

Board of Directors: Quarterly Meeting

June 24, 2026
8:30 – 10:00am
Zoom Meeting

Meeting Minutes

Members Present

Cathy Buono	Beverly Fein	Susan Kasa	Kermit Dunkelberg
Gene Cassidy	Michael Galat	Kathy Martin	Jeffrey Sullivan
Dan Butterfield	Ben Grande	Gene Palecco	Meredith Wise
Mark Cress	George Timmons	Ed O’Keefe	
Ellen Cummings	Fiore Grassetti	Angie Grant	

Guests: Cole Angley, Paula Euber, Amie Miarecki, Kate Smith, Angie Prieto, Aaron Vega

Others Present: MassHire Staff

Meeting Materials

Emailed Out: Agenda; Draft Meeting Minutes – March 19, 2026; Executive Committee Report (Election of New Directors); Career Center Spotlight; National Dislocated Worker Grant Proposal; Guest Speaker: Cole Angley, Executive Director, Mass Workforce Association; President & CEO Report (Labor Market Snapshot, Quarterly Highlights, Funding Opportunities Update)

I. Welcome and Approval of Meeting Minutes

Chair Jeff Sullivan called the meeting to order at 8:30 a.m. and welcomed the Board of Directors and guests. Attendance was recorded, and a quorum was confirmed.

The Board of Directors recognized Board member Fiore Grassetti for his contributions and dedicated service to the Board over the years. Fiore will be retiring from Ironworkers Local 7 at the end of July. Fiore thanked the Board members for their recognition and expressed his appreciation for the opportunity to serve on the Board.

A motion was presented to approve the March 19, 2026, meeting minutes.

- **Action Taken:** A motion to accept the minutes as presented from March 19, 2026, meeting was Seconded and Approved.

II. Executive Committee Report

Chair Jeff Sullivan presented the Executive Committee Report.

A. Finance & Audit Committee

Christine Lorenz presented an overview of the FY’26 3rd Quarter Financials. She noted that most revenues and expenses were in line with expectations and provided an

explanation for those that were not. Some variances were attributable to the timing of expenditures and revenues within the quarter.

- **Action Taken:** A motion was made to accept the FY'26 3rd Quarter Financials as presented. The motion was seconded and approved.

B. Governance Committee – Election of New Board Members

Peter Farkas presented two prospective new Board members who had been recommended by both the Governance Committee and the Executive Committee for consideration for appointment.

Name	Title	Organization
Paula Euber	Area Director	Mass Ability
Amie Miarecki	President	Junior Achievement of Western Massachusetts

- **Action Taken:** A motion was made to elect Paula Euber, Area Director at MassAbility, and Amie Miarecki, President at Junior Achievement of Western Massachusetts, to the MassHire Hampden County Workforce Board Board of Directors for a term from July 1, 2026, through December 31, 2028. The motion was seconded and approved.

C. Strategic Planning Committee

Jeff Sullivan continued with the Strategic Planning Committee report. He stated that the Executive Committee had unanimously voted to extend the current Strategic Plan for an additional three months to allow sufficient time to finalize the new plan.

Peter Farkas explained that the extension would be through September 30, 2026, to allow additional time to finalize the content and complete the design and production of the new, more digestible Strategic Plan. He noted that the Board is hiring a graphic designer during the summer and expects to present a draft of the new Strategic Plan to the full Board for approval at the September 24th quarterly meeting.

- **Action Taken:** A motion was made to grant an additional three-month extension to complete the new Strategic Plan. The motion was approved.

III. One-Stop Career Center Recontracting

Meredith Wise continued with her presentation and reported on the FY'27 Career Center re-contracting process. She stated that the MassHire Springfield Career Center had been granted a four-year charter period ending June 30, 2029. The MassHire Holyoke Career Center had been granted a one-year charter, subject to a six-month review for potential extension. Meredith noted that MHHCWB enters into Standard Financial Contracts annually with the One-Stop Career Centers, contingent upon a comprehensive performance evaluation.

Meredith reviewed the difficulties and challenges previously encountered by the MassHire Holyoke Career Center, including leadership vacancies. She noted that these issues have been

addressed with the appointment of Kate Smith as President and CEO. She also reported that the Career Center has engaged an outside accounting firm.

Meredith reviewed the activities conducted as part of the One-Stop Career Center charter extension and re-contracting process for FY'27. She also reviewed the coordinated business services provided by the two One-Stop Career Centers under the Business Solutions umbrella and outlined the areas included in the review.

- **Action Taken:** A motion was made to approve the review of the results of the above areas and, as recommended by the MHCWB One-Stop Career Center Committee, approve the following actions. The motion was seconded and approved. Kermit Dunkelberg abstained.

Approved Motions:

- Extending the MassHire Holyoke Career Center Charter period from one year to four years, ending June 30, 2029.
- Re-contracting with the MassHire Holyoke Career Center for FY'2027 be approved for the second year of the four-year Charter period.
- Re-contracting with the MassHire Springfield Career Center for FY'2027 be approved for the second year of the four-year charter period.

