

MassHire Central Region Workforce Board  
January 20, 2022; 8:30 AM  
Via Webex – phone & online

Meeting Minutes

The following members/proxies were present: Paul Gilbody (Chair); Janice Ryan Weekes; Libis Bueno; Robin Hooper; Hasir Gonzales; Jose Perez; Joyce Clemence; Joshua Froimson; Ethan Brown; Charla Hixson (Proxy for Marybeth Campbell); Amy Partelow; Kevin Gaugush; Richard Cheney; Kevin Kuros; Kathy Rentsch (proxy for L. Pedraja)

Guests/Staff: J. Turgeon (MCRWB)

Call to Order, Announcement of Quorum & Note of Conflict of Interest: P. Gilbody called the meeting to order at 8:39 AM, and asked the members if anyone wished to note any conflicts of interest on the agenda. No conflicts were noted. P. Gilbody then welcomed all the attendees and thanked them for their attendance. J. Turgeon then reviewed the attendance log.

Approval of the October 21, 2021 MCRWB Meeting Minutes: Upon a motion and second from the attendees, the minutes were unanimously approved.

J. Turgeon then facilitated the election process for the MCRWB chairperson role. He discussed the role of the Chair and called for nominations. J. Weekes nominated P. Gilbody. The nomination was seconded by R. Hooper. Hearing no additional nominations, a motion was made by J. Perez and seconded by L. Bueno to close the nominations and elect P. Gilbody as the chair. The motion passed unanimously. J. Turgeon then congratulated P. Gilbody and returned the meeting facilitation to him.

P. Gilbody thanks the members for their continued support and then asked J. Turgeon to give the attendees an update on Board programs and activities. J. Turgeon noted the work being done on regional training projects, such as the state grants to train Commercial Drivers (and school bus driver training in partnership with the Worcester Public Schools and the Worcester Jobs Fund), and the Building Pathways construction training, Certified Medical Assistant training, and new trainings launching in IT – coding and behavioral health, and also Asbestos remediation worker. He also noted the board's work with the region's Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) partners, and the implementation on the regional blueprint in preparation for upcoming funding opportunities. He also highlighted the planning being done for YouthWorks youth jobs in partnership with the Worcester Community Action Council, and a new \$1.1 million program that will pay up to 250 area high school seniors to work with their schools as educational assistants.

J. Weekes then discussed career center programming and operations, including updates on the temporary facility closures to in-person services due to the COVID surge, as well as the leases for the Board and Worcester Career Center to 554 Main Street, and the selection of a new location in the Southbridge Conference Center for the Southbridge Career Center.

J. Turgeon and J. Weekes also discussed area training opportunities and the need for training candidates – especially for the certified medical assistant program, the Coding Dojo program, the human services support program, a CDL for returning citizens training project, and the asbestos remediation worker program.

J. Turgeon then reviewed the anticipated funding that the Commonwealth is planning to make available in the coming two years, worth \$104 million, spread across multiple state program lines. He highlighted funding being made available to the career centers to support a staff person to assist job seekers with connecting to regional training opportunities, as well as a board position to support employer connections to these trainings. He noted the Central Region person has been hired through the MassHire North Central Workforce Board – her name is Penny Doolittle, and she will be able to hit the ground running due to her previous experience.

J. Turgeon then discussed some of the new labor market data tools that have recently been released or accessed to the boards, including a new cliff-effect calculator tool through the Federal Reserve.

P. Gilbody then invited to make announcements and no member announcements were made, and upon a motion, second, and unanimous vote, the meeting was adjourned at 9:41 am.

P. Gilbody thanked all for their attendance.

The next MCRWB full board meeting is Thursday, April 21, 2022 (Webex virtual, unless otherwise announced)

*Respectfully drafted by, J. Turgeon; MCRWB*