



## Board of Directors: Quarterly Meeting

March 19, 2025

8:30 – 10:00am

Zoom Meeting

### Members Present

C. Buono	K. Dunkelberg	P. Samra
C. Burton	F. Grassetti	G. Timmons
J. Cook	S. Kasa	M. Wise
E. Cummings	K. Messina	Wendy Andino-Williams
E. Demetrian	E. O'Keefe	

Others Present: MassHire Staff

### Meeting Materials

Emailed Out: Agenda, Draft Meeting Minutes of December 10, 2024, Executive Committee Report (FY'25 2<sup>nd</sup> QTR Fiscal Summary / Budget Modification, WIOA Transfer Memo, One-Stop Career Center Operator/Service Providers Recommendation Memo, President & CEO Report (Labor Market Snapshot, FY'26 State Budget Priorities)

## I. Welcome and Board Business Items

### A. Welcome and Approval of Minutes

#### Announcements

Peter announced and congratulated the Chair Samra on her retirement. Patty has agreed to remain as Chair of the Board for the remainder of her term ending in December 2025.

Patty congratulated Peter for his success in his first year as President & CEO of MHHWCWB and his contributions to the Board.

#### Minutes

Chair Patricia Samra called the meeting to order and welcomed the Board of Directors. Patricia continued with a motion to accept the December 10, 2024 meeting minutes as presented.

- **Action Taken:** A motion to accept the minutes as presented from the December 10, 2024 meeting was *Seconded and Approved*

## II. Executive Committee Report

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

### A. Finance Committee

Diana Carr provided an overview of the FY'25 second quarter financials noting most income and expenses were in-line with expectations. She stated since the initial FY'25 budget was approved, the budget has increased by \$1.43M through securing a combination of new state, federal, and private funding. The substantial increase required a budget modification which was approved by the Executive Committee.

- **Action Taken:** A motion to ratify the FY'25 Budget Modification through December 31, 2024 as approved by Finance and Executive Committees was Seconded and Approved.

### III. **WIOA Funds Transfer Request**

Steve Trueman presented the proposal to transfer \$100,000 from the WIOA Adult to Dislocated Worker. This will enable the region's Career Centers to continue to placing Dislocated Workers into ITA Training while maintaining sufficient funds to continue to provide ITA opportunities Adult customers. It will enable the Career Centers to place approximately 20 additional Dislocated Workers in occupational skills training.

- **Action Taken:** A Motion to approve the Transfer of \$100,000 from the WIOA Adult Program to the Dislocated Worker Program from the FY'25 allocation was Seconded and Approved.

### IV. **One-Stop Career Center Procurement Recommendation**

Steve Trueman provided a detailed overview of the procurement process purpose and selection process. This included reviewing the Request for Proposals (RFP) components, Proposals Submissions & Compliance Review, Proposals Review Committee and Interviews. He stated two bids were received:

- Springfield Based Center: FutureWorks, Inc. dba MassHire Springfield
- Holyoke Based Center: Hampden County Career Center, Inc. dba MassHire Holyoke

Meredith Wise thanked everyone on the Review Committee for their hard work and time commitment. She continued to discuss the Review Committee's thorough evaluation of the proposals.

Meredith stated the Review Committee expressed concerns about MassHire Holyoke Career Center's recent challenges, including the Executive Director's passing, turnover in the VP of Finance position and other senior leadership roles, and slow progress in moving all services to one centralized location. To discuss the concerns, the Review Committee decided to interview MassHire Holyoke Career Center and their Board of Directors on February 20, 2025. It was stated some of the concerns were alleviated during the interview, but the Review Team was not comfortable recommending a full 4-year charter.

