



GREATER LOWELL WORKFORCE BOARD

Full Board Meeting

Thursday, 6/25/2026

1-2:30pm (Hybrid)

Attendees: John Palmieri, Dawn Beati, Judy Burke, Brian Chapman, Bob Cox, Jill Davis, Linsey Former, Vichtcha Kong, Luce Lopez, Elizabeth McKiernan, Tom Raiche, Jean Tchazou, Geoff Vercauteren

Kevin Coughlin, Austin Ball, Michael Broderick, Cathy Byrnes, Heather Donovan, Nancy Gagnon, Shawn Machado, Shaun McCarthy, Susan McQuaide, Somong Rattanayong, Cathy Sturtevant, Brian Sok, Kennes Mor

I. Welcome, Call to Order (1:04 pm)

Chair John Palmieri called the meeting to order at 1:04 pm. A quorum was confirmed. The minutes of the March 11, 2026, meeting were presented for approval. Brian Chapman moved to approve the minutes, and Jean Tchazou seconded the motion. The motion carried.

II. Report of the Chair, John Palmieri

1. **Introduction of New Board Members** – John Palmieri formally welcomed the following individuals to the Board of Directors:
 - Bob Cox, Executive Director, The Bridge Club of Greater Lowell
 - Linsey Former, Interim President & CEO, Greater Lowell Chamber of Commerce
 - Mital Parikh, Chief Operating Officer, HBSS Connect Corporation
 - Michael Vazquez, Government Relations Director, Elevance Health
 - Geoff Vercauteren, System Director of Workforce Development, Tufts Medicine
2. **Establish Screening/Search Committee for Executive Director position** John provided an overview of the purpose, responsibilities and anticipated time commitment associated with the Executive Director Search Committee.

The following Board Members expressed interest in serving on the Search Committee: Dawn Beati, Judy Burke, Bob Cox, Vichtcha Kong, Luce Lopez, Tom Raiche, John Palmieri.
3. **Reaffirmation of New Executive Board Members** Brian Chapman moved to reaffirm the appointments of John Burrows, Jon DaSilva, and Jean Tchazou to the Executive Board. Judy Burke seconded the motion. The motion carried.
4. **WIOA Youth RFP Award**

John Palmieri asked any Board member who has a conflict of interest to disclose that conflict and recuse themselves from the discussion and voting. Board member, Jill Davis recused herself from the discussion and vote.

Motion: Tom Raiche moved to consider all three WIOA Youth Awards as a single motion. Brian Chapman seconded. The motion carried.

VOTE: to accept the recommendation of the Scoring Committee to award the following:

- In-School Youth: Greater Lowell Technical High School in the amount of \$51,000 to serve 24 in-school students.
- Out of School: Community Teamwork/YouthBuild in the amount of \$113,228.50 to serve 22 out-of-school youth.
- Out of School: International Institute of New England (IINE) in the amount of \$122,771.50 to serve 20 out-of-school youth.

Roll Call Vote – 12 in favor, 0 opposed, 0 abstention. Motion Passed

- III. **Fiscal Report, Austin Ball.** Austin reported that FY27 begins on July 1. Staff are finalizing contracts, entering the FY27 budget into Munis, preparing purchase orders, and reviewing projected spending needs. Funding is expected to remain level funded.

Grant expenditures were reported as follows: WIOA is on track to reach at least 80% expenditure; YouthWorks has spent \$934,000 of its \$1 million grant; and the Health Care Hub Grant is approximately 70% expended and is expected to be fully utilized by the end of the calendar year.

- IV. **Congressional Update, Somong Rattanayong, Director of Constituent Services for Congresswoman Lori Trahan's Office.** Somong provided an update on workforce development, highlighting ongoing challenges related to unemployment, employer hiring needs, and skills gaps in key sectors, including manufacturing, healthcare, education, technical services, and construction. She noted the need for additional mid-level credentials and expanded IT skills.

Somong concluded by presenting Kevin with a Congressional Citation from the Office of Congresswoman Lori Trahan in recognition of his leadership and contributions to workforce development and the community.

- V. **Report of the Executive Director, Kevin Coughlin.** Executive Director Kevin Coughlin reported that final copies of the Fiscal Monitoring Report and Department of Career Services Field Monitoring Report were included in the Board packet. All identified items have been addressed, and no further action is required.

Kevin recognized the Connecting Activities Program and reported that Tewksbury secured a \$10,000 Work-Based Learning Planning and Resources Grant, with support from the Workforce Board and Connecting Activities. The grant will support student workshops, transportation to work and career sites, guest speakers, and exposure to military careers.

Kevin reported that Phase 2 of the transportation pilot program may be implemented, contingent upon available funding. He also announced plans to launch the Healthcare Initiative Workgroup, which will be headed up by Geoff Vercauteren of Tufts Medicine.

Health Care Initiative Workgroup - Geoff Vercauteren, System Director of Workforce Development at Tufts Medicine, provided an overview of the proposed Health Care Initiative Workgroup. The initiative will bring together healthcare employers, educational institutions, colleges, high schools, and

community-based organizations to identify workforce needs, develop career pipelines, and address barriers to employment in the healthcare sector. The first meeting is scheduled for August.

- VI. Report of the Career Center, Shawn Machado** - Shawn Machado reported regional unemployment and job posting data. There were 6,971 unemployed individuals in the Greater Lowell area, including 2,915 in Lowell. Registered nurses remain among the region's most in-demand occupations.

For the fiscal year, MassHire served 7,063 customers, including 1,288 new customers during the quarter. A total of 1,312 job placements were achieved, with an average wage of \$34.29 per hour. Additionally, 376 individuals enrolled in training programs, and Business Services supported 1,108 employers, 279 job postings, and 132 hiring events.

The Mobile Career Center is operational and provides career counseling, resume assistance, referrals, and training information throughout the region, improving access for individuals facing transportation barriers.

1. **Job Fair Update:** Shaun McCarthy reported the May 20 job fair held at the Chelmsford Forum was the Career Center's largest to date, with 64 employers and more than 260 job seekers participating.

Several recruitment events have been planned for the summer. Two events have already taken place, resulting in 30 MassHire referrals to Abbott Electronics and 26 referrals to Raymour & Flanigan. Each employer reported seven hires. Additional recruitment events are planned with local employers, including Sterling, Encompass and Chelmsford Public Schools.

The Career Center will continue supporting employer recruitment throughout the summer. A potential November job fair at the Lowell Memorial Auditorium is also being explored.

2. **Young Adult Center:** Heather Donovan reported on summer programming and recent accomplishments. The Summer Work Experience Program has enrolled 115 young people against a goal of 105, with 37 worksites offering 179 work opportunities. Participants will complete up to 110 hours of work and training at wages of \$16–\$16.50 per hour.

Recent accomplishments included the graduation of 56 students from Lowell Middlesex Academy Charter School, career-readiness workshops for 696 Lowell High School freshmen, and several participants securing employment, including positions with BAE Systems and Crosspoint.

- VII. Other Business:** Chair John Palmieri recognized Executive Director Kevin Coughlin in advance of his retirement and expressed appreciation for his leadership, dedication, professionalism, and commitment to workforce development and the Greater Lowell region. Kevin thanked the Board, staff, partners, and customers for their support during his four and a half years as Executive Director.

VIII. Adjournment

There being no further business, Bob Cox moved to adjourn. Jean Tchazou seconded the motion. The motion carried. The meeting adjourned at 2:02 p.m.

Approved September 17, 2026