

**MassHire Central Region Workforce Board**  
**Executive Committee**  
**May 17, 2024; 8:30 AM**  
**Conducted via MS Teams**

**Meeting Minutes**

Attendees: Paul Gilbody, Joshua Froimson, Robin Hooper, Libis Bueno; Jennifer Almeida, Janice Weekes

Staff: Jeff Turgeon

- P. Gilbody welcomed attendees and after brief welcoming discussion a motion was made to accept the March 15, 2024 meeting minutes. The motion was seconded and passed unanimously.
- J. Turgeon then outlined several Board activities that have been completed or being worked on, including the final submission of the regional workforce blueprint to the MA Executive Office of Labor and Workforce Development (EOLWD), the follow up work to the state Board certification that has been done, along with the state fiscal review that was recently completed. He also informed the committee that he is working with the region's WIOA Coordinator, Jason Matthews, on a revised agreement with all the WIOA partners. This is an update required every three years and due in to the state July 1<sup>st</sup>.
- J. Turgeon then discussed that status of the YouthWorks program budget and the large drop off that he has been made aware of for this summer's funding -- there will be approximately \$1.6M available for the region, which is down from \$4.5M last year. In large part this is due to a large infusion the past two years of federal ARPA funds that the state invested into the program, and so the funding allocation is now going down to an amount more in line with historical averages. J. Turgeon has a meeting coming up with state officials to explore what, if anything can be done to make more funds available for this summer. This is an especially bad time for the cuts because of the spike in youth violence in the City. Strategies to increase donations from United Way and local employers are being explored. J. Turgeon will also send out to members information about contacting state elected officials regarding the FY 25 YouthWorks budget – which potentially further reduces the state program budget.
- J. Turgeon then highlighted some of the other programs the Board is involved with and discussed potential new programs being developed with MassHire North Central colleagues and Worcester Public Schools Nightlife program.
- J. Ryan Weekes then gave an update regarding the career center work, including their efforts to serve migrants living in the area's emergency shelters – noting that the state made funding available to the region that will be spent to expand ESOL plus work training classes, purchase translation devices, and offset staff time. She also discussed the recent DCU job fair that was a tremendous success, with more than 1,800 job seekers and 100 employers. In addition, she noted the staff participated in training

regarding active shooter response, staff openings; 3 employment counselor (state positions) and the need to fill the vacant Access to Recovery position. J. Ryan Weekes then went on to advise the Committee that audio-visual equipment at the career centers and Board offices are being updated and staff are planning a Hawaiian themed activity to help with staff camaraderie and morale. Lastly, she highlighted that the Board and Career Centers were named “advocates of the year” by the Worcester Regional Chamber of Commerce.

- J. Turgeon then discussed a City grant program available for businesses that achieve their diverse business certification. He also discussed the potential for an in-person summer meeting (or perhaps hybrid) and potential agenda items, such as Artificial Intelligence and the cyber security implications of its use, along with trends and policy issues that employers should consider (L. Bueno to coordinate this).
- J. Almeida announced the MA Restaurant Association is recruiting for their training projects and has submitted a new federal grant application. J. Froimson announced Abbvie has hired 53 manufacturing technicians so far this year.
- The executive committee meeting will next meet on Friday, June 20, 2024 at 8:30am via MS Teams.
- Hearing no other business, the meeting was adjourned.

*Respectfully submitted by: J. Turgeon*