

**MassHire Central Region Workforce Board
Executive Committee
September 15, 2023; 8:30 AM
Conducted via MS Teams**

Meeting Minutes

Attendees: Paul Gilbody, Joshua Froimson, Janice Ryan Weekes, Jennifer Almedia, Robin Hooper

Staff: Jeff Turgeon

- P. Gilbody welcomed the attendees and asked if there were any conflicts of interest to note. Hearing none, the committee then voted unanimously to approve the meeting minutes from the June 16th and August 18th meetings, respectively.
- J. Turgeon updated the committee about the status of the career center monitoring follow-up probationary status. He noted that there was a meeting with the career center leadership reiterating what was necessary to end the probationary period and that a new review of customer files for Veterans will take place soon and will hopefully indicate the necessary changes had been documented in the MOSES database and the career center will then be taken off of probation.
- J. Turgeon then discussed Board activities, including the summer YouthWorks program that recently ended (except for a small cohort of older youth remaining active for another few weeks). The program served more than 600 youth in the region and included new partnership with the Blackstone Valley Center for Workforce Development, as well as the existing program partners at the Worcester Community Action Council, the Milford Youth Center, and the Center of Hope (Southbridge). He also informed the committee that this year the Board is helping to fund a student Arts-careers program in partnership with the City's Youth Opportunities Office and Cultural Development Office funded through our Connecting Activities program. He also noted ongoing efforts by our three WIOA Youth programs – You, Inc., Worcester Community Action Council, and the Fieldstone School.
- J. Turgeon also informed the attendees that the Board will be hosting a regional blueprint kickoff later this fall (in partnership with MassHire North Central), as well as the fact that the Worcester Jobs Fund is hiring a part time administrative assistant to help manage the numerous program contracts that are being issued through City ARPA funds related to workforce development being coordinated through the WJF and the Board. He also discussed the status of our Tech Quest and Tech Boost grants – namely that we are attempting to verify placements but getting outcomes from graduates and our training partners has a been a tremendous challenge. Other grants in process include an application for our healthcare Hub implementation grant that will be soon submitted (along with a behavioral health grant that will be led submitted by Open Sky),

and efforts to support a MassHire Berkshire led banking staff training grant, and a healthcare apprenticeship program by UMass.

- J. Ryan Weekes then discussed career center activities, noting she still has only one current staff vacancy to be filled (the Access to Recovery Counselor position) and reiterated that she is keeping her admin assistant position vacant for the time being due to cuts in the FY24 State budget that funds career center staff. She also informed the committee that now that the career center is inspected she is organizing the official career center ribbon cutting with the City Manager's office that will occur in the coming weeks – an invitation will be sent out to the committee and full Board and our partners. She also discussed two upcoming job fairs that her team is organizing – one focused on older job seekers and another one regarding more flexible and part time positions.
- J. Turgeon then shared the date of the MA Workforce Summit, happening in Devens, MA on October 26th.
- J. Turgeon discussed the October full Board meeting agenda and an invitation that was sent to the MA Workforce Association to discuss a bill before the MA legislature to better share data regarding outcomes for career center customers and community college students. Other agenda item suggestions should be sent to J. Turgeon.
- The executive committee meeting will next meet on Friday, November 17, 2023 at 8:30am via MS Teams.
- Hearing no other business, the meeting was adjourned.

Respectfully submitted by: J. Turgeon