people who were unemployed and not looking for work into the labor force, and many are finding opportunities to work. She pointed out that high-demand for management jobs might be a re-employment opportunity since management was one of the highest occupations for UI claimants. She also noted the scale of number jobs gaining in postings was far greater than those declining in postings, which may be reflective of the good economy.

Jeffrey McCue asked how the state labor force participation rate compares to the national rate. Secretary Acosta responded that the state’s rate is higher. Warren Pepicelli asked about the difference between categories “Leisure and Hospitality”, and “Accommodations and Food Services”, the answer is that Accommodation and Food Services is a subset of the larger Leisure and Hospitality industry grouping. Aixa Beauchamp asked about the growth of manufacturing, and where there are subsets of growth; the response was that growth is seen in advanced manufacturing, that often requires technical skills like programming or software engineering. James Cassetta noted that in Health Care and Social Assistance there is a 30% vacancy rate for direct care personnel (personal care attendants, etc), which can affect pay and pay equity.

**MassHire State Workforce Board Committees Discussion**

Donna Cupelo, Secretary Acosta, and Cheryl Scott reviewed the proposed committee structure that was sent to the Board ahead of the meeting, then opened the floor for discussion.

Aixa Beauchamp suggested that the committees focused on clearly defining their work and focusing on work that the committee can take on. Pam Eddinger wanted an update on what took place with the previous committees and where that leaves the Board. Donna Cupelo responded that the Youth Committee gave a presentation at the last meeting on this topic, but the committee had great concepts, but were challenged by having the bandwidth to move forward especially with Cassius Johnson’s departure, so the committee will be shifting their focus to better align with work of the administration and EOLWD. The Economic Opportunity Committee was challenged by being providing value-add to the programs that were already in place, so the proposed Adult Pathways Committee is more directly in line with agency priority areas. The MassHire Performance Committee and the Workforce Intelligence Committee are very similar to the previous iterations of the committees. Anne Broholm added that with the Economic Opportunity Committee there was a broad area of focus and the committee members learned a lot, but was ultimately challenged by the lack of manpower, authority or money to implement a new body of work. Jesse Brown supported those comments.

Secretary Acosta added that these committees are an opportunity to reset the Board’s work and learn from what worked, and what did not work. This slate of proposed committees was informed by what the agency will be focusing on in the foreseeable future. The intent was to have a manageable number of committees, and focusing the work on areas where the Board should have voice and input. Ms. Beauchamp suggested that we use the values of the Board to frame the work of the committees. Juliette Mayers added that as the committee move forward, it will be helpful to have a higher level framework for their work that translates to the Secretary’s vision to ensure the committee work is aligned. Ms. Broholm noted that she sees part of the Board’s work as holding the system accountable, and hopes that the Board devote time in meetings to talk about the issues facing the workforce system, citing the work the DTA is doing as an example of an issue to delve further into. Ms. Cupelo acknowledged that the agenda should be simplified so there is ample time for discussion. Ms. Mayers further suggested that committees report work in the interim between meetings so that the Board doesn’t spend a lot of time informing everyone, versus discussion.

Donna Cupelo called for a motion to accept the committee structure. The motion was made and seconded, then passed unanimously.

Donna Cupelo adjourned the meeting at 11:43 a.m.