

Board of Directors: Quarterly Meeting

June 25, 2025

8:30 – 10:00am

Zoom Meeting

Members Present

C. Buono	S. Kasa
C. Burton	K. Lynn
J. Cook	J. Mitchell
K. Dunkelberg	P. Samra
M. Galat	J. Sullivan
M. Wise	

Others Present: MassHire Staff

Guests: Melissa Kline, MSN, RN; Beth Welch, ParmD

Meeting Materials

Emailed Out: Agenda, Draft Meeting Minutes of March 19, 2025; Executive Committee Report (Election of New Director, Ratify FY'26 WIOA Youth Providers); Healthcare Workforce Partnership of Western Mass Overview; President & CEO Report (Labor Market Snapshot, Funding Opportunities Update, FY'26 State/Federal Budget Update); 2025 Meeting Schedule.

I. Welcome and Board Business Items

A. Welcome and Announcements

Attendance was recorded, and it was determined that a quorum was not present. As a result, no official business was conducted and no votes were taken.

Chair Samra announced that Ken Messina, a long-time board member will be retiring on June 30th.

II. Executive Committee Report

Chair Samra reviewed and highlighted key areas of the Executive Committee meeting held on June 10, 2025.

A. Finance Committee

Report on the 3rd QTR Financials was given which noted that expenses were on track as expected at this point in FY'25.

B. Governance Committee

The Governance Committee and Executive Committee unanimously voted to recommend to the MHHCWB Board the election of Benjamin Grande, Owner and General Manager of Meridian Industrial Group. Peter noted that, due to the absence of a quorum, the vote to elect Mr. Grande as a Board member will be deferred to the

September 18th meeting. Discussion was held regarding increasing private sector membership on the Board, with a targeted goal of adding two members from the Healthcare and Social Assistance sector, one Attorney, and one member from another industry.

C. Strategic Planning Committee

A report was provided on the progress of the Strategic Plan through the third quarter of FY'25. It was noted that the Strategic Plan will enter its third and final year beginning July 1, 2025. The development of a new Strategic Plan will commence in FY'26.

III. FY'26 WIOA Youth Provider Funding

Chair Samra noted that the Workforce Board is entering the second year of the two-year RFP cycle for WIOA Youth providers. Steve Trueman provided an overview of the re-contracting process, which included both fiscal and program monitoring. He then reviewed and presented the FY'26 funding, which had been approved by the Executive Committee. Steve further noted that funding amounts may be adjusted proportionally to each provider's share of the WIOA Youth allocation as updated allocations are received, with the possibility of proportional additions from any FY'25 carry-in.

FY'26 Funding	
<i>Out-of-School Vendors (Minimum 75% of Funds)</i>	FY26 Funding
New North Citizens' Council	\$354,340.19
Square One	\$440,015.86
VOC, Inc.	\$269,366.55
	\$1,063,722.60
<i>In-School Vendors</i>	
New North Citizens Council	\$117,428.40
Pathfinder RVTHS	\$58,892.53
Holyoke Public Schools	\$138,107.15
BayState Medical/BSEP	\$38,821.50
	\$353,249.58

IV. Regional Highlight – Healthcare Workforce Partnership of Western Mass

Peta-Gaye Johnson, MHHCWB Director of Healthcare Workforce Initiatives, introduced two guest speakers:

- Melissa Kline, MSN, RN – Mercy Medical Center, Nursing Professional Practice & Education
- Beth Welch, PharmD – Western New England University, Dean for Pharmacy Academic Affairs

Peta-Gaye opened with an overview of the Healthcare Workforce Partnership of Western Massachusetts, highlighting:

- The Partnership is organized around three committees: The Western Mass Nursing Collaborative, the Allied Health Committee, and the Pioneer Valley Interprofessional Practice and Education Collaborative (2018).
- An Advisory Board guides the vision, policy development, strategic planning, and sustainability of the Partnership.
- The Partnership's governance and funding model, which includes financial contributions from stakeholders.

Melissa Kline presented on the work of the Western Mass Nursing Collaborative (WMNC). She began by commending Peta-Gaye's leadership, noting her positive impact on the collaborative efforts. Melissa highlighted WMNC's role in strengthening the nursing workforce by:

- Coordinating regional collaboration and nursing faculty recruitment efforts.
- Facilitating data collection and analysis on nursing program outcomes.
- Promoting student clinical placements and internships in high-need settings.
- Supporting employer learning experiences focused on high-impact practices.

Beth Welch also recognized Peta-Gaye's leadership before presenting on the Pioneer Valley Interprofessional Practice & Education Collaborative (PV-IPEC). Key highlights included:

- Aligning interprofessional education (IPE) with national accreditation standards, now required across all health profession programs.
- Coordinating integration of IPE competencies and evaluating their impact on student learning and workforce readiness.
- Examples such as poverty simulations where students and practitioners collaborate to understand systemic barriers.

Peta-Gaye concluded by presenting the work of the Allied Health Committee, which focuses on addressing the needs of allied health occupations. She noted that the committee leverages labor market data, employer input, and educational resources to guide initiatives.

V. President & CEO Report

Peter provided the Committee with an update on recent regional workforce activities, labor market trends, funding opportunities, and key developments in state and federal workforce policy.

Peter shared highlights from EOLWD Secretary Lauren Jones' visit on May 28, 2025, including stops at Holyoke Community College's Nurse Aide/Home Health Aide/ESOL program and Holyoke Media to highlight the YouthWorks program.

Peter presented a Labor Market Snapshot, including Labor Force, Employment, Unemployment, and Unemployment Rate data, with a focus on the four Gateway Cities (Chicopee, Holyoke, Springfield, Westfield), which represent approximately 60% of the regional labor force.

Peter continued with an update on funding opportunities and current grants that have been awarded or are pending since the last quarterly meeting.

Peter led an overview of key workforce development line items in the state budget that directly impact programming implemented within the region. It was noted it is a very lean year with no increases and several decreases in key line items.

	FY'26			
Line Item	MWA Request	Gov's Budget	House Budget	Senate Budget
One-Stop Career Centers 7003-0803	9.87M	8.25M	8.25M	8.25M
Connecting Activities 7027-0019	8.0M	6.53M	6.53M	6.53M
YouthWorks 7002-0012	20.0M	15.74M	15.24M	15.24M
Registered Apprenticeships 7003-0151	N/A	3.32M	3.32M	3.32M
Advanced Manufacturing 7002-0020	N/A	0*	0*	0*

Peter led a discussion around the uncertainty of the federal workforce development system under the new presidential administration. On April 23rd, President Trump signed an executive order, *Preparing Americans for High-Paying Skilled Trade Jobs of the Future*, which directs the Secretaries of Labor, Education, and Commerce to review all federal workforce programs. In addition, President Trump's FY'26 budget proposes combining 11 workforce programs administered by US. Department of Labor into a single funding stream to states called Make America Skilled Again (MASA). The Administration is requesting \$2.9B for MASA which would be a 24% cut to current funding levels.

Peter noted ongoing advocacy with the Massachusetts Workforce Association to support USDOL funding and its local impact.

Chair Samra thanked everyone for their participation, engagement, and contributions throughout the meeting. With no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 10:02 AM.