IV. Career Center Spotlight: MassHire Holyoke Career Center

Kate Smith, President and CEO, provided highlights from her presentation and shared several recent accomplishments and initiatives at the MassHire Holyoke Career Center.

- Kate highlighted the Career Center's outdoor hiring event, "Hot Dogs for Jobs," held on July 12. The event was a significant success, attracting 45 employers and approximately 350 jobseekers.
- Kate discussed a new system that allows employers to track the jobseekers they meet with and identify candidates in whom they have an interest. The Career Center team will follow up with participating employers to obtain information on candidates seen and provide appropriate credit for follow-up and placements.
- Kate also highlighted two new employers entering the region: Framebridge, a custom framing company that is moving into the Holyoke area and expects to hire approximately 70 individuals, and LaRibbon & Crafts, a manufacturer of ribbons, bows, and boxes that is moving into the Westfield area and expects to hire approximately 40 individuals. MassHire Holyoke has met with both companies, explained the workforce services available, and will collaborate with them on their hiring needs.

Peter Farkas added that both companies were referred to MHCWB by the Massachusetts Office of Business Development (MOBD). Peter and Aaron Vega met with representatives from the companies, who were seeking a workforce board to assist with

their hiring needs in the Western Massachusetts/New England region. Peter commended Kate Smith and her team for quickly identifying and engaging these new employers and for taking advantage of the opportunity to connect them with workforce services in the region.

V. National Dislocated Worker Grant Proposal

Steve Trueman discussed the National Dislocated Worker Grant proposal submitted to the U.S. Department of Labor (USDOL) in April to address significant workforce impacts from planned closures and layoffs in Hampden County. The proposal focuses on workers affected by Smithfield Foods (190 employees), Coca-Cola (176 employees), and CRRC (161 employees).

The proposal is pending with USDOL. In the meantime, the Board is coordinating with Rapid Response and the MassHire Springfield and Holyoke Career Centers to provide services and support to impacted individuals.

VI. Guest Speaker: Cole Angley, Executive Director, Massachusetts Workforce Association

Cole Angley provided an update on the Massachusetts Workforce Association (MWA), including its membership, federal workforce policy priorities, and the FY27 state budget outlook. MWA represents MassHire Workforce Boards and Career Centers, as well as other organizations involved in workforce development.

Cole highlighted two major federal issues being monitored by MWA: FY27 federal appropriations and WIOA reauthorization. He noted that the FY26 federal budget was enacted in February, with most WIOA programs funded at levels generally consistent with FY24. The FY27 federal budget process is underway, with MWA and national workforce organizations advocating for increased workforce funding in light of anticipated federal workforce requirements.

Cole also provided an update on WIOA reauthorization, noting that the legislation originally enacted in 2014 expired in 2019 but continues to receive federal funding. Congress continues to consider reauthorization proposals.

At the state level, Cole reviewed the status of the FY27 Massachusetts budget, which was nearing completion. He highlighted funding levels under consideration for Career Centers, School-to-Career, Registered Apprenticeships, and YouthWorks, noting that the House and Senate had differing proposals for YouthWorks funding.

VII. President & CEO Report

Peter Farkas, President & CEO, provided an update on recent MHHCWB activities, initiatives, and workforce trends.



Peter highlighted the YouthWorks State Grant announcement hosted by MHHCWB in Springfield, where \$14.4 million was announced statewide, including \$1.87 million awarded to MHHCWB. He also discussed MHHCWB's participation as one of four regions selected to pilot the Commonwealth's Youth Employment and Skills (YES) Initiative focused on summer youth employment.

Peter highlighted the Youth Employment Summit hosted at the Basketball Hall of Fame, which brought together 240 youth and 40 employers. He recognized Kate and Kevin for their assistance in making the event a success. Both youth employment events received coverage from WWLP News, providing additional visibility for MHHCWB's youth employment efforts.

Peter also highlighted recent Registered Apprenticeship and training activities, including a National Apprenticeship Week event at Baystate Health, AMR EMT graduations attended by Mayor Sarno, Senator Oliveira and Congressman Neal, and CNC Operator graduates from Springfield Technical Community College supported by funding through the Massachusetts Technology Collaborative. He noted that additional funding has been secured for the upcoming year.

Peter provided an overview of labor market and unemployment data, including unemployment trends, Hampden County compared to the Commonwealth, unique job postings, top hiring industries, and in-demand occupations.

Peter also provided an update on funding opportunities and grant activities and reviewed the upcoming Board meeting schedule.

VIII. Adjourn

Chair Jeff Sullivan thanked the Board members and guests for their participation. With no further business before the Board, a motion to adjourn was made, seconded, and unanimously approved. The meeting adjourned at 9:55 a.m.