



Board of Directors: Annual Meeting

December 11, 2025

8:30 – 10:00am

1441 Main Street
Springfield, MA 01103

Members Present

Cathy Buono	Kermit Dunkelberg	Fiore Grassetti	Ed O’Keefe
Cleveland Burton	Beverly Fein	Susan Kasa	Patricia Samra
Dan Butterfield	Michael Galat	Gina Kos	Jeffrey Sullivan
Ellen Cummings	Ben Grande	John Mitchell	Meredith Wise

Guests: Angela Grant, Anne Kandilis, Kate Smith, Kevin Lynn, Senator Jacob Oliveira, Mark Cress, Gene Palecco, Kathy Martin, Jennifer Pickering

Others Present: MassHire Staff

Meeting Materials

Emailed Out: Agenda, Draft Meeting Minutes: September 18, 2025, Executive Committee Report (Election of Directors & Officers), Guest Speaker Bios – Senator Jacob R. Oliveira & Anne Kandilis, Executive Director of Springfield WORKS, Springfield WORKS presentation, and President & CEO Report (quarterly highlights and funding updates)

I. Welcome and Board Business Items

A. Welcome and Announcements

Chair Samra called the meeting to order at 8:31am and welcome the Board of Directors to the Annual Meeting. Attendance was recorded, and a quorum was confirmed. To begin, all attendees went around the room and introduced themselves. A motion to accept the September 18 2025 meeting minutes was presented.

- **Action Taken:** A motion to accept the minutes as presented from the September 18, 2025 meeting were seconded and approved.

II. Executive Committee Report

Chair Samra presented the Executive Committee report.

A. FY’25 Audit Report

The Workforce Board had another successful audit. Meyers Brothers Kalicka’s FY’25 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 \$77,380 in FY’25.

B. Governance Committee

Peter Farkas asked Members to turn to page 5 in the agenda packet and discussed the following:

a. Election of New Directors

Peter discussed the candidacy of the following new members. He stated the Governance Committee, the Executive Committee unanimously voted to recommend to the MHCWB Board of Directors their election.

Name	Title	Organization
Dr. Kathleen A. Martin	President & CEO	Glenmeadow, Inc.
Mark D. Cress	Partner	Bulkley Richardson & Gelinas, LLP.
Gene Palecco	General Manager	Digital Color Concepts (DCC)
Angela Grant	Manager of Program & Business Coordination	MassHire Dept of Career Services

➤ **Action Taken:** A Motion to approve the Executive Committee’s recommendation for the election of the above candidates as MassHire Hampden County Workforce Board – Board of Directors for a term ending December 31, 2028 was second and approved.

b. 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	Organization
John Mitchell	Mitchell Machine
Dan Butterfield	US Tsubaki Automotive
Mike Galat	Big Y Foods
Fiore Grassetti	Iron Workers Local 7
Edward O’Keefe	SMART Local #63
Dr. John Cook	Springfield Technical Community College
Cleveland Burton	Westover Job Corps

➤ **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, 2028, was seconded and approved.



c. Election of Officers

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

- Chair: Patricia Samra (1st year of 3-year term)
- Vice-Chair: Vacant
- Treasurer: Eugene Cassidy (1-year term)
- Clerk: Vacant
- 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. **Guest Speaker: Senator Jacob R. Oliveira**

Chair Samra introduced Senator Jacob Oliveira and thanked him for attending. She stated he represents the Hampden, Hampshire, and Worcester District, which includes twelve communities. In addition, he is the Chair of the Joint Committee on Labor and Workforce Development.

Senator Jacob R. Oliveira focused on several workforce development themes, including the expansion of registered apprenticeships, strengthening connections between education and careers, expanding ESOL programs, workforce training for high-demand industries, and the importance of regional workforce growth—particularly in Western Massachusetts.

He stated how these priorities align with the strategic goals of the Massachusetts WIOA State Plan, which focuses on building an integrated, equitable, and employer-responsive workforce system.

Senator Oliveira also addressed questions regarding the growing importance of quantum technology and food science in the Pioneer Valley and their workforce implications, the increasing demand for human service workers, and the need for continued state investment in workforce development programs, particularly funding for the Career Centers and YouthWorks. It was noted the region has two outstanding Career Centers in MassHire Springfield and MassHire Holyoke.

He concluded by thanking the board members for their important work and recognizing their vital role in connecting residents to high-quality jobs and career opportunities.

IV. **Presentation: Community Empowerment & Reinvestment Grant Program (CERP)**

Chair Samra introduced Anne Kandilis, Director of Springfield WORKS to present on the CERP program. Anne provide an overview of the program around how to increase employer capacity in ways that open employment opportunities for qualified applicants with older CORIs.

She highlighted the work accomplished over the last four years with various community partners and the next steps for the initiative. She discussed the establishment of a workforce planning committee to



support employer engagement. The project is seeking 2–3 senior-level employers to participate in 4–6 interactive workshops focused on co-designing hiring practices that are more inclusive of workers impacted by older CORIs. The project is scheduled to run from November 2025 through June 30, 2026.

If interested, please reach out to either Peter Farkas or Anne directly.

V. **President & CEO Report**

Peter provided an update on past accomplishments and highlights over the last quarter.

Pioneer Valley Healthcare Career Pathways Forum: convened over 100 attendees from 15 school districts, including 30 high schools and 45 high school counselors, alongside college representatives and health care employers. The forum explored innovative strategies to help students pursue health care certificate and degree programs and transition successfully into the workforce.

MassHire Day: Executive Office of Labor and Workforce Development, the MassHire Department of Career Services, and the MassHire State Workforce Board hosted the fifth MassHire Awards Celebration at the Statehouse. Both MassHire Springfield and MassHire Holyoke were honored in several categories.

Pioneer Valley Advanced Manufacturing Summit: In collaborative with MassHire Franklin Hampshire, the summit brought together manufacturers, training providers, educators, funders, and workforce partners from across the region to explore innovative solutions to workforce challenges, discover funding opportunities, and strengthen regional training pipelines.

Peter also provided an overview and update on funding opportunities including securing a \$217,500 grant through the Division of Apprenticeship Standards to enroll 33 registered apprenticeships.

Peter acknowledged Patricia Samra on her retirement from Baystate Health and the conclusion of her service as Board Chair. He thanked her for her leadership and contributions to the board and to the region's workforce and healthcare community.

VI. **Adjourn**

With no further business before the Board, the meeting was adjourned at 10:03