



Board of Directors: Annual Meeting

December 10, 2024

8:30am – 10:00am

TD Bank Conference Center

Members Present:

G. Cassidy	S. Kasa	P. Samra
J. Cook	G. Kos	J. Sullivan
E. Demetrian	K. Messina	G. Timmons
K. Dunkelberg	J. Mitchell	M. Wise
S. Hatiras	E. O'Keefe	

Others Present: MassHire Staff

Meeting Materials

Emailed Out: Agenda, Draft Minutes of the September 24, 2024 Meeting Minutes, Executive Committee Report, President & CEO Report, State of Directors & Officers for Election, One-Stop Career Center Procurement RFP Schedule, "A Stronger Workforce for America" Fact Sheet and 2025 Meeting Schedule.

I. Welcome and Introductions

A. Welcome and Approval of Minutes

Chair Patricia Samra called the meeting to order at 8:32am and welcomed the Board of Directors to the Annual Meeting. Patricia continued with the requested motion to accept the September 24, 2024 meeting minutes as presented.

- **Action Taken: A motion to accept the minutes as presented from the September 24, 2024 meeting was seconded and approved.**

Patricia acknowledged Spiros Hatiras, President & CEO of Holyoke Medical Center, for his service and contributions to the Board. Spiros stated he's been on the Board since 2013 and while he will no longer be a Board Member he looks forward to contributing to the region's workforce development efforts.

II. Executive Committee Report

Patricia reviewed and highlighted key areas of the Executive Committee report.

A. FY'24 Audit Report

The Workforce Board had another successful audit. Meyers Brothers Kalicka's FY'24 audit resulted in no deficiencies or compliance issues to note, no adjusting journal entries required of the financial statements and no findings or questioned cost. There was a surplus of \$134,061 in FY'24.

B. Governance Committee

Peter Farkas asked Members to turn to page 8 in the agenda packet and discussed the following:

- a. Re-Election of Directors



The Governance Committee reviewed attendance for those members whose terms expire this December against the By-law policy and discussed their re-election with the Executive Committee. Those members are:

Name	Title	Entity/Organization
Ed Demitron	Vice President, Sales	TigerPress
Eugene J. Cassidy	President & CEO	Eastern States Exposition
Kermit Dunkleberg	Assistant VP of Adult Education and Workforce Development	Holyoke Community College
Keshawn E. Dodds	Executive Director	Boys & Girls Club Family Center
Wendy Andino-Williams	Springfield Area Director	MassAbility

- **Action Taken:** A Motion to approve the Executive Committee’s recommendation for the re-election of the above Board Members for terms ending December 31, 2027, was seconded and approved.

b. Election of Officers

The following MHCWB, Inc. Board Officers and MHCWB Executive Management Team were approved and recommend by both the Executive Committee and the Governance Committee and require a vote by the Board:

- Chair: Patricia Samra (3rd year of 3-year term)
- Vice-Chair: Jeffrey Sullivan (1-year term)
- Treasurer: Eugene Cassidy (1-year term)
- Clerk: Jeffrey Sullivan (1-year term)
- President and Chief Executive Officer (non-voting): Peter J. Farkas
- Vice-President and Comptroller (non-voting): Diana M. Carr
- Vice-President of Workforce Operations (non-voting): Steven Trueman

- **Action Taken:** A Motion to Approve the MHCWB, Inc. Officers with Terms as indicated, and the MHCWB Executive Management Team was seconded and approved.

III. **President & CEO Report**

Peter provided an update on the following Workforce Board activities, events, and accomplishments:

A. **Labor Market Snapshot**

For October 2024, the unemployment rate in Hampden County is 4.5% compared to 3.7% for Massachusetts. In addition, year over year the region’s labor force has increased by 5,166. Over the last 90 days there were 14,199 unique job postings by 2,401 employers.

There was discussion amongst the Members about the importance of drilling down in the job posting data to which industries and occupations are in most demand – both currently and in the short and long term.



Peter stated for future meetings, the Workforce Board will supply a “Labor Market Snapshot” in the meeting materials which will be updated each quarter.