Subsequent to the discussion, the following motions were put forward:

- **Action Taken:** A Motion to Approve the following as Operator/Service Provider of the One-Stop Career Center in Springfield for a 4-Year Charter period commencing July 1<sup>st</sup>, 2025, subject to an annual review, re-Chartering and re-contracting renewal process: FutureWorks, Inc. dba MassHire Springfield was *Seconded and Approved*.  
*Note: Kermit Dunkelberg Abstained*
- **Action Taken:** A Motion to Approve the following as Operator / Service Provider of the On-Stop Career Center in Holyoke for a 1-Year Charter period commencing July 1<sup>st</sup>, 2025 Hampden County Career Center, Inc. dba MassHire Holyoke was Seconded and Approved  
*Note: Kermit Dunkelberg Abstained*

- **Action Taken:** A Motion to approve a comprehensive review of the status of the following in January 2026 to determine if extension of the One Year Charter was Seconded and Approved.
- MassHire Holyoke's progress in addressing key leadership vacancies including President & CEO and Vice President of Finance.
  - MassHire Holyoke's progress in providing all comprehensive One-Stop services at the STEAM Building on Race Street in Holyoke.

*Note: Kermit Dunkelberg Abstained*

Peter thanked the staff and the Review Team for their hard work on the procurement process. He thanked Cathy Buono for reviewing each proposal's audits financial statements and Wendy Andino-Williams proving comments and feedback on the proposals as a WIOA core partner.

Steve outlined the next steps that included securing Mayor Sarno's agreement and negotiating the charters to start July 1<sup>st</sup>.

**V. Presentation: Free Community College: Increasing Access, Opportunity, and Educational Attainment across Western Massachusetts**

Patty introduced Dr. John Cook, President of Springfield Technical Community College and Dr. George Timmons, President of Holyoke Community College.

Dr. Cook and Dr. Timmons proceeded to provide an overview of Free Community College for All including the impact it is had at their respective institutions. Highlights on the presentation included:

- All 15 colleges reported double-digit growth in degree-seeking students.
- Holyoke Community College
  - Student headcount has increased 13.3% from Fall 2023 to Fall 2024
  - 41% of degrees seeking students are age 25 or older, and the proportion of adult students has increased 7% e points from one year ago
  - Retention strategy to increase fall-to-fall retention rates of first-time degree seeking students from 53%- 57% by 2026.
  - Top 5 enrolled programs in Fall 2024: Foundations of Health (14.8%), Liberal Arts and Sciences (9.3%), Business Administration (6.5%), Psychology (4.4%), and Criminal Justice (3.4%)
- Springfield Technical Community College
  - Headcount from Fall 2023 to Fall 2024 saw an increase of 900 students from 4,561 to 5,461
  - 25 years and older remains the largest age demographic and has seen the largest increase of 3.9% or +572 students
  - Free community college is supporting STCC's mission of access. Household Income comparing Fall 2022 to Fall 2024, students/families earning under \$50k increased by nearly 600 students, now representing 38% of matriculated students
  - Increase in Hispanic/Latino enrollment: now at 40%
  - Seen substantial increases in enrollment in the following programs: Health Science, Business, Social Work, Cybersecurity, HVAC/Energy Systems. Enrollment in General Studies has declined 20%.



Dr. Cook and Dr. Timmons stressed the importance of wrap around support services to strengthen outcomes for students facing systemic barriers. It was noted funding for these services is critical but faces uncertainty.

There was a discussion around how employers can promote and support Free Community College for their employees.

**VI. President & CEO Report**

Peter referenced the President & CEO Report in the meeting materials. He provided a high-level Labor Market Snapshot for the region stating the most recent unemployment rate for Hampden County is 4.97% compared to 4.16% for Massachusetts.

He noted WIOA Reauthorization, A Stronger Workforce for America Act, was not included in December's Continuing Resolution. While it did not pass, the House Subcommittee on Higher Education and Workforce Development held on hearing focused on reauthorizing WIOA on March 6<sup>th</sup>. In addition, the Senate's Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions (HELP) Committee has also expressed interest in reaching an agreement.

He shared that on March 10<sup>th</sup>, Lori Chavez-DeRemer was confirmed as the new US Dept of Labor Secretary. While in Congress she supported the WIOA reauthorization proposal.

Peter stated their will be upcoming voluntary Board Member Refresher Orientations.

Chair Samra thanked everyone for a great informative meeting, engagement, and attendance. With no further business before the Board, the meeting was adjourned at 10:01am.