B. Quarterly Highlights

Peter highlighted the following accomplishments over since the September quarterly meetings:

- *“Pioneer Valley Healthcare Career Pathways Forum”* – spearheaded by Peta-Gaye Johnson, the event at Western New England College fostered collaboration between approximately 100 attendees from high school counselors, educators, health care businesses and community organizations. The event explored ways to prepare high school students for successful careers in health care, focusing on certificates and degrees.
- *“Healthcare Hub – EMT Graduation”* - through funding from Commonwealth Corporation, a cohort of 15 participants successfully completed an EMT training program. As of today, 13 of the 15 have successfully obtained employment as EMTs.
- *“National Apprenticeship Week”*
 - Lauren Jones, Secretary of the Executive Office of Labor and Workforce Development visited Metrica Interior to tour the facility and meet their Registered Apprentice
 - MassHire State Workforce Board Presentation – On November 21st, Peter presented to the State Workforce Board on the success the region has had implementing registered apprenticeships.
- *Funding & Grant Opportunities Update*
Peter provided an update on new grants submitted and awarded since the last quarterly meeting.

Project	Funding Source	Amount	Status
Connecting Activities	Department of Elementary and Secondary Education	Total: \$453,742 Round 1: \$213,979 Round 2: \$239,763	Awarded – \$238,763 in Round 2 Funding from July 1, 2024 – June 30, 2025.
Sector Based Expansion Intermediary and Related Technical Instruction	MA Department of Apprenticeship Standards	\$201,347 for 36 registered apprentices	Awarded Funding from August 1, 2024 – December 31, 2024.
Apprenticeship Expansion & Opportunity	MA Department of Apprenticeship Standards	\$250,000 for 42 registered apprenticeships	Awarded Funding from November 26, 2024– June 30, 2025
Emergency Assistance Shelter Residents – Part I	EOLWD/MassHire Department of Career Services	\$119,212 to support Career Center staff providing services to immigrant shelter residents	Awarded Funding through June 30, 2025
Emergency Assistance Shelter Residents – Part II	EOLWD/MassHire Department of Career Services	\$106,393 - additional funds to support Career Center staff	Submitted on December 3 rd



There was a discussion around how the Connecting Activities grant is implemented. Peter stated the Workforce Board partners with the region's school districts and coordinates region wide activities.

C. Career Center Procurement

Peter provided an update on the procurement of the region's One-Stop Career Center Operator/Service Providers. He stated the current charter/contact with the current operators ends on June 30, 2025. WIOA mandates Career Center Operators to be selected through a competitive process not less than every 4 years.

Peter provided reviewed the Request for Proposals (RFP) Schedule and highlighted key dates:

- December 9th: RFP Release
- December 16th: Bidders Conference
- January 3rd: Letter of Intent Due
- January 24th: Proposals Due
- March 19th: Full Board Vote

IV. WIOA Reauthorization – “A Stronger Workforce for America Act”

Peter led a conversation on Congress potentially reauthorizing the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA). The House's *Education & Workforce Committee* and the Senate's *Health, Education, Labor, & Pensions (HELP) Committee* have agreed on a bipartisan, bicameral reauthorization bill --- “A Stronger Workforce for America Act” (ASWA).

Peter walked through some of the key components of the potential reauthorization including:

- Funding: 3% increase across the board in funding for the next 5 years
- Training Mandate: 50% training requirement for Adult & Dislocated Worker programs towards upskilling and reskilling workers
- State Level Reservations: Governor can reserve additional 10% of state's WIOA allocation for “Critical Industry Skills Fund” or “Industry or Sector Partnership & Career Pathways Development Fund”
- Local Workforce Regions: Governors required to review existing workforce development areas (LWDAs) before 3rd program year
- Youth Work Experience: Require 40% of WIOA funding to be used for work experience with 12.5% of requirement for pre-apprenticeships and apprenticeships

The Members discussed the pros and cons of the legislation and the impact of the 50% training requirement and potential consolidation of workforce regions.

Peter stated the bill would need to be brought up for a vote before December 20th – the last day of Congress. The bill won't be voted on as a stand-alone bill, but could possibly be attached to the year-end government funding bill/continuing resolution or annual National Defense Authorization Act.



V. Upcoming Events, Meetings & Key Dates

Peter provided an update on upcoming key events including voluntary Board Member: Refresher Orientations to be held on January 15th (Zoom), February 20th (in-person), and March 27th (Zoom).

Peter thanked all the Board Members and wished them Happy Holidays.

Chair Patricia Samra thanked everyone for coming to the in-person meeting, and with no further business coming before the Board and the meeting was adjourned at 10:00am.